

South Fork Vegetation Treatment Project

Who: Beaver Ranger District, Fishlake National Forest

What: Remove dead trees, reduce overall tree stand densities, and reduce hazardous fuels on approximately 2,000 acres of Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir forest around private lands east of LeBaron Lake. Approximately three miles of new temporary roads would be constructed, and approximately ten miles of temporary roads formerly used for vegetation treatments would be reopened. All temporary roads would be decommissioned (restored to a natural state) and signed as closed upon completion of treatment activities. Treated areas may be reforested with Engelmann spruce and Douglas-fir if necessary to supplement natural regeneration and help achieve recovery.

When: Treatments would begin as early as spring 2004 and are anticipated to be completed within five years.

Where: The project area is located between Circleville Mountain and Birch Creek Mountain, approximately 13 miles southeast of Beaver in Beaver County, Utah. Treatments would occur in six units, each ranging from approximately 200 to 500 acres in size.

Why: The purpose of the proposed action is to reduce the susceptibility of stands to spruce beetle attack and the build-up of local populations and to reduce hazardous fuels around private lands east of LeBaron Lake. This would reduce the susceptibility and improve the overall health of the remaining adjacent stands, hasten the re-establishment of a forested landscape, and reduce the risk of uncharacteristically intense and severe wildland fire around LeBaron private lands.



Beetle-killed spruce and fir.



Beetle-killed spruce and fir forest.

South Fork Vegetation Treatment Project



Trees stands susceptible to spruce
Beetle attack.



Beetle-killed spruce.

Project Design Features:

- Complete regular maintenance activities on Forest System Road (FSR) 137, as necessary. Maintenance activities could consist of blading to smooth and level the road surface, cleaning out or replacing culverts, and cleaning out drainage dips and lead out ditches.
- Reopen approximately ten miles of temporary roads formerly used for vegetation treatments. Activities would consist of clearing and removing berms and debris to allow for passage of equipment. These roads would be decommissioned (restored to a natural state) and signed as closed upon completion of treatment activities.
- Construct approximately three miles of new temporary roads, which would be decommissioned and signed as closed upon completion of treatment activities.
- Use former skid trails and landings to transport and stack cut trees, where possible. Skid trails would be spaced a minimum of 100 feet apart, except where trails converge to landings. Obliterate and reseed skid trails and landings upon completion of treatment activities.
- Locate temporary roads and skid trails to avoid slopes greater than 40 percent.
- Conventional, ground-based logging equipment (e.g. rubber tired skidders, caterpillar tractors, forwarders, feller-bunchers) would be used to cut and remove trees.
- A minimum of 300 snags per 100 acres, greater than 18 inches in diameter, and 30 feet in height, would be retained, where available. Where not available, snags of the largest available diameter and height would be retained.
- Residual live green spruce trees, subalpine firs and snags would be retained in groups or clumps to provide protection from wind throw, and to provide for visual quality and wildlife hiding cover.
- Burn, chip, or shred concentrations of slash to reduce fuel loading and insect buildup. Slash within 50 feet of a road or trail would be piled or chipped in order to minimize visual impacts.

South Fork Vegetation Treatment Project

Project Design Features (continued):

- Place cut pieces of green Engelmann spruce larger than 14 inches diameter and 18 inches long in slash piles and burn along with residual slash. This would eliminate beetles and prevent further infestation.
- Lop and scatter slash to a maximum depth of 24 inches. Where slash would exceed 24-inch depth, it would be piled by tractor and burned by hand.
- Pile landing slash by tractor and burn by hand.
- Scarify the forest floor to prepare the seedbed for tree planting where there is heavy duff accumulation.
- Treatments would be designed to maintain or improve nesting and foraging habitat for the northern goshawk, following the standards and guidelines of the Utah Northern Goshawk Project Forest Plan amendment. Treatments would not be conducted within active nest sites between March 1 and September 30.



Beetle-killed spruce and fir in Anderson Meadow Campground.



Beetle-killed spruce and fir east of Anderson Meadow Campground.