

# Snapshots

November 11, 2005



Successful BLM Projects  
Supporting the National Fire Plan

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*Dave Vickery, editor  
Sheri Ascherfeld, layout and design*

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## Idaho

### Boise Mayor has Prevention on His Mind

The Boise Foothills are one of the city's most valuable resources for recreation and wildlife habitat. The foothills steadily rise almost 4,000 feet from Idaho's dynamic capital city, providing a backdrop of picturesque scenery, recreation opportunities, and crucial wildlife habitat. In 2001, Boiseans demonstrated how much they value the foothills by voting to pass a foothills levy, which allowed the city to include a two-year levy on property taxes to raise \$10 million dollars

to protect the most unique characteristic of Boise's skyline by purchasing private land in the foothills.

However, several human-caused fires occurred in the foothills throughout the 2005 fire season which impacted over 1,500 acres and damaged wildlife habitat, invaluable recreation land, promoted noxious weed invasion, threatened people's homes and created flash flooding concerns for some Boise neighborhoods.

These recent foothills fires prompted Boise District BLM prevention specialists to team up with Boise Mayor Dave Bieter and Boise National Forest to create a public service

announcement designed to raise awareness about the impact of human-caused wildland fires on the foothills.

The announcement, written and coordinated by BLM Prevention Specialist Jessica Gardetto, features Mayor Bieter standing amidst charred remains the Homestead Fire, the largest in 2005, which started above the Boise neighborhood of Harris Ranch and quickly grew to over 1,200 acres in a matter of minutes. The public service announcement begins with Mayor Bieter stating the negative effects of human-caused wildfires in the foothills, which is accented by video footage of past foothills fires.



*Boise Mayor Dave Dieter and Smokey Bear pose for a photo at the Foothills Learning Center during a recent fire prevention awareness event in the Boise foothills.*

The Mayor then addresses the most common causes of foothills fires by saying, "Therefore, I am asking for your help in preserving Boise's foothills by being careful with anything that may ignite a fire. Please, don't park or drive on dry grass and be sure you have a spark arrestor on your motorcycle and other ATVs. If you are towing a trailer, be sure nothing is creating sparks behind you."

Mayor Bieter's request is complemented by video footage of all terrain vehicle users, trailers, and off-road drivers. The announcement closes with Bieter thanking the public for their help in preventing human-caused fires and preserving the Boise Foothills. In spring and summer of 2006 Boise BLM Fire Prevention Specialists will schedule the public service announcement to air on television stations throughout the Boise area in hopes that the public will work to protect the unique and valuable Boise Foothills.



*A Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System C-130 aircraft drops retardant of a Boise Foothills fire in 2005.*

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*One of many recent fires in the Boise foothills which threatened homes.*

The announcement is a small part of the Boise BLM's plan to continue partnering with local city and county officials to promote human-caused wildfire prevention through public service announcements. Firewise presentations, literature drops, and financial aid for rural fire departments and communities at risk from wildfire will also be used in this effort.

Contact: Jessica Gardetto,  
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## The Four C's and International Fire Code Adoption Protect Homes from Wildfire

Idaho's Bannock County is singing a new tune when it comes to protecting local homes. Local elected officials have joined the choir, and the song is now ringing with increasing volume throughout the county's wildland urban interface.

This year, Bannock County formally adopted the 2003 International Fire Code and developed and formally adopted a wildland urban interface appendix to it. The appendix is specific to new home construction. Currently, building codes exist only to avoid loss and damage due to earthquakes, hurricanes, heavy snow and floods. County officials believe that protecting lives and property from wildland fire is no different.

The inspiration behind this new initiative came from Interior Secretary Gale Norton's Four C's. It was with consultation, cooperation, communication, all

in the service of conservation that members of the "choir," Bannock County Planning and Zoning, county fire chiefs, county fire commissioners, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Three Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Council, and Bannock county commissioners collaborated to establish building codes for new development in wildland urban interface areas.

"The fire-wise principles adopted under these codes have been proven to increase the survivability of a home in a wildland fire by approximately 90 percent. Having new construction adhere to these Firewise principles will also increase the safety of firefighters throughout the county," said Richard Wolfe, Gateway Interagency Fire Front liaison and a retired Pocatello City fire chief. Wolfe has been extremely instrumental in facilitating the interface code adoption.

