

# Snapshots 2003

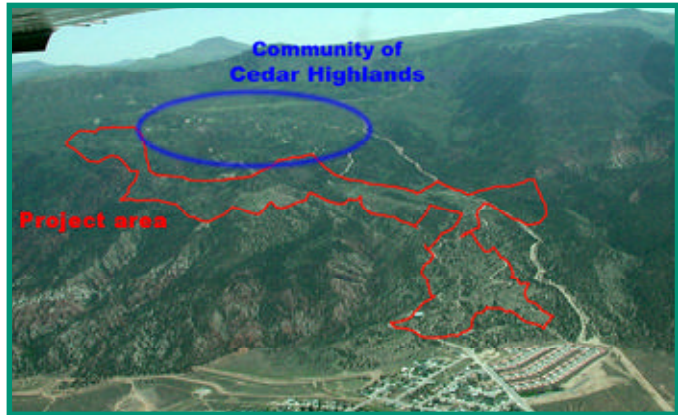
October 3

## Utah

### Cedar City

The Cedar City, Utah BLM Fuels program staff has had an active and busy schedule throughout the 2003 fiscal year. More than 9,000 acres were treated to provide protection from wildfire to communities and public lands. Treatments ranged from manual cutting and mechanical treatments by contract and by BLM crews.

Many of these projects include a number of partners that are helping by providing cost sharing.. Partners have donated over \$75,000 to buy seed to apply to the project areas and share in contract costs. About 1,100 acres of seed has already been applied and additional work will be accomplished this fall.



The C-trail project was started in 2001 and by this past fall 400 acres of debris piles were burned. The Lower lobe of the project is being worked on currently to provide protection for and from the community below.



Three communities along the I-15 Corridor received similar fuel breaks along property boundary lines for a total of 1,800 acres this year.



(Left) Before treatment. (Above) After treatment. Four-thousand acres of pinyon and juniper have been removed this summer with a mobile chipper-shredder in southwest, Utah. Holding a fire at this interstate will protect the community of Beaver and private and federal lands on the other side of the interstate.



Highlighting BLM projects that support the National Fire Plan.

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## Mammoth Creek Community At Risk Project

The community of Mammoth Creek is bordered by the Cedar City Ranger District of the Dixie National Forest. It lies eight miles north of the community of Duck Creek, a Color Country Interagency Focus Area. The Mammoth Creek area contains of over 500 lots smaller than one acre in size located in a canyon that runs east and west. Over 75



*Mammoth Creek prescribed burn – north side of the community.*



*One of the homes in the Mammoth Creek community.*

Mammoth Creek by the Cedar City Ranger District fire crew and the Cedar City BLM fuels crew. The zone is 400 feet wide and covers more than 350 acres. The treatment was done by thinning and hand piling the slash.

In the early summer of 2003 a fire council was formed in the community. Members include representation from the Mammoth

percent of the lots have structures. Fuels within and directly adjacent to the community consist of dense ponderosa pine and mixed conifer, with moderate to heavy levels of dead and downed woody material, putting it at high risk of wildfire.

Six-hundred acres were treated in 2002 with prescribed fire to reduce hazardous fuels on the north side of the community. An additional 200 acres will be treated in the fall of 2003 to complete the prescribed fire project totaling 800 acres.

In the summer of 2003 a defensible fire space zone was created on the south side of



*Mammoth Creek defensible fire space zone on the south side. Crews thinning and piling.*



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*Mammoth Creek Fire Council working on the community fire Plan.*

Creek community, Forest Service, and Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands. A community fire plan is nearing completion that consists of a community description, hazard evaluation, and prescription. The community prescription plan deals with fuel modification projects, infrastructure improvements, education, wildfire response, and the evacuation plan. In 2004 the Mammoth area hopes to receive a grant for a new firehouse.

## Frampton Heights Subdivision

Frampton Heights is a small subdivision northeast of the City of Fillmore, Utah. It has seven homes, which are located along a narrow dirt one-entry road that runs east and west. There is one full time resident that resides in the subdivision, the other homes are used intermittently by owners on a regular basis.

Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, State and private lands surround the subdivision of Frampton Heights. The vegetation type that surrounds the subdivision is stands of junipers, oak, sagebrush, as well native grasses. Homes within the urban interface are cabin style with roofs, walls, and decks made of wood. Debris such as wood

piles and abandoned cars is present, as well propane tanks and other combustible materials. Trees, sagebrush and plants growing in yards compound the problem.

Due to the threat of wildfire to the subdivision a fuels reduction project was proposed and approved. The fuel break was created on Bureau of Land Management land northeast and adjacent to the subdivision. The only access was a one-way dirt road among thick vegetation.

The Frampton Heights Project consisted of cutting down and thinning the juniper trees, piling them, and at the same time cutting out fence posts and stays for the Bureau of Land Management. The piles are drying out and plans are to burn some of them this fall. The project size is about 200 acres, over half of which is complete. The Fillmore Interagency Fire Crew worked all fall, winter and spring and most of the summer on the project. During this time, meetings with the homeowners were held to assess homes and discuss implementing defensible space in yards. So far three have chosen to implement defensible space work in their yards.



