

The National Fire Plan

Bureau of Land Management Accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2001



“I am firmly committed to a process called the Four C’s: they are consultation, cooperation, communication -- all in the service of conservation.”

- Secretary Gale A. Norton

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The National Fire Plan

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In 2000, President Clinton asked the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to provide recommendations on how to reduce the impacts of fire on rural communities and ensure sufficient firefighting resources in the future.

The Secretaries published a report, also known as the President's Report. The efforts to implement the President's report have collectively become known as the National Fire Plan. This plan outlined five key points:

- Firefighting
- Hazardous fuel reduction
- Rehabilitation and restoration
- Community assistance
- Accountability

Accountability can be demonstrated by what the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) accomplished in the areas of firefighting, rehabilitation and restoration, hazardous fuel reduction and community assistance.

Firefighting

Workforce

The Department of the Interior (DOI) was funded at the full readiness level in fiscal year 2001. As a result, the BLM was better able to respond to initial attack incidents efficiently, effectively, and safely.

The BLM hired 3,336 firefighters as temporary, career-seasonal, and permanent employees, which represents about 81 percent of its target (see Table 1).

Firefighting		
Workforce - Temporary, Career-Seasonal and Permanent Positions Hired by State	Target	Actual Hired
Alaska	484	363
Arizona	201	148
California	400	290
Colorado	213	149
Eastern States	20	19
Idaho	571	590
Montana	231	166
New Mexico	162	126
Nevada	483	352
Oregon	499	431
Utah	290	215
Wyoming	153	134
Other (NIFC, NBC, NSTC, NTC, WO, NHRMC)	421	362
Total	4,128	3,345 (81%)

Table 1 Workforce target and actual number hired by state.

Equipment

The BLM has 49 of the 62 pieces of new equipment (engines helicopters, airtankers, dozers, and water tenders) currently in place. The outstanding pieces are on order (see Table 2).

Equipment (Heavy engine = Hvy Eng; Light Helicopters = Lt Heli; Air Attack Platforms = Air Atk; Single Engine Air Tanker = SEAT; Dozers = DZR; Water Tenders = Wtr Tdr)												
Type of Equip.	Target						Actual					
State ▼	Hvy Eng.	Lt Heli	Air Atk	SEAT	DZR	Wtr Tdr	Hvy Eng.	Lt Heli	Air Atk	SEAT	DZR	Wtr
Alaska	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arizona	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
California	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colorado	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	21	0	1	1	1	4	16	0	1	1	1	4
Montana	2	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0
New Mexico	0	0	0	.5	0	0	0	0	0	.5	0	0
Nevada	4	1	1	1	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	0
Oregon	7	0	1	.5	1	1	6	0	1	.5	1	0
Utah	4	1	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0
Wyoming	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Sub-Total	40	3	5	4	3	7	30	3	5	4	3	4
Totals							62					
							49					

Table 2 Types of equipment targeted and in place by state.

Research and Technology Development

Funding for the Joint Fire Science Program doubled as a result of the 2001 appropriation and the National Fire Plan. This funding will help federal wildland agencies improve firefighting technology, rehabilitation and recovery efforts, fuels management, and community protection and capability.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction

The BLM had many successes in hazardous fuel reduction work on projects implemented jointly with states, tribes, and other partners.

Hazardous Fuel

The BLM planned to treat 269,000 acres of hazardous fuel. The agency completed 430 hazardous fuel projects, treating 215,388 acres. Nearly 75 percent of the projects were prescribed fires (see Table 3). In addition, the BLM awarded contracts for projects that would result in an additional 15,800 acres. This will increase the total to 231,188 acres or 88 percent of the original target.



Hazardous Fuel Reduction				
Number of Acres Treated by Mechanical and Prescribed Fire Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI)	Target for Mechanical & Rx Fire	WUI	Non-WUI	Total Actual Acres Treated
Alaska	30,000	82	40	122
Arizona	29,064	26	19,764	19,790
California	10,616	1,582	3,991	5,573
Colorado	20,143	12,603	5,475	18,078
Eastern States	5	0	5	5
Idaho	86,006	34,082	58,475	92,557
Montana	10,150	4,094	6,201	10,295
Nevada	45,000	1,249	16,229	17,478
New Mexico	19,756	2,286	10,461	12,747
Oregon	60,000	36,084	50,035	86,119
Utah	20,701	5,321	23,038	28,359
Wyoming	28,800	1,181	21,674	22,855
Totals	360,241	98,590	215,388	313,978

Table 3 Number of acres treated for hazardous fuel reduction.

Wildland Fire Use

Resource management objectives were met on 47 lightning-ignited fires (134,701 acres) in accordance with approved land management plans.

Wildland Urban Interface

The BLM targeted 125,000 acres to be treated by prescribed fire in the wildland urban interface (WUI). A total of 225 projects were completed and 98,590 acres were treated. The BLM also awarded contracts for an additional 29,450 acres that when completed will result in a total of 128,040 acres treated or 103 percent of the original target.



A Look to the Future

The BLM strives to uphold its mission to:

- mitigate threats to the safety of communities in the wildland urban interface;
- protect, enhance, restore, and maintain habitats that are critical for endangered, threatened, or sensitive plant or animal species; and,
- restore fire to its natural role in ecosystems.

Projects planned in fiscal year 2002 include 125,000 acres of wildland urban interface treatments, 275,000 acres of hazardous fuel treatments, and 625 wildland urban interface risk assessments, mitigation plan, and projects.

Rehabilitation and Restoration

Much of the rehabilitation and restoration work is multi-year projects, with immediate site stabilization followed by restoration of native vegetation.

The BLM targeted 863,077 acres for fiscal year 2001 and accomplished 893,238 acres (see Table 4).

Rehabilitation and Restoration		
Acres Treated	Target	Actual
Alaska	Did not participate	
Arizona	Did not participate	
California (97%)	5,666	5,506
Colorado (87%)	15,776	13,781
Idaho (90%)	418,436	375,075
Montana (567%)	2,043	11,578
Nevada (118%)	317,984	374,177
New Mexico	Did not participate	
Oregon (107%)	50,593	54,009
Utah (84%)	41,600	35,048
Wyoming (219%)	10,979	24,064
Total	863,077	893,238

Table 4 Target and actual acres treated for rehabilitation and restoration.

Community Assistance

Rural Fire Assistance



The 2001 Appropriation established \$10 million for a Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) program. The program assists rural fire departments with training, equipment purchase, and prevention activities to increase firefighter safety and fire protection capabilities, enhance protection in the WUI, and increase coordination among local, state, tribal, and federal firefighting resources.

The BLM received \$5.9 million to assist rural fire departments in the vicinity of agency land. All of the funds were distributed to rural fire departments that work with the BLM (see Table 5).

Community Assistance		
Rural Fire Assistance	Amount Allocated	Actual Amount Awarded
Arizona	\$410,000	\$410,000
California	\$300,000	\$300,000
Colorado	\$550,000	\$550,000
Idaho	\$850,000	\$850,000
Montana	\$720,000	\$720,000
Nevada	\$850,000	\$849,000
New Mexico	\$320,000	\$320,000
Oregon	\$850,000	\$850,000
Utah	\$760,000	\$760,000
Wyoming	\$347,000	\$347,000
Total	\$5,957,000	\$5,956,000

Table 5 Amount of money allocated to each state for rural fire assistance.

Highlights

- The BLM hired more than 3,000 firefighters; most of which are entry-level forestry and range aids or technicians assigned to firefighter positions.
- There was a target for 62 new pieces of equipment. There are 49 currently in place and the remainder are on order.
- The BLM overshot its target for restoration and rehabilitation by more than 30,000 acres.
- Hazardous fuel reduction efforts were challenged this year by severe drought conditions, extreme fire activity and aviation restrictions. Yet, the BLM accomplished nearly 87 percent of its target.
- The Rural Fire Assistance Program was very successful this year. More than \$5.9 million was allocated for BLM, and \$5.9 million was distributed to rural fire departments throughout BLM states.

The National Fire Plan will allow us to manage fire better, reduce the risks of wildland fire to communities, and restore health to forests and rangelands.

Success Stories

View *BLM Snapshots Successful Hazardous Fuels Reduction Projects in the Wildland Urban Interface* on the BLM intranet web site at <http://web.blm.gov/internal/fire/snapshots.htm>.

Cooperative Work, College Style

A fresh approach to the issue of wildland-urban fire in the west was taken during the year with the addition of a group of bright, talented and energetic college students. The 50 student interns, many from eastern colleges, were part of the Fire Education Corps that was created through the BLM partnership with the Student Conservation Association.

