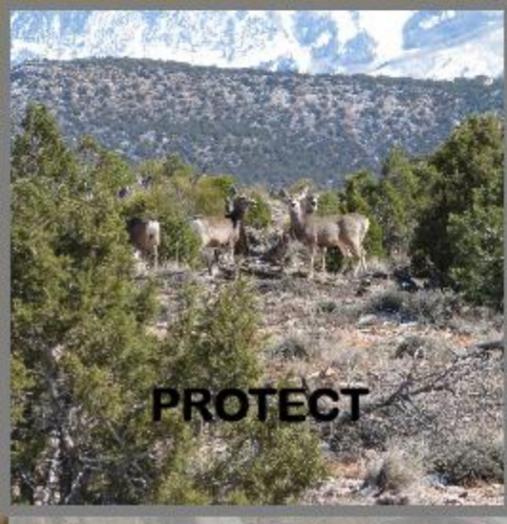


Black Ridge Fuels Reduction, Vegetative Restoration & Habitat Improvement Project



Black Ridge Project (pre-treatment)



OVERVIEW

Multiple phases of the project will occur over many years.

Phase I began in fall 2010.

Planned and coordinated utilizing in-depth scientific research.

Various methods of vegetation treatments have been implemented to:

1. Protect against wildfires
2. Enhance wildlife habitat
3. Improve watersheds
4. Restore plant communities

Wildfire protection includes thinning dense pinyon/juniper trees adjacent to communities, next to roads, and around utility and communications sites.

Wildlife habitat enhancement incorporates seeding for grasses and shrubs, opening up pinyon/juniper savannas, and leaving old growth pinyon/juniper woodlands as travel corridors for big game herds as they access the La Sal Mountains.

Watershed improvement consists of increasing ephemeral stream flows, dredging stock ponds for water retention, and decreasing soil run off and erosion.

Plant community restoration achieved by aerial seed application, harrowing degraded and over-grazed sagebrush flats, thinning pinyon/juniper, chipping in old chaining sites, and restricting livestock grazing for two years in each phase (allowing plants to establish).

GOALS

- Reduce the potential loss of life and property from wildfire for adjacent communities.
- Preserve and enhance critical winter habitat and forage for wildlife.
- Enhance wildlife travel corridors.
- Restore ecological resilience to watersheds.
- Restore and expand sage brush communities.

Winter Pile Burning



Aerial Seed Application



TREATMENTS

- Chipping
- Chain Harrow
- Lop and Scatter
- Thin, Pile, and Burn
- Seeding

HISTORY

The Black Ridge area ecosystem is dominated by pinyon (*Pinus edulis*) and juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*) trees. During the past century pinyon and juniper (P-J) woodlands have dramatically encroached into the domain of vital vegetation regimes on this landscape. P-J woodlands represent the third most extensive vegetation type in the continental U.S. Recent comparison by historical photo documentation shows there has been a 100% P-J increase across southern Utah. P-J woodlands are highly flammable and BLM fire managers are concerned that large destructive fires in the area are imminent.

Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) is a general classification of the historical role that fire played across a landscape prior to modern human intervention. P-J encroachment has played a significant role in fire regime departure among vegetation groups including: gambel oak communities, sage brush, and grass lands. Most of these regimes are now FRCC-2 or 3, where FRCC-3 is complete departure from historic fire occurrence and dominant vegetation class.

Over the past several decades, P-J encroachment has been a major focus for the BLM due to its spatial extent and the undesirable consequences of fire regime change. Vegetative competition from P-J has contributed to declines in forage production, diminished habitat quality for wildlife, decreased herbaceous cover, and increases in soil erosion with implications for long-term ecosystem sustainability.

MONITORING AND REPEAT PHOTOGRAPHY



**Black Ridge Bullhog Plot 2 August 5, 2010
pretreatment, old chained area**



**Black Ridge Bullhog Plot 2 September 30, 2011
first year post treatment and seed response**

COLLABORATION

- The Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative (UWRI) has been an integral partner contributing funds for seed purchase and equipment rentals.
- Participation for project design was a collaborative effort within the BLM, Moab Field Office's Fuels, Wildlife, Hydrology, and Range staffs.
- Utah Forestry Fire and State Lands developed Community Wildfire Protection Plans with adjacent communities which were incorporated into the design of the Black Ridge Project.
- The BLM and Utah Division of Wildlife Resources have monitoring locations in the project area to study treatment effectiveness on vegetation and on migratory bird habitats and migration patterns.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- This unique desert ecosystem, once at risk from the impacts of pinyon/juniper encroachment and wildfire, now has tangible signs of restoration, diversity, and resilience.
- The success of the Black Ridge Project is the unification of sound land management practice and the application of contemporary scientific research.



Utah Fire Info

www.UtahFireInfo.gov
for more info and
other on-going projects

BLM, Canyon Country Fire Zone, Moab Field Office



Moab BLM

