



Bureau of Land Management Canyon Country Fire Zone Price, Moab, and Monticello Field Offices

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On July 16, 2009 the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Canyon Country Fire Zone conducted a prescribed fire between the Colorado River and Highway 279 approximately three miles southwest of Moab, Utah. The area of the burn was hand-picked to help achieve a specific goal, which is to closely monitor the effect of prescribed fire on a thick stand of tamarisk that has been defoliated by the tamarisk leaf beetle.



Timing of the burn was dependent upon the defoliation effects of the beetle which do most of their work in the summer months. After the vegetation began to turn brown from the beetle infestation, approximately eight acres of tamarisk was broadcast burned late in the afternoon at the peak of the burn period. The desired effect of the burn was a high intensity, stand replacement fire to assess prescribed fire as a management tool in the treatment

of the thousands of acres of beetle infested tamarisk along riparian corridors throughout the Canyon Country Fire Zone. The burn was completed and smoke had cleared within a matter of hours to allow Highway 279 to be reopened which had been closed during ignition operations to protect the safety of the public and firefighters. Smoke from the burn was thick and black and was visible from Moab Valley, from areas within Arches National Park and also from other viewpoints.



The BLM has been working on multiple tamarisk projects along the Colorado River over the past several years. Activities have included mechanical removal of tamarisk and Russian olive to create fuel breaks at critical places along the riverway as well as around several of the campgrounds. Revegetation at many of these areas started last fall with the planting and irrigation of native trees and the seeding of shrubs and grasses. Canyon Country Fire Zone treatments have been concurrent with BLM Moab Field Office campground restoration efforts as well as with treatment actions conducted by partners including the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, the State of Utah Forestry, Fire and State Lands, and The Nature Conservancy.

This project will provide valuable data that will be combined with other monitoring results to determine the best methods for enhancing the defoliation effects of the tamarisk beetle. More information on the Tamarisk Removal/Colorado Riverway Restoration project can be found at the BLM, Moab Field Office website <http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/moab.html> or by calling Brian Keating, Canyon Country Fire Zone Fuels Program Manager at 435-259-2194.