The group worked throughout the summer to help home owners learn how to protect property from the threat of wildland fire. The work done by the students was accomplished with a \$325,000 grant through the National Fire Plan. Collectively, the students, working in seven teams, canvassed nearly 5,400 homes in 54 rural communities in Idaho and Nevada. They completed FIREWISE based evaluations of almost 1,000 as a result of their canvassing work. During the summer, they participated in public events, made media appearances, handed out fire prevention materials, and helped produce public service announcements for radio, television, and print outlets.

One of the keys to success for the program was the widespread and strong acceptance from home owners and the public to the young college students, which paved the way for carrying prevention messages to communities and property at risk.

Cooperation with the SCA and the interaction of the students with agencies, local communities, and rural fire departments proved to be a positive method to accomplish the BLM goal for fire prevention and to meet Secretary Norton's direction in a unique manner.

Scouts Get Wise With Firewise

Removing debris from the roof, using fire resistant roofing materials and placing landscape plants a safe distance from your house are all good Firewise practices. These are also some of the lessons learned by Boy Scouts at the BLM Firewise Challenge at the 2001 National Boy Scout Jamboree.

The 2001 Jamboree was held at Fort A. P. Hill from July 22 to August 1. Located outside of Fredericksburg, Virginia, the Jamboree was host to over 20,000 Boy Scouts from across the nation and 26 foreign countries.



SCA Fire Education Corps member Jeanette Meleen is from Thibodaux, Louisiana. She attends Loyola University and plans to become a teacher.



Venetia Gempler, Office of Fire and Aviation, explains the Firewise Challenge to a group of obyscouts.



Boyscouts remove debris and put on a Firewise roof.

Along the Conservation Trail, as part of the Bureau of Land Management exhibit, was the Firewise Challenge. Using posters, and an interactive session, scouts learned about Firewise practices, and put those lessons into use.

Developed as an outreach and educational tool by staff at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), the heart of the Challenge was a model house with replaceable roofs, artificial grass, tile and landscaping plants that could be moved. Groups of scouts were given two minutes to put Firewise techniques into practice

around the house. Among the methods emphasized during the exercise were using grass and tiles to create fuel breaks around a home, the location and spacing of plants, putting screens on chimneys and burn barrels, and selecting fire resistant roofing materials. A smoke generator inside the house was used if the house did not pass inspection.

Posters explaining firewise principles, the role of fire in nature, fire prevention and living with fire combined with the house activity to create a great learning experience. After an introduction, groups moved on to the main activity - to make a house survivable using Firewise techniques. After the exercise, the scouts were asked to explain why they made certain choices like roofing materials and plant locations.

The messages and the hands-on exercise really connected with the scouts. Groups were going through the exhibit up to the last minute of the last day. Some scouts came back with their friends and went through the Challenge a second time.

The Firewise exhibit was staffed by employees from the National Interagency Fire Center, and BLM offices in Arizona, New Mexico and California.

BLM/Project Learning Tree Fire Education Initiative

BLM and Project Learning Tree have entered into an exciting new partnership to provide increased opportunities to teach students about wildland fire along with its role in ecosystems. The partnership will also provide training on fire wise safety for communities. The cooperative agreement was finalized in the late spring of 2001. A primary goal is to use Project Learning Tree as a catalyst and network for interactive, hands-on, and locally driven programs to engage teachers, students and local communities in wildland fire education and activities.

The initial phase of implementation of the BLM/PLT Fire Education Initiative has been both active and successful, laying the groundwork for further teacher training to come in the months ahead.

Formal implementation of the initiative began at PLT's International Coordinators Conference in Fish Camp, California on April 18-21, 2001. At the conference, all participants were introduced to the overall initiative in a one-hour general session. A follow-up one-hour concurrent session was also offered for any participants wanting to learn more about the *Burning Issues* CD. Finally, PLT State Coordinators (or their representatives) from the nine states directly involved in implementing this initiative (Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming), met to discuss the initiative.

In early May, the initiative was featured in the spring issue of PLT's national newsletter, The Branch. With a distribution of approximately 250,000 educators involved with PLT as either coordinators, facilitators, natural resource professionals, or educators who have received training in the use of PLT materials, this was felt to be a cost-effective way to inform the majority of the PLT community about the details of this initiative. A companion article summarizing the accomplishments of the initiative to date, will be featured in the spring 2002 edition of The Branch.

June, July, and August saw the beginning steps of implementing both facilitator and teacher training in the nine primary states involved in the initiative. The nine primary states report that, as of the end of summer 2001, they have successfully trained all those in their respective states identified as part of their "lead teams" - those individuals who will be primarily responsible for establishing and conducting Fire Education workshops between now and the summer of 2002.

State Coordinators and designated facilitators from each state attended the Wildland Fire Education Leadership Workshop at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho from August 28-30, 2001.

As of September 15, a total of ten facilitator or teacher workshops have been conducted by the states responsible for implementing this initiative. This represents a total of 162 educators trained, representing 102 different communities in which those participants live or teach. Of those 162 educators, 64 were trained as facilitators (able to train others in a Fire Education workshop) and 98 were trained as teachers (those who will use this information with those they teach). The goal is to include 1,000 educators for the program.

Burning Issues

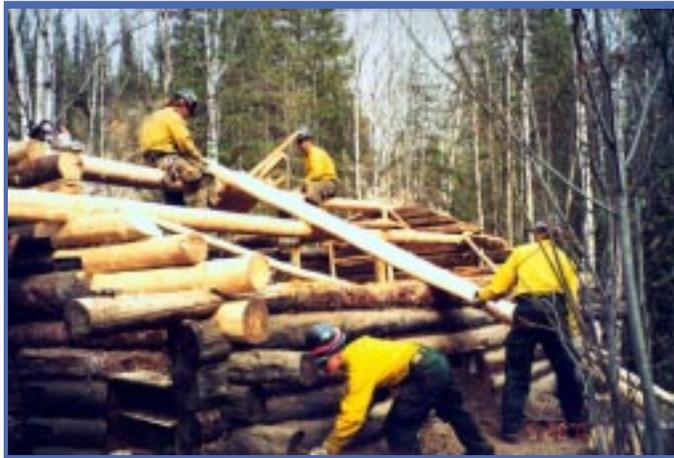
The *Burning Issues* CD is a computer based program produced by the Science Education Department of Florida State University in cooperation with BLM. It is a highly interactive and entertaining education product that puts students at the controls as they attempt to keep destructive fires from spreading, learn when prescribed fire is appropriate, and learn to protect homes and communities from wildfire. The CD also includes four "Eco-ventures" illustrating the impact of wildland fire on four distinct ecosystem types.

The *Burning Issues* CD is an approach that is finding wide acceptance and endorsement from educators throughout the country.

Alaska

Long Bar Cabin

The Long Bar cabin has stood on a bend of the Fortymile National Wild and Scenic River since the early years of the last century. Built by a miner who came north for the Klondike Gold Rush, it was recently declared eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. But the years have not been kind to the cabin. Part of the sod roof had collapsed, chinking had fallen from the walls, and the forest had closed in, creating a fire hazard.



Alaska Fire Service fire crews install a new roof.

Last summer a crew of firefighters and a carpenter from the Alaska Fire Service flew in to the remote site 200 miles southeast of Fairbanks to attend to the ailing cabin. The firefighters spent several days dismantling and replacing the roof, restoring the walls, and cutting a swath through the forest around the cabin, thinning trees and removing flammable materials. “We set it up so in the event of a fire, a small crew could come in and quickly defend the cabin,” said Pat O’Brien, superintendent of the Chena Hot Shot Crew.



A firefighter works to restore the cabin door.

As they prepared for their flight out, the firefighters tidied the cabin’s interior and packed up 1,600 pounds of trash for removal by the helicopter. With its new roof keeping out the rain and snow, the Long Bar cabin should provide river travelers with a taste of the Fortymile’s fascinating past for years to come.

'Great Land' projects benefit Alaska

Tanacross is a Native village and corporation located in the Tanana River valley in Alaska's interior region. BLM has fire management and protection responsibility for the lands under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.



Village of Tanacross, Alaska

The area for fuels treatment has a long history of Native use and occupancy. It currently is surrounded by a dense stand of white spruce pole timber with transition to dense black spruce. This has high potential for crown-type fires.



Homes and office at risk to wildland fire.

