



2011 **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 2011

Total acres of Prescribed Fires Planned for Southwest Idaho –

Total Acres	32,211
Spring 2011	14,380 acres
Fall 2011	17,831 acres
National Fire Plan Mechanical Treatment Planned for Southwest Idaho for 2011	
Total Acres	6,889

Idaho Department of Lands Prescribed Fire

Total Acres	1,915
Spring	150 acres
Fall	1,765 acres
Mechanical Treatment Total Acres	0

Bureau of Land Management Prescribed Fire

Total Acres	6,180
Spring	4,154 acres
Fall	2,026 acres
Mechanical Treatment Total Acres	2,128

Boise National Forest Prescribed Fire

Total Acres	8,126
Spring	3,706 acres
Fall	4,420 acres
Mechanical Treatment Total Acres	833

Payette National Forest Prescribed Fire

Total Acres	10,833
Spring	5,470 acres
Fall	5,363 acres
Mechanical Treatment Total Acres	3,028

Sawtooth National Forest Prescribed Fire

Total Acres	5,157
Spring	900 acres
Fall	4,257 acres
Mechanical Treatment Total Acres	900



Intense wildfire seasons continue to demonstrate the importance of reducing unnaturally large amounts of fuels, especially in areas near homes.

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 wildfire, particularly in urban interface areas, is driven home virtually every year when the summer season brings wildfire.

In 2007 for example, for just the Payette and Boise National Forests, over 600,000 acres burned from wildfires, with several communities threatened. Nationally, nearly \$1 billion dollars has been spent in recent years to suppress wildfires. 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.

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

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.

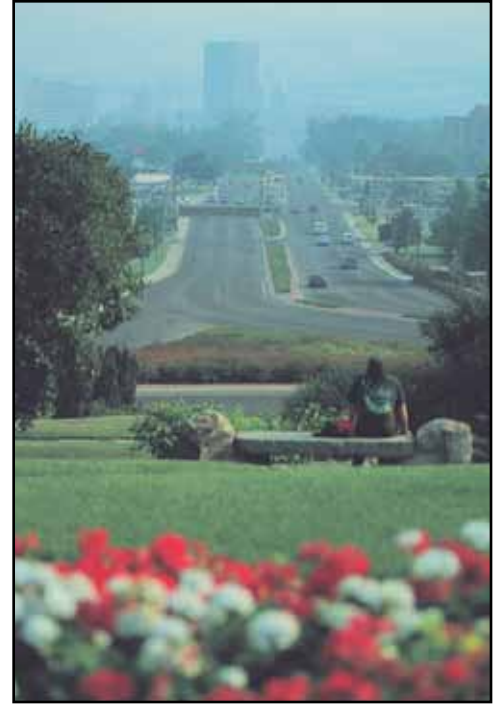
For daily planned ignitions go to:

www.smokemu.org

For specific project information go to the Southwest Idaho Prescribed Fire Website

www.rxfire.com

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 current information from its real-time air monitoring stations around the state. Real-time air monitoring data is located at <http://airquality.deq.idaho.gov/>.

When the Unexpected Happens

Agencies conduct after-action review to discuss smoke event

The Montana/Idaho Airshed Group smoke management program was established to coordinate with agencies to minimize or prevent smoke impacts from fire to accomplish land management objectives. The group's operating guide identifies member regulatory agencies responsibilities to ensure proper procedures and agreements are followed to prevent adverse smoke impacts.

Even with the best preparation the unexpected can happen. On November 2, an After Action Review (AAR) between agencies was held following a prescribed fire smoke event on the Idaho City Ranger District October 19th-20th. Agencies involved included the National Weather Service, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (Regional and State level), Montana/Idaho Airshed Group, Intermountain Regional Office Fire and Aviation Management, and the Boise National Forest.

Forest officials ignited a burn for the 300-



View from downtown Boise, October 2010.

acre Granite Creek/Mores South Prescribed Fire project designed to reduce the risk of wildfire to the community of Idaho City. Crews started hand ignition around noon and smoke dispersion flowed east away from Idaho City. By two o'clock ignition was complete and the smoke column had changed directions to southwest toward Idaho City and Boise. By the end of the day and into the next morning smoke was very noticeable to Boise and Idaho City residents. Numerous calls were received about the smoke.

After Action Reviews are designed for the participants to be open and honest about what transpired with sufficient detail and clarity so everyone understands what did and did not occur and why.

The key questions to answer with an AAR are (1) What was planned; (2) What actually

happened; (3) Why did it happen; and (4) What can we do next time. A thorough review of the burn plan, weather forecasts and ignition of the burn was discussed among the participants to understand the events leading up to and during the incident.

