

Lodge Fire Progression & Effects

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U.S. Bureau of Land
Management

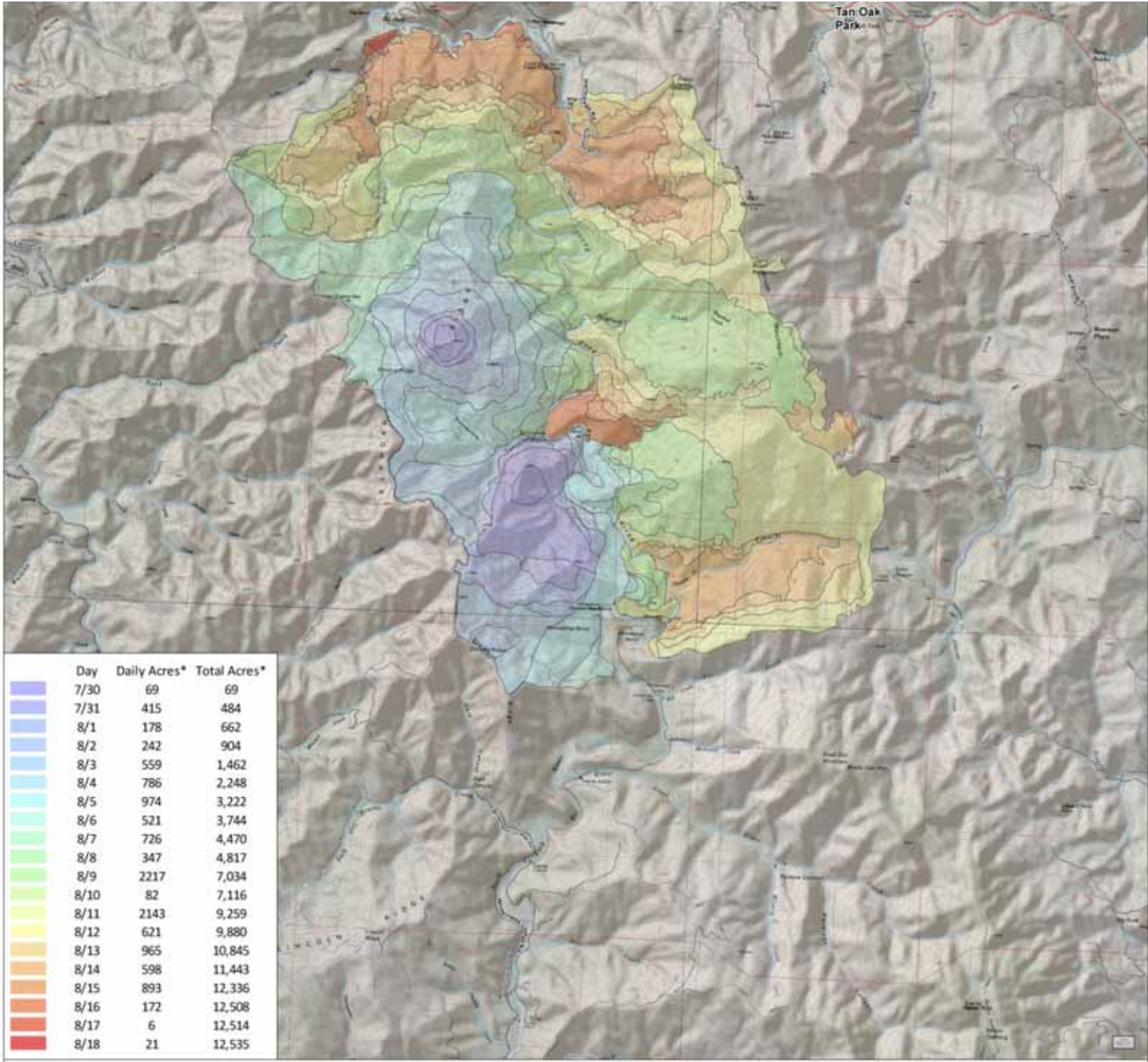
Arcata Filed Office Fire
Manager

- Power Point assembled from slides presented on October 4, 2014 at Laytonville and from transcript of meeting by ERRP.

