

A Century of Change in a Ponderosa Pine Forest

These photos, taken from the same point, show how ponderosa pine forests change from fire exclusion and harvesting. Between 1600 – 1895, low-intensity fires burned this area every 3 – 30 years. No fires have occurred since 1895, causing denser forests, with more Douglas-fir trees than ponderosa pine trees.



About half of the large ponderosa pines were harvested before this photo.



Open conditions and no fire allowed small trees to develop after harvest.



About a third of remaining large pines were cut in the 1950s, including the tree in the foreground (arrow).



10 years after the 2nd harvest, seedlings have established.



31 years after the 2nd harvest, the stand is dense and has more Douglas-fir trees than ponderosa pine trees.



Some trees in foreground were cut in 2014, but 57 years after the 2nd harvest Douglas-fir trees still dominate the stand.

For more information visit: <https://www.firelab.org/project/century-change-ponderosa-pine-forest>

Forest Service Research & Development
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