

Table of Contents

Oregon

New Publication to Give Ideas and Methods for National Fire Plan Projects..... 1

National Fire Plan Awards Excellence and Innovation in Southwest Oregon..... 1

Utah

Hazardous Fuels Projects and the Blue Spring Fire 2

Firewise Landscaping for Utah is Hot Off the Press..... 4

Spring Planning: Salt Lake Fuels and Fire Program Get Ready For Field Season..... 4

Wyoming

BLM Wyoming to implement Wildland Fire Use Program 5

Oregon

New Publication to Give Ideas and Methods for National Fire Plan Projects

The Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group (PNWCG) has issued a toolkit including success stories from Oregon and Washington National Fire Plan (NFP) projects. Within the pockets of the media kit folder, there are information sheets telling the stories of local Oregon and Washington projects or programs which advance the goals of the National Fire Plan.

With photos or diagrams, the information sheets include key points of each effort:

- Purpose
- Project Description
- Partners
- Accomplishments
- Investments, and
- Contact

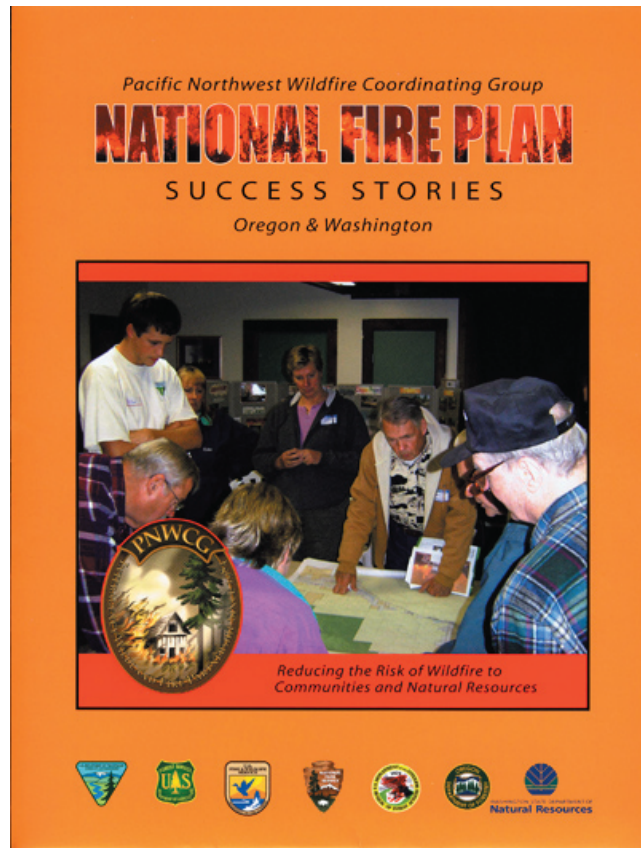
Copies of the kit are available through the member agencies: BLM Oregon State Office/US Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region Fire Management; US Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Region; National Park Service, Pacific West Region; Bureau of Indian Affairs Wildland Fire Management; Oregon Department of Forestry Protection from Fire Program; Washington Department of Natural Resources; Oregon Fire Chief's Association; and the Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs. More information on this and other happenings from the PNWCG, please visit the PNWCG homepage at <http://www.nwccweb.us/admin/nnwccg.asp>.

National Fire Plan Awards Excellence and Innovation in Southwest Oregon

Two Oregon nominees brought home awards at the National Fire Plan ceremony this year. The Klamath Falls Resource Area of the Lakeview District received the award for innovation in biomass utilization. The Medford District was recognized for excellence in meeting the challenges of restoring fire-adapted ecosystems.

The success of both of these projects depended on resource improvement, new technologies, cooperation with communities and partners, and advancements made in the National Fire Plan 10-Year Implementation Strategy. Invasive species reduction and ecosystem health were central to both projects, though the situations and goals varied.

The biomass utilization project included several partners in treating juniper encroachment and using the wood fiber



The media toolkit issued by PNWCG will be a big help to communities.

for hardboard manufacturing. The Resource Area worked with clients to develop a market for the use of juniper. The materials provided product and work for a sawlog plant, hardboard manufacturing, and other commercial activity. Partners included REACH, a western juniper sawlog processor; Collins Products, a secondary exterior hardboard manufacturer; Timber Resource Services, an adjacent landowner; and Quicksilver Contracting, the successful bidder on a stewardship contract. Quicksilver has sought several market avenues for this woody biomass.

In the Medford District, the fire program was hit with severe and high-profile fires in 2002. Four specific Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation projects were completed in 2005, after massive outreach and planning. The Biscuit, Timbered



Medford District's Tom Murphy received an NFP award and congratulations for post-fire restoration successes.