- At left: South Fork Eel River adjacent to BLM Elkhorn Wilderness during Lodge Fire.**

Lodge Fire Facts

- Fire started on July 30 and BLM and CALFIRE had surveyed the area by helicopter within 24 hours of its start.
- BLM Arcata contacted the State BLM Office and got permission to bulldoze fire breaks inside Wilderness Areas as long as erosion potential was completely mitigated after the fire was suppressed.
- Resources were too scarce and terrain too steep for aggressive initial attack.
- Fire lines were created at outer perimeter of fire to prevent its spread into communities.
- Priorities on fire for BLM are prevent injury or loss of life, protect property, and protect resource values of Wilderness.



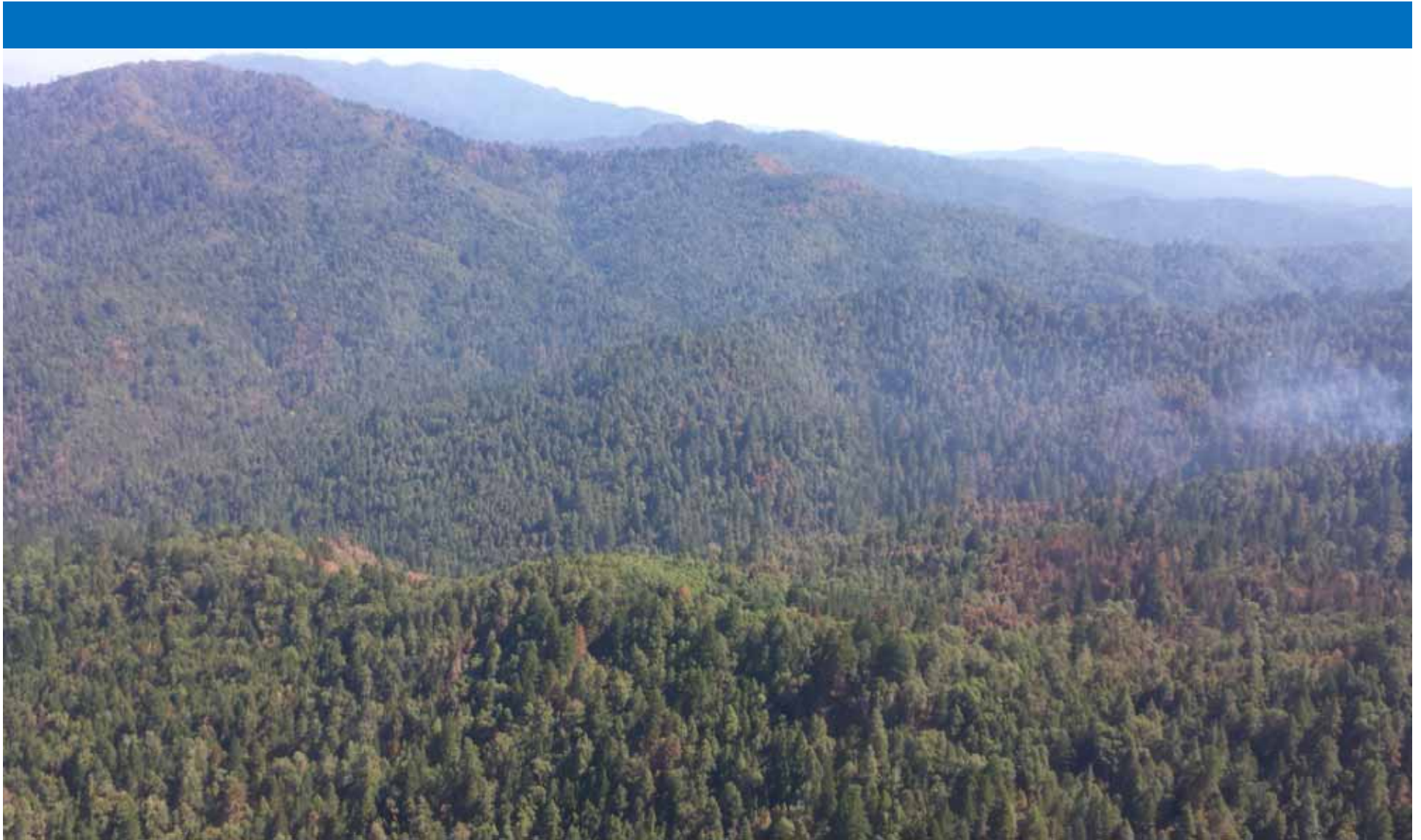
Final Fire Progression Map



Lodge Fire started burning on ridges as a result of lightening strikes west of Laytonville on July 31, 2014. Red color of trees is as a result of their being doused with fire retardant, which does not necessarily kill them.



View of Lodge Fire burning on ridge tops in the Elkhorn Wilderness on the upper South Fork Eel River on 8/1. The area gets its name from the topographic resemblance of the ridge to elk antlers. The terrain is extremely steep, which makes fire fighting difficult and dangerous.



The Lodge Fire smoldered north on Elkhorn Ridge until August 1, when the fire began a run. Brown trees are damaged by the fire, but most of the burn was along the ground except during short periods.



By August 6, the Lodge Fire had grown to 3,527 acres, and was only 15% contained. The two major fire areas along Elkhorn Ridge converged and the fire began to move east.



. From August 7th through the 9th, the two major areas of fire converged and made a major run. Wind conditions picked up and a very hot fire swept out of Hog Shed Creek.



Lodge Fire as seen from high altitude from a distance on August 8.



