

USFS approves South Shore thinning project

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit released the final decision last week for a forest thinning project that aims to reduce excess vegetation on 3,737 acres of National Forest lands on the south end of Lake Tahoe.

This project is designed to decrease the risk of wildland fires and should complement defensible space treatments implemented by local municipal fire districts on adjacent non-federal lands.

Treatments include forest thinning using hand and mechanical methods, cable yarding and prescribed fire operations involving pile and understory burning. Tree planting will occur in some areas to promote tree species or forest structure diversity. Treatments will take place in areas primarily thinned within the past 15-25 years and in some areas that will be treated for the first time.

In addition to possible short-term impacts to recreational areas, thinning projects change the appearance of our forests. Treated areas may look disturbed at first, but recover visually within a few years and provide for a healthier, more resilient forest over time.

Work could begin this year and may take approximately 10 years to complete, depending on funding and conditions.