



The Cedar Fire burned across almost the entire Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. Conifer mortality in the park was extremely high (>95%) due to the fire severity and high temperatures. The conifer seed bank was destroyed and the forest was not recovering.



The Mixed Conifer Forest provides habitat for protected species such as California spotted owl and the purple martin, which were in the park prior to the fire. Restoration will benefit other more common species such as mule deer and mountain lions.

- ◆ Over the course of its lifetime, one mature conifer may produce 300 cones per year, 300 seeds per cone, and live for 300 years. That's 27 million seeds! Yet, only one seed needs to survive to replace the mature conifer when it dies.
- ◆ In the natural environment, very few seedlings survive.
- ◆ During the past two years our seedlings have had an approximately 70% survival rate, and in some places, as high as 94%.



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www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=667

or

California Dept. of Parks & Recreation

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Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Reforestation Project

Restoring a Vanishing Habitat



**Cedar Fire at
Cuyamaca Rancho State Park
October 2003**



The 2003 Cedar Fire was the largest fire in California's recorded history. It claimed 14 lives, burned 270,686 acres, and destroyed 2,232 homes, before it could be extinguished.

Between 2002 and 2007, over 51% of the montane Mixed Conifer Forest in San Diego County was burned by wildfire, most of it in high intensity fires like at Cuyamaca.

Prior to the fire, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park contained almost 20% of the montane Mixed Conifer Forest habitat in San Diego County.



In some areas, temporarily cutting back brush and using prescribed burns is needed to allow for the establishment of new seedlings. Approximately 1,700 acres or 7% of the 24,768 acre park will require some site preparation.

The Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Mixed Conifer Forest Restoration will:

- ◆ **Help restore regional biodiversity.** Mixed conifer forest has been reduced to less than 4% of rural San Diego County.
- ◆ **Restore the mosaic of native plant communities, birds, and mammals** historically found in the park.



The project consists of planting 2,530 acres of former forest lands in a series of plots that will become centers for seed dispersal, and are expected to restore the larger conifer forest.

Benefits:

- ◆ **Protect water quality and the watershed.** Lake Cuyamaca and the Sweetwater River provide drinking water for suburban San Diego.
- ◆ **Enhance recreation**, such as camping, hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking. Before the Cedar Fire Cuyamaca was the largest forested public park in San Diego County.
- ◆ **Moderate the pace of climate change** by restoring a forest that absorbs atmospheric carbon.