

Snapshots 2004

Highlighting BLM projects that support the National Fire Plan.



April 9

Nevada

Buffer between Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and Wildlands

The Reno-Sparks Indian Colony's Hungry Valley Community and the Bureau of Land Management's Carson City Field Office have jointly planned a fuels reduction project on public lands in Hungry Valley, Nevada, in order to reduce the threat of wildfire damage to homes and property in the community.

The fuels treatment will target a five mile long strip of sagebrush, juniper trees and native bunch grasses on the edge of the colony. A buffer 150 feet wide will provide protection from a large unburned area of vegetation.

Secretary of the Interior Gail Norton praised the Hungry Valley Fuels Treatment Project during a February

visit to the colony, where she received briefings from both the tribal council and BLM Carson City staff.

BLM Carson City fire personnel have already broadcast a seed mix of native bunch grasses and crested wheat grass on the 57 acre strip, and a local contractor is set to begin mowing operations in early April. The mowing will take a week to complete. The mulch left behind by the mowing will mix with the seed, provide soil cover and retain moisture.

BLM and the colony jointly developed the Hungry Valley Fuels Treatment Project in 2003 using a streamlined National Environmental Policy Act review that included a categorical exclusion for hazardous fuels treatment. In comparison, an earlier project in the North Valleys near Stead took six months longer to prepare, using traditional Environmental Assessment steps.

The colony, located 10 miles north of Sparks, has been threatened by wildfire in 1985, 1999 and 2000. It includes two residential areas and a large community center, with administrative offices, a gymnasium, a pre-school and day-care center, and a fire station. The tribal council passed a resolution approving the project in November 2003.



Members of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Tribal Council and Secretary Norton during the announcement.



Part of the Hungry Valley area prior to treatment.



Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton discusses the Hungry Valley Fuels Treatment Project at the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony in February 2004.



The North Valleys area showing post-treatment results.

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Colorado

Southwest Colorado Hosts Wildfire Prevention and Education Month

“What Are You Waiting For?” is again the theme for the 2nd annual Wildfire Prevention and Education Month in southwest Colorado during the month of April. Local, state, federal, and non-profit partners have joined together to showcase National Fire Plan implementation, with a particular emphasis on tools for the homeowner. Activities and workshops have been designed to make people aware of wildfire hazards and mitigation efforts on both public and private land.

Southwest Colorado’s new Firewise Council will host a half-day symposium for homeowners that will focus on insurance and legal issues, grant opportunities, evacuation plans, and more. Another workshop will offer considerations regarding the emergency evacuation of livestock and pets during a wildfire. Also on the agenda are tours to demonstration sites showing hazardous-fuels treatments on both public and private land, fire department open houses, and workshops on beetle infestations, forest health, and water-wise irrigation.



Logo for Firewise-Southwest Colorado.

A new video, produced by Durango Community Access Television and the Office of Community Services, will premiere mid-month. Titled “*First Line of Defense: Homeowners Stand Up to Wildfire*,” the 30-minute documentary shows how one homeowner went about choosing a mitigation contractor to reduce the wildfire hazard on her property. The video also includes interviews with residents who lost their home in the wildfires of 2002, saved a home, or hope to save a home.

Dr. Andrew Gulliford from the Center for Southwest Studies at Fort Lewis College will present a slide show about the monuments and memorials that the Glenwood Springs community dedicated to the fourteen firefighters killed on Storm King Mountain. His lecture will be followed by an interactive question-and-answer period with wildland firefighters.

Local television stations will offer broadcasts of some of the workshops and presentations as well as locally produced fire videos throughout the month.

The month’s activities were funded by the San Juan Public Lands Center and a grant that the San Juan Mountains Association received from the National Forest Foundation. Other partners include the Colorado State Forest Service, local fire departments, Office of Community Services, Fort Lewis College, BIA – Southern Ute Agency, Dover Creek TV and Durango Community Access TV, La Plata County Human Society Durango Nature Studies, Empire Electric Association, La Plata Electric Association, Four Corners Backcountry Horsemen, Firewise Southwest Colorado, Mesa Verde National Park, and KSUT public radio, our media sponsor. In addition

to announcing event information, KSUT will host a weeklong series of interviews with mitigation contractors, fire department personnel, and others about the benefits of wildfire hazard mitigation.

