

University of Arizona Cooperative Extension RREA Program

RREA funds received for FY2004 = \$73,494

Fighting Fires, Beetles and Drought with Education



Arizona is facing an unprecedented drought leading to a bark beetle epidemic that may cause 50-80% mortality in some pine forests. The combination of dead trees, dense undergrowth and drought is a recipe for devastating forest fires affecting homeowners, recreationists, land managers and wildlife. Cooperative Extension became a reliable source of forest health information and a partner with cities, towns, county, and land management agencies. In 2004 we informed walk-in clients and phone callers, conducted site visits, and held more than 60 forest health workshops, including Firewise training. We produced 13 publications, one video/DVD and two new web sites: <http://cals.arizona.edu/extension/fh/> and <http://cals.arizona.edu/firewise/>. The University of Arizona sponsored the 2004 National Forest Health Monitoring Workshop. As a result, Arizona residents better understand the ongoing challenge of managing drought-ravaged forests. Forest owners learned how to become better land stewards and to accept bark beetles as part of the local ecosystem. Many homeowners took steps to increase their property's fire-safety. As awareness increased, recommendations came before the governor of Arizona, new bills were introduced to fund control measures and educational programs, and the federal government was encouraged to fund removal of trees impacted by bark-beetles.



Improving Range Management on Public Lands



Approximately 86% of Arizona's surface area is rangeland, providing vegetation suitable for grazing animals. Variation in seasonal precipitation and temperature, soil characteristics and topography contribute to a great diversity of plants and animals. Rangelands are largely managed under the auspices of federal and state agencies, but many are leased to private ranchers. RREA funds research and education on resource planning methods, analysis procedures, and vegetation monitoring techniques, furnishing the ecological and technical basis for rangeland management planning and interpretation of inventory and monitoring data. We offered rangeland monitoring workshops and field days, participated on state-level task groups and committees, and developed electronic education modules. Land managers and ranchers increased monitoring skills and ecological knowledge.

Participants at Range Monitoring and Inventory Programs said:

- "One thing I will do as a result of this workshop is to keep better utilization records and tie them to precipitation data."
- "This workshop had a very good mix of ranchers and still a very professional adherence to professional standards."
- "One thing I learned during the workshop was how to monitor the right way."

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