

Snapshots 2003

November 28

Wyoming

The Bureau of Land Management in Rock Springs conducted a prescribed burn of East Richard's Mountain on Thursday, Oct. 2, 2003. The prescribed burn took place on the east end of Richard's Mountain, in the western end of the Red Creek Basin. The Red Creek Basin is located about 40 miles south of Rock Springs. The total acreage is approximately 14,000, of which BLM burned roughly 4,000 acres.

"The purpose of the burns is to improve watershed quality and to improve wildlife habitat. Previous prescribed burning in the Red Creek Basin has benefited wildlife (including elk) and I believe that most members of the public recognize that," said Thor Stephenson, BLM Rock Springs resource advisor for the prescribed burns.



*A smoke tornado forms in the middle of the prescribed burn area on East Richard's Mountain on Saturday, Oct. 4, 2003. East Richard's Mountain is located about 40 miles south of Rock Springs, Wyo. The Bureau of Land Management conducted the prescribed burn as a practical method of improving watershed quality and improve wildlife habitat.
BLM Photo by Juliane Zimmerman*

Arizona

Corporate Support Helps Arizona Firewise Communities Workshop

Allstate Insurance, The Home Depot and State Farm Insurance provided more than \$8,000 in financial support for a Firewise Communities workshop in Tucson last October. In addition, 21 companies donated door prizes and other support. Vendors set up 22 booths at the Tucson Convention Center, promoting environmental consulting, landscaping, architectural and governmental services, insurance, fire and fuels reduction equipment, home products, lumber and software.

Virtually in the shadow of Mount Lemmon, scene of the devastating Aspen Fire this summer in which 322 homes were lost and 85,000 acres burned, more than 250 people attended the one-day statewide workshop. Planning and financial support came from the Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Arizona State Land Department, University of Arizona, the

Tohono O'odham Nation and fire departments representing Tucson, Mt. Lemmon and the Northwest Fire District. More than a dozen BLM staff assisted as cadre or volunteers at the workshop. The cadre included lead and assistant facilitators, computer assistants, rovers and coordinators. Additional volunteers helped with registration, door prizes, public relations, donations, set-up and breakdown of the breakout rooms and displays and as ushers and parking attendants.



Highlighting BLM projects that support the National Fire Plan.

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Vendors display their products and services at the Tucson Firewise Community workshop.

During the workshop seven breakout rooms were set up. Session presentations included Arizona state and Tucson Firewise proclamations, and a video on preventing home ignitions. The keynote speaker from the Santa Fe County Fire Department spoke about values at risk and how this ties in with their Wildland Urban Interface program. A retired fire information officer discussed recent large wildland fires, fire resistant landscaping. Ruidoso, New Mexico's wildland-urban interface forester Rick DeIaco discussed how communities can work together to achieve successful wildfire protection programs.

Workshop attendees represented myriad aspects of their communities, including federal and rural fire staff, insurance company officials, people who had lost homes to wildland fire, some whose homes survived a devastating wildfire and private contracting companies.

This program was successful due to a year of planning and major participation from numerous agencies along with companies and organizations that shared their time, expertise and finances. The end result was more than 250 people returning to their communities better informed and with a greater understanding on how to make their homes and communities safer from the threat of wildfire.

Contacts: David Peters, Fire Mitigation Specialist, Safford/Tucson Fire Management Zone, (520) 258-7207; Michael Trent, Fire Prevention Officer, Phoenix/Kingman Fire Management Office (928) 692-4451; Thomas Lund, Arizona Strip Fire Mitigation Specialist, (435) 688-3213

Upper San Pedro Watershed Wildfire Assessment Completed

The Wildfire Hazard Assessment and Mitigation Plans for seven communities-at-risk along the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area were completed this summer. The Summary Report and Mitigation Plans for this wildland/urban interface can be found at the BLM Safford and Tucson Field Office web sites, and at the contractor's web site, www.Hydrosphere.com/SanPedro. In addition to the report and mitigation plans, 444 home survey reports were completed for homeowners along the conservation area boundary.

BLM fire staff use the plan to work with community leaders and homeowners to implement its recommendations. Categorical exclusions are being written for some homeowners adjacent to BLM lands to allow them to reduce hazardous fuel loads according to permit stipulations. Fuel reduction projects are still underway on several BLM sites to protect structures, the public and fire fighters.

BLM fire staff is also working with community leaders interested in fire mitigation projects including firebreaks, creating Firewise working groups and completing additional wildfire home assessments. This year, fire staff will work with local fire chiefs by sharing the home survey data and providing access survey data that has been linked to RedZone software. This software gives fire departments and firefighters valuable field data to develop Firewise Communities and in wildland fire fighting situations.

Contact: David Peters, Fire Mitigation Specialist, Safford/Tucson Fire Management Zone (520) 258-7207



The summary report and mitigation plans for the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area has been released.



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BLM Defensible Space Message Goes Beyond Fire Staff

Arizona State Office Fire and Aviation staff has ensured that their prevention and safety messages were heard and heeded by an audience often overlooked – internal staff. Many non-fire employees know that literature, videos and other reminders are available within the office and have taken advantage of the opportunity.

Information Resources Management staffer Chris Czapski, who with her husband owns a weekend/vacation cabin in the forested area of north central Arizona, has taken the defensible space messages to heart. She carefully researched the qualities and capabilities of various automated wood chippers before buying a midrange model and presenting it to her husband. Immediately realizing the usefulness of such a machine, he made short work of the fuel load around their cabin. In addition, after seeing the results, the Czapskis' north country neighbors have taken an interest in providing similar space around their hideaways, keeping Czapski and his chipper busy during weekends away from his job with the county sheriff's office.

The couple realizes that using the chipper is a major step toward improving the fire safety of their retreat. They plan to continue removing ladder fuels, opening the canopy of the larger trees, widening the access road and ensuring that firewood and other combustible materials are stacked well away from the house.

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Before and after the Czapskis used their new chipper to reduce the fuel loads around their holiday retreat.



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