

Devil Canyon Project Area



OVERVIEW

This project began in 2011, to protect the community of Canyon Terrace from potential wildfire loss and damage. Multiple phases of the project will occur over the next several years.

Various methods of vegetation treatments have been implemented to:

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

Wildfire protection includes thinning dense pinyon/juniper trees adjacent to residences, roadways, utility corridors and infrastructure.

Wildlife habitat enhancement entails restoring sagebrush communities by removing encroaching pinyon/juniper and leaving old growth pinyon/juniper woodlands as travel corridors for big game herds as they access the Abajo Mountains.

Watershed improvement consists of increasing ephemeral stream flows and decreasing soil erosion.

Plant community restoration comprises cutting beetle killed pinyon, thinning pinyon/juniper encroachment, rehabilitating old chaining sites and restricting livestock grazing for two years after seeding (allowing plants to establish).

GOALS

- Protect Canyon Terrace from potential wildfire loss and damage
- Reduce dense fuels complex of pinyon/juniper & dead wood debris
- Preserve & protect natural resources
- Enhance and expand wildlife habitat
- Provide fuel wood biomass to the community

Winter Pile Burning



Chipping Mulch after Treatment



TREATMENTS

- Chipping/Mastication
- Thin, Pile & Burn
- Lop & Scatter
- Seeding

HISTORY

The Devil Canyon area is a high desert ecosystem with a complex vegetative mix composed of pinyon and juniper (P-J) woodlands, ponderosa pine stands, oak brush and open sagebrush flats. During the past century P-J woodlands have dramatically encroached into the domain of these 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 can be highly flammable and the Devil Canyon area has high fire probability due to fuels, topography, weather and lightning. 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: sage brush, ponderosa pine and native forbs. 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 addressing 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.

COLLABORATION

- The Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative (UWRI) with contributions from the Division of Wildlife Resources, Mule Deer Foundation, Sportsman for Fish & Wildlife and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, donated funding for seed and treatments.
- Participation for project design was a collaborative effort within the BLM Monticello Field Office's Fuels, Archaeology, Woodlands/Forestry, 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 Devil Canyon Project.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The treated areas within this project now have tangible and visible signs of returning to a diverse and resilient high desert ecosystem.
- The achievement of the Devil Canyon Project is the application of sound land management practice, collaboration between multiple interest groups and the application of contemporary scientific research.



Utah Fire Info

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



Monticello BLM

BLM, Canyon Country Fire Zone, Monticello Field Office