



2013
PRESCRIBED
FIRE IN SOUTHWEST
IDAHO

In southwest Idaho, public land managers are reducing the risk of large, severe wildfires, improving wildlife habitat, and achieving other natural resource objectives through the use of prescribed fire and other management programs.

**Boise National Forest
Prescribed Fire Hotline
208-373-4208**

**Southwest Idaho
Prescribed Fire Website
www.rxfire.com**

Acres of Treatment Planned for 2013

TOTAL ACRES OF PRESCRIBED FIRES PLANNED FOR SOUTHWEST IDAHO

Total Acres	33,760
Spring 2013	22,457 acres
Fall 2013	11,303 acres
National Fire Plan Mechanical Treatment Planned for Southwest Idaho for 2013	
Total Acres	11,975

Idaho Department of Lands Prescribed Fire

Total Acres	2,158
Spring	75 acres
Fall	2,083 acres
Mechanical Treatment	
Total Acres	0

Bureau of Land Management Prescribed Fire

Total Acres	1,010
Spring	810 acres
Fall	200 acres
Mechanical Treatment	
Total Acres	4,450

Boise National Forest Prescribed Fire

Total Acres	10,597
Spring	9,270 acres
Fall	1,327 acres
Mechanical Treatment	
Total Acres	2,329

Payette National Forest Prescribed Fire

Total Acres	14,900
Spring	11,330 acres
Fall	3,570 acres
Mechanical Treatment	
Total Acres	4,195

Sawtooth National Forest Prescribed Fire

Total Acres	5,095
Spring	972 acres
Fall	4,123 acres
Mechanical Treatment	
Total Acres	1,001

COVER PHOTO: Continued prescribed burning helps to maintain low fuel densities and create an open forest environment.



Intense wildfire seasons continue to demonstrate the importance of reducing unnaturally large amounts of ground fuels.

The Prescribed Fire Program

Virtually every year Idaho's challenging wildfire season demonstrates the importance of prescribed fire, or other tools, to help prepare wildland urban interface areas and the forests from uncharacteristic fire events.

Fire managers for the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the Idaho Department of Lands have established annual programs that reduce fuel concentrations and wildfire risks on an average of 25,000 acres each year through the predominant use of prescribed fire.

The need to use prescribed fire, or other tools, to reduce the risk of large, severe wildfires, particularly in urban interface areas, is driven home virtually every year when the summer season brings wildfires. In 2012, for the Payette, Boise and Sawtooth National Forests nearly 249,000 acres burned from wildfires with several communities threatened. Last year's fire season in Idaho was the costliest to date with 1.7 million acres burned at a cost of around \$50 million. Nationally, nearly \$1 billion dollars was spent in recent years to suppress wildfires. Currently, nearly 60 percent of new homes being constructed in the nation are within a wildland urban interface.

The National Fire Plan, Healthy Forest Initiative and Healthy Forest Restoration Act focused national attention on fuels management and most importantly, fuel reduction. Action and coordination by concerned people in communities, counties and agencies has increased. Collaboration and integration with community wildfire protection plans (CWPP), county fuels committees, rural fire departments, local communities, and federal and state agencies determine the annual program.

Prescribed fires on federal lands must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires analysis of the environmental, economic, and social impacts of projects and public participation.

Fuel reduction management is a long-term proposition, but through annual programs the journey to return much of our forests to a historic condition and reduce the threat to life and property is being achieved.

Air Quality Standards in Place



Locally, atmospheric conditions are monitored closely before ignition to maximize smoke dispersion. Factors evaluated include wind direction and speed, atmospheric stability, and long-range weather forecasts. Yet even in favorable conditions, the air may still become smoky, especially at night. Often, although the air is smoky, it still meets federal and state air quality standards.

Idaho's Department of Environmental Quality's real-time air monitoring program collects real-time measurements of ambient levels of air contaminants at more than 20 sites throughout the state. Integrated sampling methods are used at another 10 sites.