The full agenda of events can be viewed on the Web at www.sjma.org or www.southwestcoloradofires.org.

Contact: Allen Farnsworth, Mitigation Specialist, (970) 385-1207

Wildfire Awareness Brochures from Firewise-Southwest Colorado

Firewise-Southwest Colorado, a community consortium working to promote wildfire preparedness, mitigation, and education to southwest Colorado residents, has just produced a series of five Wildfire Awareness brochures. Target audiences for the brochures are not only homeowners but also real estate agents, appraisers, insurance agents, and others who have close contact with both current and potential homeowners.

Part 1, *Fire’s Natural Role*, describes the importance of fire in southwest Colorado’s ecosystems, and considerations for homeowners in each of the different vegetation types.

Part 2, *Preparing for Wildfire*, offers tips on pre-planning that will assist the homeowner in the event they need to evacuate.

Part 3, *Getting the Work Done*, talks about the need for defensible space and things to consider whether hiring a contractor or doing the work yourself, including objectives, local resources, and slash disposal.

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WILDFIRE

Prevention and Education Month APRIL 2004



WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
CREATE A SAFER HOME & COMMUNITY

Workshops / Speakers / Events at Local Fire Houses
Tours to Mitigation Sites / Video Releases / and More

www.SJMA.org

Download a schedule of regional and local events or call SJMA at 385-1210

Part 4, *Increasing Your Property Value*, designed for the homeowner preparing to sell their home, discusses the ways in which mitigation work can add to the value of their property.

Part 5, *Community Efforts*, offers suggestions on how residents can become involved with local education and mitigation efforts.

For more information contact the Fire Council at firewiseswcolorado@yahoo.com or Pam Wilson, Fire Information Officer at (970) 385-1230.

Brochures will be distributed to local insurance companies, real estate agents, appraisers, Chamber of Commerce offices, and fire departments during April. They should be available on the web by the end of April.

The brochures were funded by the San Juan Public Lands Center and the San Juan Mountains Association.

Utah

Risk Planning in Color Country

Some 147 communities in southwest Utah and northwest Arizona have been identified to be at risk from wildfire. The Color Country Interagency Fuels committee has developed a process to measure the level of risk to these communities. This will help the committee identify and prioritize areas where focus of education and fuel reduction projects take place.

During the winter of 2000-2001, the fuels committee developed a process to quantify the level of risk to communities in the Color Country Fire Management Area. Winter of 2001-02, six communities or groups of communities were identified as interagency focus areas within the Color Country. These areas were selected because they involved multi agency lands and or issues to be addressed. The idea is to coordinate efforts to create continuous fuel breaks and provide added protection to communities across agency boundaries on adjacent public lands.

This past winter the fuels committee grouped communities into families with criteria by similar fuels types, geographic location, and common access. Twenty family groups were established to include all 147 communities on the federal register to bring the number down to a more manageable size.

Families of communities were assigned to an agency lead to organize and implement external and internal risk assessments. Assessments are being completed by teams of multiple disciplinary specialists from different agencies, including local community leaders and fire personnel. Teams

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go through the internal and external assessment forms to gather data to provide a numerical risk rating. Assessments are done within one community or over a larger area of development where communities are not defined.

After factoring in social and political constraints and willingness to address issues, communities are assigned a color category of red, yellow, or green. This color category indicates risk level and willingness to participate in addressing the problem, indicating the status of each community within the Color Country.

- Red Communities have a high-risk, or, do not have a risk assessment completed, and/or no community fire plan completed.
- Yellow Communities have boundary treatments completed, but no community fire plan or have a community fire plan, but no fuels treatments implemented.
- Green Communities have a low-risk rating or have fuels treatments and community fire plans implemented.

The goal is to eventually have all family of communities in the yellow or green categories. Each year a color

country team will analyze the different communities and track progress to see where focus needs to be placed in the future. Individual communities will be assessed annually and the category adjusted as needed.

Bureau of Land Management in Utah and Arizona, Zion and Bryce National Parks, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Dixie National Forest and Utah division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands are cooperating agencies within Color Country Interagency Fire Management Area.

A web site showing progress in these communities is at: www.ut.blm.gov/ccifc/WUIFocusArea.htm



State and federal agency personnel reviewing the community assessment files for accuracy and consistency.