Rock, Squires Peak, and East Antelope fires included varied resource values as well as lots of interface with rural communities. Treatments included partners and different methods to stabilize soils and streams, remove hazard trees, reseed and restock acreage, and replace water dips and culverts.



Matt Webb received a NFP award for accomplishments made in the Klamath Falls Resource Area in the area of biomass utilization.

National attention on the Biscuit fire and the presidential visit to the Squires fire brought great scrutiny to these acres. Most of the fires were in wildland-urban interface lands, so stabilization of soil and stream channels was crucial to public safety. The District can do broad public education as the plans moved forward. The close-out reports included a “Lessons Learned” section. This section proved extremely useful when the District again faced three large fires in 2005. Minimum impact suppression tactics were used to limit the degree of rehabilitation required. Both of these award-winning efforts have yielded scientific data, insights for future planning, and enhanced relationships with area partners.

Utah

Hazardous Fuels Projects and the Blue Spring Fire

Before the 2005 fire season began, interagency partners in Color Country were planning for potential catastrophic fire events. By working together to build partnerships with communities and removing hazardous fuels near these communities, the partners felt they could mitigate the effects of cataclysmic fire. These fuels projects, in the event of fire, would slow down the fire’s progress and enable firefighters to better protect lives and property. One such project, located to the south of New Harmony Utah, was Ash Creek.

The rapidly growing community of New Harmony has expanded along the boundaries of the Bureau of Land Management, the Dixie National Forest, and Zion National Park. Many homes and subdivisions now border the heavily vegetated foothills of Pine Valley Mountain. Recognizing the need to take action, the Color County

Interagency Fuels Committee identified New Harmony as one of six interagency focus areas for reduction of hazardous fuels on public lands surrounding the community.

In the summer of 2002, as the Sequoia Fire threatened the community of New Harmony, fire crews constructed a 50 foot-wide fuel break on Forest Service land. Fortunately, the weather changed and the fuel break was not tested. But the contacts made with the community and the fire line preparation provided the basis for the Community Fire Plan completed in 2004 with the help of the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Dixie National Forest.

By the end of 2002, the BLM had completed the 1,500 acre Ash Creek Fuels Reduction Project. The project spans from I-15 to the USFS boundary. The treatments were designed to reduce the threat of wildfire to homeowners in the New Harmony area while also restoring ecosystem health.

In the summer of 2003, planning was initiated to extend and expand the fuel break on the Dixie National Forest. This would strengthen the fuel break and link it to the Ash Creek Project on BLM lands. Also, across the interstate from New Harmony, Zion National Park completed a hazardous fuel reduction project for the purpose of protecting the Kolob Visitor Center and surrounding private structures in the event of a wildfire.

With three federal agencies implementing fuel breaks in the area, New Harmony had fuel treatments on the east, west, and south sides of the community, and the Utah

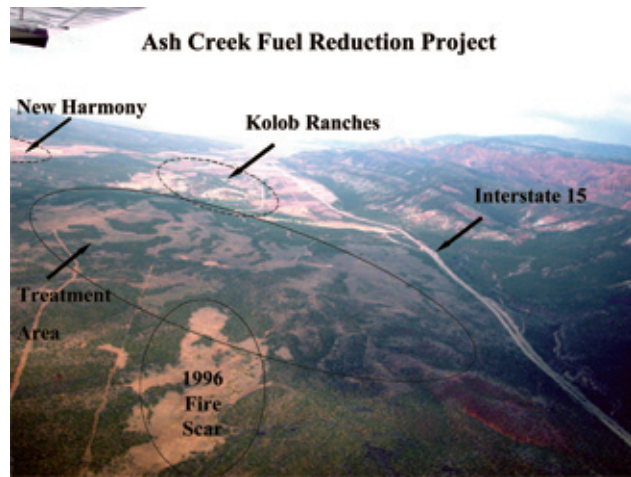


Blue Springs fire burning dangerously close to nearby homes located in the wildland urban interface of southern Utah.

Forestry, Fire and State Lands worked with individual home owners to reduce fuel loading.

On June 25, 2005 at 1:49 p.m., lightning ignited the Blue Spring fire south of New Harmony. It grew over five days to 12,286 acres, ending in the backyards of Harmony Heights. BLM's Ash Creek and Dixie National Forest fuel treatments influenced the movement of the fire, allowing firefighters to protect the homes from the blaze. While the Blue Spring fire was by no means the largest fire in southern Utah in 2005, it was significant in that the fuels projects were dominate factors in the rate and direction of the fire's spread. Homes were saved because of the fuel breaks created by these projects.