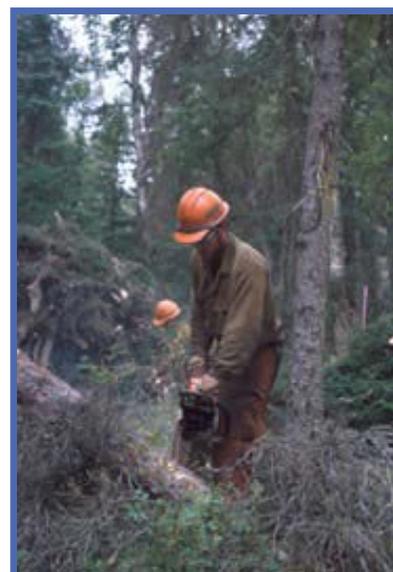
A multi-year treatment project will provide employment for local village residents with reducing fuel loading during the balance of 2001, then continuing work during the 2002 fiscal year with prescribed fire to remove the slash generated from the fuels work. At this stage through a series of meetings with local people, Native leadership and state government, there is strong support for the project. Hand work is underway for the first stage.

Campbell Tract: Wildlands in the Heart of Alaska's Major City

Campbell Tract is 730 unique wildland acres in the middle of Anchorage, Alaska with a population of 297,000. Immediately adjacent to the tract is a significant wildland-urban interface. Managed by the BLM Anchorage District, the land receives a major amount of recreational use by residents, and any changes or activities generate a high degree of public interest.

This season, crews from BLM's Alaska Fire Service enhanced the defensible space surrounding the facilities, and created a fuel break on a portion of the tract infested with spruce bark beetles.

The Campbell Tract work is underway now with good community support and has been well accepted as a vital urban fuel reduction project by BLM.



Sawyer works to remove invested trees.



Local fire department and BLM fire crews work jointly on public education.

Arizona

Cooperative Effort – Keeping Black Canyon City Fire Safe

Black Canyon City Fire Department and BLM Phoenix Field Office will be working together to educate Black Canyon City Residents about the importance of protecting their homes from the risk of wildland fires in their neighborhoods. Over the next few months the Phoenix Field Office and the Black Canyon City Fire Department will be conducting

house to house inspections of over 2,000 Black Canyon City residents, checking for various fire hazards (e.g. brush, trees, tall dry grass, propane tanks, etc.), devising a plan for fuel reduction and in the final stage, with the assistance of the community, carry out the task of eliminating or cutting back potential hazards such as brush, trees, grass, and at the same time educating the community on the importance of keeping their homes fire safe.

Kids Enjoy Visit to the BLM

“This is the best field trip we’ve ever been on!” This was one of the many comments Safford Christian School first and second grade students had after they visited the Safford Field Office on August 21, 2001. Diane Drobka, public affairs specialist, welcomed the students and then introduced them to the BLM. She explained how public land is used and the resources used to manage the it. She also gave them an overview of the types of jobs within the BLM.



Drobka then took the students out to the Fire Shop to learn about wildland firefighting. Roy Draper’s tour of the fire cache allowed students to see the variety of equipment used by firefighters and he let them try on a hard hat. Firefighter Marco Coronado then demonstrated how an engine can spray foam and how it is used to suppress a fire. The students enjoyed their day at the Safford Field Office and learned a lot about the BLM.

Prescribed Fire - Mimicking Mother Nature

In late June 2001, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Phoenix Field Office mimicked Mother Nature by igniting nearly 6,000 acres of the Agua Fria National Monument. Lighting fires in Arizona during the summer months has a similar effect as the pre-monsoon lightning fires. Fire promotes a healthy grassland ecosystem by improving the quality of grasses for wildlife and reducing the number of non-native plant species.



The Phoenix Field Office worked with the Tonto and Prescott National Forests, the Arizona State Land Department, Black Canyon City Fire Department, and the Arizona Department of Transportation to make this prescribed fire a success. During this burn, hundreds of motorists along Interstate 17 stopped to ask about the fire, which gave employees the opportunity to interact with the public, explain the purpose of the prescribed burn, and provide daily updates.

Resource specialists and fire managers discussed strategy, safety concerns, public information needs every morning. Firefighters patrolled the area to make sure no flare ups occurred at night.

Long-term monitoring of the area will provide resource specialists and fire managers with information to help with future prescribed burn planning.

California

Protecting Giants

Just west of Sequoia National Park, BLM owns four groves of giant sequoia monarch trees on 444 acres on Case Mountain. The Kern Valley Hotshot Crew, working out of the Regional Fire Management Office in Bakersfield, spent two days in September 2001 working in the Case Mountain Giant Sequoia Grove Complex thinning out young white fir and incense cedar trees from beneath the crowns of 52 large giant sequoia trees. The removal of these green fuel ladders that were growing directly under the large sequoia crowns will greatly reduced the risk of basal and crown damage resulting from wildfire.



Crews from Kerns Valley BLM at work.

To date, 160 large giant sequoia trees on Case Mountain have had slash removed from their bases by these crews. Returning fire to this ecosystem through prescribed burning is slated for 2002-3 after the remaining sequoia monarch trees have been safeguarded by the successful completion of this type of fuels reduction work.

Fire Back Where It Belongs

On October 16, 2001, the Alturas Field Office continued work on the Popcorn Prescribed Burn, burning a 70+ acre block in a mosaic of fuels including mixed conifers and old-growth chaparral. A combination of heavy fuel loading, a smoke sensitive area, and the ability to hit the prescriptive window has made this project a difficult one to complete. Originally begun about 3 years ago, this hazardous fuel reduction project is continuing with two primary goals:



Alturas BLM conducting prescribed burn.

1. To reduce the unnaturally high fuel accumulations found in the area by returning fire to the ecosystem.
2. To improve wildlife habitat by stimulating new growth on decadent plants.

This recent burn successfully met these goals and additional blocks will be burned in the coming weeks if conditions permit. The project occurred on BLM lands, with other agencies providing assistance including California Department of Forestry and California Department of Fish & Game.

Prescribed Fire Helping Restore Great Basin Ecosystem

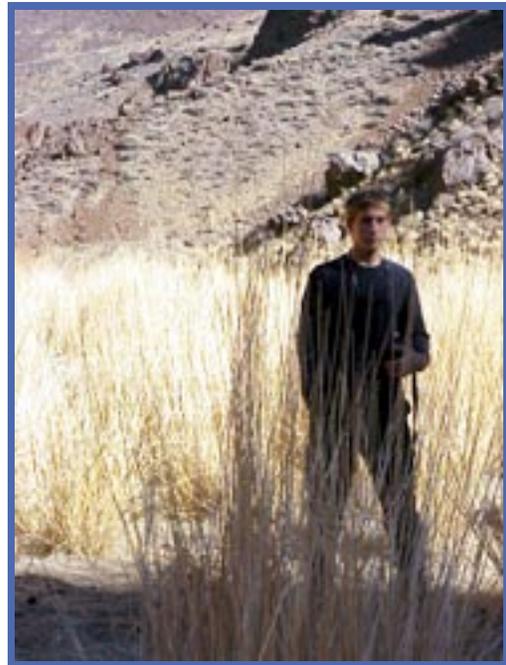
Restoring a portion of the Great Basin ecosystem of northern Nevada has been the focus of the High Rock 2 hazardous fuels reduction project. The project, being conducted by the BLM Surprise Field Office, has been an on-going effort to reintroduce wildfire to the area in an effort to improve plant species diversity, improve big horn sheep habitat, and reduce heavy fuel loading of sage.

A 50-acre prescribed burn was completed recently. The burn will stimulate new and vigorous growth of native plants, including willows and Basin Wildrye, creating a healthier ecosystem.

Fire effects similar to those from prescribed burns conducted three years ago are expected from the recent burn.



The Surprise Fuels Module in action, creating a line in preparation for a burn.



Fire crew member, Alex Irving, standing next to native Basin Wildrye, a result of a prescribed burn three years ago.



Dramatic regrowth of willow after being burned.

Colorado

Reducing Fuels in the Wildland Urban Interface in Southwestern Colorado

On a 50-acre tract of classic Wildland Urban Interface area in southwestern Colorado, the Montrose Interagency Fire Management Program and the Colorado State Forest Service are working in conjunction with the Log Hill Fire Department to reduce fuels and demonstrate to local landowners the positive results of mitigation treatments. This particular brush cutter project is designed to reduce fuels along County Road 1, which is the primary access route that winds up through a canyon on a steep escarpment at the south end of Log Hill Village. In addition, this project will include mitigation around homes at the top of the escarpment to model for homeowners that well-planned thinning and pruning around a home can be both effective and attractive.



Brush cutter obtained under fire plan grants ready to work.



Interagency managers and private land owners review brush work.

These treatments are all being conducted on private lands. The project funding and the purchase of the Fecon Bull Hog Brush Cutter (locally known as the “cedar eater”) comes from the federal and state grants made available through the National Fire Plan. This is just one of many Wildland Urban Interface projects funded by federal and state grants in and around the 1800-acre Log Hill community.

