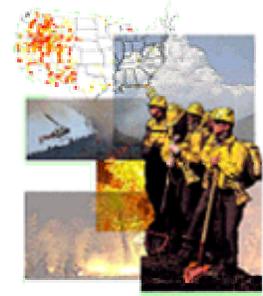


NATIONAL FIRE PLAN

Anasazi Heritage Center Grounds Made Wildfire Ready San Juan Public Lands, Durango, CO



In the fall of 2002, fire crews that spent the summer fighting wildfires turned to projects that will help reduce the threat of future fires. The San Juan Hotshots and Dolores Public Lands Office Fire Crew spent 10 weeks thinning hazardous fuels on 60 acres of federal land surrounding the Anasazi Heritage Center, managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The thinning project will help protect the interpretive museum and its archeological resources from wildfire.

"Our landscape looks pretty different but we will have a much safer environment for us and our neighbors," says LouAnn Jacobson, AHC Manager. "One of our goals was to make this a demonstration area for fuels reduction so that the public can see what a thinned area looks like."



Hand thinning is a labor-intensive job, but was the perfect tool for this project as it allowed archeologists to mark cultural sites to be avoided, and also allowed crews to leave clumps of vegetation for use by wildlife. The crews thinned trees, brush, and dead material with chainsaws. Removing brush from under trees should help keep a fire on the ground where it is easier for firefighters to fight. And putting more spacing between trees will help keep a

fire from spreading rapidly from tree to tree. The removal of dead pinyon pines from the recent *lps* beetle infestation in Montezuma County has made the area more attractive and reduced the fire hazard.

The piled cut material is being burned as conditions permit, or hauled off. Larger-diameter wood was stacked for use by AHC volunteers. For more information, call the Heritage Center at 970-882-5600.