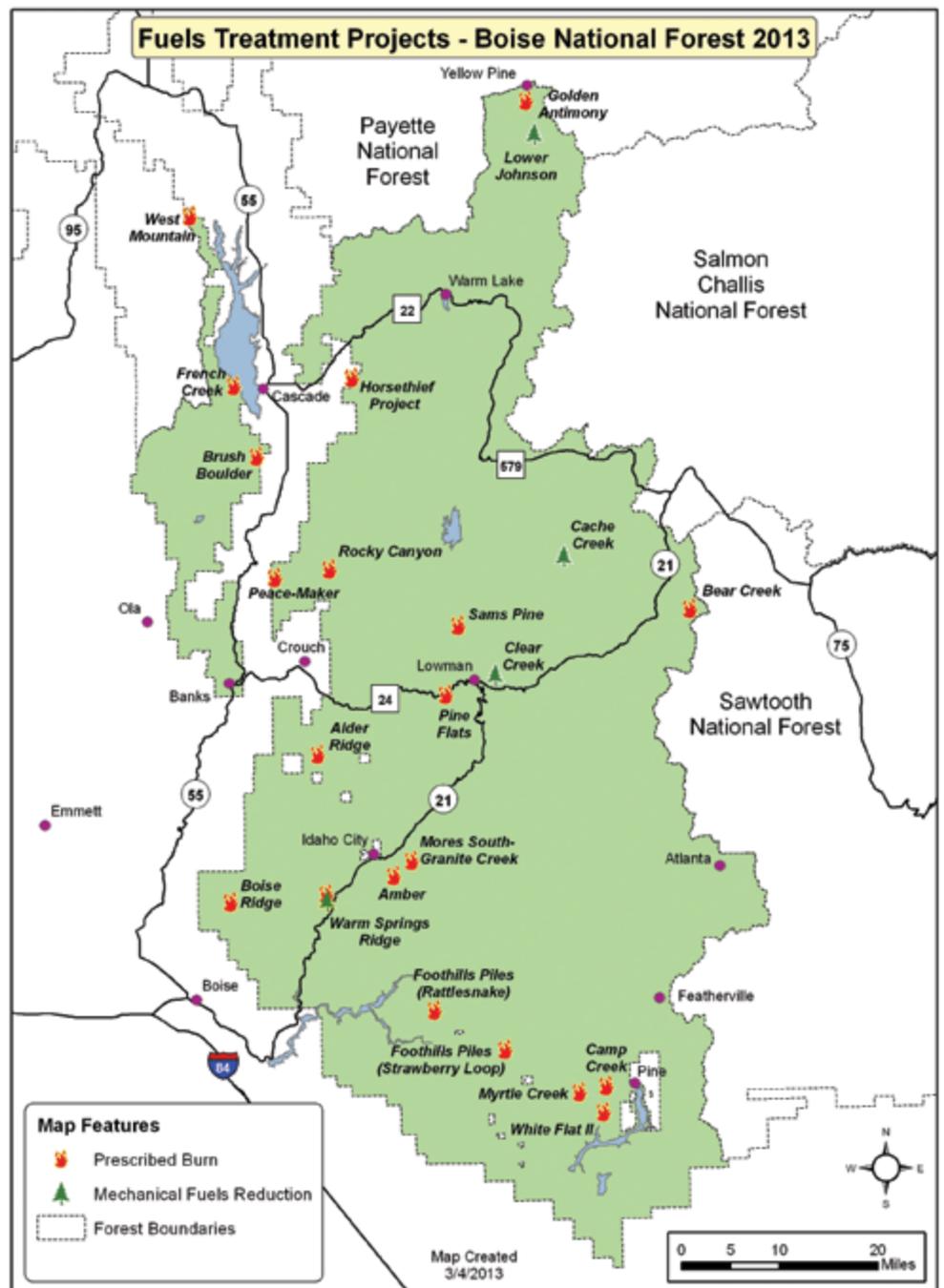
DEQ improved its website to provide the public with accurate information from its real-time air monitoring stations around the state. Real-time air monitoring data is located at <http://airquality.deq.idaho.gov/>

