

Moab District Office and Utah State Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands Help 10 Communities Complete Fire Plans Under Direction of the National Fire Plan

By Heather O'Hanlon

The BLM Moab District Office in cooperation with Utah State Division of Forestry, Fire and State Land (Lead) and the Manti-La Sal District of the U.S. Forest Service, coordinated and assisted with 10 communities to write and complete community fire plans.

Starting in October 2003, the three agencies combined with community members and county administrators held a series of workshops designed to help communities write the plans.

Canyon Terrace, Castle Valley, East Carbon (included- Sunnyside and Columbia), Old La Sal and Ray Mesa, Pack Creek, Blanding (included- White Mesa and Johnson Creek), Eastland, and Montezuma Canyon all attended the workshops and started developing fire councils. In addition to the workshops, each of the communities held "in house" meetings with the various agencies to coordinate efforts and keep "everybody on the same page".

All of these communities are communities at risk with the exception of Eastland, Johnson Creek and Montezuma Canyon. However, the latter three should be added to the list by the end of 2004. Many of these communities were already involved in the National Fire Plan Grant. The remaining communities could see the writing on the wall regarding the need for fire mitigation and simply started the process all on their own with guidance from the cooperating agencies.

The community of Castle Valley has taken fire mitigation a step further. They have also applied for and received a grant through Firewise. Through the grant they were able to acquire resources management software that will help them in their mapping and fire mitigation efforts.

The agencies worked with two different contractors to hold the community fire plan writing workshops. Community Solutions is the contractor that would help with the creative side of plan development and contractor Lenard Stull, Forester, who coordinated with the local RCD's to get the mechanics of the plan writing done.