Over the past 8 months, the Montrose Interagency Fire Program and the Colorado State Forest Service have worked closely with the Log Hill Volunteer Fire Department and the Southwestern Colorado Red Cross Volunteers trained in Firewise principles and techniques. Joint demonstration projects are educating homeowners about the threat from wildland fire. Some entrenched skeptics are being won

over. For example, one family has a home right along the edge of the escarpment. Every New Year's day for the last 11 years they have performed the ritual of tossing their dried-out Christmas tree off their front deck into the canyon below, believing that by "recycling" the tree they are improving the ecosystem. They have now signed on to clear a large amount of the vegetation around their home, including many of the trees that grow (or have accumulated) along the edge of the escarpment.

Sullivan Creek Prescribed Burn a Success

A prescribed burn was conducted on October 15 – 17, 2001, about 4 miles northwest of the small community of Hillside, at the base of the beautiful Sangre De Cristo mountains in south-central Colorado. The Royal Gorge Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management, in conjunction with the San Carlos Ranger District, San Isabel National Forest, successfully completed another phase of the Sullivan Creek Hazardous Fuels Treatment project. This multi-year project which began in 1998, not only uses prescribed fire as a treatment tool, but dense stands of Gambel oak have been mechanically cut or 'roller-chopped' on several sites within the 1,200 acre project area.

Mixed conifer, pinon-juniper and Gambel oak plant communities adjacent to and throughout the Eagle Peak subdivision have not burned in a hundred years or more. The entire project area has been a fire waiting to happen, not only because of historic fire suppression efforts, but because the area is prone to frequent lightning storms, and the risk of wildfires from hunting and other recreation uses is high. So, the primary objective of this project is to reduce hazardous fuels density in the mixed conifer and Gambel oak adjacent to the subdivision, thereby reducing the potential for catastrophic, stand-replacing wildfire.

Another benefit of the project is to improve elk and cattle forage production and quality, and to shift elk distribution from private lands and pastures to public lands. To assist BLM, the Rocky

Mountain Elk Foundation and the Habitat Partnership Program have provided financial support for various phases of the project.



Sullivan Creek prescribed burn does its planned work.

The most recent 3-day phase of the Sullivan Creek project burned an estimated 350 acres of forested and shrub habitats on public and private lands. This is not the first time a fire has been ignited adjacent to the Eagle Peak subdivision, and private landowners understand that with fire comes smoke. While they may not be very happy with the smoke,

the majority of private landowners in the area understand the importance of the project and are very supportive of the prescribed burn. One resident most affected by several days of smoke said, "It's a small price to pay for being able to live out here."



Smoke in rural subdivisions is an issue.

Counties Plan for Wildfire

Twenty-two Colorado counties are developing comprehensive fire plans with the help of Bureau of Land Management grants to five individual counties and three organizations serving multiple counties. When completed the county fire plans will guide decisions made by cooperating landowners and agencies about wildland fire management. Seamless fire management across administrative, jurisdictional, and ownership boundaries will be easier.

The Colorado legislature in 2000 changed the county sheriffs' wildland fire responsibilities from prevention and suppression to management. (In Colorado, the sheriffs provide fire protection on non-Federal lands.) The change substantially increased the complexity of the sheriffs' jobs. Now they may engage in a whole range of fire management actions including hazardous fuels reductions, fire education, and wildland urban interface wildfire preparedness.

The same law authorized and encouraged counties to prepare plans that would help coordinate fire management. The legislation provided a foundation for seamless, interagency fire management. The BLM has completed fire management for all lands that the agency manages in Colorado. The National Fire Plan requires close coordination and cooperation between Federal agencies and local authorities and landowners. Recognizing that a comprehensive, countywide fire management plan covering all lands including Federal lands meets these needs, the BLM made financial, material, and technical assistance available to support county efforts.



BLM and county planners coordinate on fire plan.

Planning is well underway. On November 26, Colorado county fire planners will meet in Colorado Springs just before the winter meeting of Colorado Counties, Inc. (An association of Colorado County Commissioners.) CCI, the BLM, and the Colorado State Forest Service are sponsoring the planners' meeting. The first comprehensive county fire plan drafts should be ready early in 2002.



Encroachment of young trees into Deer Haven.

Deer Haven Ranch

The Royal Gorge Field Office (BLM), in Canon City, Colorado completed the Deer Haven Mechanical Fuels Treatment Project in August of 2001.

The project area covered approximately 410 acres where mechanical treatments were used to reduce hazardous fuels that had accumulated over many years. The project was also designed to improve habitat for elk, mule deer and turkey in addition to improving forage conditions for livestock.

Mechanical treatment in the numerous meadow complexes in the Deer Haven area removed young ponderosa pine, pinyon pine, juniper and white fir trees that had invaded the meadows. Maintenance of the meadows insures that fuel breaks are in place in the event of a catastrophic fire and helps reduce ladder fuels in the understory. Transplants of saleable ponderosa pines were removed prior to mechanical treatment. The treatment consisted of using hand-held chainsaws to cut and slash the undesirable vegetation. Additional mechanical treatments and prescribed burning are planned in the future to continue with the fuels treatment program in this area.

The BLM acquired the 4,900 acre Deer Haven Ranch from the Mellon Foundation and the Conservation Fund several years ago. The two organizations purchased the Deer Haven Ranch from the Resolution Trust Corporation and donated the land to the BLM to provide significant wildlife, riparian and wetland habitat, recreation opportunities, protect scenic quality and to improve stewardship and access to adjoining public land. The development of adjacent private lands into subdivisions has necessitated increased fuels reduction efforts on the ranch.



Site after fuels treatment.

American Red Cross Teams with BLM

American Red Cross volunteers are working with the Colorado State Forest Service in western Colorado to promote community wildfire preparedness. The Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service provide funds, training support, and other assistance. Trained Volunteers help landowners decide on wildfire hazard mitigation and teach wildland urban interface residents about wildland fire and how to live safely with it.

Red Cross volunteers trained at Cedaridge, Colorado in the basics of FIREWISE landscaping and building construction and community-based fire education methods. They shadowed a state forester to learn more about how to help residents prepare their families, homes, and landscapes to survive wildfire and now are working in several interface communities.

The experiences of these Volunteers are the basis for training curriculum development in community wildfire preparedness and hazard mitigation education. Red Cross will use the curriculum to train Volunteers in Colorado and elsewhere.

The Bureau of Land Management provides funding and expertise to Red Cross for curriculum development and volunteer logistical support. BLM Fire Mitigation Education Specialists, state foresters and volunteers coordinate work on federal lands and neighboring communities supporting local education efforts. The BLM and USFS provide funding to the Colorado State Forest Service to help finance a Red Cross program coordinator for education efforts in the wildland urban interface.

Red Cross works with neighborhood leadership and the sheriff and rural fire departments. Volunteers serve as the “arms and legs” of the fire agencies. They organize community education meetings where agency specialists teach fire behavior, fire ecology, and advise on hazard mitigation. They organize hazard mitigation demonstrations, monitor progress, watch for problems and help find solutions, and do other things needed to reduce the wildfire threat on a neighborhood scale. The success of the program has spawned requests from American Red Cross chapters and fire managers in other states for training and assistance in establishing similar programs.



Red Cross volunteers receive training to help residents in the wildland urban interface.

Eastern States

Juniper Inlet Natural Area

Eighty six acres surrounding the picturesque Jupiter lighthouse in northern Palm Beach County, Florida reverted to the Bureau of Land Management in July, 1996, after over 100 years of use by the U.S. Coast Guard. The BLM is now working with Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management, the South Florida Water Management District and other local partners to manage this urban “island” of scrub, mangrove, and hardwood tropical hammock. This tract is the fourth largest Florida scrub tract remaining in the County.



BLM's Jupiter Lighthouse tract.



Public notice about Jupiter Lighthouse.

Sensitive vegetation communities and the presence of 18 special status species prompted designation of the northern 54 acres of the tract as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern in 1996, a first for BLM in the east. A plan was developed with public input to guide management of the tract for the next ten years. In the upland scrub, this included the reintroduction of fire, an important element for many of the scrub-dependent special status plants. It also included an aggressive exotic species removal program.

The goal of the first controlled burn was to reduce the possibility of a destructive wildfire which would threaten properties in the area, and to improve habitat for wildlife. The initial burn encompassed 5.3 acres in the northeast portion of the Jupiter tract. A second prescribed burn is now planned and is expected to take place early in FY 2002. Each year this site has been selected as a National Public Lands Day site, and over 100 local students have come out and assisted with exotic plant removal (such as Australian pine).