As a result of the AAR, the Boise National Forest plans to review the outcomes of this process with forest fuels managers, involve the National Weather Service and Montana/Idaho Airshed Monitoring Group at burn boss refresher classes prior to burn season and share the lessons learned with other burn bosses.

While the AAR process highlighted areas of improvement, cooperators recognized the good working relationships and trust between agencies involved and will strive to maintain these positive partnership

DEQ PM 2.5 Monitors in Southwest Idaho

Garden Valley, Idaho City, Ketchum, McCall, Twin Falls, Treasure Valley (Meridian and Nampa)

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
When the AQI is in this range:	...air quality conditions are:	...as symbolized by this color:
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




For more information visit:

<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/air/aqindex.cfm>

Valley County Fire Working Group Receives Grant for Hazardous Fuels Treatment

Project will benefit several housing developments on the west side of Lake Cascade

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) enables a community to plan how it will reduce the risk of wildfire. The plan identifies strategic sites and methods for fuel reduction projects across the landscape and jurisdictional boundaries. One of the benefits of having a CWPP include having National Fire Plan priority for projects. The US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management can expedite the implementation of fuel treatments, identified in a CWPP, through alternative environmental compliance options offered under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.



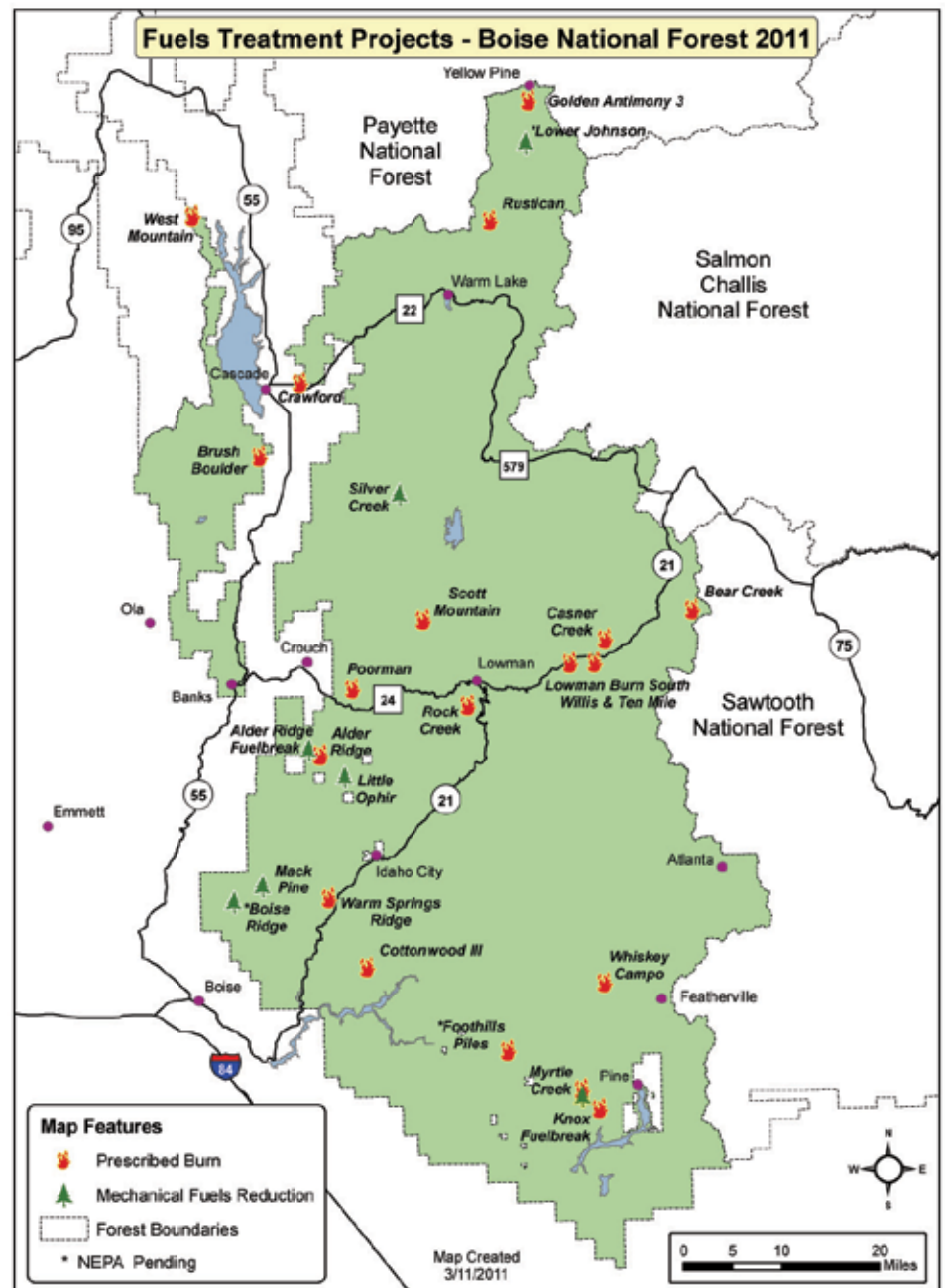
In 2003, the Valley County Fire Working Group formed as outlined in the Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan. The state of Idaho decided to form its groups based on counties rather than cities to make the preparations for the plans easier. The Valley County Group is comprised of several partners including federal, state, county officials and private landowners who work together on several issues related to fire, prevention and land management.

