

## Fuel Treatment Evaluator

### A New Strategic Tool to Identify Hazardous Fuel Reduction Opportunities

#### What Is The Issue?

Over the last 100 years, natural fire cycles have been altered across large areas of the West, changing the vegetative character of fire-adapted ecosystems and increasing wildland fire risk and hazard. The Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) is focused on reducing hazardous fuels and restoring ecosystem health and fire-cycles to historical patterns. The large number of acres needing treatment and the associated costs of such efforts point to the need for an efficient and effective means of identifying potential treatment areas.

#### What Does The Tool Do?

Forest Service scientists developed a new web-based tool called the Fuel Treatment Evaluator (FTE) that uses Forest Inventory and Analysis data to identify, at a regional planning scale, where the greatest hazardous fuel reduction opportunities lie.

The FTE will:

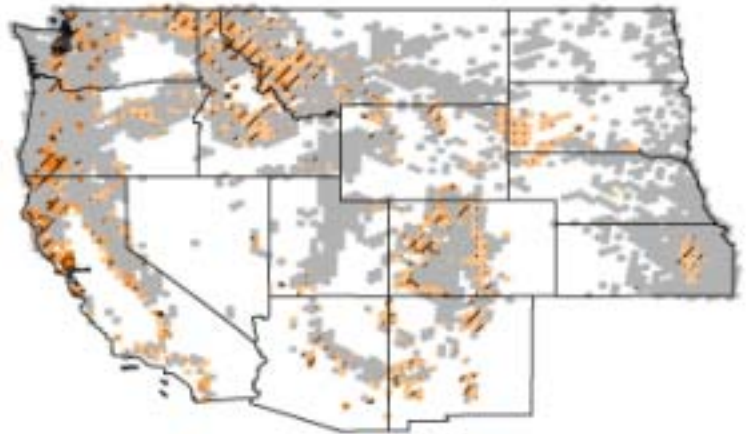
- Identify forest areas that need thinning,
- Identify forest areas that have departed from historic natural fire regimes,
- Identify forest areas in the wildland urban interface,
- Display the effects of alternative silvicultural treatments, and
- Evaluate silvicultural treatments by acres, biomass yields, value, and characteristics such as crown height and density that affect fire behavior.

#### How It Could Help?

Currently, the FTE can identify areas in greatest need of fuel reduction treatments throughout the western United States in close proximity to communities. The example here was generated from an FTE analysis and converted for display as a map.

- The shaded areas indicate existing productive forests.
- The orange indicates forests within the wildland urban interface that have departed significantly from historic natural fire regimes -- the darker the orange, the greater the quantity of existing biomass there.
- The crosshatched areas indicate the biological potential for biomass removal – the heavier the crosshatching, the greater the quantity of wood that could be removed.

This analysis shows opportunity for treatment, not necessarily feasible locations for project implementation.



This FTE-generated map highlights hazardous fuel reduction opportunities across 32 million acres with a potential to yield 724 million dry tons of biomass. Of these opportunities, 59% are on National Forest lands. (For best view of the map, view this document at 150%.)

## **Take It For A Test Drive**

This strategic tool continues to evolve and develop and is best suited for analysis at the state or regional level. For further information, contact one of the following researchers to learn more about the Fuel Treatment Evaluator and get a hands-on demonstration of the software and database capabilities. Additional information is available on the web at

<http://www.ncrs.fs.fed.us/4801/hot-topics/bio-fuel-reduction/FTEbrief.pdf>

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