

# Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

## Utah

### Cedar City Field Office

“Remember only you can prevent wildfires from destroying your home.” This is a message that was given to 70 fifth graders in Beaver, Utah on December 22. Esther Benson of the Cedar City BLM office and Matt Buhler of the Dixie National Forest presented a fire effects, fire history and living with fire presentation.



*Fifth grade students learn about wildland fire history.*

Students responded to questions about what fire can be used for and does to the environment. One class responded on the positive effects like nutrients to the soil, to clear away the decadent and thick stands of vegetation. Another class brought up that fire burned people and killed animals, and destroyed the animals' homes. The last class was more focused on the domestic uses and physical properties of fire.

A 2' x 2' model of trees was used to show the spacing of the trees at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and to show how fires would creep on the ground and that trees were spaced further apart. A fire history of the last 100 years was explained starting with the establishment of the forest reserves to the introduction of prescribe fire in 1968. Trees were added to the model to show the increase of fuels as a result of the fire suppression over the last 100 years.



*A classroom setting worked well in the learning process.*

A home was added to the model of thick trees to show the students how their home or cabin could be in danger from wildland fire. The 10 steps in the “Living With Fire” program were taught. Packets with checklist of how to make their home or cabin safe from wildland fire was sent home with the children to give to their parents. A student's mother relayed that she was just going to throw the packet away, but her daughter insisted that they go through it. This student even made two copies to take to her neighbors.

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## Richfield Field Office

### Fire Prevention...Never too young

The "Gooseberry Experience" is one that teachers, students and parents look forward to each year. Started 23 years ago by the Fishlake National Forest in response to a teachers request for help with teaching environmental education, it has grown to become a Forest Service and BLM interagency event each year.



*Dave Harmon talks about the various tools that firefighters use.*

A fire prevention team now carries on the program at Gooseberry. This annual event has had many positive benefits such as a reduction in human caused fires along with an environmental stewardship in the local area. Some of the earlier instructors have had some young adults say "that they remembered them from Gooseberry." Great feeling!

Each year the third grade classes from the Ashman Elementary School meet at Gooseberry for the week, during the fall. Fire prevention and natural resources programs are the targeted areas for teaching students..

A similar session has been established at the Maple Grove Camp Ground for the first graders from Ashman Elementary School. Nearly 200 students attend to become exposed to natural resources and fire prevention issues.



*Rita Morgan talks about firefighter's gear.*

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In a separate part of the overall education and prevention program, a unique buffalo hunt in the Henry Mountains provided an approach to reaching hunters. Individuals fortunate enough to draw a tag are given a packet of material explaining any restrictions that might be in place for the hunt.



*Smokey and Woodsy greet the Ashman Elementary first graders.*



*Outside helpers.*



*Students get to spray a little water.*



*Ivie talks about campfire safety.*

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## Vernal Field Office

### Shindy Draw Wildland Urban Interface Project

A key wildland urban project consists of removing approximately 21 acres of tall mountain sage brush in the vicinity of Dry Fork Canyon near Vernal, Utah. Plans for the project are to create a wildfire buffer between the BLM and private landowners.

Landowners are anxious to have the work done and are looking forward to a safer environment. Some local concern about how the BLM intends to do the project has been expressed. People living in the area have a strong environmental ethic and have been closely working with BLM. It is hoped to make this the first of several projects in the area so the local BLM specialists are taking great care to make this a successful and worthwhile experience for residents.

Work to date has accomplished clearing the sage brush with chainsaws, then piling and burning it. Within the near future the area will be chemically treated and re-seeded with fire resistant vegetation. The seed mixture will consist of Fourwing Saltbush, Basin Wildrye, Western Wheatgrass and Needle and Thread. Residents seem pleased with the progress of the project so far. Completion is expected by the end of this year.



*Homes at risk in the wildland urban interface in Utah.*



*Tall mountain sage is a primary hazardous fuel source.*



*Part of the project area has been cleared and debris removed.*

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## Arizona / Utah

### Color Country Committee teams up with local parade of homes

A display with tips for making homes survivable was unveiled over the 10-day period of the Washington County Parade of Homes. During this time, there were 6,000-7,000 people who visited a parade home in Dammeron Valley, Utah. An interagency Color Country Committee is a joint group from Arizona Strip BLM, Cedar City, Utah BLM, Dixie National Forest, Zion National Park, Utah Department of Forestry, Fire and State Lands and Bureau of Indian Affairs.

A new home located in pinyon and juniper in the wildland/urban interface was selected as a demonstration site. It is located in the Dammeron Valley which has been identified by the state as a community at the highest end of the risk scale.



*Booth was purchased, designed and managed by the committee and will be used through out Southern Utah and Northern Arizona with public outreach opportunities.*

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*This home helped to demonstrate the need for survivable space to many potential home buyers in the development.*

Participants toured the \$800,000 home to get construction, landscaping, and decorating ideas. Some were there to buy or have homes built. As they toured the home they observed scenic vistas of rolling pinyon / juniper hills and the essence of living in a mountain setting. As participants exited through the garage they were exposed to the Color Committee display, presenting ideas of how homes survive a wildfire. The most common question was, "Would this home survive?" The Color Country representative discussed positive and negative aspects of construction and landscaping of the demonstration home and ways to generally improve

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safety around their planned homes. “Living With Fire” information and other brochures were handed out to people from Utah, Arizona, Nevada and California who attended.

As a result of the interagency participation a proactive relationship with the Washington County Home Builders Association was achieved. There are now plans to have a “Living With Fire” presentation given during one of their monthly luncheons. Also this display will be used through out Southwest Utah and Northern Arizona to make the public aware of wildland/urban interface conditions and to inform them how to make their homes safe from wildfire.

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## Arizona

### Safford Field Office

#### Outreach to Fire Chiefs

In February, David Peters, Fire Mitigation Specialist for BLM’s Tucson Field Office, made a 30-minute presentation at the Sunsites/Pearce fire chiefs meeting, showing a video on structural and wildland firefighting in the wildland-urban interface and presenting information of interest to the chiefs. He reported on the recent 4,500-acre fire on the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, and announced opportunities for fire refresher training from March to May as well as first responder courses that some fire crew members could attend. David also discussed and passed out information on the \$415,000 BLM grant being administered through the Arizona State Land Department, and promoted BLM fire fighting jobs for which people could apply in the next month. He also encouraged attendees to take materials he had brought for them, including refrigerator magnets, “Firewise” information on construction and landscaping, the BLM Rx Burning brochure, Arizona BLM notepads, the “Living with Fire” news insert, and his business card.



*Attendees at the Sunsites/Pearce fire chiefs meeting view a video on firefighting in the wildland-urban interface.*

Through this and other outreach sessions, David has been able to communicate information and refresh the chiefs’ memories on what they need to keep in mind for their crews on wildfires. In addition, by talking to people after the meeting, he has gained valuable feedback on the type of information the chiefs most need and how BLM can help them get this information.

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