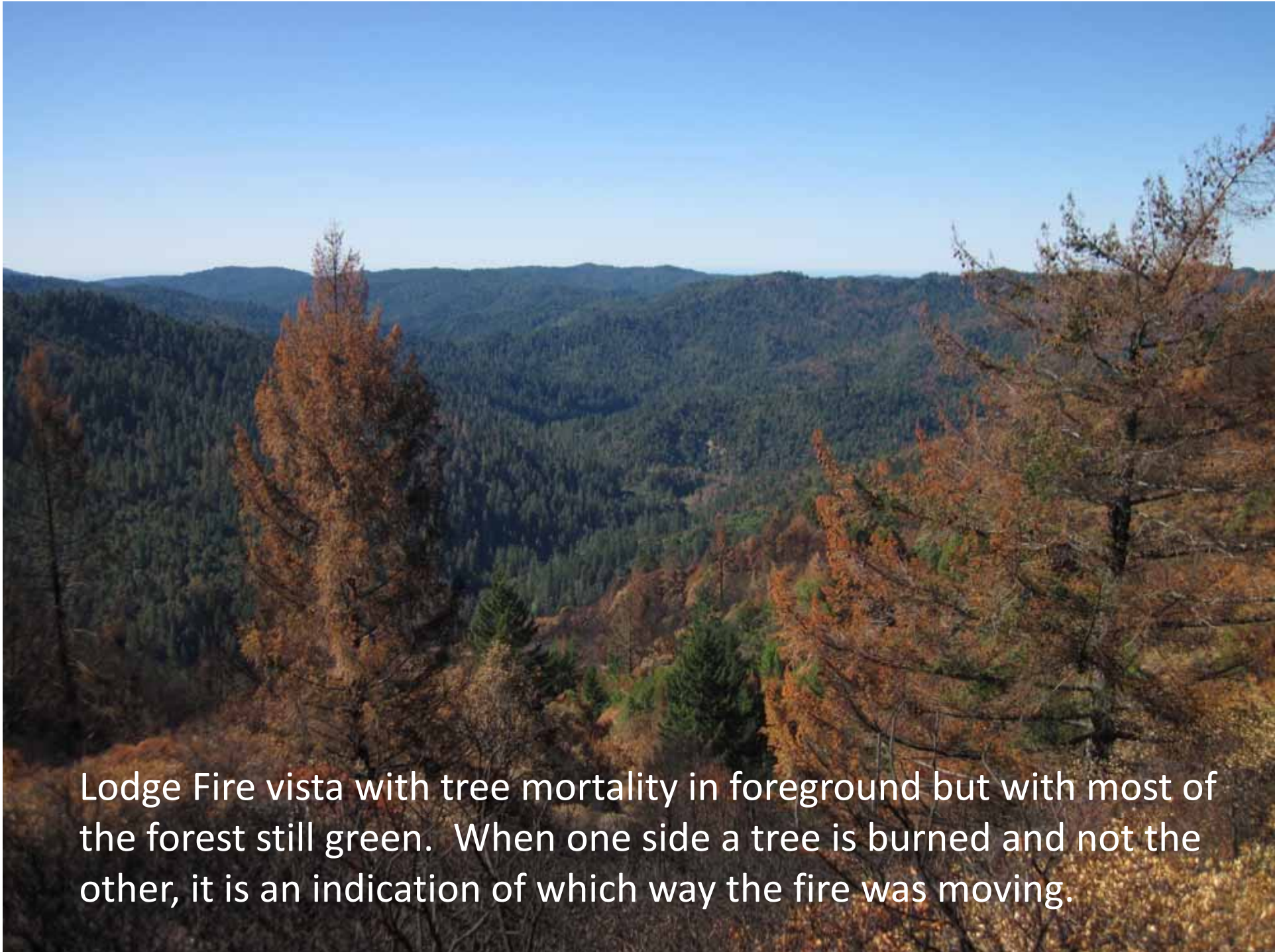
Closer view of Lodge Fire making a run in the upper South Fork Eel River watershed with Highway 101 in view on the left.



