



California: San Bernardino and Riverside County Fuels Reduction Project

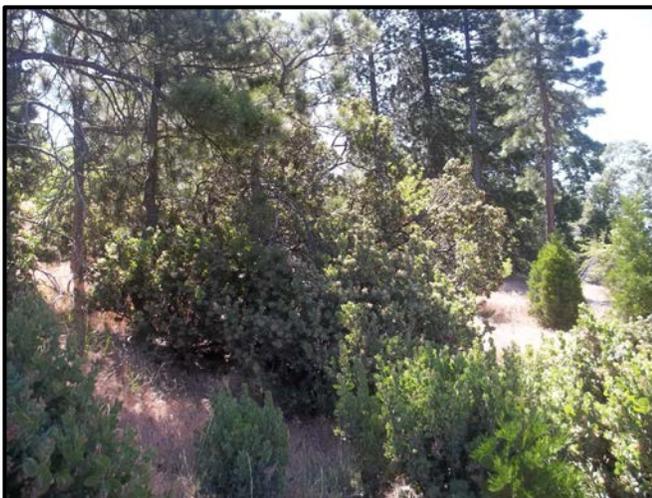
The Partners

In October 2003 Southern California experienced catastrophic wildfires that burned over 750,000 acres, destroyed 3,500 homes, and resulted in 22 fatalities and over \$3 billion in losses. Since then, multiple partners have committed time and resources to planning and implementing forest health and wildfire hazard reduction projects on private land within the San Bernardino National Forest in both San Bernardino County and Riverside County. NRCS was the lead funding agency from 2004 to 2009 and USFS was the lead funding agency from 2009 to 2012. Additional partners and cooperators include Cal Fire, San Bernardino County Fire, Inland Empire RCD, Mojave RCD, BIA, Santa Rosa Tribe, Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, multiple Organizational Camps, Homeowners Associations, Fires Safe Councils, Insurance company representatives and multiple citizen groups.



The Project

The partnership will focus on treating additional private forest land within the San Bernardino National Forest in order to reduce catastrophic wildfire, improve forest health, improve water quality services, rehabilitate burned lands and improve wildlife habitat. Approximately 15,000 acres have been identified for treatment, including 2,000 acres of tribal lands located primarily on the Santa Rosa Reservation. The rest of the project area will be centered on communities in the San Bernardino Mountains which include Big Bear, Lake Arrowhead, Crestline, Twin Pines and others. Private forestland in need of forest fuels reduction and forest health treatment within the San Bernardino





Mountain communities will be eligible for the project. Specific focus areas include the south side of Big Bear Lake (4,000 acres), the Baldwin Lake area (5,300 acres), North Big Bear Lake (5,500 acres), and May Valley and Thomas Mountain near Idyllwild (3,200 acres).

The Benefits of Additional Resources

Communities within the San Bernardino National Forest host tens of thousands of tourists every weekend during the summer and winter. The Santa Ana and Mojave Watersheds, which originate in the San Bernardino Mountains, supply water to over 20 million people in downstream communities. The intense pressure on the forest for recreation and water services and the devastating wildfires of 2003 and 2007 are some of the reasons a partnership was formed to address the issue of Forest Health and Wildfire Hazard within the communities of the San Bernardino National Forest.



Over 60,000 acres of private forest land have been treated to reduce catastrophic wildfire and address other associated resource concerns by this partnership since it was established. During the 2007 wildfires, previously treated project areas proved effective in protecting communities from the fire, reducing overall fire severity and assisting fire fighters in battling the blaze and a forest fuels reduction project is credited with saving the community of Running Springs during the 2007 Slide Fire. Additional resources will accelerate the pace of costly forest restoration, providing further enhancements and protection for community safety, wildlife habitat, watershed health, recreation opportunities and cultural resources. Economic benefits include job creation, as various contractors and private consultants will be used to complete individual restoration projects. The project will also produce firewood, fiber products and timber products. Local tribes will benefit in similar ways with regards to wildfire protection and improved forest health as well as improved management of culturally and historically significant plants.

The Measure of Success

The success will be measured by the quality, amount and effectiveness of the fuel reduction resulting in a reduction in fire threat and improved forest health, water quality and wildlife habitat. The success will also be measured by the **cost avoidance** of fighting a large wildfire, loss of life, destroyed property, loss of local economy, and the resulting flooding and sediment removal that follows wildfire.