For daily planned ignitions go to:
www.smokemu.org

For specific project information go to the Southwest Idaho Prescribed Fire Website
www.rxfire.com

For More Information

Detailed descriptions of each project are available on our website (www.rxfire.com) along with a local contact number to discuss the project. Prescribed fires must be ignited under certain weather conditions, both to achieve natural resource management objectives and to meet air quality standards. It is difficult to determine exactly when they will occur. Burns planned for each day can be found on line at www.smokemu.org. Individuals potentially affected by prescribed fires are encouraged to refer to this web site on a daily basis during the spring and fall burning seasons.



DEQ PM 2.5 Monitors in Southwest Idaho

- Garden Valley
- Idaho City
- Ketchum
- McCall
- Twin Falls
- Boise

Based on DEQ's analysis of pollutant indicators and meteorological conditions, a color-coded system notifies the public of the forecasted air quality condition for the following day. When air quality is expected to be good, a green alert is issued; when air quality is deteriorating, a yellow alert is issued; when air quality is poor and expected to deteriorate even further, a red alert is issued. Precautionary measures are prescribed for each type of alert.

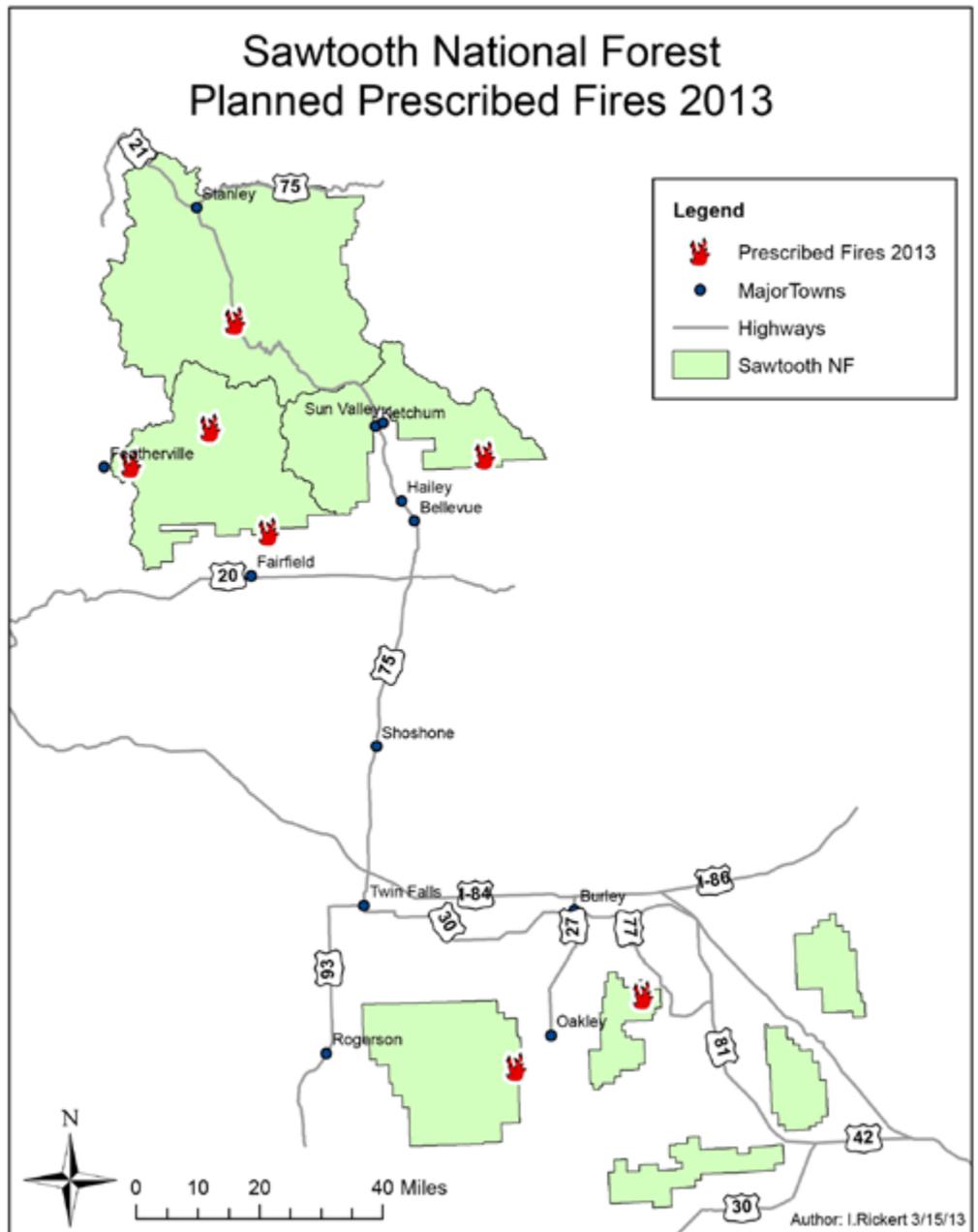
Air Quality Index (AQI) Values	Levels of Health Concern	Colors
<i>When the AQI is in this range:</i>	<i>...air quality conditions are:</i>	<i>...as symbolized by this color:</i>
0 to 50	Good	Green
51 to 100	Moderate	Yellow
101 to 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Orange
151 to 200	Unhealthy	Red
201 to 300	Very Unhealthy	Purple
301 to 500	Hazardous	Maroon

