

Three Trappers Restoration Underburn Project

November 2016

General Location:

The Three Trappers Project is located adjacent to the community of Yellow Pine, ID on the Cascade Ranger District of the Boise National Forest. The project area lies within the Johnson Creek Corridor (Yellow Pine). Yellow Pine is a National Fire Plan community, identified in the Federal Register, as a community at risk from wildfire.



Figure 1: Three Trapper Project

Introduction:

The Three Trappers project proposes to implement a series of prescribed burns to restore species composition and stand structure, reducing undesirable species and stand densities, while favoring retention of larger diameter more fire resistant trees throughout the project area. Fuel loads, ladder fuels, and stand densities would be reduced, decreasing the opportunity of crown fire development and improve the resiliency of affected stands should a wildfire ignition occur. In addition, activities occurring within the WUI would create or enhance defensible space for suppression resources should a wildfire threaten adjacent private properties. Restoring vegetative conditions more reflective of the fire-adapted ecosystem, reducing hazardous fuels, and minimizing risks to public health and safety would allow for safe and effective management of wildfire in the urban environment and meet the intent of several goals identified in the National Fire and the Comprehensive Strategy.

The Boise National Forest step-down process for delineating the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) zone was used to delineate the (WUI) boundaries by using a scale radius of 0.5 mile and then out to 1.5 miles using steps 1 through 4 of the step-down process.

Project Location:

The proposed Three Trappers project covers approximately 2,290 acres in Management Area 21 (Lower Johnson Creek) within the Wardenhoff-Bear Subwatershed. Three Trappers also include 700 acres in Management Area 20 (Upper Johnson Creek) within two watersheds: Trapper Creek and Burnt Log Subwatersheds on the Cascade Ranger District, Boise National Forest. Legal location for the proposed activities are Township 17N, Range 8E, Sections 4, 5, 8, and 9 Township 18N Range 8E Section 28, 29, 32, and 33 on the Cascade Ranger District Boise National Forest within Valley County.

Of the 2,990 acre project area, 1,089 area falls within the WUI delineation. The remaining 1,902 acres consist of one large area (Trapper Creek) although outside of the WUI boundary, the overall objectives of the project are similar for WUI and non-WUI, no distinction will be made during analysis between the two areas. The project area encompasses two prescribed burn units within the larger planning area; the Trapper Creek drainage defined by natural features such as Trapper Creek located on the north boundary, The YellowPine power line corridor on the west boundary and Forest Service road 440 (Thunder Mountain Road) located along the south boundary and proceeding east following FS road 440 until intersecting with Trapper Creek. The second unit consist of Moose/Bear and Hansen Creeks defined by natural features such as Bear Creek on the south boundary, The Yellow Pine power line corridor west boundary. Hansen Creek located on the north boundary, and the east boundary will consists of a ridgeline running north and south of Moose, Bear, and Hansen Creeks.

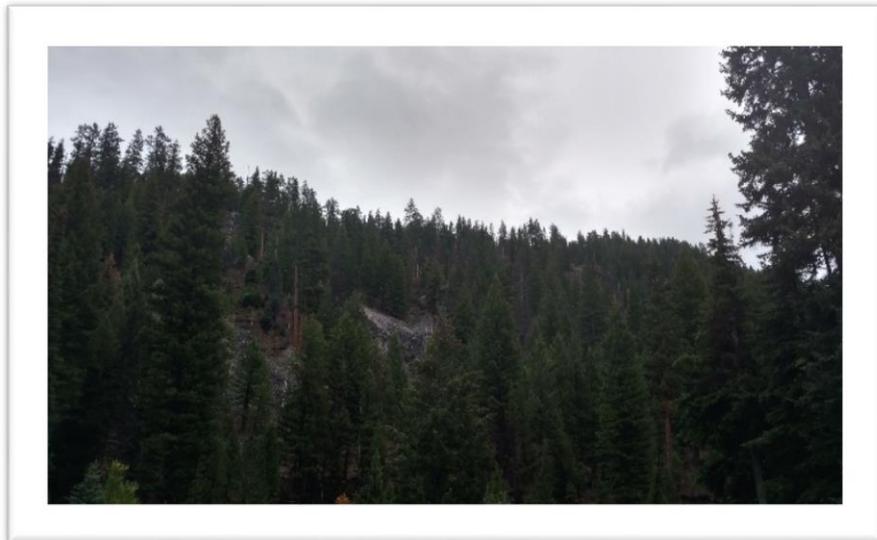


Figure 1 View of Hansen, Moose, and Bear creeks from Wapiti Ranch

Purpose and Need:

The purpose of this project is to reduce the hazardous fuels and risk of a crown fire spread within the wildland-urban interface along with the natural fuels accumulation with the Wardenhoff-Bear, Trapper Creek and Burntlog Subwatersheds and the Meadow Creek Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA). The current stand condition can be described as having high surface fuel loading, continuous dense overstory canopy that are conducive to high intensity fires, spotting, crown fire initiation and crown fire spread. There is a need to reduce dense pockets of regeneration within some stands that have produced a multi-storied canopy which could facilitate crown fire should an ignition occur.

