

# Hydromulching to protect areas near King Fire

Hydromulching 1,200 acres of the King Fire terrain will begin this week in the Eldorado National Forest.

The goal is to protect areas from severe post-fire erosion that may occur with winter storms. The infrastructure at risk includes Eleven Pines Road, which serves as the primary route from Highway 50 to the northern end of the Eldorado National Forest, and the Brush Creek and Slab Creek reservoirs, which are integral to SMUD's hydroelectric facilities in the Sierra Nevada.

The project should take two weeks to complete, but the actual timeframe will be weather dependent.

Bradco Environmental, a company based in Crestline, will do the work.

Large bales of certified weed free straw, a byproduct of rice grown in California, will be loaded into horizontal grinders which will chop the straw into 4 to 8 inch pieces of mulch prior to aerial application. Two medium sized helicopters will be used to drop the mulch onto slopes ranging from 15 to 60 percent grade, treating approximately 80 acres per day with each helicopter.

The King Fire started Sept. 13 by a suspected arsonist in Pollock Pines. It burned 97,717 acres. Twelve houses were destroyed and 68 outbuildings were lost.