



## Grand Teton National Park Fire Management

Extended mild weather allowed Grand Teton National Park to complete two more prescribed burns this season, adding 785 acres to the total treated this fall.



The Elbo Ranch project, divided into two separate burn units, consisted of historic agricultural fields that were part of homesteads dating back to 1910. These fields were used for hay production for livestock operations and have been dominated by smooth brome grass (*Bromus inermis*). The objectives for the prescribed burn were to utilize fire to allow native grasses, forbs, and shrubs to reestablish within the fallow hay meadows.

Working with the park's Fire Management staff, the Division of Science and Resource Management determined that treatment by fire in these old hayfields might also be an effective bison management tool. Bison populations have been increasing in Grand Teton National Park, and preferred foraging areas are beginning to show signs of continued bison use. Because the Elbo Ranch burn units are similar in vegetative composition to other areas that have burned and become favored areas for the herds, the prescribed burn will redistribute concentrations of bison from current high use areas.



The second prescribed burn was a 285-acre unit located on Timbered Island, a stand of dense conifer growing on a small moraine. Here, mixed conifer regrowth and a large accumulation of dead and down material created above average fuel loading. Objectives for the burn were to reduce the fuel loading, separate the continuity of the vegetation, provide a diverse age class in the stand, and create a mosaic of burned and unburned areas to enhance wildlife habitat.



Because smoke was visible from both the Inner Park Road and Highway 26/89/191, the Fire Management Office utilized the park's new mobile informational radio broadcast system to assist with fire information. The antenna and recorder were stationed at a highway pullout directly east of Timbered Island, and signs directed visitors to tune to the recording. With an approximate 1/2-mile range in either direction of the unit, the system transmitted a message detailing the prescribed burn and encouraging visitors to stop at the fire information station on the Inner Park Road.

With interagency assistance in conducting the projects, Grand Teton National Park was able to complete four prescribed burns this fall for a total of 2,605 acres.