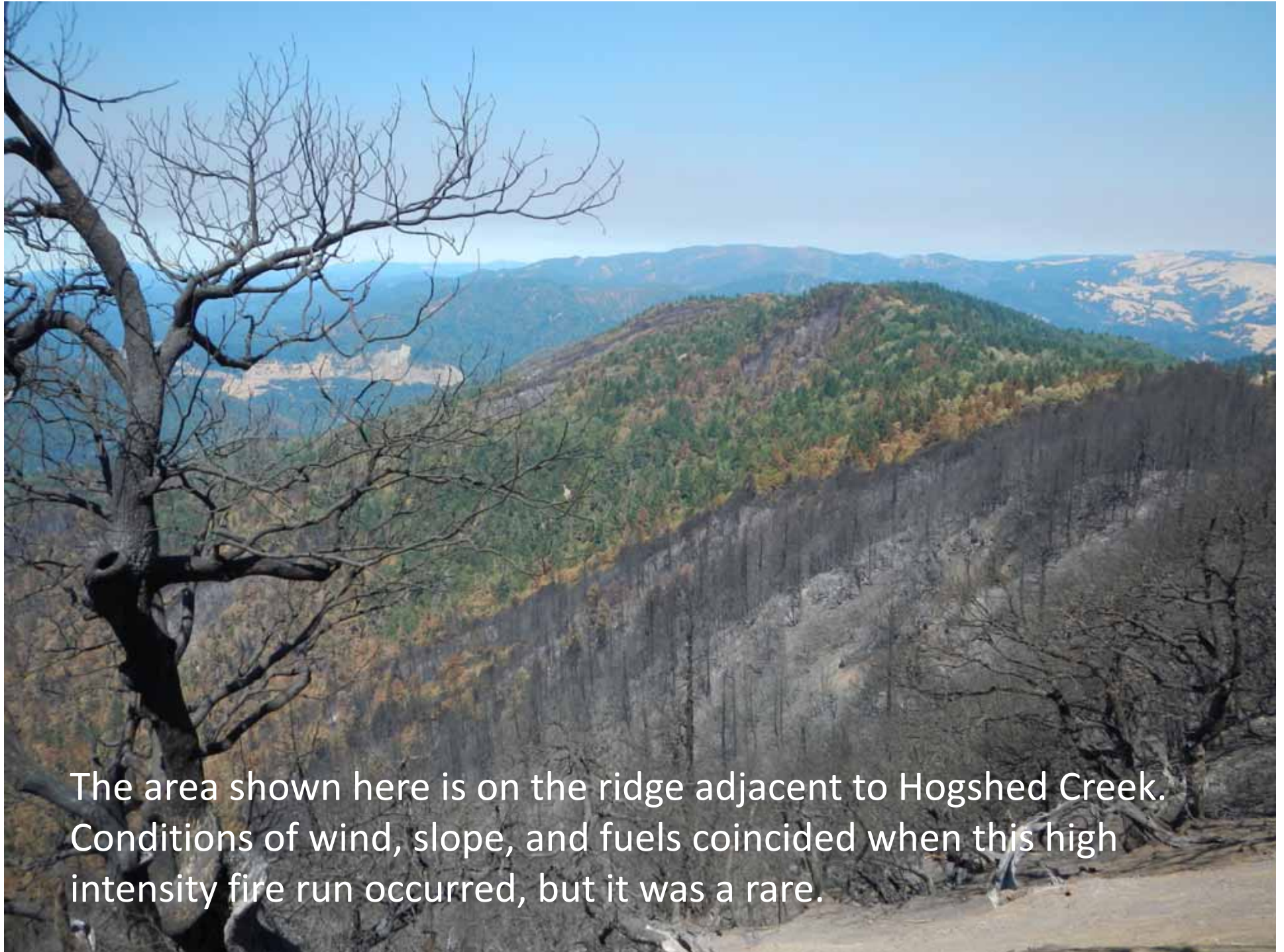
Lodge Fire expanding on August 8. Note plane dropping fire retardant (orange cloud).



The Lodge Fire eventually expanded to just over 12,000 acres, but tree mortality was low. Extreme drought conditions lead to expectations that there would be extensive areas with stand replacing intensity. Instead it burned mostly with low intensity and along the ground.