Contact: Paul Briggs (435) 865 3002



Aerial view of Ash Creek fuels reduction project.



Aerial view of the entire area including the location of the fuels reduction treatments which became a dominate factor in suppressing the Blue Spring Fire.



Burned area close to home after Blue Spring fire.



Suppression efforts to contain the wildfire threatening communities included aerial attack.

Firewise Landscaping for Utah is Hot Off the Press

"Your own property is concerned when your neighbor's house is on fire."

Horace, *Epistles*

So says the first page of the newly published "*Firewise Landscaping for Utah*," by authors Michael Kuhns and Barbara Daniels from Utah State University. The project brought specialists in academia, agencies, and local citizens together in order to help inform and educate Utah residents on simple firewise techniques they can perform in their own backyard. Contributions in the form of peer review and monetary support came from a variety of sources, from the USDA Forest Service to the Utah Living With Fire Inc., a non-profit organization. The booklet and tabletop display will make its debut at the upcoming Home and Garden Show this spring.

Firewise Landscaping for Utah describes how to create and maintain landscapes around homes, cabins and other buildings to reduce fire risks. Principles and suggestions for building placement, plant choice and placement, and landscape maintenance are explained. An extensive list and photos of firewise trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, and grasses are included. By following the information presented in this booklet, you can create a landscape on your property that will be as firewise as possible. *Firewise Landscaping for Utah* cautions although landscapes can never be fire-proof, using the recommendations will give you and firefighters a higher chance of protecting homes and property.

Utah State University Forestry Extension is offering a one-time **free** (to groups and agencies) distribution of varying



*The updated booklet version, *Firewise Landscaping for Utah*, is a practical guide.*



The Firewise booklet and display makes its debut at the Ogden Home and Garden Show.

quantities of the booklet *Firewise Landscaping for Utah*. Homeowners in the wildland-urban interface are the target audience for this publication. *Firewise Landscaping for Utah* is a 34-page full-color booklet that not only explains how a wildfire can threaten a home and steps that can be taken to reduce the hazard around the home, but recommends grasses, ground covers, perennial plants, shrubs and trees to plant around Utah homes. Clear graphics and dozens of photographs are used to help homeowners choose their landscaping materials with both fire hazard and beauty in mind.

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Spring Planning: Salt Lake Fuels and Fire Program Get Ready For Field Season

Spring has sprung. Even the activity around the BLM Salt Lake Field Office (SLFO) has a little spring in its step. After a long, wet winter they're excited to see how projects like emergency rehabilitation efforts have stood up to the weather. Spring is a chance to gather information on wildlife habitat. Also exciting is how fuels projects have helped or hindered the springtime activities of special species like the Sage Grouse.

Just this week the SLFO Fuels and Fire program met with Utah State University and the Cedar City Field Office to discuss public outreach objectives in regards to the Joint Fire Science Projects taking place in the state. The SLFO met with the Sage Grouse Working Group alongside academia, private landowners, and state wildlife personnel. The Central Region of the Division of Wildlife Resources also met at the SLFO to discuss big and small game habitat goals and fire's effect in the past and future.



'Access to BLM land' advertised in a future development. Some see homes, the fire program sees more values at risk.

Internally, the SLFO continues to work with the Archeological and Recreational staff to plan for the open house at Simpson Springs to celebrate the Centennial of the Antiquities Act. Seasonal firefighters are expected the second week of May. The fire education collection has been recently updated with a new publication called, *Firewise Landscaping for Utah*, made possible by the Utah State University and the Utah Living with Fire group. The timing couldn't be better and public response has been very positive thus far. The booklet contains photos that accompany scientific and common plant names, making



Dr. Gene Schupp, USU professor, describes the sagebrush-step restoration project at a field trip facilitated by the BLM Salt Lake Field Office.

it very practical to visualize and personalize firewise concepts at home. Copies are available by contacting the fire program at the Salt Lake Field Office, BLM.

The SLFO Prevention team has also been busy coordinating with its counterparts at Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, and the USDA. Forest Service to host the Eastern Great Basin/Northern Rockies Fire Prevention Workshop taking place in Moab, Utah, May 2-4, 2006.

It's a good thing spring brings along some added daylight; more time to get 'er done in Utah.

Wyoming

BLM Wyoming to implement Wildland Fire Use Program

The old adage 'where there's smoke, there's fire' may also mean healthier range and forest lands. Wildland fire, when properly managed, plays a critical role in maintaining the health of native vegetation and wildlife habitat in the West.

In 2006, the Wyoming Bureau of Land Management made the policy decision to allow the implementation of Wildland Fire Use (WFU) on about 1.5 million acres of land to manage naturally-caused fires. This management decision was in effort to have fire benefit resources by playing its natural role in the ecosystem. The implementation of this policy in Wyoming will allow fire to more closely resemble its historical role in the ecosystem.

