

Fuel Management Methods and Equipment

Mechanical

Motorized heavy machinery is mounted with various mowing, mulching, and masticating heads for larger scale vegetation removal projects and cyclical maintenance tasks. There are two main types of mechanical treatment methods:

- 1) Mechanical thinning/whole-tree harvest: Individual trees are directionally felled using a mechanical cutting head attached to a tractor or similar unit.
- 2) Mastication: A mastication head attached to an excavator or similar machine is used to chip or shred ladder fuels.

Mechanical fuel reduction treatments are completed using heavy, diesel-powered equipment, including excavators, backhoes, skidsteers, tracked chippers, mowers and tractors. Under the WRMP, mechanical equipment can only be used in areas with a slope of up to 35 percent.



Hand Thinning

Hand tools may be used for fuel management tasks such as thinning stands of small-diameter trees and shrubs. Non-powered hand tools used for cutting are most commonly loppers, hand pruners, hand saws, and hatchets. Common powered hand tools include chainsaws and brush cutters. Push mowers and weed-whips are also used. Under the WRMP, hand tools may be used in areas with up to an 80 percent slope.



Prescribed Burn

Prescribed burn involves the burning of ladder fuels in a predetermined area under the supervision of trained fire personnel. General types of equipment include fire engines of different sizes, fire hose, hand tools, chainsaws, and drip torches or other approved ignition devices. In some cases, contingency equipment may include a plow, small bobcat, or bulldozer.