Across the Project area, there is a need to manage forest structure and species composition to accelerate the development of large tree size class by early seral tree species that will contribute to achievement of the forest Plan Goals and Objectives.

Proposed Action:

The proposed action would apply a low to moderate intensity prescribed fire over 45% to 80% of the project area by using aerial ignitions with Plastic Sphere Dispensers (PSD) as the primary means of ignition, while leaving a mosaic pattern of burned and unburned vegetation, targeting the dead and downed woody material along green trees in the seedling/sapling sizes classes.

Hand ignition utilizing drip torches will occur along portion of the handlines to help secure portion of the control lines. Ignition will not occur within any RCAs or outside the prescribed fire boundaries. However, fire would be allowed to back into both the RCAs and project boundaries.

Relationship of this Project to the 2010 Forest Plan:

The Boise Forest Plan (USDA Forest Service 2010b, Chapter 3) describes location-specific management direction in terms of Management Areas and Management Prescription Categories (MPCs). MPC direction provides the framework for the type of tools (e.g. mechanical vegetation treatments, prescribed fire, etc.) that may be used to accomplish overall management objectives and emphasis. The project is located in the Upper and Lower Johns Creek, Management Area 20 & 21. The majority of the 2,990 acre project area is within MPC: 5.1 as described below:

Management Area 20

- *MPC 3.1 Passive Restoration and Maintenance of Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Watershed Resources*

Management Area 21

- *MPC 5.1 Restoration and Maintenance, Emphasis within Forested Landscapes.*
- *MPC 3.2 Active Restoration and Maintenance of Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Watershed Resources.*

