

# Snapshots

## Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

large trees from the ground and reduce the dense canopy of juniper. The trees were then placed in windrows and burned. Finally, sagebrush, forbs and grasses (both native and cultivars) were seeded into the available soils. After the seeding was finished, a protection fence was constructed to keep undesired livestock off of the area. This continued until the vegetation was able to withstand the vigor of grazing.

Saw crews provided the maintenance on this project. Because many trees were too small for the chaining operation, they bent over and were left in the ground after the chain proceeded. The saw crews were used to remove the residual trees. They established grids then cut the available trees. They also removed the remaining green portions on the stems still persisting in the soil.

Many people participated in this project, and as a result, bighorn sheep have now been reintroduced onto the range. The area also now provides a viable firebreak for suppression crews when fighting severe fires. Through multiple treatments and planned maintenance, this project has been deemed a success and will sustain itself, provided use of the area is moderate.

### Outreach, Education, Projects Take Many Forms In WUI

**Foothills Literature Drop** – The Boise Front provides the city a scenic backdrop of foothills and mountains. The area also provides a highly-used recreation area, a home for a variety of wildlife, and is the site of an expanding wildland-urban interface. Unfortunately, the foothills also are often tinder-dry and nearly always at risk from wildfire during the summer months. Every few years a wildfire will take hold and threaten or burn homes built on the hills and in the drainages.

It is that threat, and loss of homes and property, that brought the BLM and local fire departments together in ongoing efforts to educate homeowners about the risks of living in such an area and steps they can take to better protect themselves and their property.

This spring, as they've done in past years, BLM fire staff has joined with the Boise City Fire Department, North Ada County Fire and Rescue, and the Eagle Fire Department to take educational information door to door across the foothills interface area.



*The 8<sup>th</sup> Street Fire in the foothills above Boise in 1996 heightened homeowner awareness which is now reinforced through an annual pamphlet drop, fire station open house and other homeowner education activities.*

June 12, 2002



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“We visited 1600 homes in May this year,” said Randy Eardley, fire mitigation and education specialist for the BLM’s Lower Snake River District. “Each year we see more homeowners taking steps to make their homes more fire resistant, but there are still many homes at a critical risk from the next fire. As new residents move into the area, we need to continue this type of education efforts, and the door-to-door project is one tool in our toolbox to accomplish it.”

### **Grant for fuel break may lead to home protection**

The Boise City Parks manager responsible for reserves near the base of Boise’s foothills has been concerned about wildfire for the past few years. One particular reserve is thick with vegetation and lies at the base of slopes leading right up to many homes. His concern led to several consultations with the BLM about fuels management possibilities that might provide a firebreak around the reserve but would be consistent with maintaining the natural state of the area.

This spring, when a Resource Conservation and Development community forester approached the BLM with a grant in hand looking for a place to develop a firebreak it seemed an instant match for what the city was looking for. The grant criteria required the fuel break be placed at the bottom of a 20-percent slope with at least 25 residences above and at risk, and that it be in an area of fuels prone to rapid fire spread. There were other criteria as well, and all seemed to describe the city’s issue.

Seeing an opportunity to engage a recognized need with a positive solution, the BLM introduced the RC&D to the city parks needs. It’s still early in the process, but the means and potential for resolving a long-standing concern are not within reach.

### **Boise City Fire Department Centennial**

The BLM’s Lower Snake River District, given it’s long association and cooperative partnership with the Boise City Fire Department, was asked to participate in celebrating BFD’s 100<sup>th</sup> year of service. Thousands of people turned out over the 3-day Memorial Day weekend to view firefighting equipment from each era during the past 100 years and to talk about changes in fire suppression. One significant topic during the event was how the wildland-urban interface had impacted fire response needs, skills, and equipment. Along with a display of wildland equipment, BLM personnel staffed an information table that included the large static display titled “When Nature’s Fury Becomes Your Worry.”

“There was a lot of interest in wildland fire issues near the city and other communities, and many wondered how they could better protect themselves,” said Randy Eardley, fire mitigation and education specialist with the Lower Snake River District of the BLM. “We were only too happy to provide them that information and education.”

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