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News Release

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Low-Intensity Fires Can Improve Forest Landscapes

SPRINGVILLE, Calif., June 12, 2017 – Over the past few weeks, nearly 400 acres of forest land have been treated with prescribed fire on the Western Divide Ranger District in Giant Sequoia National Monument, Sequoia National Forest. Last fall, approximately 9,000 acres were treated on the District by managing several lightning-caused fires for resource benefits.

Recent lands treated by prescribed fire include the popular Trail of 100 Giants, where hazardous dead trees had been cut down along the trail, piled and burned. Debris was also piled and burned around Upper Grouse Valley, where the District manages recreation rental cabins. Pile and understory burning was done around the community of Ponderosa, and along the boundary between the forest and the Tule River Indian Reservation.

Last fall's wildfires managed for resource benefits included the Slate, Hidden and Meadow fires where fire managers utilized a confine and contain strategy. Under the right conditions, a fire will consume woody materials on the ground, open up areas for regeneration, and return nutrients to the soil in the form of ash.

“Under appropriate conditions, low-intensity fires reduce the risks associated with high severity wildfire, reintroduce fire to the ecosystem, reduce unnatural fuel accumulations, and promote regeneration, leaving resilient forest structures. We allowed fire to burn through Long Meadow Grove last fall and now we are seeing giant sequoia seedlings sprout up on the forest floor,” stated District Ranger Eric LaPrice. Pictured are examples of prescribed and managed fire results, “We plan to treat additional acres this year if the opportunity presents itself.”

FS Photos Below

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Prescribed burning completed last week at Trail of 100 Giants to clean up some of the debris from felled hazard trees along the edge of the trail.



Before and after pictures of Long Meadow after the Meadow Fire burned through it last summer. The fire was allowed to burn through the adjacent Long Meadow Giant Sequoia Grove. This grove had not burned within the last 100 years.



The fire removed some of the ground fuels and opened the understory, and now giant sequoia seedlings are sprouting.



USFS contributed photos