The codes require that new construction in an identified wildland urban interface include fire-resistant roofing, adequate fire-resistant space around the

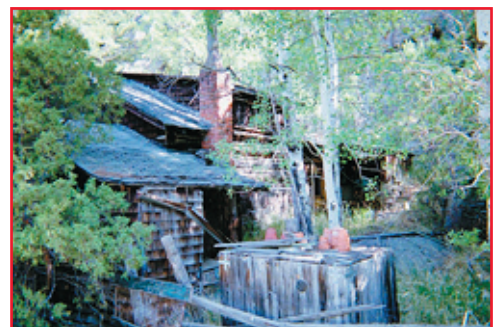
structure, screened or covered openings close to the ground, and noncombustible rain gutters, eaves, fascia, soffits enclosed with materials other than PVC or vinyl. Codes also require vents covered with non-combustible, approved screening, and approved spark arrestors for chimneys, stove pipes or heater vents. Exterior walls must be fire-resistant, and gas or propane tanks located at a safe distance from other structures with firewood or combustible materials stored at least 20 feet from a structure unless otherwise protected.

Each fire department within Bannock County can adopt the codes once interface areas have been identified and mapped within its fire protection boundary, thereby indicating that the department is ready to enforce them.

Although it may be a landowner applying for a permit to build a home or business, responsibility for adhering to the new codes also resides with developers, contractors and builders. Land management agencies, fire protection organizations



*This home, in the wildland urban interface of Pocatello, is adjacent to new development that will fall under the new interface codes.*



*This home in the wildland urban interface is highly susceptible to wildland fire.*

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*Although not considered under construction, this home, in the wildland urban interface of Pocatello, has applied almost all of the new interface codes. The home is also adjacent to public land that is currently being treated to thin out the abundant juniper.*

and private interest groups continually initiate and support the education and involvement of communities in taking responsibility for the protection of lives and property from wildland fire.

Bannock County and local elected officials are also facilitating educational opportunities for building in the wildland urban interface to help make it a safer, more enjoyable place for all who live and recreate there. Now the work continues to bring new members of the choir, developers, contractors, builders and landowners, into harmony.

*Contact: Sonja Shadow, (208) 524-7613*

## Arizona

### Signage Partnering

BLM is working with local fire departments, Audubon, Palominas Firewise Community, Boy Scouts of America and the U.S. Forest Service to place signs on the Gila District in southeastern Arizona. BLM is distributing general mitigation, prevention and information signs to partners, which will then change fire awareness messages throughout the year in conjunction with BLM.

BLM purchased and will be erecting 25 Firehouse and 20 general fire message signs in southeast Arizona over the next several

months. Almost all of the firehouse signs have been placed on the San Pedro Riparian and the Las Cienegas National Conservation Areas this past summer. Now the fire management zone is working to put general fire message signs up before next fire season.

To get the signs up throughout the district, BLM is using fire crews, Boys Scouts, Audubon and fire department staff. They are purchasing and installing signs and having the U.S. Forest Service partners maintain the messages and the land adjacent to the signs, so the signs can be easily read by motorists.

The Safford and Tucson zone recently erected a bulletin board in conjunction with the Palominas Firewise Community. This two sided structure allows



*Local Boy Scouts volunteered to place signs in the BLM Gila District in Arizona.*

the community to inform the public of Firewise efforts and successes while showing simple things that can be done to protect homes from wildfires.

*Contact: David Peters, Gila District Fire Mitigation Specialist, Tucson Field Office, (520) 258-7207*

### Major Revision of Firewise Tabloid Benefits Communities

Several natural resource agencies and the University of Arizona teamed up to revise the standard *Living with Fire - A Guide for the Homeowner*, which is published in about 40 versions around the United States. The tabloid is now titled, "*Living with Wildfire - A Homeowners' Firewise Guide for Arizona*". It is also available on three websites in Arizona, including [www.StateFireInfo.org](http://www.StateFireInfo.org), [www.AzStateFire.org](http://www.AzStateFire.org) and <http://cals.arizona.edu/firewise/>.

