



## Custer Fuels Reduction Project 2009

**Project Description:** The Custer Fuels Reduction project is located on the Challis-Yankee Fork Ranger District, Salmon-Challis National Forest in the Yankee Fork of the Salmon River drainage. The Custer Townsite is a historic ghost town from the mining days in the late 1800s with private inholdings and houses in and surrounding the site. After the 2005 fire season the county along with the Forest Service determined more fuels reduction work had to be done in this steep canyon area to help protect the private inholdings and the historic site. The hillsides west of the Townsite and adjacent to private inholdings had dense stands of second growth Douglas-fir.



**Implementation Plan and Accomplishment to date:** This project was developed to address a request in the Custer County – Idaho Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan and a WUI priority area in the National Fire Plan. A service contract to thin the stand from below to a 20 foot crown separation and pile the slash was completed in 2009. This contract covered 407 acres. The boles of the cut trees are being utilized by firewood gatherers. With the reduction of hazardous fuels, removal of ladder fuels, and thinning of the dense Douglas-fir stand, fire behavior modeling indicates a wildland fire, except under extreme conditions, will not transition into a plume dominated, crown, or treetop fire now that the thinning is completed. Fire behavior modeling also indicates that flame lengths and fire intensity will remain low enough to allow hand crews to take direct attack on a wildfire in the project area. The finished project, after the piles are burned in the fall of 2010 is expected to increase protection to the private inholdings, the historic Custer Townsite, and to allow fire managers to more safely and effectively control a wildland fire in the area. Additional treatments such as an underburn already planned will be required in the future as regeneration once again become established.

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