

Indian Falls Fuel Reduction Project GN 03-DG-11051150-035

Final Report

December 31, 2006

General

Plumas County Fire Safe Council (PCFSC) and Plumas Corporation carried out this private lands project in the historic settlement of Indian Falls [adjacent to national forest lands]. The project was brought to the Council by local residents and firefighters. The project used RAC Title II (\$47,800) and Plumas Board of Supervisors Title III funds (\$9,000-Planning only) as well as National Fire Plan and other funds. The Board of Supervisors finalized the allocation of matching Title III funds on 6/17/03 and the RAC Title II funds' contract was executed (PCFSC and USFS) on 7/21/03. PCFSC solicited for and chose a Registered Professional Forester to oversee the fuels reduction work. That forester did not work out and was replaced in early 2006 by Wayland Resource Management. The basic thinning prescription was approved by the District Ranger for NEPA purposes and was carried out in mid-2006. Fuels reduction thinning, chipping and underburning was accomplished on 39.8 'new' acres in seven ownerships.

Due to small lot sizes, landowner requests, the type of tree stands (dominated by many small fir trees) and terrain impediments, a maximum tree size of 8" was chosen for removal with twelve foot spacing between those trees. Conifer trees between 4"-8" were targeted. All oak trees were left. This was a less aggressive thinning prescription than on most Fire Safe council projects. There was also no commercial product removed as part of the project.

Fuels Reduction

An important component of the matching funds and acreage on this RAC Title II project is the separate Forest Service grant funded *Countywide Demonstration Fuels Reduction Project* completed in 2005:

<http://www.plumasfiresafe.org/Documents/Demo%20Project%20Rpt.pdf>

An Indian Falls component was completed as part of that Demonstration, with 11.03 acres thinned at a cost of \$13,700. This amount is an additional match for this RAC/Title III funded project and the number of acres accomplished was included in the 50 acre target for the overall Indian Falls project (including RAC funds).

PCFSC and the RPF, in 2003, began the process of working with each property owner to define the project scope, secure the necessary permits from CDF (and their approval by USFS) and carry out the fuels reduction work on the new RAC funded acres.

A total of 39.8 'new' acres were completed as part of this RAC project. 'Landowner Agreements' with eight landowners were executed. A total of 50.83 acres in Indian Falls

have now received treatment (counting the 11.03 acres in the original Demonstration project).

The full “NEPA Analysis for Indian Falls Fuels Reduction 2” was developed by the RPF on 2/25/05 and submitted to the District Ranger. The District Ranger issued a Decision Memo on 4/21/05 approving the project and authorizing immediate implementation.

Contract extensions were granted on this project by USFS, Plumas National Forest, through 12/31/06.

The Project Prospectus was issued to Licensed Timber Operators (LTO) and others in April, 2006 and there were six proposers. Red Coast was determined to meet the contractor and project criteria in early June and entered into contract.

Thinning began on 6/13/06 using chainsaws and chippers where possible. The project was ~ 80 % complete by 9/30/06. However, no pile burning could take place in the summer and early fall due to dry weather.

There was some dissatisfaction, after field reviews, with the level of thinning that had been carried out. After discussion, a determination was made to also remove 0”-3” trees to further reduce the density of the smaller trees. The LTO contract was amended and this was carried out in late November.

Significant pile burning (on approximately 30 acres) remained and was accomplished after the main wildfire danger passed (in November and early December). Unfortunately, four small burn piles escaped their containment on December 2 & 3 due to lack of supervision. USFS fire trucks had to respond. No structures were burned. Less than 2 additional acres were burned on USFS lands. The contractor will be billed for the costs of the fire suppression by USFS. Six ‘uncured’ piles remain for burning in Spring, 2007

All burning and other project activities were completed by December 28, 2006.

Costs

A total of \$58,705.22 was spent on the 39.8 ‘new’ acres in this project or \$1,449 per acre

Financial Accrual Status

Under grant # 03-DG-11051150-035, the Plumas County Fire Safe Council has incurred the following costs for the Title II portion of the project: \$ 47,800. All \$ 47,800 in the Title II grant was invoiced and received. An additional \$ 9,890 in matching funds was spent on the project for a cumulative total \$ 57,690 in overall project costs.

These figures do not include the \$13,700 expensed as part of the previous *Demonstration* project in the Indian Falls area (see above)