

Mount Laguna Forest's Health

From our visit to Mount Laguna National Forest and the photos that we captured, we can infer that the forest is in relatively good health. This is because there is noticeable new tree growth as well as a thriving abundance of tall grass, bushes and shrubbery. We also noticed that there is a large amount of lichen on both the rocks and trees in the forest, an attribute of good forest health. In a few photos, we have captured a dry creek or small river bed which alludes that there may have been the presence of water running through the area in the past. In 2013 there was a wildfire in the area and we can see evidence of possible smoke damage in the surrounding area.

From looking at our photos, we can infer that the condition of the forest is fair. There are older trees that are still thriving and there is also new growth. There were old fires that damaged the area, but the forest seems to be growing back. The dried up stream infers that the drought is potentially negatively affecting the area. There is an abundance of tall grass and other plant life on the forest floor which helps to show the health of the forest in the recent past.

Global Forest Watch tells us that there is some tree loss in the area, but not in the exact area of the Lagunas that we took pictures. Also the western pine beetle has killed or damaged some trees in the forest over the last 5 years as well as Heterobasidion (Annosus) Root Disease and Goldspotted Oak Borer. The Ponderosa and Jeffrey Pine are common pines in the area. Drought has severely impacted the area over the last couple of years based on the interactive map on the website foresthealth.gov.

Other sources that we looked at showed us that 82,528 trees (mostly Jeffrey pines) have succumbed to a lack of rainfall, with many more struggling to survive. This data was provided by Jeffrey Moore an interim aerial survey program manager for the U.S. Forest Service. From different websites we found that the most common trees that we saw weren't Incense Pine, Coulter Pines, Sugar Pines, Pinyon Pines, and Black Pines.

After looking at all the sources we came to the conclusion that this forest is being negatively affected by many beetles and diseases, but there is not a ton of significant tree loss compared to its neighbor the Cuyamaca State Park. The last major fire was in 1970 and it seems that the forest has regrown well since then. Overall, the forest seems to be fairly healthy with an abundance of life and good protection. Large amounts of dead wood and dry plants in combination with the beetles and some tree disease is the most significant concern for the forest as of right now. Hopefully in the future there will be more of an effort to help Mount Laguna thrive.

Work Cited

"Background." *Forest Health Advisory System*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Nov. 2016.

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