

Success Story
For the
Alma Taylor Vegetation Management Project
By
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The Alma Taylor Vegetation Management Project was designed as a multi-disciplined effort to benefit various resources on the Vernal Ranger District. The primary purpose for the treatment is to control lodgepole pine density and promote aspen regeneration; subsequently, these treatments will reduce the risk of extreme fire behavior in the Ashley Creek municipal watershed, benefit mule deer populations, restore critical moose winter range, and also improve northern goshawk foraging, nesting habitat. Moreover, the expected increase in grass yield will benefit the existing range allotment for domestic animal grazing.

The project area was divided into smaller units where various treatment opportunities have and will be implemented to achieve the desired results. These methods include creating 877 acres of shaded fuelbreaks (approximately 600 foot wide strips) to facilitate up to 1030 acres of future prescribed fire; partial cutting of 380 acres of seral aspen to remove conifer encroachment; group selection cutting on 1400 acres to create wildlife openings, pre and commercial thinning efforts on 250 acres; and 82 acres shelterwood thinning to help reduce perpetual dog hair stands.

On June 26, 2009 a contract was awarded to Conservation Services LLC of Jarales New Mexico to create the shaded fuelbreaks. The original contract was to treat 302 acres using thin from below methods to decrease the overall basal area by 40% and reduce ground fuels of 10-30 tons/acre. The desired finished product would result in a leave tree spacing of 10-16 feet, a basal area of approximately 40-60, and down/dead fuel loadings of 5-10 tons/acre.

The Forest made efforts to utilize a shearer/buncher head mounted on a track-hoe to treat an additional 200 acres in the project area. It was readily apparent that this was not the tool for the job and could be likened to using a chainsaw to perform an appendectomy. A subsequent modification was made to the contract for Conservation Services to treat the remaining 200 acres in the same manner as the original contract.

It is estimated that over 5,000 slash piles were created on this project. These piles will be allowed to cure for a season prior to burning. Below are pictures that represent the volume of work completed.



Average view of project



Finished Product