

## Partnership Project Success Story

<b>State:</b>	<b>Colorado</b>	<b>FS Funds Used:</b>	<b>\$ 1450</b>
<b>National Forest/Grassland:</b>	<b>White River National Forest Aspen/Sopris Ranger District</b>	<b>Other Funds Used:</b>	<b>\$</b>
		<b>Partners:</b>	<b>\$ 6000</b>
<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Canada Lynx Habitat Restoration</b>	<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	<b>\$ 7450</b>

**Project Purpose/Objectives:** The White River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan has a management objective of maintaining and improving Canada lynx foraging habitat. Few projects for benefiting Canada lynx have been implemented on the Forest since this species was listed as threatened. The purpose of this project is to improve the stand conditions within low quality winter foraging habitat such that higher quality winter forage habitat conditions are provided. Numerous studies have shown that snowshoe hares prefer densely stocked conifer stands for winter foraging habitat. Since lynx rely heavily on snowshoe hares as prey, consequently, good snowshoe hare habitat translates to good lynx forage habitat.

**Work Performed:** In order to improve snowshoe hare habitat, Aspen-Sopris District, in cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Aspen Ski Company developed a stand prescription to improve a 43-acre mixed conifer stand conditions for snowshoe hare. The stand was selected because of its suitability for treatment and its proximity to winter foraging habitat stands that were cleared as part of ski area developments at nearby Snowmass Ski Area. The treatments used to implement the silvicultural prescription were: 1) Fall trees to expand existing openings, which will allow more sunlight to reach the forest floor, and release regeneration already present, and 2) Scarify the soil within non-stocked or lightly stocked openings throughout the stand to create a seedbed favorable for germination and seedling establishment.

**Benefits:** Within a 43-acre conifer stand, 33 acres of open sites with poor understory regeneration were selected where scarification was used to prepare soils for conifer germination and select trees were felled to open the tree canopy (Figure 1). Regeneration at this site is poor, except in clumps. A small bulldozer was used in September to scarify soils in openings prior to conifer cones dispersing seed in fall (Figure 2). A crew used chainsaws to selectively fell approximately 100 canopy subalpine fir trees that shaded treated openings. Some of these were used to create a barrier to skiers, in order to protect new growth trees from damage. Work was conducted by Aspen Ski Company employees under a participating agreement and work was inspected by a Forest Service Wildlife Biologist (Figure 3). It is anticipated that numerous fir and spruce seedlings will become established within scarified openings within a few years of implementation (Figure 4). Over the longer term, newly established seedlings will develop into saplings of an appropriate height (3-10 feet), which will improve snowshoe hare habitat.

**Additional Information**

**Partners:** Aspen Ski Company and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Figure 1. Within low-quality suitable lynx habitat, open sites with poor understory regeneration were selected for treatment.



Figure 2. Tooth implement used to scarify soils.



Figure 3. A small bulldozer is used to scarify soils in openings prior to conifer cones dispersing seed in fall.



Figure 4. Site condition after scarification