



American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Habitat Treatments in Tuscarora

Category: Habitat Restoration

BLM
NEVADA

Restoration Will Benefit Sage-Grouse in Northeastern Nevada



Contract workers install fencing in the Lower Rock Creek area to protect seedlings from grazing until plants are established.

In the BLM's Elko District of northeastern Nevada, a number of contractors are improving and restoring 10,000 acres of sagebrush habitat in the expansive Tuscarora area north of Battle Mountain.

The project's integrated approach includes a variety of methods to augment previous emergency stabilization and rehabilitation treatments in an effort to restore sagebrush habitat in areas that have endured catastrophic wildfires over the past 20 years. The wildfires destroyed a number of Wyoming big sagebrush communities, setting off a rapid expansion of cheatgrass and other invasive grasses that degrade wildlife habitat.

The first step in a reseeding project is to treat the invasive annual grasses. To that end, herbicide treatments to knock back cheatgrass were completed on a portion of the project in the spring with additional areas planned for herbicide treatment this fall. This will give the new seedlings a competitive edge. New fences will also protect seedlings from grazing until the vegetation is established.

Seeds were purchased in March 2010 from twelve vendors. A mix of shrubs and perennial grasses, including Wyoming big sagebrush, will be planted by drill seeding, harrowing, and aerial seeding. Drill seeding is scheduled for mid-September, followed by aerial seeding in early October and harrowing in mid-October 2010.

The ARRA contract of \$886,031 is supporting contract workers and the local economy. Local contractors received some of the work and non local contractors are purchasing fuel, food and lodging in local communities while completing the work.

Restoration of this area will improve habitat for sage-grouse, mule deer, pygmy rabbit and pronghorn. It will also improve overall watershed health, reduce the incidence of catastrophic fires in cheatgrass-dominated areas and reduce erosion.

The BLM's partners include the Nevada Department of Wildlife and Nevada Muley's. Although not part of the ARRA contract, they have assisted with projects that complement the contract work.



Volunteers plant 3,000 Wyoming big sagebrush seedlings in the Rooster's Comb area, which is crucial deer winter range, in March, 2010.

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U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

