



Moab Division of Fire Management

Price Field Office, Moab Field Office, Monticello Field Office

For Immediate Release
July 16, 2008

Contact Info: Heather O'Hanlon
Phone: 435-259-2184
Email: hohanlon@blm.gov

BLM TO EXTEND RAY MESA FUELS REDUCTION PROJECT

Moab, Utah ... The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Moab Field Office is planning to implement fuel reduction and vegetative/habitat restoration projects within a 5,000-7,000 acre area of public lands administered by the BLM. The Ray Mesa II (Phase II) project area is approximately seven miles east of the town of La Sal, Utah, in San Juan County. The northernmost boundary of the project area would be adjacent to and surrounding private property along County Road 162 where there are privately-owned homes on varying acreages and future home sites within the "Woodlands at LaSal" subdivision.

Phase II is designed to enhance and extend the original Ray Mesa Wildland/Urban Interface Treatment Project (Phase I) that was implemented between 2004 and 2007. Phase I treatments included both manual and mechanical thinning, pile burning, and prescribed fire. Maintenance and monitoring activities have been ongoing in the Phase I area for the past few years, and monitoring results would be incorporated into the Phase II project.

The project would extend the WUI treatment to the south and west of homes and infrastructure, reducing hazardous fuels. The treatment plan would also target the reduction of closed canopy pinyon/juniper woodlands to modify wildfire behavior and restore grass understory for wildlife and livestock forage and habitat. Sagebrush meadows would be evaluated individually to determine the most effective method to improve or maintain the health and productivity of a given community. In addition, the treatment would involve the restoration and protection of one of southern Utah's remaining isolated ponderosa pine stands. Remnants of old-growth ponderosa forests persevere in several of the drainages near the mesa top, and reducing the number of encroaching pinyon/juniper trees and reintroducing understory fire is the recommended restoration approach to preserve this valuable resource.

The entire project area would be divided into treatment units with each unit averaging between 300-500 acres. Activities would be based on fuel reduction designs most likely to achieve project goals and objectives for a specific vegetative type.

For additional information contact Heather O'Hanlon@ 435-259-2184 or go to www.utahfireinfo.gov.

-###-