As a guide, it includes detailed information homeowners and communities need to help protect them from wildfires that can damage homes and surrounding communities. Topics covered



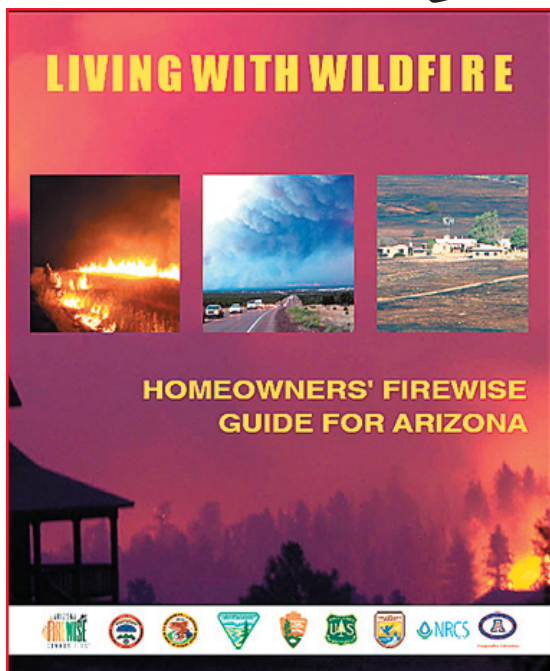
*The Palominas Firewise Community bulletin board with information for residents.*

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Cover of the *Living with Wildfire—A Homeowners' Firewise Guide for Arizona* guide.

in the tabloid include Firewise practices for construction materials and landscaping. Various Arizona vegetation fuel types descriptions are included, as well as explanation of how they burn under natural conditions, natural fire environment and fire behavior. Information on the wildland urban interface, wildland fire emergency conditions, wildfire suppression limitations, and wildfire survival space checklist are part of the document.

Major work on the tabloid was completed by the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Service, Bureau of Land Management, Arizona State Land Department Forestry Division, U.S. Forest Service, as well as the National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Arizona fire chiefs.

Recently 80,000 copies of the new tabloid have been printed and distributed across Arizona. Federal funding and grants from federal agencies including BLM, University of Arizona, National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided for printing. This interagency effort has allowed for a wide distribution throughout the state of Arizona.

An additional 100,000 copies will be printed this fall for distribution around the state.

Contact: David Peters, Gila District Fire Mitigation Specialist, (520) 258.7207

## Alaska

### Alaska Fire Service Aviation Fuel Shop—Reclaiming Energy and Saving Money

With the skyrocketing increases in fuel prices these days it is indeed a rarity when any organization can save money on fueling costs—but that is exactly what the Aviation Fuel Shop is doing at BLM's Alaska Fire Service.

Under a current project, the Alaska Fire Service is retrofitting the fuel shop to include insulating the facility and installing a new heating system. But the real news is that it will redirect a portion of the fuel waste stream to the more productive in-house use of heating the fuel shop, rather than paying contractors to pick fuel waste for disposal.

“With back-to-back record-breaking fire seasons and upward, spiraling fuel costs, it makes sense to take a good look at this waste stream for recoverable energy,” said Lead Fuel Specialist Lindsay Wyatt. “Since the fuel shop is already performing most of the steps in this process, receiving, consolidating, testing and labeling, why not go the rest of the way and utilize that waste stream to reduce, or offset, long-term overhead fuel costs.”

During the 2004 fire season, Alaska Fire Service delivered some 700,000 gallons of fuel, and Wyatt said that several types and grades come to the fuel shop for final disposition from fires, including; drum fuel caches, purge, out-of-date, and contaminated fuels.

“By reducing our waste stream we should save in disposal costs which vary from 35 to 50 cents per pound, or from about \$97 to \$125 per drum,” said Wyatt.

When complete, the project will not only reduce the waste stream and reclaim a valuable energy source, but will provide 100 percent of the fuel required to heat the fuel shop and run the emergency backup generators at Alaska Fire Service.

“The fuel shop retrofitting, boiler installation and plumbing are scheduled for next summer,” added Wyatt. “The energy recovery and recycling program should be on going.”



Alaska Fire Service Lead Fuel Specialist Lindsay Wyatt explaining the fuel waste stream process that will ultimately heat the fuel shop. Kevin McIver photo