Program Success



Sawtooth National Forest

The multi-year Howell Canyon Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project on the Minidoka Ranger District of the Sawtooth National Forest reduced the threat of wildfire in this popular recreation area. The project also increased aspen reproduction creating a defensible space zone in the wildland urban interface.



Program Success

Partnership Restores Marsh Land Habitat for Waterfowl

Idaho Department of Lands

On April 3, 2012 the IDL Southwest Area carried out a prescribed burn on Idaho Fish and Game property near Roswell, Idaho, west of Boise in Canyon County. Known as the Roswell Marsh Habitat Area, the Idaho Fish and Game managed wetland area was overgrown with cattail, bulrush and phragmites (common reed). Fish and Game enlisted the help of IDL to restore the marsh to proper waterfowl habitat. Under the direction of burn boss trainee Rick Finis and fire warden Dan Christman the IDL fire crew made the Roswell Burn a success. An Idaho Office of Corrections inmate crew from the South Idaho Correctional Institute and volunteer firefighters from Canyon and Boise counties

also added to the success of the project.

Fish and Game expressed much gratitude to IDL for bringing the land closer to its intended purpose and also complimented the IDL fire personnel on their outstanding work and professionalism.

The Roswell Marsh Habitat prescribed burn successfully improved waterfowl habitat.



IDL firefighters use torches to light a prescribed burn at Roswell Marsh Habitat Area.



In addition to habitat improvement, IDL has protection responsibilities in the wildland urban interface. Fire managers credit fuels reduction work in the Wilderness Range Subdivision near Idaho City for protecting those homes during the 2012 Karney Fire.



Program Success

Forest Fuels Specialists Monitoring Treatment Effectiveness in Reducing Wildfire Severity

Mountain Home Ranger District

The Mountain Home Ranger District implemented a variety of fuels treatments from 2001-2012 that were directly impacted by the Trinity Ridge wildfire in 2012. The human-caused Trinity Ridge fire started Aug 3rd and burned 147,691 acres through the months of August and September.

