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(Neb.)-Forest Service Releases Plans For Replanting Burn Areas



By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 04/22/2013 08:44 AM

(Chadron)-The US Forest Service released scoping documents today regarding a three-year reforestation project on the Pine Ridge Ranger District to plant ponderosa pine seedlings within two areas burned by last summer's unprecedented wildfires. Planting will be done on the Nebraska National Forests & Grasslands (NNFG) near Round Top, approximately 11 miles north of Crawford, and in Roberts Tract, approximately 17 miles southwest of Chadron.

John Lee, Forester for the Pine Ridge Ranger District said that approximately 25,000 acres of the Pine Ridge Ranger District burned during the 2012 fire season, which included large amounts of ponderosa pine. He said large tracts of pine forest are now "black forests" or totally burned, and the fire scorched so hot that trees cannot regenerate naturally, and that replanting is the only way to achieve reforestation.

Lee said that approximately 40,000 ponderosa pine seedlings will be planted this year with hopes that up to 200,000 more seedlings will be planted each of the next two years. Their goal is to plant 200 to 300 seedlings per acre for both the Round Top and Roberts Tract reforestation projects, so they may have trees for the next 100 years on that landscape. According to Lee, they will plant strategically to improve seedling survival, by placing trees where they have natural shade, and placing some in small groups to create future micro-climate seedling sites.

People who have questions may call Lee at [308-432-0300](tel:308-432-0300) or email him at johnklee@fs.fed.us. The scoping period is open for 30 days, or until Saturday, May 11, and people are invited to comment. Interested persons may stop by the Pine Ridge Ranger District office to view maps and information from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday at 125 N. Main Street in Chadron.

(Story courtesy of Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands)