

# Snapshots

Successful BLM hazardous fuels projects in the wildland urban interface...

## Idaho

### Lava Ranches Project

The Pocatello Field Office in Idaho BLM's Upper Snake River District is implementing the Lava Ranches fuels project. The goal is to reduce hazardous fuels that create intensive fires and increase fuels that are more fire resistant. This will be accomplished through the installation of "shaded fuel breaks." The project scope encompasses a four-mile stretch of public lands that are surrounded by many private landowners.



*Lava Ranches project before prior to the project.*

Much of the area consists of dense conifer stands and a mixed overstory of Douglas fir, maple, Utah juniper, Rocky Mountain juniper and mountain mahogany. This project will reduce the fuel load and crown carrying capacity in conifer and mixed overstory stands by opening up these areas with mechanical thinning and then following up with some burning where appropriate (i.e., pile burning and small broadcast burns). This will aid aspen regeneration with a maple understory and aid mountain mahogany regeneration through the disturbance of clearing out juniper and conifer encroachment into decadent stands that fall within these treatment areas. Much of the terrain is steep and rocky. Private landowner cooperation is assisting with access. Given the project conditions, a patchy treatment scenario is more realistic than a continuous one.



*Crews cut, clear and pile brush and trees for lava ranches project.*

A demonstration area for the public is already underway, and a visible and accessible area to public lands has been chosen. Local public interest is gaining momentum from our Communities at Risk meetings and through the NEPA process. Inquiry by private land owners regarding the capability of the BLM to help them perform this type of work on their property is also being received. Reducing the fuels on the public lands adjacent to Lava Ranch will do little to reduce the

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direct threat to homes and private property unless the project can anchor to and include private lands. Public participation is a vital aspect in reaching project success.

The goal, while not to make an area fire proof, is to make it more fire manageable. Instead of an intensive stand-replacing fire, the goal is creating a low ground fire. The success of this project revolves around mitigation assistance, education and community outreach.



*Lava Ranches project area after thinning. Prescribed fire will be used to treat remaining understory.*

## Wyoming

### North Zone Fuels Crew Adds Capability

Wyoming's BLM North Zone has established a nationally-recognized fuels treatment program in the Bighorn Basin over several years. To enhance the ability to the program, a ten-person fuels management crew was added to their operation during the 2001 field season. The driving force was the need to accelerate mechanical fuels treatments. The crew, composed mainly of college students, used treatments to removing juniper from ponderosa pine stands and riparian areas.



*Untreated ponderosa pine stand.*

After rigorous training, the crew started with a juniper removal project in an area known as Maggie's Cabin. The project entailed cutting the juniper understory in ponderosa pine. Juniper limbs and boles were pulled away from the ponderosa pine to

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