

King Fire burn area being reforested



Crews from Sierra Nevada Forestry Service planting seedlings. Photo/D. Walsh/USFS

Crews spent hours last week manually replanting 324 acres in Eldorado National Forest burned in the King Fire last fall.

The seedlings currently being planted will re-establish plantations in units that were previously planted after timber harvests in the early 1990s, as well as units planted after the 1986 Hale Fire, and other units that were planted as part of a soil study in 1992. These plantations all burned severely in the King Fire, leading to greater than 90 percent tree mortality. Replanting conifers during the first spring after a fire is advantageous because trees can get established before competing vegetation recaptures the site which increases the chances of seedling survival, according to U.S. Forest Service officials.

The young trees being planted are from a diverse stock of species native to the Sierra Nevada – ponderosa pine, sugar pine, and white fir.

The trees in the current plantation re-establishment project

are being planted in low-density groups with wide spacing between the groups.

Up to 12,081 additional acres may be planted after the King Fire Restoration Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is completed. This hazard tree removal project will remove dead, dying, and other trees that present a hazardous condition to campgrounds damaged during the King Fire.