Introduction

>> My name is Sharon Hood.

I'm a research ecologist at the fire sciences lab in Missoula, Montana.

It's part of the Rocky Mountain Research Station.

What is your project

A project that I'm just now finishing up was originally designed

to examine how we can apply treatments in the forest to increase the resistance

to high severity wildfire so that more trees survive a fire.

What is unique about this project is that a mountain pine beetle outbreak began

Unique about your project

about five years after the treatments were implemented.

And this allows a very rare opportunity for us

to test how a fuels treatment originally designed for one purpose can also be effective

What are your findings

against another disturbance, in this case mountain pine beetle.

And what I found was that treatments that involve thinning

and burning created a very resilient Ponderosa pine forest

that had very little mortality from the mountain pine beetle.

It's really cool because it's very rare that we can actually test our treatment effectiveness.

So we put in treatments all the time in forest, but it's really rare that a wildfire comes

and challenges that treatment so we can say definitively if that treatment was effective.

It's an exciting opportunity because a lot of things aligned

and it shows the value of long-term research.

I hope, with this particular study, that it highlights how those treatments are going

to affect the forest overall so including climate change, responses to drought,

and other disturbances such as insects and disease.