

Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

Wyoming

Cooperative Effort in Wildland Urban Interface

Cedar Mountain rises prominently from the western edge of Cody, Wyoming. The mountain's location makes it an ideal spot for radio repeater towers. However, over the years the timber stand that caps the mountaintop has become so dense that if a wildfire were to occur there, these communication sites would be threatened.



Access road being treated.

In 2001 personnel from the Wyoming BLM's North Fire Management Zone evaluated the wildfire threat to the numerous communication towers on the mountain and determined that action was needed. The desired treatment for this location was mechanical thinning with the generated residue to be chipped and scattered.



Home site prior to treatment.

The solution sounded easy enough to implement except for access to the work site. The site where the communication towers sit is a mixed ownership of public and private lands. To avoid possible access issues concerning the entire project area, personnel from the Cody Field Office worked out an agreement with the landowner to conduct fuels mitigation around his lands in exchange for access to the repeater

November 15, 2002



Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

sites. The North Zone's Fuels Crew along with two BLM engine crews spent four days this summer cutting and removing hazardous fuels around the landowner's home. The crews were also able to establish a fuel break adjacent to the main access route to the landowner's property, increasing the amount of defensible space available for potential fire suppression activities.

All parties were pleased with the outcome. This wildland urban interface issue was handled in such an effective manner that work by a local, private contractor is now underway to clear the area around the communication sites.

Contact: John Thompson (307) 347-5136



The area near the home following treatment.

November 15, 2002



ominous threat of 100-foot flames during the Commissary Ridge Fire, which occurred near Kemmerer, Wyoming. Firefighters saved more than 200 homes and structures during the September fire that covered more than 2,000 acres.

Kemmerer

Commissary Ridge Fire

Appropriate roofing and some FireSafe practices helped fire crews save this structure from damage while dealing with the



Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

Eastern States

Hotshots Gear Up for Prescribed Burning

The BLM Jackson Hotshots are gearing up for their second year of prescribed burning in the off-season. In cooperation with NIFC, the Fish and Wildlife Service and other state agencies, the Jackson Hotshots are one again forming two



Crew members going over specifications of the day's burn plan.



Hotshots monitoring a prescribed burn in a Georgia coastal area.

prescribed burning crew modules. The crews will initially begin in the Savannah Coastal Wildlife Refuge in Georgia and the Sandhill Crane Wildlife Refuge in Mississippi. As the year progresses they will move into other states.

The purpose of the modules is to assist other Interior Department agencies such as the Fish and Wildlife Service and state agencies with their

prescribed fire and fuels reduction programs in the southeast. In many of the refuges where the burns occur, prescribed burning is essential to maintain the current ecosystems and to provide optimum habitat needs for resident wildlife. Last year, the Jackson crew successfully fielded two eight-person prescribed fire modules. Overall, the Hotshots provided ignition and holding support for approximately 27,000 acres. While many of the areas worked on were remote wildlife refuges, many other areas were in wildland urban interface settings.

November 15, 2002



Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

Oregon

Fire Prevention Teams Affect Communities

In an effort to improve public safety and reduce the likelihood of property damage from wildfire, several areas throughout the country have enlisted the help of National Fire Prevention and Education Teams. The teams are made up of federal, state and local fire education and prevention technical specialists. Team sizes vary with the specific mission, ranging from three to 12 people and their mission is to supplement the communications efforts of local, state, and federal fire agencies when exceptionally severe conditions exist. New Mexico, Colorado, South Dakota, California, Washington and Oregon are among the states where the teams have been deployed.

The Fire Prevention and Education Team that came to Oregon and Washington during the very busy fire season of 2002 assisted agencies in communicating with the public. While in Oregon and Washington, the team worked with local fire districts to train firefighters and homeowners on reducing the risk of wildfire damage to their homes and property. The team also assisted local law enforcement agencies and community leaders address an arson problem in central Washington.

The team also gave a presentation to the Three Rivers Community in central Oregon. Team members assessed the communities' risk of wildfire with local fire officials and worked with firefighters and homeowners to develop strategies for improving safety in a fire prone environment.

Members of the team also provided support to the Oregon State Fire Marshal's pre-evacuation and fuels mitigation effort in communities threatened by the Biscuit Fire. Team members initiated door-to-door efforts in threatened communities and distributed "24 Hours to Success" flyers to over 300 residents that were located in the possible threat/evacuation zone.

A major objective of the teams is to assist homeowners in making their property more survivable in the event of a wildfire. The teams address a wide spectrum of wildfire related issues including fire restrictions, debris burning, arson, vehicles and equipment,



Community meetings were an integral part of building public support.

November 15, 2002



Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

fireworks and recreation. The teams have been involved in a variety of assignments, from the Black Hills motorcycle rally in South Dakota to mitigating fire hazards in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area of Minnesota. The teams are an important resource in reducing the number of human-caused fires and helping people protect themselves and their homes and property from the threats wildfires.

Utah

Air Operations Center Opens in Cedar City

An open house was held on June 6, 2002 to celebrate the opening of the Interagency Air Operations Center in Cedar City, Utah. This newly constructed facility was a cooperative effort between the Bureau of Land Management Cedar City District Office (which provided the majority of funding and planning documents), the National Park Service (Zion National Park), the National Forest Service (Dixie National Forest), and Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands. The center will serve as an aerial resource center for interagency firefighting efforts in the Eastern Great Basin area.

This project was funded through Congressional appropriations associated with the National Fire Plan of 2000, which recognized the need for improved firefighting preparedness after that year's severe wildfire season. One of the key needs documented by the plan was to construct and repair air tanker and helitack bases across seven western states. These bases are a nationally shared firefighting resource.

The air operations center will house an air tanker base (consisting of a Type II air tanker, capable of delivering 2450 gallons of retardant), a fixed-wing base (consisting of a twin-

November 15, 2002



New Interagency Air Operations Center at Cedar City, Utah.

Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

engine aerial command aircraft that provides aerial supervision of aircraft on wildfires) and an eight-person National Park Service Helicopter Module (providing initial attack capability and aerial reconnaissance and support), and a dispatch center to coordinate all of the air activity. A ready room, kitchen and sleeping area will provide crew and staff with on-site amenities. Future plans will provide quarters for 12 Bureau of Land Management smokejumpers, who will be stationed at the facility through the fire season.

The center will provide for quicker, safer and more efficient protection from wildfires that threaten public and private properties in the eastern Great Basin (and throughout the west). It also represents the value of interagency cooperation that is vital to successfully manage wildland fire.



A ribbon-cutting ceremony was part of the open house event.

November 15, 2002

