

# Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects in the wildland urban interface...

## 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.

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## 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.



*Black Hill Power and Light Company helped with this project.*



*Fuel buildup before clearing right-of-way.*

- 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.

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.



*Project site after the work was completed.*

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## 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

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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. 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.

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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.



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

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