

# Creating Healthy Watersheds is Good Business for Everyone

- BLM, Color Country District-

## THE BIG PICTURE

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in partnership with Utah's Watershed Restoration Initiative (UWRI) recently completed the second phase of the South Canyon Watershed Restoration project near Panguitch, Utah.

**“This multi-year project will provide vegetation improvements to 20,000 acres in the South Canyon area, over the course of 10 years.”**

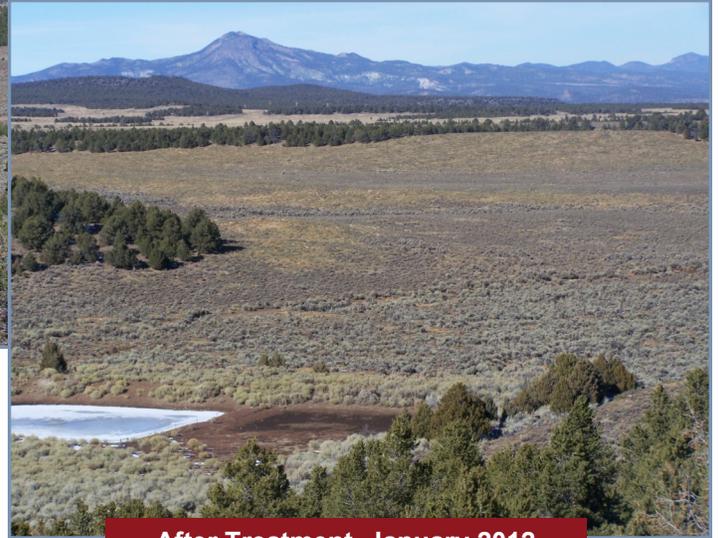
Shawn Peterson, BLM Project Manager



**Landscape Treatments >**

Near Panguitch, Utah

**Before Treatment, October 2011.**



**After Treatment, January 2012**

Phase two, which began in the fall of 2011, was designed to restore 1900 acres of rangeland using mechanical equipment and was reseeded with desired grasses and forbs. Landscape projects like this are implemented to improve wildlife habitat, reduce the risk of wildfire to nearby communities, and increase water yield and quality in the Sevier River Drainage.

## LOCAL ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The South Canyon Watershed Restoration provided numerous benefits to the local economy of Panguitch and surrounding area. It employed 20 full-time individuals including contractors, sub-contractors, heavy machine operators, and other technical workers. Two of which were hired from the local community.

Employment with this project provided personnel with good wages and valuable experience for the duration of this four-to-six month contract.

By federal law, heavy equipment operators are required to be paid a minimum of \$17.94 per hour. Compared to the average hourly salary of \$12.88 in Garfield County, this opportunity provided good wages (<http://jobs.utah.gov/jsp/wi/utalmis/industrydetail.do>).

Not only is this project providing work for many people, it generates a lot of other business for the local economy through the purchase of thousands of dollars in fuel, mechanical parts and services, food, and lodging expenses.

For example, Project Manager Shawn Peterson states that approximately 60 gallons of fuel is needed daily to operate each of nine machines for approximately 12 hours per day. “Fuel is purchased locally, adding about \$1,890 daily to the local economy from fuel alone, which amounts to \$170,000 throughout the 90 days of this treatment contract.”



**South Canyon Demanded Heavy Metal >**

Nine “Bullhogs” worked to restore wildlife habitat, improve community wildfire protection, and restore the South Canyon Watershed.

Additionally, each machine that is utilized on this project is routinely serviced in the local area. Expenditures for replacement parts and repairs of the equipment provide significant revenue to the local auto parts stores and mechanic shops. In fact, national contracts are written to encourage contractors to support the local economy nearest to the project site. Cecil Swaggart of Swaggart Enterprises and contractor for the project estimates that at least one out of the nine machines working on the project is in need of service daily.

“Due to the BLM’s current contracting structure, we spend most of our money in the communities nearest to our work site.

We pay rent, buy food, purchase fuel, and order equipment parts locally.”

*Cecil Swaggart, Swaggart Enterprises, Oregon*

### NOT ONLY UTAH BENEFITS

Not only is this project and many others like it creating jobs locally, they are creating jobs nationally.

*Swaggart Enterprises* is based out of Oregon and has recruited assistance from various companies throughout the United States. Other contract companies used to complete this project include *Open Range* of Colorado, and *West Forest* of California.

Local, Utah based companies are always given an equal opportunity to be “awarded” contracts, but due to the

various rangeland health project opportunities currently available this fall and winter, most of the local companies were already working to complete other treatments.

### HIGH PRIORITY TREATMENTS

Pro-active vegetation treatments similar to this are being implemented throughout the BLM Color Country District and are a high priority for restoring Utah’s watersheds, improving sage grouse and big game habitat, and preventing the adverse effects of large-scale wildfire.

Clearly, managing watersheds to a healthy condition is good business for everyone. It’s something that federal and state land managers, many sportsmen’s groups, and the wildlife moving into these treatment areas can all agree on.

**ONLINE** > Interested in seeing more treatments like this? Visit [Utahfireinfo.gov](http://Utahfireinfo.gov) to view projects being implemented near you.



Before Treatment-  
2009



After Treatment-  
2011

### If You Build It, Wildlife Will Come >

There has already been a significant increase in wildlife using treatments. Mule Deer, Elk, Antelope, and Sage Grouse are benefiting from the newly created habitat they now call home!

### Sage Grouse >

One primary objective of this habitat treatment is to **prevent** the federal listing of Sage Grouse, by restoring habitat that is being encroached upon and fragmented by pinyon and juniper trees.