Initial prescribed burn site.

Idaho

The Hulls Gulch Environmental Education/Wildland-Urban Interface Project

In August 1996, more than 15,000 acres across the Boise Front burned. Hundreds of homes in the wildland-urban interface were threatened including an inholding surrounded by Boise City's Hulls Gulch Preserve, a protected 270-acre property that provides a public gateway to the heavily used Boise Front.



In 1997, the City of Boise acquired the 20-acre property from the McCord family. It includes about two acres of landscaped area around the home. From the outset, the city's vision has been for the McCord site to serve as a community outdoor lab and environmental education center, particularly due to its location in the wildland-urban interface and ease of public access.

After the severe fire season of 2000, the McCord site was used to develop a public model home that emphasized living safely in a wildland fire environment, wildland fuels management, and fire ecology.

When completed the facility will provide indoor and outdoor classroom and meeting space to educate audiences ranging from school children to adult neighborhood associations and other community groups. The site, only minutes from the National Interagency Fire Center and the Capitol building, is a wonderful educational opportunity to showcase wildland-urban interface facility.

The McCord project provides an excellent chance to create interagency, community, and business partnerships. Idaho BLM, the City of Boise, Ada County, Ridge to Rivers Council, Boise Parks and Recreation and the Treasure Valley Fire Prevention Co-op are working together on this project to provide funds, expertise, and labor. Other groups and organizations also have expressed an interest in participating in the project.



The existing house and surrounding buildings will be redesigned. Once complete, the exterior of the facility will appear as a typical urban interface home with appropriate landscaping. Inside, however, will house a large classroom facility, meeting space and offices. Nature trails, interpretive signing, and an orchard with sample fire resistant plants surround the center. The McCord project is expected to be completed sometime in 2003.

Montana

Hearst Subdivision, South Dakota

A Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) fuels reduction crew from the Lower Brule, Winnebago, and Santee Reservations recently helped BLM’s South Dakota Field Office on a cooperative urban interface fuel reduction project near the Hearst Subdivision in Lead, South Dakota.

The BIA crew worked with other crews from Lead and the South Dakota Division of Wildland Fire Suppression. The Lawrence County Sheriff provided several trustees to deliver lunches and water to the crews. Trustees also operated a small chipper provided by the city of Lead. Crews worked in three project areas during a two-week period:

- A cut and pile project was completed next to structures and a cemetery on Lead property.
- Thick pine regeneration was cut in a power-line row directly below structures on the west Hearst. Black Hills Power and Light then had a contract chipper complete the project.
- A cut and pile project on BLM just west of the subdivision was completed.

This was the beginning of a substantial cooperative effort to reduce the fuel hazard around the Hearst Subdivision. BLM will continue to treat fuels in the remainder of a 125 acre area by using commercial and additional pre-commercial treatments. Other partners around Hearst include Black Hills Power and Light, Homestake Mining Company, and individual lot owners.



Black Hill Power and Light Company helped with this project.



Project site after the work was completed.



Fuel buildup before clearing right-of-way.

Lower Blackfoot River Corridor, Western Montana

Montana's Missoula Field Office completed fuel augmentation work this summer for a prescribed burn in March or early April 2002 in the Lower Blackfoot River Corridor. This area qualifies as an intermix community where structures are scattered throughout a wildland area. The area is also a heavily used recreation area. About 25,000-30,000 people recreate in this area during the summer months.

The objective of the project is to reduce fuel loadings (dense overstocked Douglas-fir understory) and fire severity within Ponderosa Pine stands. Historically, these stands had low fuel loadings and higher frequency/low severity fires. Restoring fire into these areas will aid in recreating the historic stand structure (i.e. large diameter pine with intermittent openings containing pockets of seedling/sapling ponderosa pine.) Another objective of the project is to improve big game winter range by stimulating shrub species, such as serviceberry, willow, and ceantohus.



Typical Ponderosa Pine stand in the Lower Blackfoot River corridor.



Project area prior to treatment.

Without fuel augmentation and burning in this area, ladder fuels and the risk of a catastrophic wildfire was increasing. Reducing fuels in these stands and maintaining the fuel loadings with periodic prescribed burns, will decrease the potential for a future wildfire to escape.

BLM, County Conservation District Sign \$100,000 Agreement to Aid Homeowners with Fire Prevention

by JACQUES RUTTEN, News-Argus Staff Writer (Lewistown, Montana) (local news used with permission)

Nearing the end of yet another devastating year of drought with the constant threat of fire looming large all across the region, the Fergus County Conservation District and the Bureau of Land Management signed an agreement last week to aid private landowners in reducing fire potential on their property.

The agreement is part of the National Fire Plan and is supported by a \$100,000 grant. The bulk of the money will be used for cost-sharing non-commercial thinning projects on private land.

“We cannot eliminate or prevent all fires,” said Shannon Iverson, fire management planner for the Lewistown BLM office. “But we can take steps to reduce the severity, intensity and spread by thinning the forests, creating fuel breaks and defensible space around structures such as residences and outbuildings.”

In response to the terrible losses from wildfire last year, Congress embarked on the National Fire Plan to thin excess fuels and improve forest health in order to reduce the catastrophic effects of fire.

“We have to get some of the fuels out of the forest or we’re going to have another disaster like we’ve had in our parks and in the western part of the state,” said Shonny Nordland at the Fergus County Conservation District (FCFD). “The landowners know that, and I think there will be a lot of interest in this program.”

The FCFD is currently developing the application for the program and expects to have them available within a month.

All forested lands in Fergus County are eligible. However, priority is given to lands where catastrophic fire danger is the highest, such as

the Judith and Moccasin mountains and the foothills of the Snowies.

Though the bulk of the funds will be used for noncommercial thinning, Iverson said cost-share money will also be used for developing a plan for fuel reduction in more complex cases where there is a need to thin commercial-sized trees. In those situations, the value of the commercial timber would then be used to offset the cost of necessary noncommercial thinning.

The project money will not be used to clean up after, or subsidize, a logging operation. It is intended to help people accomplish pre-commercial thinning that would otherwise be uneconomical. The amount cost-shared will vary, but will not exceed 75 percent for implementation projects.

“Providing assistance to protect communities in the wildland-urban interface is an important component of the (National Fire) Plan,” said Iverson. “The special appropriation also directed BLM to focus on collaborating with local government entities and contributing to economic stability of local communities by contracting with private companies.”

Educational activities involved with the agreement include the dissemination of the “Living with Fire” brochure (included in today’s newspaper).

Additional activities are still in the planning stages, but may include workshops, demonstration tours and forest stewardship courses. Landowners can also find additional information on the Fire Wise Web site at www.firewise.org.

Shepherd -AH-Nei Area

BLM lands are adjacent to homes in an extensive rural sub-division 20 miles from Billings, Montana. The area, referred to as the Shepherd AH-Nei area, was heavily timbered with Ponderosa pine brown from several years of drought. Topography of the area is rugged and covered with dense timber. Bringing in equipment for crews was nearly impossible in order to prevent a fire from spreading.



Under these conditions, BLM used engine crews awaiting calls to fire duty this summer to thin the trees and create a “fire break.” The Miles City field office did some computer modeling and looked at the worst-case scenario. As a result, the flame length height of a fire going through this country would be about 7 feet. The fire crews selectively thinned the trees first, to make sure there was enough space between them to prevent crown fire, then limbed the trees to 7 feet, above projected flame lengths.

The new fuel break is a mile long and 200 to 350 feet wide. Piles of slash (debris) were created, and will be burned this winter. BLM may also make some of the slash available for firewood. The fuel break will not only slow or stop fires, it may allow for other uses in the future. With fewer trees, more grass will grow and more grazing may be available. In the long-term prescribed fire may be introduced to keep dangerous fuels at a reduced level.



Nevada

Student Conservation Association Volunteers Do Home Inspections

Lynne Kistler, a retired high school art teacher moved into her brand-new retirement home in the Ruby Mountains in the community of Lamoille, not far from Elko, in Northeastern Nevada last December.

Kistler did the best she could with the landscaping to create a defensible space around her new home, but every time she saw the lightning strike the too-near slopes of the Ruby Mountains she worried.

Then she was contacted by a group of young volunteers from the Student Conservation Association Fire Education Corps (SCA) who offered free home assessments for people who live in the wildland-urban interface.

“I am very much afraid of fire, and I live in dry country, so I accepted the SCA’s offer,” Kistler said. “I’m also anxious for this area to be better mapped and identified by the county.”

Three members of the Elko SCA team came out to Kistler’s house on a hot day in July to take a look around and offer a few suggestions.

