



Upper Santa Clara River Vegetation and Fuels Project Dixie National Forest, Pine Valley Ranger District 2008

Project Description

The Upper Santa Clara River Vegetation and Fuels Project is located 19 miles north of St. George, Utah in the Pine Valley Recreation Area, adjacent to the community of Pine Valley in Washington County, Utah.

This is a five to seven year project on 1185 acres of NFS Lands designed to modify vegetation such that fuels will be reduced, wildland fire risk to private property and recreational facilities will be reduced, and forest health will be improved, while maintaining the vegetation aesthetics of the Recreational Area. Pine Valley is included on the Federal Register's list of Communities at Risk from wildfire and is a Color Country Interagency Fuels Urban Interface Focus Area for treatment. All thinning products in the campground areas and along roadways were made available to the local community as firewood.

Fifty-one percent of the project area is characterized by forested cover types, with most of this dominated by ponderosa pine (92%). The remaining forest cover types include cottonwood and mixed conifer. One-third of the ponderosa pine stands contain high densities of decadent mountain mahogany and oak in the understory. The remaining 49% of the project area is dominated by mountain shrub, pinyon-juniper and sagebrush/grassland types. Mountain shrub communities are mid-to-late successional and encroaching into sagebrush/grass, ponderosa pine and mixed conifer types. Pinyon-juniper stands are encroaching into sagebrush/grasslands and ponderosa pine types.

Implementation and Accomplishments: Current and future treatments include timber harvest, non-commercial thinning, prescribed fire, shaded fuelbreak construction and mechanical treatment. Fuelbreak construction and mechanical treatment involve thinning, pruning, piling and burning piles. This ladder fuel removal will allow broadcast- and under-burning throughout the project area.

The 2008 year was a successful treatment year and included timber harvest, fuelbreak construction on 36 acres, thinning on 269 acres, non-commercial thinning on 44 acres and pile burning on ten acres. A large collaborative effort to clean up the recreation area for the 2008 summer season included help with manpower and equipment from the Arizona Strip Bureau of Land Management, Utah Forestry Fire and State Lands, the Pine Valley Fire Department, the community of Pine Valley and local Boy Scout groups from Pine Valley and St. George, Utah.

For more information on the Upper Santa Clara River Vegetation and Fuels Project, contact Cyndi Sidles, Fuels Specialist, Pine Valley Ranger District via email csidles@fs.fed.us or by phone (435) 652-3172.