

# Appendix 9A

## El Portal Prescribed Burn Rotation Plan & Elderberry Plants

Prescribed Burns have been conducted in the El Portal area of Yosemite National Park since at least 1992. The burns are conducted to establish fuelbreaks to protect the structures located in El Portal, which is situated on the north side of the Merced River in a steep canyon west of Yosemite Valley. This canyon is extremely fire-prone due to the light flashy fuels and steep slopes. Unwanted wildland fires are inevitable; so it is necessary to provide some defensible space for residents in El Portal. Fuels are largely grass with some scattered to dense stands of shrubs, along with oak and grey pine. Along the river, vegetation can be quite dense, with a mixture of the above vegetation types along with blackberry vines, poison oak, and assorted deciduous tree species.

There is one Federal threatened species located in the El Portal area, the elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB). It resides in elderberry bushes, with stems that are approximately 1" DBH or greater. The beetle's presence is detectable through the presence of exit holes on the elderberry stems.

Approximately 160 elderberry bushes are located in the El Portal area (Acree 2002). EL Portal is divided up into 10 burn units with approximately 20 subsegments. During the November 2002 survey, it was determined approximately 134 plants were within the 20 burn unit segments.

From discussions between fire management and resource personnel, it has been concluded that not all of the elderberry bushes can be protected from damage during prescribed burns. It was also discussed that it may not be desirable to protect the elderberry bushes from fire, as it may not serve the long-term interests of the plant, and hence, the beetle. It was concluded that the burns must be done systematically. It is necessary to develop an operational and monitoring plan to provide the greatest amount of protection and sustainability for the elderberry longhorn beetle in El Portal.

Based on the elderberry plant populations detected during the November 2002 survey, the following burn segment rotation is proposed for El Portal (refer to map).

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Burn Unit</b>         |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1           | 4A West; 3A; 3B; 8A & 5B |
| 2           | 8B; 1A; 2B; & 10         |
| 3           | 1B; 4B; 9; & 2A          |
| 4           | 9A; 5A; 4C & 4A East*    |
| 5           | 7; 2C; 1C and 8C         |

\*Burn Unit 4A would not be burned if monitoring data from year 1 showed lack of elderberry recovery in 4A West. Burn would be postponed unless suitable adjacent elderberry are present.

Wherever possible, elderberry plants would be preserved and protected from fire. Elderberry plants with existing exit holes would be protected from fire. No elderberry bushes would be removed during fireline and fuelbreak construction.