One of the SCA volunteers used a hand-held device to acquire the Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates for Kistler’s house, along with the coordinates of the other homes in the area; the access roads and all fire hydrants and water sources in the area. Both the GPS coordinates and the home assessment results will be provided to local, state and federal wildland firefighting agencies.

In the event of a wildland fire, such information can be quite valuable, according to Elko SCA Team Leader Eleni Vagelatos. The GPS coordinates will make it easier for firefighters to find these homes during a fire, because existing maps of these new developments are often incomplete. The home assessments will give firefighters the defensible space information they need to protect these homes from wildland fire.

The Student Conservation Association is a national nonprofit organization that provides volunteers to assist local, state and federal agencies with conservation projects, according



Student Conservation Association volunteers review firesafe practices.



Rural home evaluated under the SCA program

to Eleni. The SCA's Fire Education Corps is a group of 50 student volunteers, working in teams, who are trained in recognizing the possible threats to homes should a wildfire occur.

Two of the seven-member SCA teams are based in Nevada: one in Elko and one in Carson City. The Nevada teams are funded as a part of the BLM's fire prevention, education and mitigation program, which was expanded as a result of the National Fire Plan.

All team members were trained in the first half of wildland firefighter Rookie School in Boise in June, and at the end of August they will return to Boise to complete their firefighter training and receive their Red Cards.

The volunteers usually go out in teams of two, and while one student interviews the landowner, the other conducts a property evaluation. Team members evaluate the structure of the building, wood piles, vegetation and landscaping, and livestock. They also assess occupant medical problems, as well as access to electricity and water.

Through the summer, the Carson City SCA team conducted 30-40 assessments per week. This was the first year for the SCA Fire Education Corps program, with only seven teams in Nevada and Idaho. Planning is already in the works for 15-20 of these teams during the summer of 2002.

National Conservation Area Benefits from Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project

The 50 acre High Rock prescribed burn was conducted in December 2000 by the Surprise Resource Area's engine and fuels crews, with assistance from other fire and resource personnel. It was located in High Rock Canyon, Nevada, which is part of the Black Rock/High Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.



The goals achieved by this burn include:

- Reduction of the fire hazard by creating fuel breaks;
- Removal of old growth sage and grasses, creating a mosaic of open and brush areas throughout the canyon complex;
- Restoration of native brush and grass species to help wildlife, and;
- Protection of historic sites.

BLM is carefully returning fire, a critical part of the ecosystem, back to High Rock Canyon. In doing so native plant species, and the wildlife that depends on them for forage, will benefit.

Partnering for Restoration

The Newland Area Restoration Project, started in 1999, is an ongoing effort which has thus far improved approximately 450 acres. Partnering with the California Deer Association, this project involves mechanical treatment of juniper. The objective of this project is to break up the continuity of the existing hazardous fuels on the site and reduce encroaching junipers to protect mahogany and aspen stands in the area.



The BLM fuels crew from the Surprise Field Office is doing the work. The photo was taken from an existing photo point and shows the dead, cut juniper in the foreground and an uncut section of junipers on the right in the background.

Indian Creek Recreation Area

BLM's Carson City Field Office has management responsibility for lands in Alpine County, California and started a fuels management program in the Indian Creek Recreation Area in 1992. The Indian Creek Recreation Area is a high use recreation area that is very important to the local communities and their recreation-based economy, and is in close proximity to the communities of Woodfords and Markleeville, California. Portions of the Indian Creek Recreation Area have burned in large wildfires in the past twenty years. Since 1992 the BLM has mechanically thinned 450 acres and conducted prescribed burns on 150 acres, treating a total of 600 acres.



The primary objective of the Indian Creek fuels management program is to reduce dangerous fuel loadings and alter fuel arrangement. But the program's other important objectives are to maintain aesthetic values, reduce dwarf mistletoe and insect pest infestations, improve the timber stand natural regeneration process, rejuvenate browse, and increase herbaceous plant production and availability.

The fuels management program at Indian Creek is ongoing. A forest thinning project is scheduled to begin in October 2001 and additional forest thinning and prescribed burning will continue in 2002.



Agency Takes a Youthful Approach to Fire Safety in West

by Tom Gorman *Los Angeles Times*

Jim Watson's mountain home near here, deep in a sea of pinyon pines, cedars and sagebrush, was about to be assessed for how well it would withstand a wildfire.

"Don't do me in," he laughed nervously as the two inspectors began their detailed tour around the home, clipboards in hand.

Nothing would escape their trained eyes, and the multitude of ways his home would be found vulnerable during this dangerous fire season left Watson a bit unsettled.

By the end of the hourlong inspection, he promised to make amends, and the inspectors wished him well. And with that, the pair of fresh-scrubbed college students—Jeremy Ray, a 20-year-old from Kentucky, and Julia Olszewski, a 22-year-old from Ohio—moved on to the next home on their list.

A few months ago, neither had any fire prevention training—and a trip west of the Mississippi was a novelty.

But as summer interns for the Student Conservation Assn., they and about 50 other college students agreed to help the Bureau of Land Management inspect homes in the mountains and foothills abutting BLM land, a task that could be poorly received coming from Uncle Sam, at least in government-unfriendly Nevada.

In Nevada, the BLM often is viewed as an adversary because the federal government dictates the land use of nearly 90% of the state. Government officials figured homeowners would be more receptive to a bunch of well-intentioned college kids in polo shirts than federal inspectors in green uniforms.

"We're helping to cross the boundaries of bureaucracy," said Brian Van Kley, a supervisor for the SCA leading six students in the Carson City area. "Homeowners around here don't necessarily want to talk to government bureaucrats, but they'll talk to us about fire dangers. They know we won't preach at them or cite them and that all we're trying to do is discuss ways to make their homes more defensible against fire.

"We are nonthreatening volunteers," he said.

And the personal contact, the students said, has a greater effect than receiving yet another fire-prevention flier.

"They can't just throw us away," Ray said. "And I'm learning a lot about how to deal with the public."

This is the first year of the partnership between the BLM, the U.S. Forest Service, local fire departments and the SCA, a national nonprofit organization that provides about 2,500 high school and college student volunteers for a host of local, state and federal agencies needing assistance on conservation projects. Each year, according to the SCA, its interns provide about 1 million hours of service to conservation efforts across the country. When the organization launched its fire education corps earlier this summer, 500 students applied. The 50 chosen ones are working around here and Elko, Nev., and in five communities in Idaho.

The students receive weekly \$50 stipends as well as room and board. The real benefit to the interns, they say, is a sense of public altruism—and resume building.

Local fire officials say they are grateful for the students' help. "We simply don't have the time to visit as many homes as these kids are," said Tracy Curtis, an inspector for the Storey County Fire Department.

The students based in Carson City have inspected about 170 homes since starting in early July and hope to have offered 300 assessments by the time their tour of duty ends Aug. 31.

Not only are the students advising homeowners on fire protection, but they are also gathering information, to be left behind at fire stations, on each home visited: the construction type, any flammable materials, the number of residents and if they are ambulatory, the location of utility shut-offs and the availability of firefighting resources, such as wells and generators.

The student program is the newest tactic to be employed along the so-called Sierra Front, where 6,500-foot mountains slope up from the high desert floor and fires are commonly ignited by lightning, including two that were contained earlier this week after charring nearly 9,000 acres.

In 1999, the worst fire season in recent years, several hundred lightning-spawned wildfires charred 1.6 million acres in Nevada and destroyed two homes. Homeowners like Watson, who has dodged fires just a few miles away, are most vulnerable because they live in areas thick with vegetation.

"About half of all big fires end up threatening homes," said Leonard Wehking, the BLM's local fire management officer. "We're doing all we can to help homeowners help themselves. It's to our benefit as well, but these students are the local heroes for doing this work."

And they take it seriously.

Inspecting Watson's home, Ray and Olszewski were unabashed in pinpointing problem areas.

His fire-resistant asphalt roof shingles were good but he ought to enclose the underside of his eaves to prevent embers from lodging beneath the roof.

That wood pile next to the house? "Oh boy, is that a no-no," Ray said.

The Russian olive tree isn't too flammable, but it should be pruned so its branches don't hang over the house. His trees should be cleared of branches within 6 feet of the ground so they don't serve as a ladder for a grass fire. And his backyard balcony, with a million-dollar view over the mountain slope, should be screened from the deck to the ground below to keep embers out.

There should be space among the pines on his property so flames can't jump from one to the next.

"It's all a matter of creating defensible space," Olszewski advised, offering the insights of a wise old firefighter.

