



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION

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Ghost Canyon Hazardous Fuels Reduction Grant Fuels Treatment Prescription December 1, 2007

Property Information: This serves as a universal prescription for the properties located in various subdivisions around the Ghost Canyon and Box Canyon area. Property specific information may be added as appropriate for individual properties.

The subdivisions in the area are surrounded on all sides by very dense and heavy fuel. The exterior portions of the subdivisions are influenced by steep canyons with densely vegetated by pine and hardwood intermixes.

The main threat for intense wildland fire is from steep topography and high fuel loading that is the result of overgrowth, debris accumulation, and storm damage. The goal of the 100% cost-share fuels treatment project is to mitigate the threat of intense wildfire in the areas of highest concern by treating these areas and creating fuel breaks. Interior portions of the subdivisions should be treated through other treatment options and methods.

Fuels Treatment: The primary objective of this treatment is to reduce the threat of catastrophic fire by removing ladder fuels from the forest floor that consist of broken tree tops, blow down, broken branches, snow bends and other forest litter. Felled trees and limbs (thinning slash) as well as, other previously downed material will be piled or chipped. This material will be hand piled or chipped by South Dakota Wildland Fire Suppression Fire Crew. The desired treatment would include thinning existing Ponderosa Pine up to 10" DBH to a minimum spacing of 15-25 feet between crowns, where possible. Larger dominate and codominate trees 10" DBH and larger that are straight, with good form and vigor, will be left as ghost trees. Pines will be removed from hardwood stands up to 10" DBH, and will also be clear-cut in a 25 foot area around hardwood pockets. Hardwood trees create excellent fuel breaks, and their health, as well as, the diversity of the forest can be improved if this treatment is applied to them.

All dead-standing snags will be left as wildlife trees. This does not apply to snags or broken trees that create any type of immediate hazard to the owners or visitors to properties. Trees that have active stem canker (Western Gall Rust), are snow bent, deformed, or have broken, dead or forked tops will be removed. It is recommended that trees with defects be removed first, with remaining trees being cut next until the desired spacing is achieved. Pines within the prescription area will be limbed to a minimum of 10 feet from the ground. This will need to be increased on areas of steep slopes to ensure that the limbs on the uphill side are at least 10 feet above ground level.

All piled fuels will be burned by the crew when conditions are favorable. Piles will be stacked wherever there is sufficient room to prevent scorching of surrounding live trees during pile burning. Every effort will be made to minimize the scorching of live trees during pile burning operations; however, some scorching is expected, and will occur. This will not harm the residual stand. Once piles have been burned, landowners should monitor burn locations for regrowth of native vegetation, and may need to reseed and/or eliminate noxious weeds.

Larger material may be hauled from the property by a commercial firewood business at no cost to the property owner or the grant (with permission by the property owner). The crew will not remove trees that require complicated felling techniques, or are a safety concern. A commercial logger may be utilized where the prescription standards cannot be met solely by the methods employed South Dakota Wildland Fires Suppression Division. Any agreement for work performed by a commercial logger will be between the property owner and the logger (contractor). The South Dakota Wildland Fire Suppression Division will coordinate the work between the logger and the SDWFS Crew.