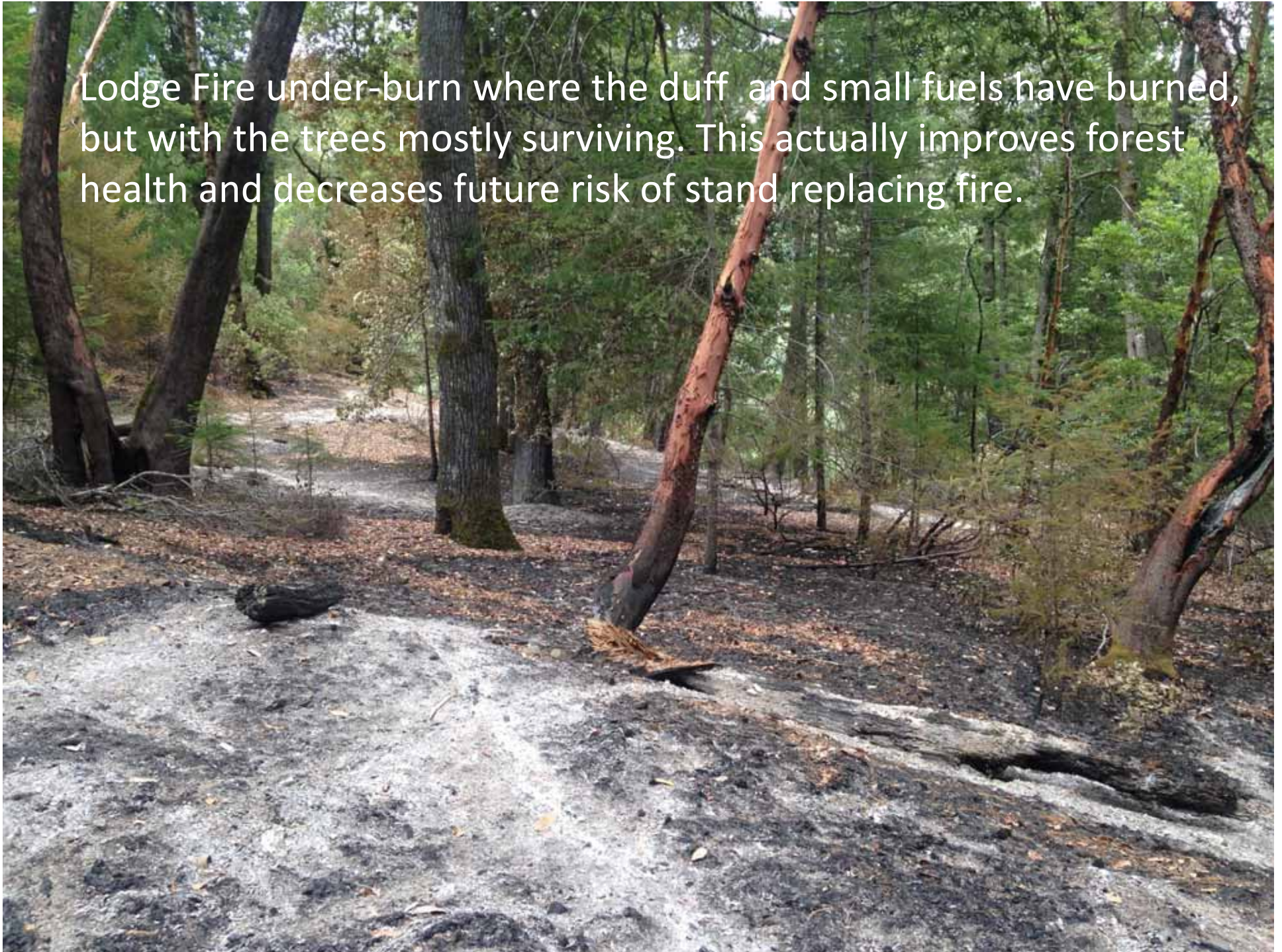


Lodge Fire vista with tree mortality in foreground but with most of the forest still green. When one side a tree is burned and not the other, it is an indication of which way the fire was moving.



The area shown here is on the ridge adjacent to Hogshed Creek. Conditions of wind, slope, and fuels coincided when this high intensity fire run occurred, but it was a rare.

Lodge Fire under-burn where the duff and small fuels have burned, but with the trees mostly surviving. This actually improves forest health and decreases future risk of stand replacing fire.





Lodge Fire at another location where duff burned but small fuels were not all consumed by the ground fire and the trees remained alive.

Lodge Fire in an area of high intensity where the fire burned through chaparral.





Lodge Fire in high intensity burn area in chaparral near a ridge (I). Manzanita actually sprouts after fire, so the community is resilient (see below).





Areas of brush or chaparral near ridges have frequent fire cycles and burns are very hot, which is a natural recurring cycle.



Lodge Fire hotspot on a ridge with tree mortality immediately adjacent, but less mortality of trees down-slope.



Lodge Fire bulldozer line at the fire perimeter along the ridge. Area of high intensity burn is apparent at the center of the photo down from the ridge.

Conclusion

- Over all the Lodge Fire burned with low intensity and caused very low tree mortality.
- The net effect is an improvement of forest health in the BLM Wilderness areas and on adjacent private land.
- Short term risk of catastrophic fire in the future is, therefore, substantially reduced.
- Working relationship between BLM and CALFIRE was exceptionally good on both fire suppression and remediation efforts.