Watson took the suggestions in stride. "I knew most of these issues even before they showed up. But I needed them to remind me to get these things taken care of."

New Mexico

The Chimayo Scout Camp – New Mexico

The Taos, New Mexico BLM Fire and Surface Protection Program began fuels reduction in the Copper Hill and Chimayo Scout Camp management areas in the summer of 1998. Since then, the BLM has treated approximately 400 acres at each location for a total of 800 acres.

With the increase in funding for hazardous fuels reduction projects, an additional 600 to 800 acres during the 2001 fire season will be improved. This will more than triple the amount of acres treated in one year.

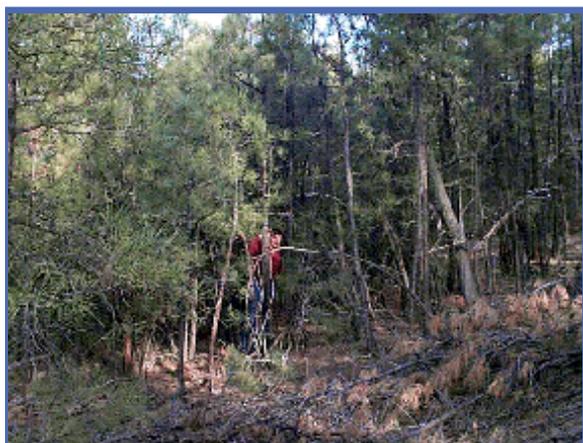


Broadcast and pile burning at Chimayo Scout Camp.

The Chimayo Scout Camp is a recreational and public purpose (R&PP) Patent from the BLM to the Greater Southwest Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. The current Patent agreement requires the BLM to manage all mineral, timber, wildlife, cultural, and recreational resources on the land. Every year, nearly 5,000 scouts visit Camp Frank Rand during the height of the fire season. With this many visitors, hazardous fuels reduction as an important part of ensuring public safety and as well as the welfare of the scouts.

Sale of firewood from the site has produced more than \$40,000 in the past three years. This year, more than \$20,000 could be generated because of this urban interface project.

Copper Hill Management Area



Unthinned plot, Copper Hill 1998

The Copper Hill Management Area is very close to Penasco, Picuris Pueblo, and surrounding communities, which makes this hazardous fuels reduction project very important. The project is being done in collaboration with Eight Northern Pueblos, jointly funded by the New Mexico Environmental Department and the New Mexico State Game and Fish.

The residents of the surrounding communities benefit from this project in several ways. In addition to reducing wildland fire risks to the communities, residents also harvest fuelwood and local hand crews are contracted by the BLM to assist with prescribed fires. Local cooks are employed and the local community center is rented and used as a base camp during the prescribed fire activities.



Plot following thinning, 2000

Forestry research at Copper Hill was initiated in 1965 under the Kennedy administration and has continued until present day. This site has been thinned and logged many times over the last 50 years, but fire has never been used as a management tool. As the pictures illustrate, tree regeneration has been high even under past thinning practices.

Mount Nebo Prescribed Burn

Northeast of Aztec, New Mexico near the Colorado border is a heavily forested (pinon and juniper) area known as the Mount Nebo area. It is situated between the Animas and San Juan Rivers in northern New Mexico. Two years ago, this area was thinned to create brush for deer and opened to the public to gather fuel wood. After the wood was gathered, the area was closed and the remaining slash burned to stimulate growth. The area will be seeded with native grasses, bitterbrush and mountain mahogany for deer habitat.



BLM fire specialist helps monitor Nebo prescribed burn.



Planning and proper conditions helped to complete a successful burn.

This project was done in conjunction with the NM Game and Fish Department to improve deer habitat above the San Juan River. This habitat is being created so that deer will cease being nuisances to local farmers.

Oregon

Oregon Plans Community Work

The BLM Lakeview District, Klamath Falls Resource Area in Klamath Falls, Oregon, has started an ambitious fuels reduction project affecting more than 3,000 acres in and around the small community of Bly Mountain, Oregon. Although the primary goal of this project is to reduce dangerous fuel loadings in the wildland urban interface area, a very important secondary objective is to provide temporary jobs for up to 80 displaced farm workers in the Klamath Basin, which has been devastated by the current drought.



Rural homes will benefit from fuels work.

Using special funding that has been allocated by the Washington Office, the KFRA has obligated the work to four private contractors, who have already begun recruiting workers in the local area. The Oregon Department of Forestry and local elected officials are assisting the BLM in planning, support, and community relations. Work will commence within a few weeks.

Utah

Pony Express

The Salt Lake, Utah, BLM has begun a hazardous fuels reduction project in Skull Valley, an area forty miles west of Salt Lake City. The hazardous fuel is cheatgrass, an invasive weed that blankets most of the area and fuels rapidly spreading wildfires that sweep annually across Skull Valley. These fires threaten isolated ranches and homes, the Dugway Proving Grounds (including the community of English Village), Skull Valley Indian Reservation and the community of Terra.

The Pony Express Black Stripping project was designed to create a 300 foot black strip along several roads in Skull Valley. This year, 746 acres were completed out of 1,964 target acres. To maintain the fuel break created by the prescribed burning, the strips will be burned a second time within the next five years to improve fire control defense by slowing the potential spread of wildfires in the valley.



Black stripping along the Rydalch Canyon road.

South Dugway

The Salt Lake, Utah, BLM has been working in cooperation with the fire department at Dugway Proving Grounds, a military installation, to complete a three phase project that will create a firebreak along the boundary of the White Sage Impact Area and provide better fire protection to the communities of Terra and English Village (on Dugway Proving Grounds). This hazardous fuels reduction project will convert the type of vegetation along the boundary from fire-prone annual grass to less-flammable perennial grass.

The first phase was completed in June, when tumbleweeds were burned off 18 miles of fence line to prepare for the second phase; burning a 300 foot strip along the fence line on

BLM land. The second phase is currently underway and once completed will be followed by the third phase of seeding perennial grasses. Six-hundred acres are planned to be treated and 70 acres have been carried through phase two so far.

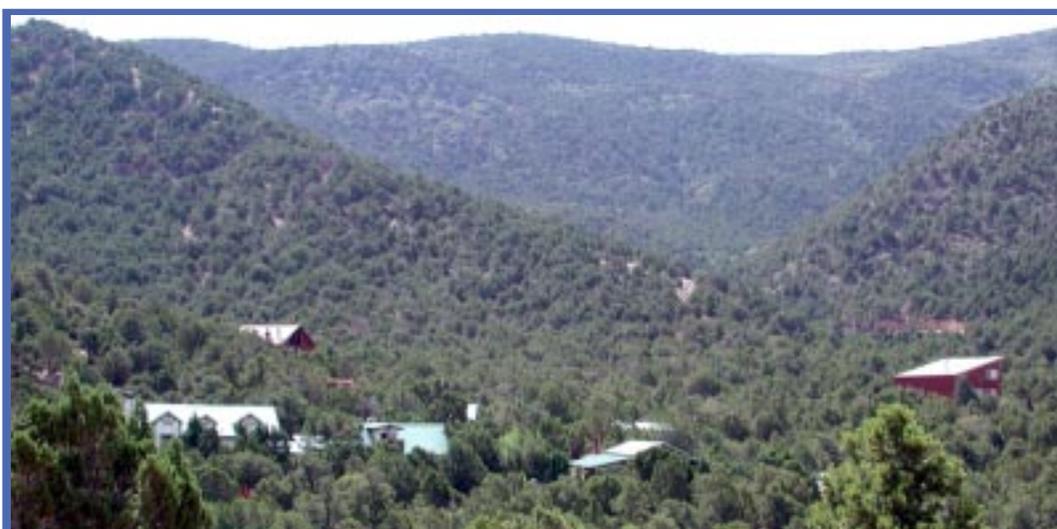


Tumbleweeds caught in the Dugway fence before the burn.

Working with Local Leaders

The Fuels Management Team for Cedar City, Utah, BLM met with the Iron County, County Commissioners on September 24, 2001. During this meeting the BLM updated the commissioners on projects currently under development in areas within their jurisdiction, including:

- The C-Trail Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project was implemented on October 3. This 260 acre project will reduce fuel loads on the lower slope adjacent to the of the Cedar Highland Subdivision.
- The Highway 56 corridor located west of Cedar City includes communities that are intermixed right in Pinyon and Juniper trees. The project areas are all identified as critical deer winter range.
- The Parowan front area located between Parowan and Summit will focus on education with home owners. Due to the steepness of slope and limited access on the surrounding public land, hazardous fuel reduction projects may not be the most effective methods. ‘Survivable Space’ messages were shared along with the need for community planning.