The group received funding to implement a 236-acre hazardous fuels project in 2011. The project will reduce the fire risk around several housing developments on the west side of Lake Cascade near the French Creek subdivision and is adjacent to a similar project on the Cascade Ranger District.

Stephanie Johnson, of Cabin Creek Consultants who wrote and submitted the grant as a representative for Valley County,

says the project is still in the paperwork phase. "We are at the preliminary stages of landowner contracting," said Johnson. "Our final layout of the project will start once

seasonal weather allows and then we will follow with contractor procurement and the start of on the ground fuels treatment." Work is expected to start in the summer of 2011.



Program Success

Minidoka Ranger District, Sawtooth National Forest 2010



Howell Canyon Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project

This project is located in the Howell Canyon Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Project Zone. The proposed WUI project area and Evacuation Corridor is included in the Cassia County Wildfire Mitigation Plan. The goal of this project is to reduce the threat of catastrophic crown fire and improve the ability to safely evacuate the public within the Howell Canyon recreational area in the event of a wildfire.

This goal will be accomplished by reducing surface fuel loads, increasing the amount of aspen reproduction found in the canyon, creating a zone of defensible space in the Thompson Flats Recreation Residences and

CONTACT PERSON: STEVE CLEZIE
sclezide@fs.fed.us
 Sawtooth National Forest-
 Minidoka District Fuels Planner

the Howell Canyon Estates at Pomerelle, providing for improvement of forest land through timber harvest, introducing prescribed fire to timber stands, and allowing the Howell Canyon road to be better utilized as an Evacuation Corridor in the event of a wildfire. The project size is approximately 1,760 acres.

As defined by The Healthy Forests Initiative

and Healthy Forest Restoration Act interim Field Guide of 2004, this project met the HFRA criteria and was therefore analyzed under its authorities.

The 2010 accomplishment is part of a multi-year effort. Treatments are varied in scope and include such methods as thinning, timber harvest, sanitation harvest, prescribed burning, and defensible space creation. The unit of interest entailed hand falling and piling of conifer encroachment within aspen clones. Subsequent burning will occur in the spring/fall of 2011. This contract was completed within a two-week time frame and treated approximately 70 acres within the WUI interface.

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 wildland fire. Using a variety of fuel treatments near community private structures, Firewise increases community protection from wildland fire. This year's fuels reduction program mixes prescribed fire and mechanical treatments.



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

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

Working Together for Communities, Recreation and Forest Health on the Payette National Forest

Recovery Act Funding enabled the Payette National Forest to administer 11 stewardship contracts that are designed to achieve multiple objectives on the landscape, including the reduction of fuel loading across the forest. Unlike traditional timber sales that focused on timber removal with payment to the US Forest Service for saw logs, stewardship contracts exchange goods (timber and biomass) for services so that improvements to other resources areas such as wildlife, fish passage and water quality can be made at the same time, and logging slash can be utilized for energy production. These types of projects have contributed to landscape restoration on approximately 11,000 acres through summer of 2013 including 30 million board feet of timber production and 50,000 tons of biomass for use in energy production.

Recovery Act funding covered over 3.3 million dollars of the costs associated with these complex projects, and supplemented receipts from timber sales where the value of the timber could not cover the entire cost of landscape restoration needs.

One such project is the Brundage Vegetation Management Project taking place on the McCall Ranger District in and around Brundage Mountain Ski Resort just outside McCall, Idaho. The project originated in the early nineties as a multi-year thinning and maintenance plan on the USFS lands permitted to the ski resort. This comprehensive plan aims to maintain the health and vigor of forest stands at the resort through thinning and timber removal so that glades and windbreaks are maintained and fire risks are reduced.

