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Idaho

Duquette Pines Moves Forward in Reducing Wildland Fire Danger

“Effective fire prevention in the wildland urban interface is like a chain. It is only as strong as the weakest link,” said Rosey Thomas, Four Rivers Field Office Manager.

“Everyone has to do their part, and it is often easier to do it collectively than separately.”

Duquette Pines is a subdivision, surrounded by public land, located approximately one mile north of Idaho City, Idaho.

Homeowners are aiming to make the fire prevention chain in their community as strong as possible. In April 2003, the Duquette Pines Homeowners Association Newsletter identified two areas of concern regarding fire danger. One was Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property west of the subdivision. The other was overcrowding of trees and brush on properties in the subdivision. The Homeowners Association, through its Board, pursued both problems, and their efforts are being rewarded.

The Board wrote letters to the BLM outlining their concerns and desire for action. This concern of citizens to protect their property along with Four Rivers Field Office staff’s concern to effectively manage the public land resulted in action. Several efforts have resulted from the desire of all parties involved to make Duquette Pines a more “fire-safe” community. Rosey Thomas and members of her staff attended a Homeowners Association meeting in May 2005 where they discussed plans for the area and facilitated a field trip to show what would be done. In September of 2005, work was started on BLM land. It included removal of trees that were nine inches and smaller in diameter, removal of ladder fuels from larger trees, and



Duquette Pines property with dense brush and trees; note home in background.



Large diameter trees and branches were offered to local citizens for fire wood. Piles like this one are planned to be burned in the fall of 2006.

removal of brush that had fifty percent or greater dead limbs. The debris was hand-piled and will be burned in the fall of 2006.

The Homeowners Association partnered with Boise County to apply for a National Fire Plan grant from BLM that is administered through the

Idaho Department of Lands. The group received a \$45,150 grant that will fund efforts to evaluate each property in the subdivision with respect to wildland fire hazards. The evaluation will estimate the hours needed to complete mitigation work. Subsequently, homeowners will be advised of the number of hours of labor that will be required of them to complete a ten-percent match for the work to be performed on their property. The match will consist of piling slash, moving firewood, and general clean-up of hazardous fuels, such as pine needles. The grant makes it possible to continue with work in the future. More projects are also planned on BLM land.



Contract crews worked to clear small diameter trees and ladder fuels to reduce the threat of fire to Duquette Pines community.

Gilmore Town Site: A Lighter Load, A Little Healthier

Gilmore, Idaho? Some only know it as, “that snowy pass you drive over on your way to Salmon.” For others, more sentimental value is attached—where, down on one knee, “the question” was popped. Gilmore, Idaho also holds historic value as an old mining town in the Birch Creek Valley.

Years have passed, and folks other than miners have sought out the area for a piece of the Old West. It is still a beautiful location with abundant wildlife. Hunters and fisherman have built summer homes for retreats, and several cabins of the better-known mining days in Rag Town still exist as well.

With the passing of time, where we have come and gone and are now coming back again, the land and resources in and adjacent to Gilmore town site have seen various demands and uses. Recently, efforts were made to address the build up of hazardous vegetation.



An example of just how dense the Douglas-fir was prior to the treatment.

In July 2005 the BLM Salmon Field Office hired Oaxaca Reforestation, Inc. of Medford, Oregon to thin out dense stands of Douglas-fir near Gilmore. Trees with a diameter of 8 inches or less were removed with the intent of creating 20-foot tree spacing.

The work increased in October 2005 when two more companies were contracted, continuing the work started by Oaxaca Reforestation in July. Summitt Forests, Inc. thinned the Douglas fir on 25 acres of public land, while Nordstrom Mechanical, of Kingston, Idaho, used a tractor-mounted grinding blade on an additional 52 acres to mulch vegetation and leave it on site.



“Rag Town’s” historic mining cabins. Project was done to protect these cabins.

These project areas are on BLM land, which have been identified for treatment in the Lemhi County Hazardous Fuels Assessment and Mitigation Plan. “These actions are designed to keep a potential wildfire on the ground and out of the tree canopy,” said Jim Tucker, a BLM fire use specialist in Salmon.

The cut trees and limbs are now piled and ready to be burned. Currently, an excessive amount of snow is making lighting the piles difficult. While waiting for optimal burning conditions, the BLM Salmon Field Office is planning on allowing homeowners and other interested parties the chance to gather firewood from the stacked trees and limbs.

By warming their homes and businesses, the town site residents and the BLM Salmon Field Office are helping reduce the load of hazardous vegetation while creating a healthier, happy Gilmore.

Contact: Sonja Shadow, fire prevention and information specialist, Idaho Falls BLM District, 208-524-7613.



Historic cabin in Shorty's Gulch in the project area.

Utah

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 “Firewise Landscaping for Utah,” published by authors Michael Kuhns and Barbara Daniels from Utah State University. Firewise Landscaping for Utah is a 34-page full-color booklet that not only explains how a wildfire can threaten a home, but also steps that can be taken to reduce the hazard around the home, and recommends grasses, ground covers, perennial plants, shrubs and trees to plant around Utah homes.

The project brought specialists in academia, agencies and local citizens together to help inform and educate Utah residents on simple firewise techniques they can use in their backyards. Peer reviews and monetary support came from the USDA Forest Service and 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. The booklet explains principles and suggestions for building placement, plant choice and placement, and landscape maintenance. It also includes an extensive list and photos of firewise trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, and grasses. The graphics are clear and includes dozens of photographs to help



A sampling of the material found in the new publication “Firewise Landscaping for Utah.”

homeowners plan and construct their landscaping with both fire hazard and beauty in mind.

By following the information presented in this booklet, homeowners can create a landscape on their property that will be as firewise as possible. Firewise Landscaping for Utah cautions landowners -- landscapes can never be fire-proof, but using the recommendations will give you and firefighters a higher chance of protecting homeowner property.

Utah State University Forestry Extension is offering a one-time free (to groups and agencies) distribution of the booklet Firewise Landscaping for Utah.

Contact: Erin Darboven, 801-977-4328



County, state, federal and non-profit partners plant seeds about Firewise Landscaping at the Ogden Home and Garden Show.