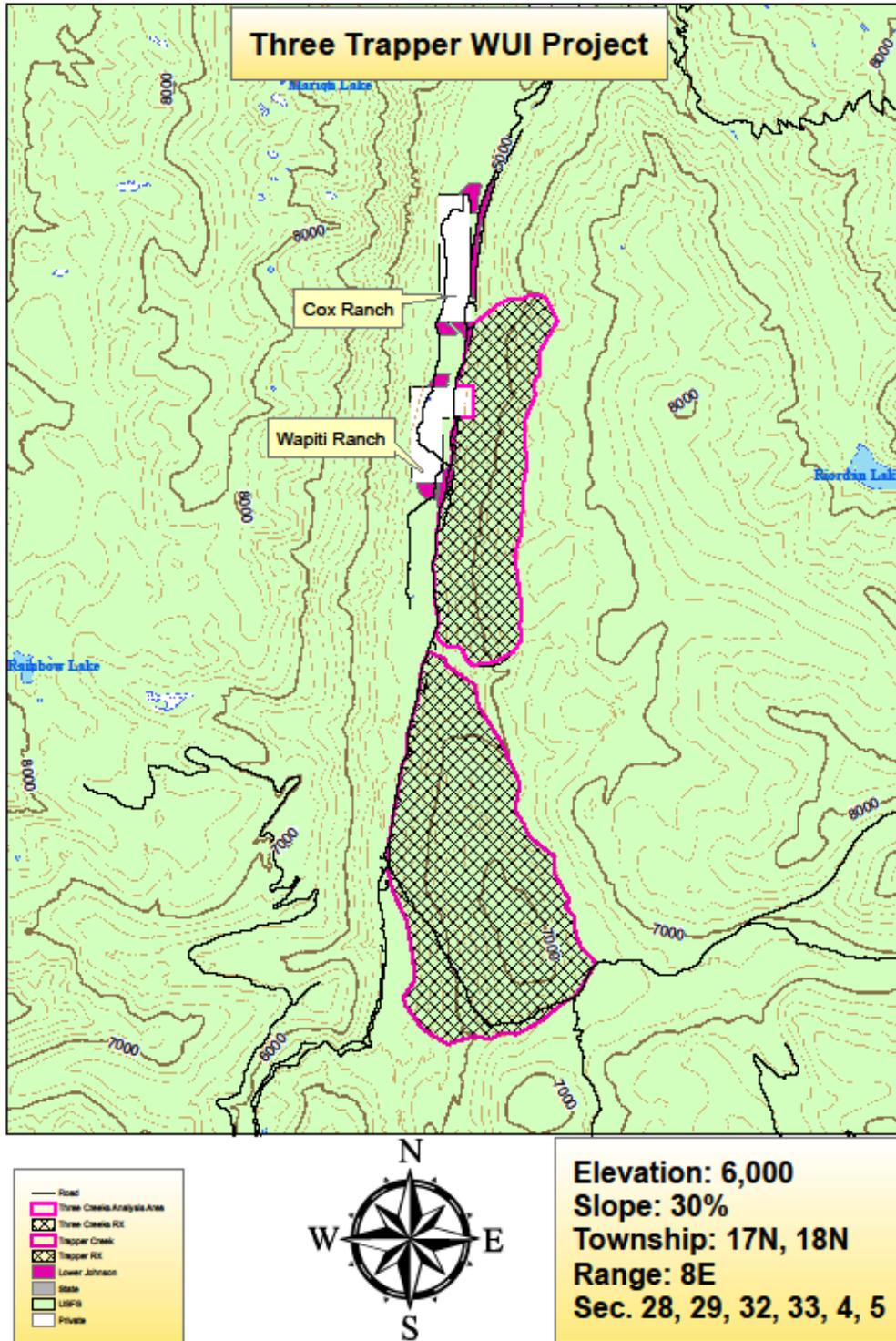


Figure 3: Three Trappers WUI Project Area

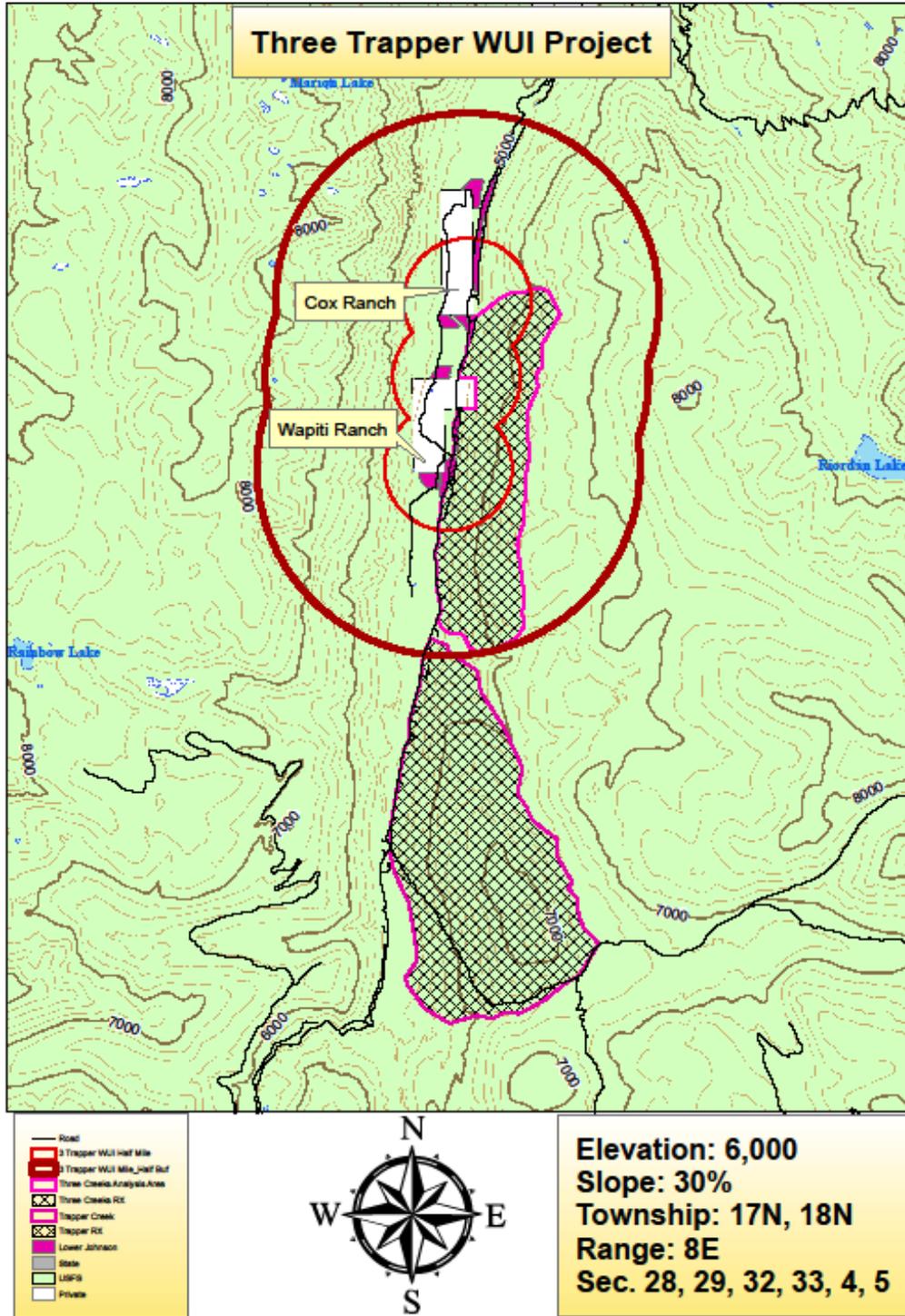


Figure 4: Three Trappers WUI Delineation