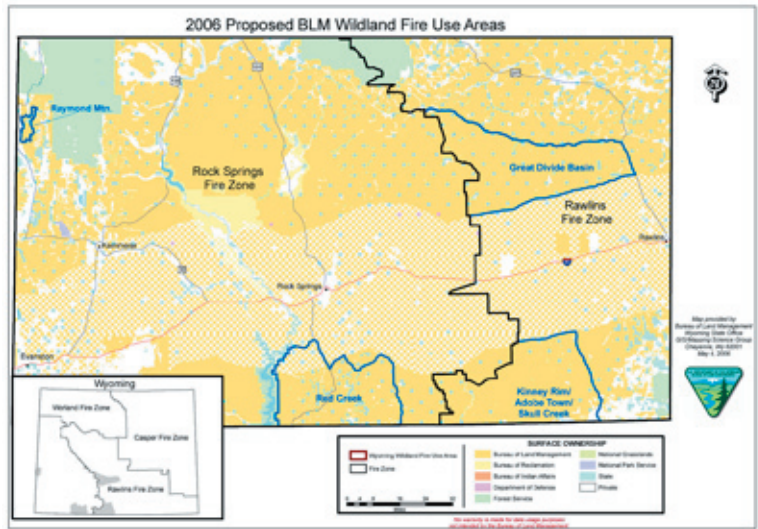
"Wildland Fire Use fires are actively managed for resource benefits, which include the restoration and maintenance of healthy forests, rangelands and wetlands, and supporting ecosystem diversity," said Bob Means, BLM Wyoming Assistant Fire Management Officer. He added, "An important part of this management is to protect the values at risk from the fire, such as range improvements, structures, and critical wildlife habitat."

Current areas in Wyoming with WFU plans are in the Rock Springs, Kemmerer, and Rawlins Field office areas. The Rock Springs and Kemmerer Field offices have approximately 415,000 acres; the Rawlins Field Office has 583,000 acres in the Great Divide area and 479,000 acres in the Kinney Rim/Adobe Town area. BLM Wyoming fire officials are currently working closely with Wyoming state officials and private land owners to

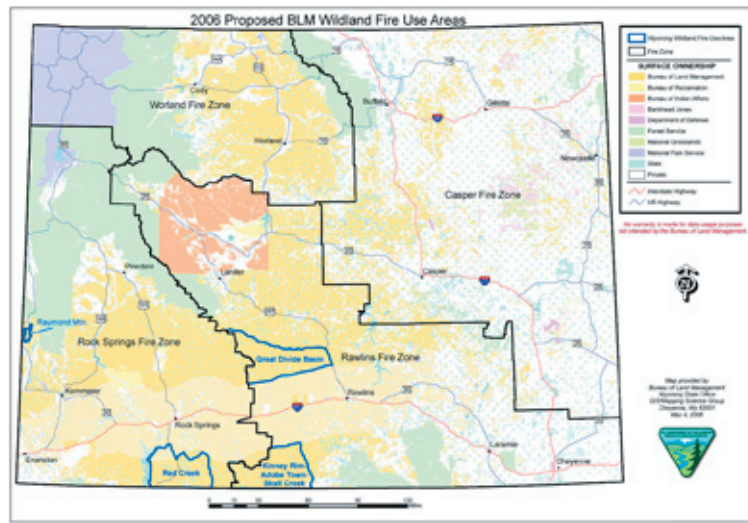
develop agreements on how to handle wildland fires when they occur in the designated WFU areas but are on state or private land.

“The new response plan option to manage naturally-ignited fires reduces risks to firefighters, reduces expenses, and allows fire to play a natural role in the ecosystem,” said John Glenn, BLM Wyoming Fire Management Officer. WFU will be decided on a case-by-case basis in accordance with Fire Management Plans and Land Use Management Plans in BLM-administered areas. Most WFU fires are not large, with the majority at 10 acres or less. In areas with active WFU programs, most of the fires are still suppressed because they are not in the right place at the right time.

“Wildland Fire Use is a direct component of wildland fire management and is equal to wildfire suppression, which constitutes an emergency action. It receives consideration, management attention, and management policies equal to wildfire suppression,” Means said. WFU will occur only in areas where it is part of the land use policy and will benefit resources. Suppression of wildland fires is also part of the WFU plan, but the risk to firefighters is reduced, especially during the initial stages of the fire.



Map of the Southwest corner of Wyoming indicating proposed areas for Wildland Fire Use.



Map of the Proposed Statewide BLM Wildland Fire Use areas.