

In Brief



Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

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National Forest System Urban Intermix Parcels in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

The Santini-Burton Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-586) (the Act) authorized the Forest Service to acquire environmentally sensitive lands within the Lake Tahoe Basin to protect these lands from development. The Act has resulted in successful federal acquisition of over 3,500 parcels, varying from a fraction of an acre to several hundred acres in size. These acquired lands, which are located within or directly adjacent to the developed communities of the Lake Tahoe Basin, are managed by the Forest Service for their watershed and other environmental values.

Little, if any, management had occurred on these lands when they were in private ownership. As the number of federally owned parcels increased, there was increased pressure from the public for management of hazard trees, dead trees, trash dumping, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use and other resource issues. Also during this period, the Lake Tahoe Basin was experiencing a prolonged drought that had begun in 1988. Drought-stressed trees and insect activity resulted in wide spread tree mortality. The public was increasingly aware of dying trees and hazardous fuels conditions. In response to these concerns, and with funding attained through the grass roots efforts the **Urban Lot Management Program** was generated in 1991.

Commitment and Partnership

The Forest Service works collaboratively in planning and project partnerships with community groups such as local chapters of the Tahoe Basin Fire Safe Council, homeowners' associations, individual citizens interested in helping remove fuels from national forest system lands near their homes, land management agencies such as the Nevada Division of State Lands and the California Tahoe Conservancy, all of the local Tahoe Basin Fire Protection Districts (Tahoe Basin Fire Chiefs Association), State Forestry agencies (NDF and CDF), and local regulatory agencies (Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, air quality and water quality). Planning and project highlights include the Tahoe ReGreen Initiative 1995-2000, partnership agreements with NDF, CDF, California Conservation Corps (CCC), Nevada Conservation Corps (NCC), and the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District for assistance with hazardous fuels reduction and forest health treatments on National Forest urban intermix parcels, and the Community Wildfire Protection Plan initiative 2004-2005. Partnership opportunities and collaboration is being expanded through the Pathway 2007 multi-agency planning effort.

Treatment Options for Fuels Reduction and Forest Health Projects

Fuels reduction treatments on National Forest urban intermix parcels in the Tahoe Basin have three objectives: (1) reduce catastrophic wildfire effects; (2) improve defensible space protection to adjoining private lands; and (3) enhance forest ecosystem health

Based on local conditions, treatments are commonly accomplished through the use of hand cutting and removal of trees. In some cases, mechanical treatments are used either as the initial treatment or as a follow up treatment to remove larger material. Removal of slash (limbs, tree tops and rotten wood) is commonly accomplished through prescribed fire treatments or through chipping.

Maintenance of Fuels Reduction and Forest Health Project Work

Fuels reduction treatments must be maintained over time to remain effective. In most cases, maintenance of fuels reduction treatments are needed every 5 to 20 years dependant upon localized ecosystems. However, on urban intermix parcels, pockets of insect mortality, storm damage, and other conditions may require more frequent treatment to maintain effective defensible space, fuels conditions, and eliminate hazards in the urban intermix. Long term funding strategies will consider the long term maintenance of fuels and forest health treatments and the need for more intense and frequent treatment within the urban intermix.



Before (west shore parcel)



After treatment

The Work that Remains

Of the roughly 3,500 urban intermix parcels acquired by the Forest Service in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU), approximately 930 parcels (1,800 acres) remain requiring various degrees of initial fuels reduction treatment. Not all parcels require treatment as some are not located within the urban interface and others consist primarily of riparian vegetation (meadows and streams).

The Forest Service has developed a plan to finish initial treatment on all National Forest urban intermix parcels and transition into a maintenance level program within the next five years.

In FY 2006 the Forest Service plans to implement initial fuels reduction treatments on as many as 260 urban intermix parcels totaling approximately 300 acres located in the Kingsbury area (Stateline, NV) , Timberland area (West shore, Placer County), Cave Rock area (East Shore, NV), Angora area (El Dorado County, CA) and Incline Village (North Shore, NV). In addition, maintenance treatments will occur on as many as 200 urban intermix parcels totaling 50 acres. In FY 2007, the Forest Service plans to implement initial fuels reduction treatments on as many as 170 urban intermix parcels totaling 425 acres. The treatments are planned to occur in the Kingsbury area (Stateline, NV), North Tahoe area (North Shore, Placer County, CA) and the Homewood area (West Shore, Placer County, CA).

LTBMU

In FY 2008 thru FY 2010, the Forest Service plans to implement initial fuels reduction treatments on as many as 165 urban intermix parcels totaling approximately 365 acres annually to complete initial treatments on all urban intermix parcels. These treatments will occur mostly in the South Shore area (El Dorado County, CA).

Summary of Urban Lot Management Program Accomplishments - 1995 through 2005

- 1280 acres of hazardous fuels management has been completed. (2,150 urban lots and 2.5 miles of urban interface lands)
- 335 acres of re-entry (follow up) forest health treatments (550 urban lots)
- removed over 2,100 identified hazard trees
- 240 acres of watershed restoration treatments (400 urban lots)
- conducted invasive species monitoring and manual weed control on 68 acres (160 urban lots)
- completed initial condition assessment inventory on 3,360 urban lots and conduct parcel condition monitoring of approximately 1,200 urban lots annually
- issued over 1,100 forest products permits (average 100 per year) to private property owners for fuels reduction stewardship of adjoining National Forest System lands

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