



Mammoth Lakes Fuelbreak

Despite the busy fire season, local fire crews began constructing the Mammoth Lakes Fuel Break on August 1, 2002. This project will protect the north end of Mammoth Lakes from wildfire and will treat more than 800 acres of forest, including 400 acres directly adjacent to the town (the π mile Defense Zone defined in the National Fire Plan).

Planning involved the local community and took almost two years to complete. Thinning work was done in the dense Jeffrey Pine thickets along the road to the local municipal park, and the timing of this work coincided with high recreational use. With this increased visibility while conducting the thinning, the crews found themselves educating the public on the forest health benefits of thinning as well as the reasoning for the fuelbreak. Comments from the public were primarily positive.

This project responds to management direction from the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA-Jan 2001) and the National Fire Plan (NFP-August 2000). The SNFPA outlined a strategic approach to fuel treatments across broad landscapes, with the highest priority for fuels treatment in the Wildland/Urban Intermix. The \$400,000 project is funded by the NFP. The most critical 350 acres will be contracted out in the spring of 2003. Contractors and local crews will complete the remainder over the next three summers.



Some of the timber along the fuelbreak before treatment.



The foreground area after thinning. The stems have been removed by the public for firewood and the limbs are piled for chipping.