



*Trusted Stewards of Idaho's Resources,
From Main Street to Mountaintop*

Taking burned trees to the bank

IDL foresters work overtime to make burned trees available for harvest before they deteriorate, and plan for massive reforestation of burned areas in southern Idaho

Sept. 3, 2013

Within a matter of weeks, the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) made modifications to two existing timber sale contracts and is preparing new timber salvage sales on approximately **6,000 acres of endowment trust land burned by the Elk Complex Fire in Elmore County in August.**

Harvesting of **40 million board feet of burned timber** already has begun and will continue through the winter and into next summer near the town of Prairie.

In keeping with a Constitutional mandate to manage the lands for **health and productivity for years to come**, the IDL will plant **1.5 million seedlings** on the 6,000 acres over the next two to three years. By comparison, the IDL planted a total of 2.2 million seedlings statewide in FY13.

Natural regeneration also will occur, as the foresters are leaving in place trees still capable of dropping their own seeds.

The sales are expected to generate **\$5-7 million additional revenue for the public school endowment fund** this fiscal year.

The expeditious planning of the sales was needed to recoup value in the forest because ponderosa pine will begin to "blue stain" and lose value by the end of November. The fire-killed trees have begun to deteriorate, so if the damaged trees are not harvested before July of 2014 most of the sawlog value will be lost.

The IDL Interdisciplinary Team - a cadre of water and wildlife biologists - worked with foresters in August to **ensure the harvesting activity protects water quality in streams and waterways** in the area.

What the public needs to know

Harvested area will be clearcut - Until the seedlings are planted and begin to grow, the 6,000 acres of state endowment trust land will look like a giant clearcut for a few years.

Hazards - Until the snow falls, parts of the area will still be smoldering. Also, trees are unstable so snags are falling to the ground and will continue to fall during the winter.

Roaming livestock - The fires burned many miles of fences, so until fencing can be replaced livestock will be wandering in the area.

Access - Forest closures may still be in place for the area.

Increased logging truck traffic - As much as 100 log trucks per day will be coming in and out of the mountains when harvesting is occurring in the area through the fall and winter, creating more traffic on local roads and the interstate.

Hunters - Hunting season started Sept. 1. Hunters planning to access the area need to be aware of these hazards, access restrictions, and traffic concerns. Visit <http://www.fishandgame.idaho.gov> for more details.

Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) - The granitic soils in the area are highly erosive. To prevent further erosion, all OHV travel must be confined to the existing open roads. No off road travel on the state endowment trust lands will be allowed.

Questions?

IDL Southwest Area Office, 208-334-3488

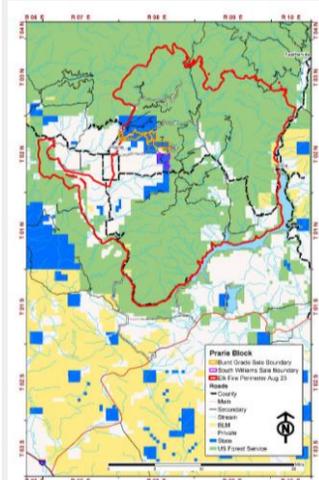
Emily Callihan, Public Information Officer,
208-334-0236

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IDL will be posting additional information in the communities of Prairie and Pine to inform nearby residents of the logging and reforestation plans



Burned trees to be salvaged. The Elk Complex Fire in Elmore County burned more than 131,000 acres, including thousands of acres of endowment trust land.



Map of the area affected by the Elk Complex Fire between the towns of Prairie and Pine. State endowment ownership shown in blue.

Fire in the Area

Four mega fires burned in the mountainous area east of Boise in August. The Elk Complex, Pony Complex, McCan, and widely publicized Beaver Creek fires burned a total of 415,000 acres within weeks during the month of August. All four fires started by lightning within a day of each other.

Most actively managed forests provide breaks in fuels to slow the growth of fires. However, the Elk Complex Fire burned so intensely due to dry conditions and 50 mile-per-hour winds that even the 6,000 acres of state endowment trust land that had been actively managed since the 1980s burned up.

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