



Chewaucan Aspen/Meadow Enhancement and Juniper Thinning FL-03-402

District: *Paisley Ranger District / Paisley, Oregon*

Contractor: *Quicksilver and ARC*

Contract #: *AG-04P5-52-04P5-4-0051C*

AG-04P5-52-04P5-4-0051B

Job Code #: *RSH602*

Title II Dollars: *\$57,000*

Partnership Dollars: *Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation - \$15,000*

Federal Appropriated Dollars: *\$50,000*

Workers Employed: *32*

Total Local workers: *28*

Total Worker Days: *155*

Total Local Worker Days: *141*

Accomplishment (Based in Acres, Miles, Structures): *402 acres*

How was this project completed? *Thinning of juniper*

Monitoring is being accomplished by the Chewaucan Biophysical Monitoring Group. Pre-thinning plots and photos were taken in 2005 before the thinning took place. Post-thinning plots and photos will be completed in 2006.

Project Summary:

Due to the significant amount of water and nutrient use by juniper, the expansion of juniper has resulted in a loss of understory vegetation which increases the potential of soil nutrient loss, runoff, and erosion in the watershed. Juniper expansion can also result in a loss of water available for stream flow during the dry summer months. By removing juniper, ground vegetation will increase and prevent erosion and sedimentation, and subsurface water flows will increase.

This project involved the thinning of juniper in upland habitats and adjacent to riparian areas along the Chewaucan River and its tributaries. In areas where the juniper has encroached into ponderosa pine stands or aspen stands, small diameter conifer trees were also thinned. Juniper trees that display old-growth characteristics were not cut to maintain trees that became established prior to fire suppression. For the most part, these trees are located on rocky outcrops and ridges, and display unique characteristics.

This project was coordinated with a large-scale restoration project located within the Chewaucan Watershed. To date, six Chewaucan Watershed Council members have been actively thinning juniper in the uplands to make this happen. For instance, the J-Spear, Murphy, and O'Leary Ranches and the Paisley Ranger District have cooperatively cut juniper and burned across approximately 5,400 acres in the Chewaucan Watershed between 1997-2003. In 2004, the Paisley Ranger District thinned approximately 3,500 acres of juniper and conifer in the Chewaucan watershed. The BLM and the J-Spear Ranch cut approximately 5,600 acres of juniper in the north end of the Chewaucan subshed and have burned approximately 8,800 acres in the same area. Since 1997 there has been a total of 14,500 acres of juniper and conifer thinned in the Upper Chewaucan watershed. These efforts are going towards fuels reduction, restoring historical vegetative conditions, and to improve forage for big game.

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation has funded this project for \$15,000 and 103 additional acres were completed in the summer of 2005 with this money. The USFS funded this project for \$50,000 in 2005. In addition, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board funded the thinning of juniper on adjacent private lands at a total of \$165,000.

For further information contact:

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