We classified this subplot as ‘phase 2’, in which trees and the understory were about equally dominant ecologically. Tree cover was about 24% in 2006, and rose slightly to 27% in 2016. No other component of the vegetation was as dominant, although the total cover of annual forbs and grasses combined was measured as high as 46% in 2016. Note also the green patch of annual forbs growing in the left foreground in 2009 – this patch contributed most of the 21.3% of annual forbs measured that year.

Throughout the sequence, shrubs are comprised of very small, stunted individuals scattered around on the right side of the scene, and consist of no more than 4% of ground cover at any time. Native perennial grasses were also stunted, although cover ranged as high as nearly 11% in 2016. Bare ground cover generally ranged above 80%, but dropped to just 74% in 2016, primarily due to high cover of annual grasses that year, mostly growing in the left foreground.

This sequence nicely illustrates the stasis one typically sees in control plots in which no trees have been removed, but continue to dominate the site, withdrawing much of the limited amount of water available for vegetation growth.