Populated corridor in the wildland urban interface area near Cedar City.

During the meeting the commissioners enthusiastically requested the fuels team share this presentation with their coordinating council, which includes all the Mayors in Iron County. Another meeting was proposed with their Planning and Zoning Committee, which was done on October 4. The commissioners wanted those groups to hear how a subdivision can be designed with survivable space prior to construction. Topics include access, suitable locations for homes, construction techniques and fire resistant building materials.

Moab Fire District Wildland/Urban Interface Projects - Summer 2001

The Monticello Field Office (Moab Fire District) in southeastern Utah has completed several fuel reduction projects that have reduced the threat of potentially damaging and life threatening wildfire in popular recreational sites.

Indian Creek Campground

The hazardous fuels within and around Indian Creek campsites, that are adjacent to the Newspaper Rock Recreation Area, threaten public safety and the BLM's capitol investments. These fuels have both vertical and horizontal continuity which will support a wildfire on the ground with intermittent torching into the crowns of large cottonwood trees. The camping and picnicking in the area presents a potential source of an uncontrolled, damaging wildfire. The fuel reduction will mitigate the damaging effects of a wildfire.



Ancient Indian petroglyphs are part of the rich archeological resources near the campground.



Campground site after fuel reduction work.



The popular public use area was at risk from wildland fire prior to treatment.

Mule Canyon Ruins

Mule Canyon Ruin is a popular recreation site for fuel reduction work. The fuels that were in and around Mule Canyon Ruin are pinyon pine and juniper that have a 100 percent vertical and 70 percent horizontal continuity. A wildfire in this area could quickly become a plume-dominated, fuel-driven fire given the right weather conditions. Estimated flame lengths for this scenario range from 30 to 100+ feet. A substantial shaded fuel break was constructed using local BLM firefighters, Southwest Youth Corp, and the Canyon Country Youth Corp. Ladder fuels (shrubs, low lying limbs and small trees) that support ground dependent crown fires were cut with chainsaws and piled for burning later this winter.



Cooperative work resulted in a protective fuel break.

Richfield BLM Area

The Gilson Mountain Restoration Project is 1,076 acres, located at the south end of the Tintic Valley in Juab County, Utah. This burn will clear the cheat grass in preparation for an Oust treatment followed by perennial plant seeding. The project is part of the Great Basin Restoration initiative.



Uncontrolled cheatgrass posed a significant threat from wildland fire.



Intense fire from prescribed burning removed cheatgrass and other annual weeds.

Topography at this site consists of gently sloping benches about 5000 feet in elevation. Vegetation at the sites proposed for prescribed fire treatment is composed of annual vegetation, primarily cheatgrass. Highway 6 and the Union Pacific Railroad lie adjacent to the proposed burn sites along the west side. The prescribed fires will prepare the sites for chemical treatment by licensed herbicide applicators.

Objectives for the project are to increase the fire return interval on this site from burning every 3-5 years to 18-20 years, use fire to prepare a seedbed that will be chemically treated and seeded with desired plant species, and establish a buffer zone between BLM land and private land to the North and West of the burn area.

Reduction of Fuel Load Near Communities

The Cedar City Field Office in Utah is selecting areas of risk by the amount of heavy fuel loads and the proximity of homes in the wildland urban interface. There are at least ten areas that have been identified so far as areas of risk. Each area has a diversity of concerns and interest groups. Collaboration is essential with these varied interests. Cedar City is meeting with local fire departments, agencies, county commissioners, homeowners and others to establish the framework for the wildland interface projects.

One of these projects is a 260 acre hazardous fuel reduction project on the west slope of Cedar Mountain above Cedar City, Utah. Above the project area is the Cedar Highland Subdivision and incorporating part of the project area is the C-Trail, a popular BLM hiking trail. The layout of the land where the subdivision is located increases its risk to high intensity fire. With an increase in dead Pinyon Pine and because of the level of fuel loading of pinyon and juniper in the subdivision and adjacent public lands this area was selected for treatment.

This fall the BLM will start the removal of the hazardous fuel load by selecting the highest affected areas and removing the fuels by hand cutting with chainsaws and piling the slash. The slash would be burned during the winter months. This project will take place over the next two to three years.

The C-Trail project area is part of a critical deer winter habitat. With that in mind, this project is designed to enhance and protect that aspect. Resource protection and enhancement are always an important part of all projects. In each area of risk, the type of fuel treatment will depend on the condition of the natural resources and public safety issues.



A home site in the lower portion of the Cedar Highlands Subdivision. The white roof tops show the location of other homes in the subdivision.

Wyoming

Rural Fire Department Grants

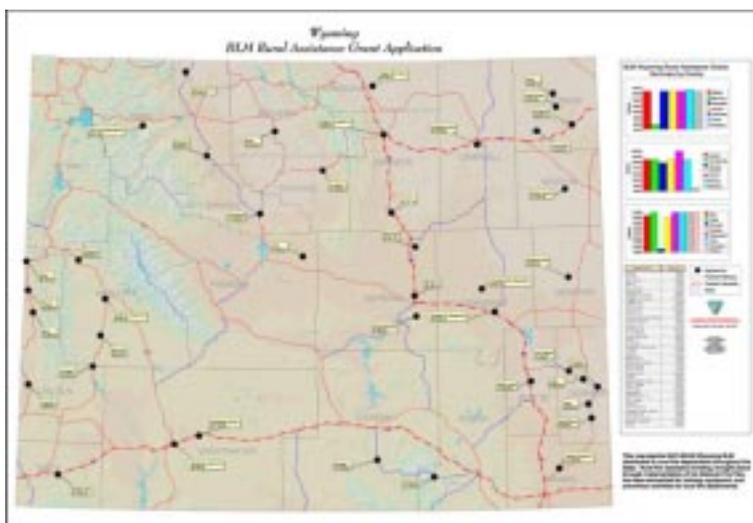
More than \$346,000 was distributed to rural fire departments across Wyoming thanks to the additional money the Bureau of Land Management received as part of the National Fire Plan.

As a result of the increased funding, BLM is distributing the money to enhance fire protection capabilities of the rural departments.

Wyoming departments submitted applications to BLM earlier this year requesting money. They could use the funds for training, equipment purchases, and prevention activities on a cost share basis. The applications were reviewed by an interagency team and the money is now being distributed.

“Last year was a busy fire season and the rural fire organizations were truly an integral part of our fire fighting capabilities,” said Wyoming State Fire Management Officer John Glenn. “Not only will this help increase coordination between BLM and our partners, but the public benefits as well. By improving our fire protection capabilities, we can help reduce fire loss and the occurrence and intensity of fires within the urban interface.”

BLM, in cooperation with the Wyoming Wildland Fire Plan Action Team, distributed this new money which was allocated by Congress to the Department of the Interior fire agencies - Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Forest Service - in the 2001 Appropriations Bill.



Wyoming BLM prepared a map/chart showing the departments and communities who received rural fire grants.

Muddy Mountain Project-BLM & ROTC

On September 29, the Natrona County High School Reserve Officer Training Corps, Army National Guard, and Bureau of Land Management joined forces to conduct fuels reduction work within the Muddy Mountain National Recreation Trail in celebration of National Public Lands Day.

ROTC students moved and prepared slash piles while learning about forestry and fuels reduction. Activities began at 10 am and ended at 4:30 pm. The National Guard provided transportation for the students, and lunch was provided for participants by BLM.



ROTC student piles brush on joint project.



Fuel loads prepared for removal during National Public Lands Day.

Heli-Rappellers Drop In

A helicopter rappel crew from Idaho dropped in on Rawlins for a couple of weeks to help out with fire suppression efforts. While there, the heli-rappellers conducted some of their regular training exercises in the skies above Rawlins.

The crew, known as the Price Valley (Idaho) Heli-Rappellers (Payette National Forest), operates out of a Bell 250 helicopter, a “Super Huey.” The craft can carry six rappellers plus the pilot and spotter. The spotter is the most highly-trained and qualified crew member, responsible for getting the rappellers out of the helicopter and then performing the “cargo letdown procedure” in which the tools and supplies the crew needs are lowered from the ship. Two crew members rappel at a time, carrying their personal gear in backpacks. The helicopter hovers between 175 and 200 feet during the rappelling procedure. The helicopter also carries a 300-gallon water tank for dropping water on the fire. The aircraft uses a snorkel to suck the water into the tank from water sources.

The rappel crew is an initial attack force, rappelling into areas where a helicopter can’t safely land. Whenever possible, however, the helicopter lands before the crew exits the aircraft. Before its stay in Rawlins, the crew had been on fires in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Arizona.



Rappelling crew trains near Rawlins.