



Low Intensity Fire Effects Seen Around Butt Lake Means a Green Forest for the Future



By Seneca Smith, Public Information Officer

As firefighters complete suppression repair around Butt Lake, they are taking note of the fire effects in the area. In the long-term, this area will benefit from results of low intensity fire that mimics how fire historically behaved in this forest.

Due to the deliberate burning techniques of firefighters, the fire that burned adjacent to the lake cleared the forest floor of the accumulation of dead and downed forest fuels and helped recycle nutrients to the soil. Most of the canopy remains green and wildlife is moving through the area. Some places did burn hotter, but this fire mosaic provides locations for sun-loving species to thrive.

There are areas with unnaturally high fire intensity as well. They make up approximately ten percent of the fire area.

The population of fir was somewhat reduced. They grew in unnaturally high numbers in the absence of naturally-occurring, low intensity fires. This forest will become less susceptible to dangerous fire in the future because firs' down sloping limbs act as a ladder that can carry fire from the forest floor to the canopy.

Preparation done by crews also helped the surrounding landscape. The thinning of the thicker, overpopulated vegetation along the road systems not only aided in buffering the fuel breaks, but opened up some views and allowed the larger trees to stay healthy by not having to compete for soil nutrients, water and sunlight.

Fire crews are also improving road conditions, stabilizing the soil, and removing fire-weakened trees along the road corridor. The fire did not enter the campgrounds.

Visitors to Butt Lake in upcoming years will see more wildflowers and plant biodiversity, which in turn nourishes wildlife. It will continue to be a popular recreation location.



the eastern shore, from the dam, and heading down to the lake along the road.

Photos courtesy of the US Forest Service.