*The photo shows one of the homes in the area and some of the surrounding fuels.*



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*The photo shows the fuel break as it goes up the hill and alongside the homes.*

The Fillmore Interagency Fire Crew will continue to work with the homeowners until this project is complete in the fall.

## Idaho

### Teamwork on Communities at Risk Pays Off

Homes located at Banberry Hidden Landing, a rural subdivision bordering BLM land near Buhl, Idaho, have been threatened by lightning and human-caused wildfire six times since 1994. In 2003, the Buhl community was designated a wildland urban interface community-at-risk.

South central Idaho BLM, Buhl Fire Department, and the local community came together to develop a plan to address the threats of wildfire in the area. The original plan called for chemical treatment and prescribed burns that would create a large buffer zone on both public and private land around the subdivision. For various reasons, some landowners were skeptical of the plan and opted not to participate.

Mark Grimes, Buhl Fire Chief, continued to look for avenues to address homeowners'

concerns and alleviate the threats of wildfire to the community. "I want to see this program succeed. These homes, along with the entire canyon, are at risk and steps need to be taken to protect the area from wildfires," said Grimes.

Grimes opted to take a casual approach. He worked with several homeowners to begin demonstration projects around individual homes in Banberry Hidden Landing and invited the South central BLM office to assist.

The Buhl rural fire department and BLM firefighters and prevention personnel employed hand removal and chain saws to clear over-mature sagebrush from around a home, leaving a defensible space that could potentially save it from wildfire. This demonstration project, and the two that Grimes and his department completed previously, garnered interest and eventual acceptance from the homeowners of Banberry Hidden Landing.

Before any action is taken, Grimes meets with each homeowner to customize a plan for their property. The homeowner is involved with the plan from initiation to completion. Nine projects will be completed by year-end.



*BLM and Buhl, Idaho fire department firefighters work to thin overgrown sagebrush around a home at Banberry-Hidden Landing.*



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Along with defensible space around the homes of Banberry Hidden Landing, designated safety zones and escape routes have been established. Homeowners have expanded and maintained their newly cleared property as well, planting wildflowers and creating fire wise landscaping. “Before, we were in a dangerous, if not impossible position, trying to protect these homes from wildfire,” Grimes said. “Now I feel that we can protect the homes and the surrounding wildland resources.”



*Banberry-Hidden Landing home following sagebrush removal. The small light fuels that remain will greatly reduce the intensity of any oncoming wildfire.*



*Buhl and BLM firefighters work as partners to conduct hand removal of sagebrush around homes.*

Program worked alongside BLM and Forest Service fuels and fire crews in a collaborative effort to protect 11 historic structures identified as high risk for ignition. Ten of the 11 structures treated in 2003 were located within a wildland-urban interface area where fire has essentially been absent for the past 100 years. Prior to treatment, each structure was assessed by a fuels specialist and an archaeologist for their potential for ignition, including examination of structural design, topography, local fuels, and access.

## Heritage Fuels Reduction Project

The lessons learned during the wildfires of 2000 continue to influence many aspects for resource management in the Salmon and Challis areas, including the development and implementation of proactive historic structure protection. Because a structure’s ability to resist ignition is the essential element in determining its ability to survive a wildfire, the Challis Field Office has begun an annual program of mechanically clearing fuels from the vicinity of specific historic structures that would otherwise be at high risk in the event of wildfire.



*Boone Cabin and interpretive sign prior to fuels reduction treatment.*

This summer, local young men and women employed through the Youth Employment



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According to Bill Baer, Fuels Specialist for the BLM Challis Field Office, “Creating a brush-free buffer zone around these structures will make them more resistant to ignition and less likely to burn if an unplanned fire starts in the area. Each building receives the same basic treatment, but each location is considered individually prior to treatment. Depending on the slope, and the height and density of the surrounding vegetation, distances between 30 and 75 feet were cleared from around each structure’s perimeter.”

This type of planned pre-treatment also provides the Cultural Resource program with the opportunity to prioritize treatment of historic buildings under non-emergency conditions. Organized and thoughtful removal of fuels done in collaboration with a cultural resource specialist greatly reduces the likelihood that treatment will cause adverse impacts to a structure or to any nearby archaeological deposits.

Assessment by a cultural resource specialist includes identification of all features needing fuels pre-treatment and any areas that should be avoided. When access routes are recorded, appropriate wildfire structure protection methods assessed, and potential firefighter safety issues such as mining adits are also identified, this type of collaborative heritage fuels reduction project truly becomes a win-win proposition.



*Boone Creek cabin following treatment.*



*A Forest Service fire crew helps the Challis Field Office fuels crew and youth employment program crews treat a 90-year old aerial tramway tower.*



*Forest Service fire crew clearing brush from around interpretive sign, mine hill area Mackay, Idaho.*



*The same aerial tramway tower following fuels reduction treatment (one of ten treated).*



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