Funding issues slowed the progress of the plan in recent years and the existing sub-alpine fir is not highly valued as saw timber. As restoration needs became increasingly apparent, Forest Service personnel worked with the resort to develop a stewardship contract that would cover the needed vegetation management work as well as

“The jobs associated with this work have provided income to people in Adams and Valley Counties where unemployment rates are at historical highs.”

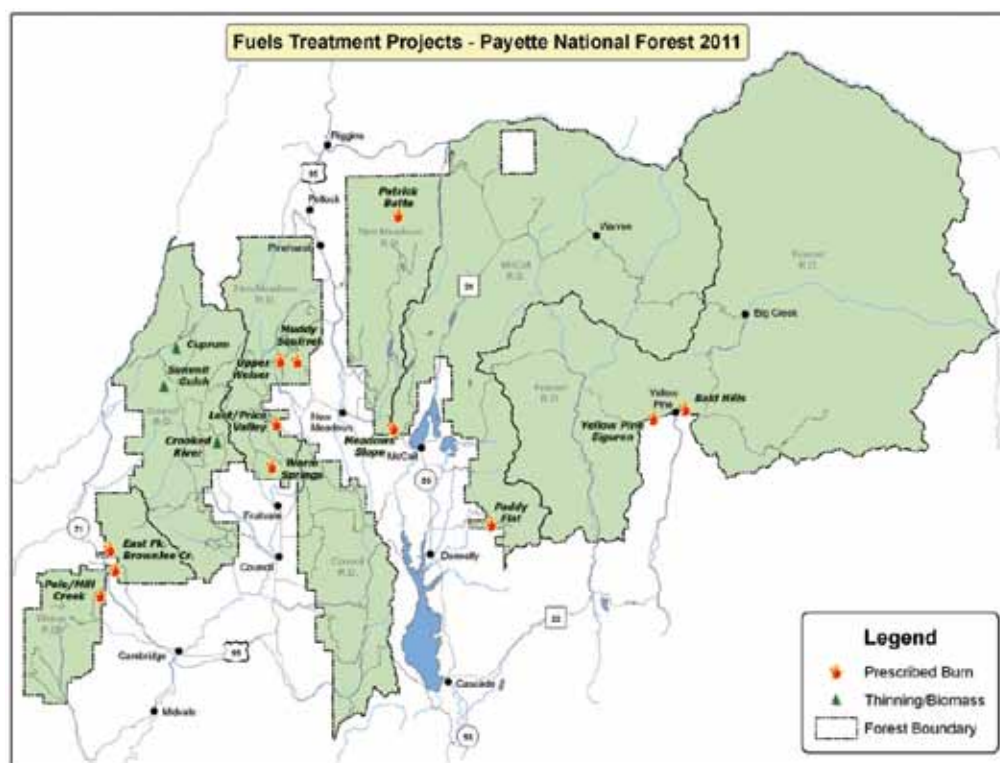
the needed road and watershed work. Over \$500,000 in Recovery Act funding enabled the forest to fast track the plan and implement the most expensive road and culvert work with the added bonus of biomass utilization.

The jobs associated with this work have provided income to people in Adams and Valley Counties where unemployment rates are at historical highs. The biomass component of the project is notable as it is supplying about \$4,000 worth of fuel to Tamarack Mill and a mill in Clarkston, WA. This also reduced the amount of slash

that would have otherwise been burned in traditional timber sales.

About 200 acres of Forest Service land are receiving treatment and should be finished by the end of 2011. The area in and around the resort is busy during the summer and winter with a range of recreationists. In light of the heavy use the area receives in the summer by bicyclists and hikers, the Forest Service worked with the contractors to limit operations to Monday through Thursday so as not to disrupt or endanger summer visitors to the forest.

“This project may be small in the grand scheme of things. But it is a huge benefit to the ski resort and the community. This will help ensure the long term sustainability of the resort and leave a legacy of benefits to fish and wildlife, and forest visitors for years to come,” said Lisa Klinger, McCall District Ranger. “This is a win-win for all parties especially in light of the current economic situation.”



