

# Snapshots

## Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

Next the counties work on identifying communities at-risk from wildfire and describing the fire threat. The landscapes surrounding the communities are divided into A-polygons where no fire is desired and B-Polygons where fire under current conditions is highly undesirable but where fuels management could reduce threat. In this way, the counties establish priorities for hazard mitigation in the wildland urban interface and begin to take ownership in wildfire preparedness and hazard mitigation. The county fire plans will help BLM managers establish priorities for hazard mitigation work on public lands.

The goal is to encourage participants to return to their counties and begin the comprehensive countywide fire planning process in cooperation with the federal and state agencies. Participants have been enthusiastic. Some have come to the workshops believing that they had adequate fire plans in place only to recognize that they have much to do. BLM, USFS, and Colorado State Forest Service resources are made available to counties to help them complete their plans. These include data sets, maps, training, and technical assistance. The BLM in Colorado plans to make funding available to assist counties with comprehensive fire planning again this year.

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## Idaho

Upper Columbia-Salmon Clearwater District  
Coeur d'Alene Field Office – BLM

### Mechanical/RX Fire Fuels Treatments

The Bureau of Land Management Coeur d'Alene Field Office in northern Idaho faces the challenge of a variety of fuel types and conditions. Traditionally, fuels specialists have relied upon prescribed fire as their primary tool for treatments. However, these treatments did not adequately address the many diverse resource management issues of the panhandle area, such as wildland-urban interface areas, high timber resource values, recreation, visual impact areas and heavy fuel loadings. These issues call for a variety of fuels treatment types. By combining mechanical work with fall and spring burning, they have been able to treat more areas in less time, while successfully achieving resource management objectives and reducing risk in the wildland-urban interface areas.

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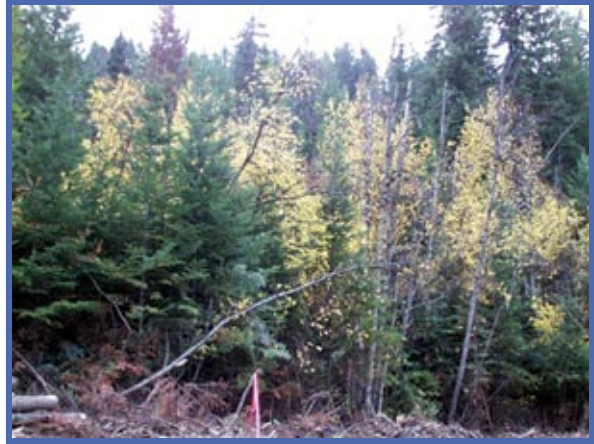
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The photos here show the different types of mechanical and prescribed fire treatments on two recent projects – Windy Bay and Huckleberry/Long Mountain. Windy Bay is a 180-acre parcel on the shore of Lake Coeur d’ Alene. It contains a boater access campground, urban-interface and heavy fuel loads. The fuel loads were caused by past ice storm damage and poor forest health. The various fuel treatments applied include mechanical brush busting/ slash busting; hand slashing and piling; lop and scatter; and broadcast and pile burning. The Huckleberry/Long Mountain project covers over 600 acres and includes a large portion of a helicopter logging area. The project is being conducted in conjunction with a timber sale. The primary fuels treatment to be applied consists of hand slashing combined with machine piling.

The piling and clearing of fuel provides a greater burning window while still achieving resource objectives. This approach also dramatically reduces risk and allows projects to be completed in a timely manner. Waiting for proper weather and fuel conditions under narrower burning windows can set projects back months and even years. The work was accomplished by local contractors, which meets an objective of the National Fire Plan. Although contracting substantially raises the cost of these projects, many risks that accompany the use of fire are eliminated, and more options are available for the retention of leave trees that would not withstand the use of



*Windy Bay project before treatment.*



*Machine piling logging slash and hazardous fuels.*

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fire. The duration of the effectiveness of the treatment must also be considered. Treatments in these heavy fuel types are often effective for 40–60 years. In addition, the mechanical work can often be completed in a more timely manner, which allows tight planning schedules for tree, scrub and grass planting and other restoration activities.



*Winter burning of slash piles, Huckleberry/Long Mountain project.*



*Bay project after mechanical thinning.*

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