

## **CASE MOUNTAIN VEGETATION TREATMENT: WHAT CAN WE DO TO PROTECT OUR GIANT SEQUOIAS? (2B)**

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BLM would like to modify biomass conditions in the vicinity of our Case Mountain giant sequoia groves.

We expect that this will promote tree health and to help protect the groves from catastrophic fires, the potential for which is expected to increase as a result of climate change. Current fuel loads are high due to the alteration of forest structure from logging and because of recent changes in fire cycles, partially a consequence of historical fire suppression paradigms. To modify the fire potential of this area, we must remove excess biomass (fuels) from the surrounding forest and in the areas downslope from the groves.

There are a number of logistical, environmental, and social issues that come into play. Access roads are limited, steep, narrow, and closed for part of the year. In addition, any significant truck traffic would negatively impact the nearby community of Three Rivers, as well as visitors to the National Park.

Because of the remoteness of the site, the costs of removing biomass are prohibitive and only a small fraction could be utilized as commercial products. In addition, Case Mountain has a lot of steep terrain and is partially within a wilderness study area, thus, limiting treatment options. Potential solutions include small scale projects, such as the harvest of forest products for horticultural markets, to large scale operations such as commercial thinning. Newer methods such as disposing of biomass via curtain burners or by the conversion to biochar may be possible. We are open to any and all suggestions.

Key words: Sequoia, biomass, fire, fuel