



Mulching

Post-Fire Benefits of Mulch

The use of mulch (native materials, wood chips, straw, etc.) has been shown to support greater native species diversity over the long term and provides excellent erosion control over the short term. Mulch helps maintain moisture, adds nitrogen (wood chip mulch), and contributes to healthier soil structure. It also increases microbial mineralization of nitrogen, making more nutrients available to surviving vegetation.

Mulching is highly recommended as one of the most effective short-term erosion control techniques following a wildfire.

Types of Mulch and Recommendations

Many types of materials can be used as mulch:

Type	Recommendation	Application
Native materials (leaf litter, needles, and small wood debris)	Highly recommended	Leave downed leaves, needles, and woody material in place. This is the most effective short-term mulching method available.
Wood chips produced from on-site or near-by native materials	Highly recommended	Wood chips may be available locally from utility and road crews. Chipping slash or debris on-site is a good option. Apply at a rate for 40-60% total ground coverage.
Commercial wood chips	Moderate recommendation due to cost and logistics	Apply at 40-60% total ground coverage.
Certified weed-free straw	Moderate recommendation due to limited availability	Certified weed-free straw is expensive and difficult to source. Likely unavailable in 2020 following unprecedented wildfire season. Suggested stocking rate is 70 lbs/1,000 sq. ft. (about 43 bales per acre).
Wheat or other commercially available straw	Moderate recommendation due to potential introduction of invasive species. NOT recommended for use in riparian areas.	Use only on highly managed landscapes such as pasture, roadsides, or residential areas. Apply at a depth of 2 to 3 inches. Do not use in forested riparian areas due to potential to establish non-native grasses and weeds.

Resources

The Pure Water Partners (PWP) program is working to place mulch in riparian areas and other priority areas as part of an integrated approach to erosion management on private properties impacted by the Holiday Farm Fire. If you are interested in assistance with erosion control and riparian restoration, please sign up for a PWP site assessment by visiting www.purewaterpartners.org

Wood chips are available from Lane Forest Products, Rexius, and may be available from tree-removal services working with local utilities.