The fire progressed into the first of six different fuels treatments around August

6th. These fuels treatments consisted of the following activities: commercially thinned and understory burned, commercial thinned and post-harvest slash burned followed up by an understory burn, and a shaded fuel break with piles. The fire also progressed through units that were in mid-treatment and were not underburned prior to the wildfire.

As the Trinity Ridge fire moved through the various fuels treatments, results varied as to the effectiveness of these treatments in

reducing fire behavior.

Forest fuels specialists are monitoring the fuel treatment's effectiveness in the fire area and to plan future treatment projects that best protect in-holdings and national forest lands while still treating the land to maintain wildlife and fisheries benefits.

Fuel specialists are studying historic photos to determine how severe the Trinity Ridge fire burned and the mortality of timber is compared to historic years.

Fuel Treatments in the Trinity Ridge Fire area on the Mountain Home Ranger District from 2001-2012

Name	Completion	Acres Completed	Treatment	Intensity of Prescription
Fairview	2001	1,500	Commercial thin & under burn	Moderate
Lower Feather	2005	600	Commercial thin (pre-commercial thin) and under burn	Moderate
Pine-Featherville	2009	500	Shaded fuels break & piles	Low
Lincoln Creek	2009	75	Under burn target of 10 inch or less diameter trees	Low/Moderate
Lower Parks	2012	1,200	Timber harvest (commercial think) understory burn (not completed)	Moderate
Whiskey/Campo	2012	100 1,400 (not completed)	Post-timber harvest Slash under burning	Low



Mechanical treatments use chainsaws or other larger equipment to cut down or remove fuel, that is often followed by burning piled limbs, branches or area burning (called under-burning).

Protecting Our Communities at Risk

Integrating a mix of fuel treatments and a community based Firewise effort with private structures is the key to enhance community protection from wildfire. Using a variety of fuel treatments near community private structures, Firewise increases community protection from wildfire. This year's fuels reduction program mixes prescribed fire and mechanical treatments.



For more information on the
Firewise Program log on to:
www.idahofirewise.org

Program Success



Left:
Pre-treatment
vegetation
includes timber
and grass
understory.

Right: This goat
grazing treatment
effectively
reduced fire
behavior in areas
of the Boise
foothills.

