

## UTAH BLM SENIOR LEADERSHIP TOUR FUELS AND INTEGRATION EFFORTS

With several new individuals in leadership positions within the Utah State Office including the State Director, Associate State Director, Deputy State Director for Resources, and the State Fire Management Officer, there was a desire to go into the field and showcase the Fuels Management work and integration with the Resources program occurring across the state. Southern Utah was identified for a tour location as efforts occurring there exemplify the great work and integration occurring throughout Utah BLM.



Tour group including staff from the Color Country District, Kanab Field Office, Utah State Office, National Interagency Fire Center, National Operations Center, Utah Department of Natural Resources, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service and local rancher and permittee.

As the Utah BLM edges towards one-million acres of fuels treated on BLM Lands throughout Utah, the purpose of the field trip was to see firsthand and provide background and understanding of the Utah BLM Fuels Management Program, looking at resilient, science-based and strategically placed fuels treatments on the landscape. Since the inception of the National Fire Plan, the Utah BLM Fuels Program has benefited through and contributed towards various efforts and initiatives including the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative (UWRI), and the Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy (IRFMS, formerly referred to as SO 3336).

Anita Bilbao, Associate State Director commented “what passion for the work and camaraderie from our fuels team and partners! The scale of the on-the-ground projects really demonstrates the fuel's program ability to think big. Powerful partnership and on-the-ground success through the Watershed Restoration Initiative!”

The field trip showcased and highlight to senior level management:

- Implementation and monitoring occurring on the ground
- Integration occurring between the Fire & Fuels Program and the Resources Division
- Positive impacts vegetation treatments are having towards BLM Sage-Grouse efforts
- Partnerships and impact of the Utah Partnership for Conservation and Development's (UPCD) Watershed Restoration Initiative.



Local Rancher and Permittee, Hal Hamlin, talking of success and efforts in having landscape scale treatments on BLM allotment.

Efforts to restore declining rangelands at a watershed and landscape scale have been occurring on BLM Administrated Lands in southern and central Utah since the inception of the National Fire Plan in 2002 and the UWRI in 2006. During this time, treatments have occurred on over 455,601 acres in these regions of Utah, much of this work contributing to the conservation, enhancement, connectivity, and/or protection of the Greater Sage-Grouse and providing resistance and resilience to their habitat.

J. Bradley Washa, Utah BLM State Fuels Specialist said "I think being able to get out on the ground and show off the great work occurring within the West Desert and Color Country Districts and representative of the type of work occurring throughout much of the state was beneficial to all. We could definitely see the pride and enthusiasm everyone has in the work occurring."



Brigham Young University Professor Dr. Bruce Roundy talks about Joint Fire Science Program's SageSTEP Project near Scipio.



Sage-Grouse Researcher Dr. Nichole Frey of Utah State University describes data on Sage-Grouse in the Kanab area.

A significant amount of work in southern and central Utah recently was completed through the Southern Utah Resilient Landscape Collaborative ([Video on Resilient Landscapes](#)). In FY2015 the proposal was one of ten Collaboratives selected within the Department of Interior's Resilient Landscape Program. Over the past three years, \$9,323,000 in Resilient Landscape funding was allocated to the Collaborative. The Resilient Landscape funds have been leveraged with other Fuels, Wildlife, and Healthy Lands funds along with outside funding from the Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative, basically doubling the allocation for

69,827 acres in identified treatments.

Southern Utah has been at the forefront of the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Sage-Grouse Initiative and the UPCD and their UWRI that has successfully leveraged funds beyond what the BLM could do alone. This Initiative has more than double the BLM's investment, by working cooperatively and collaboratively with other Federal agencies, states, tribes, local stakeholders, and non-governmental organizations on fire and fuels management, habitat restoration, along with post-fire stabilization, rehabilitation, and restoration activities.

Insight from Jessica Wade, Utah BLM State Fire Management Officer, "Your projects are such a great example of getting great things done efficiently and effectively in the name of healthy and resilient landscapes. And the employees who make that happen are amazing. You all give me inspiration to keep doing my job!"

Eight stops to projects were made over the two-day period including Northern Utah Interagency Fire Center, Scipio, Greenville Bench outside of Beaver, Fremont, Yellow Jacket, Upper Kanab Creek, South Canyon near Panguitch, and Buckskin (South Beaver). Along with project overviews at each stop, topics discussed in the field included:

- Utah's Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy,
- Utah's Interagency Smoke Management Program,
- Joint Fire Science Program's SageSTEP Project,
- Natural Resource Conservation Service's Farm Bill and Sage-Grouse Initiative,
- BLM Healthy Lands Efforts,
- Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative,
- perspectives from a local rancher and permittee,
- Sagebrush Science Framework,
- Economic Impacts of Sagebrush Steppe Restoration, and
- Sage-Grouse Research in Southern Utah conducted by Utah State University.

Units and partners participating in the field trip included

- West Desert District (Salt Lake City)
- Color Country District (Cedar City),
- Kanab Field Office
- Cedar City Field Office,
- Utah BLM State Office,
- National Interagency Fire Center,
- BLM National Operations Center,
- Utah Department of Natural Resources,
- Utah Division of Wildlife Resources,
- Utah Forestry, Fire, and State Lands,
- Natural Resources Conservation Service,
- Brigham Young University and
- Utah State University, and
- local rancher and permittee.

Local rancher and permittee, Hal Hamlin, shared a poem and his perspective, "And just one more thing I'll ask you Lord, just help us with what you can to save some seeds of freedom for the future sons of man." "That's what these projects are about. It's not just for me and it's not for you. But it's for the future and it's for what this country can be.