Program Success

Boise BLM Continues Fuel Treatment Project in Silver City

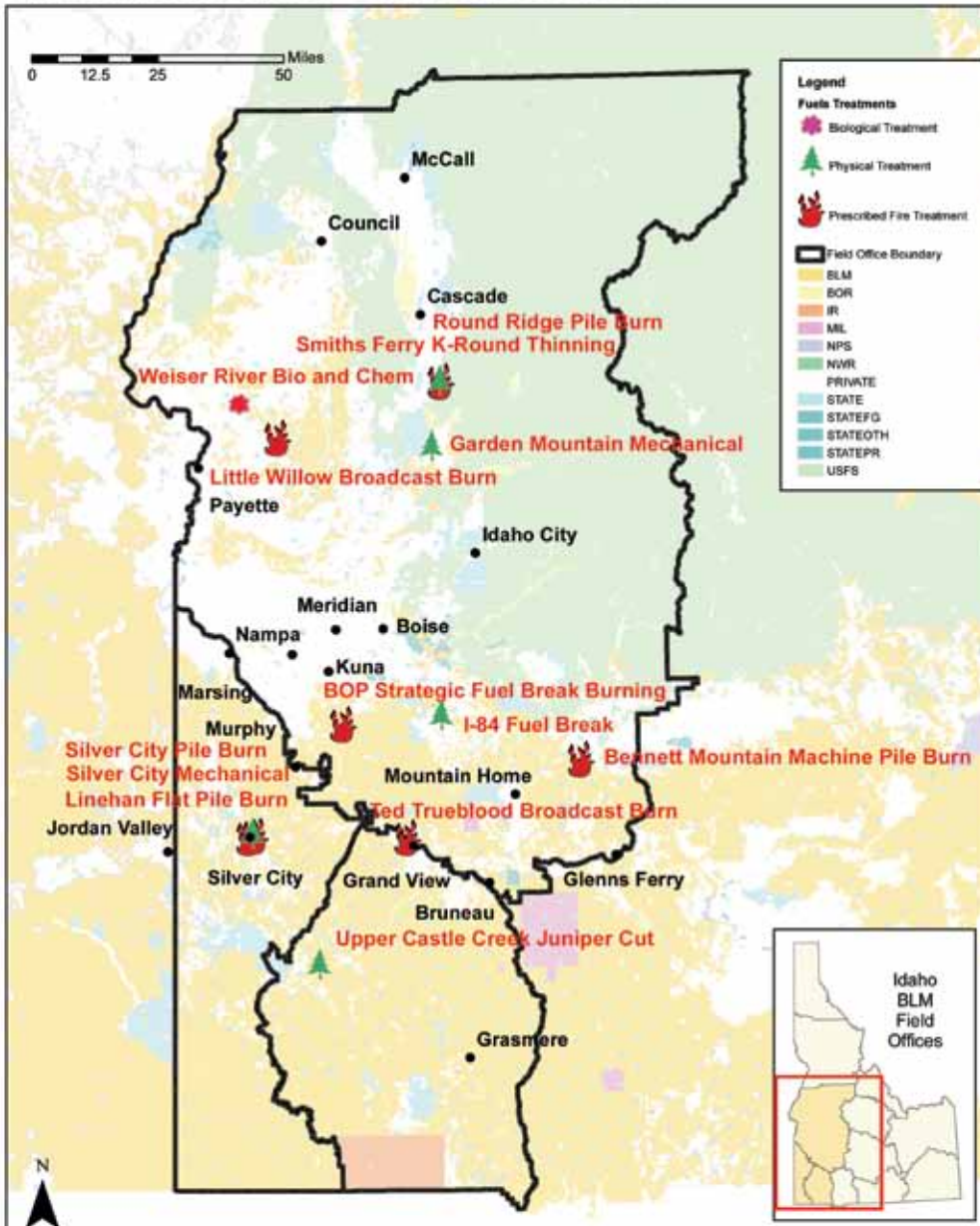
The Boise District Fuels program will continue work on the Silver City fuels treatment project by treating 450 acres in 2011.

The ten-year project, in motion since 2006, was designed by the BLM to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire, improve the ecosystem,

and maintain a scenic landscape in and around the historic town of Silver City, which is located in the Owyhee Mountains. This project focuses on three areas surrounding Silver City. The first step which has been completed was fuels reduction work in and adjacent to the town itself. This included thinning and hand piling of juniper

trees around Silver City to create defensible space and restore the area's vegetation to its natural condition so that when wildfire returns to the area, the result would be a less intense, slower moving ground fire that could be more easily controlled. The second step which is ongoing is treating the travel corridors in and out of Silver City.

Fuel Treatment Projects - Boise District BLM 2011



Treatments were designed to provide a 500 foot buffer on both sides of the main roads accessing Silver City to provide safe travel for the public and emergency responders in the event of a wildfire.

Thinning and hand piling of fir and juniper trees within that buffer was the tool that was chosen. All hand piles are burned by the BLM in this project area from October through December. The third treatment is focused on treating aspen stands that are or may be encroached on by conifer trees. We will be treating these aspen stands by removing conifers through thinning and hand-piling.

In addition to acting as natural fire breaks, treating these aspen stands will help improve the overall ecosystem and maintain the historic scenic landscape of Silver City.



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

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