

Snapshots

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

California

Fuels Project Pays Off

The BLM Folsom Field Office completed the 60+ acre Round Mountain fuel break project two years ago along a roadway that provides the sole escape route for local residents as well as access to a high use recreation area along the South Yuba River. The mixed conifer habitat was mechanically thinned to reduce brush and open the canopy.

Concern about accidental starts originating along the roadway were realized on July 4th 2001 when a vehicle caught fire on the road and quickly spread onto the treated

BLM lands. The weather was hot and dry with temperatures in the low 90s and relative humidity at 26% on the initial dispatch. The remote area is served by a volunteer fire department with a 20 minute response time to the location of the fire. Thanks to the fuel reduction project the fire burned slowly, scorching only 2 trees. The first fire engine to respond was able to stop the forward spread of the fire within 3-4 feet of the fuel break's edge. Firefighters on the scene stated that had the fuel break not been there the fire would likely have made a run through heavy conifers and towards adjacent homes in a matter of minutes.



Fuel treatments along road in Folsom area help reduce spread of fire.



Topography after treatment,

The fuel break did its job well on that busy holiday weekend and continues to provide protection to the resource values of the BLM lands as well as for neighboring private property.

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Crews from Kerns Valley BLM at work.

crowns will greatly reduced the risk of basal and crown damage resulting from wildfire.

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 .

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



Giant sequoia monarchs protected by

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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:

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.

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Alturas BLM conducting prescribed burn.

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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.



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

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