



The Yacolt Burn: Washington State

Photos by Will Hamilton USFS

Above: September, 1902, the largest fire in recorded Washington State history destroyed over 238,000 acres on 128,000 acres of federal lands and 110,000 acres of state and private lands. The fire created a wasteland over 370 square miles and consumed 12 billion board feet of old growth timber

Fires continued to burn the region for the next 50 years. Between 1902 and 1952 there were 25 fires that exceeded 1,000 acres, many of these occurring within the original burn. With little if any restoration work on these burned lands, foresters knew it would take decades to rehabilitate naturally, if at all. Young seedlings were either burned over or choked out by dense brush.

Below: In 1933 the CCC began a massive reforestation effort through planting seedlings. By 2002, most of the state and private lands in the Yacolt were rehabilitated. The Yacolt rehabilitation project has proven that actively reforesting an area can be successful and, in the eyes of some, a miracle. The Yacolt area is now a functioning forest that provides important habitat for spotted owls and other wildlife.

