United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Shasta-Trinity National Forest Headquarters

3644 Avtech Parkway
Redding, CA 96002
(530) 226-2500
(530) 226-2490 – TDD
www.fs.fed.us/r5/shastatrinity

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Route To:

Subject: Input to Bear Fire BAER (FHP Rept. No. 04-07)

To: Todd Ellsworth

On August 17 and 18 I examined trees along the major roads and campgrounds in the Bear Fire to locate imminent hazard trees and trees that are likely to die in the near future. A map with field notes and a CD with photos was prepared for Todd Ellsworth, BAER Team Leader.

Between the Jones Valley Marina access road and the Jones Valley Boat Ramp, there are approximately 60 small (less than 12 inch dbh) ponderosa pine and knobcone pine along the roadside that are dead and dying. They are not imminently hazardous, but will be expected to begin falling as early as the winter of 2005-2006. It should be possible for one faller to cut and limb these trees in a day. If a swamper is used to hand pile the slash, it would cost approximately $400 to cut and hand pile. If a chipper has to be rented, it could double the cost.

There are approximately 70 larger ponderosa pine that are girdled at the root collar within striking distance of the road between the Jones Valley Marina access road and the Jones Valley Boat Ramp. Most of these trees are not an imminent hazard, however they will deteriorate quickly due to the low elevation. There are also approximately 40 ponderosa pines that have been girdled by ground fire in Lower Jones Campground and an additional 50 ponderosa pines in Upper Jones Campground. These trees will have a commercial value until the weather warms up in the Spring of 2005. A rough guess is about 160 ponderosa pine trees containing about 65,000 board feet.

There are numerous black oak and live oak trees in the campgrounds that were girdled at the base. These trees will sprout, but the tops will become hazardous if they are not removed. Many of these trees would be suitable for fuelwood, although they might not have a high commercial value. If we have to pay to cut the hardwoods and dispose of the slash, it might take a faller 4 or 5 days with a cost of as much as $2,000.

There are 5 ponderosa pine in the Jones Valley area that pose an imminent hazard of falling. All have been flagged with orange flagging on the bole. One is located to the east of the entrance to the Upper Jones Valley Campground and leans toward the main road. One is located to the north of Upper Jones Valley Campground at the Lake access in an area where people have parked in the past. Three additional ponderosa pines are located on the south side of the main road between the Upper Jones Valley Campground and the access road to the Jones Valley Marina. All have large cavities burned into the bole, and all are close enough to strike the road. The tree at the Lake access is relatively small and should not be difficult to drop. The 4 larger trees have

bole defects and lean toward the road. They will require an experienced faller and will require additional help to delay traffic on the road. Depending on where the trees actually fall, it may require a skidder to move logs off the road. It would probably take a faller 2 to 4 days to deal with these trees at a cost of $1,000 to $2,000. If the skidder and operator have to be present all of that time, the cost could double.

Most of the trees along the Jones Valley Marina access road were killed outright or girdled by the fire. Some of the slope above the road are steep enough that trees could travel several hundred feet when they snap. Some clean up was in progress on August 18 when I saw the area. It would be advantageous to make sure all hazards have been mitigated.

I examined the Backbone Ridge Road for hazardous trees. There are relatively few roadside trees in the short sections of National Forest land. On August 17 a contract crew was in the process of cutting the hazard trees they identified. There is probably little else to do on the National Forest System land to mitigate hazard trees. There are many dead small diameter conifers and hardwoods along the road in the sections of private land. A few of these are large enough to cause considerable damage to transient targets. Many smaller trees might only cause property damage, but they have the potential to close the road for some length of time. The smaller trees should begin to fall during the winter of 2005-2006. I would estimate approximately 2.5 miles of privately owned road could use treatment. A complete job would fell trees on about 55 acres and could cost over $10,000. A selective falling of only larger trees could be done in about a week and a half at a cost of about $1,500.

I only looked at a few sections of the Clikapudi Trail. There are numerous dead and girdled trees along the trail. There are dead oaks, ponderosa pine, knobcone pine and gray pine. Two classes of trees should be considered imminently hazardous. The conifers under 12 inches diameter will decay rapidly and begin to fall during the winter of 2005-2006. The larger conifers should last for 2 to 10 years, although most would not last more than 3 or 4 years. The other imminently hazardous class of trees would be the oaks that had considerable decay prior to the fire. If they have nothing but a shell of sound wood and can strike the trail, they should be considered hazardous. Due to the limited access points and the need to walk, I would estimate the time to survey and treat hazard trees on the trail at 10 days. A rough guess at cost would be $2,500.

/s/
Dave Schultz
Entomologist

cc: Kristy Cottini