Grazing Goats Protect the Boise Foothills

Boise BLM

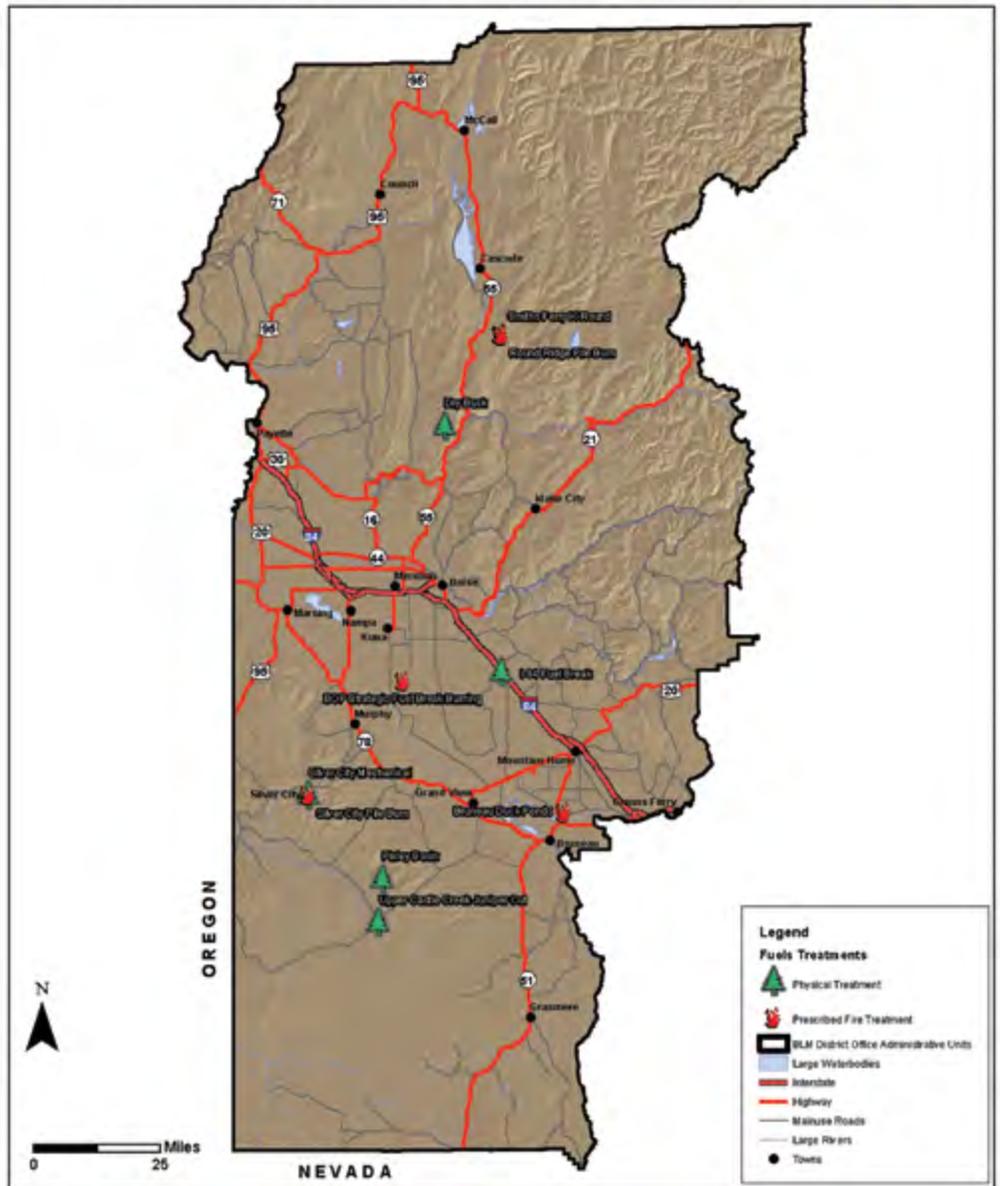
In the spring of 2012, goats were strategically grazed throughout the Boise foothills, creating targeted fuel breaks along roads and near neighborhoods. In mid-June of 2012, a grass fire ignited near the Warm Springs Mesa neighborhood.

The fire was kept small by a homeowner with a garden hose until Boise City firefighters arrived, which would not have been possible if the goats had not created a significant fuel break near the neighborhood.

On September 9, another fire ignited in the Military Reserve area, near neighborhoods and a popular recreation area. Again, the fire stayed small due to the lack of vegetation nearby, a result of the targeted goat grazing, and firefighters were able to contain the fire.

This project was a result of a partnership between Ada County, Boise City, Southwest Idaho RC&D and the Boise BLM.

Fuel Treatment Projects - Boise District BLM 2013



Program Success

Improving Habitat for Endangered Species

Payette National Forest

The Payette National Forest successfully implemented several treatments over the last 12 years to improve habitat for Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel in the Lost Valley Reservoir area. Treatments involved tree thinning and prescribed burning to improve habitat for the federally listed threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

The squirrel's habitat is characterized by native bunch grasses and forbs that provide for-

age. Years of fire suppression enabled trees and shrubs to encroach on squirrel habitat. Surveys conducted in 2000 indicated 50 – 75 squirrels lived in the Lost Valley Reservoir area and most recent surveys show the population increased to approximately 200 – 300 squirrels. By contrast, in 1985 an estimated 5,000 squirrels were documented.

Recently, Forest employee's built an interpretive site to explain the benefits of reintroducing fire to improve habitat for fire dependent wildlife species like the Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel.



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Fuels Treatment Projects - Payette National Forest 2013

