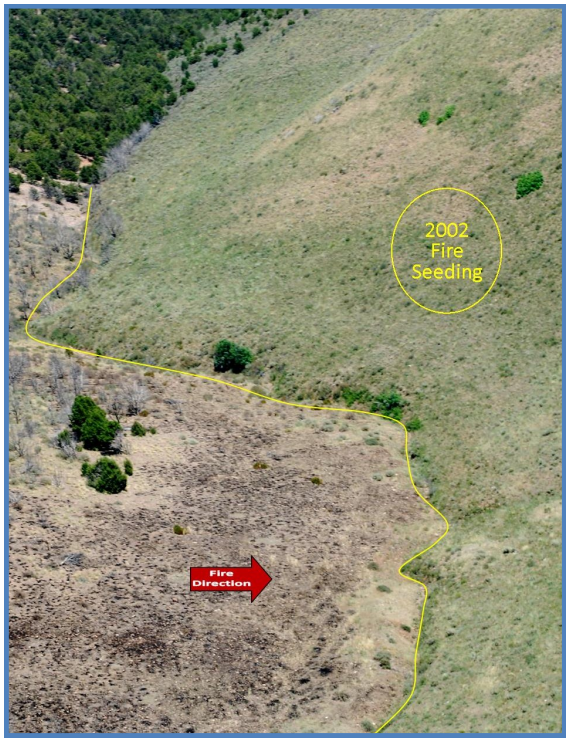
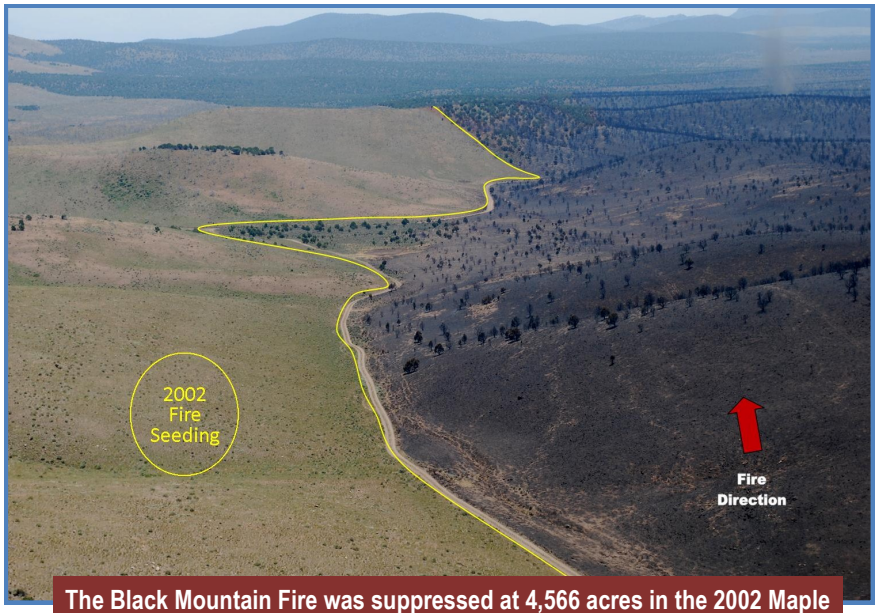
Post Fire Seeding Saves Dollars, Habitat from Black Mountain Fire

-BLM, Color Country District-

On Tuesday, July 2, the lightning caused Black Mountain Fire generated a large smoke column north of Cedar City and south of Minersville, Utah. The fire moving primarily south, made significant runs through the rolling hills of Iron and Beaver Counties until it came in contact with the Maple Springs fire rehabilitation reseeding from 2002. Fire fighters took advantage of the reduced flame lengths in the reseeding by quickly suppressing the head of the fire after establishing a safe place to work. In places, the fire suppressed itself in the flame resistant vegetation, seeded to prevent cheat grass invasion and restore a more resilient landscape of perennial vegetation following the 2002 fire.



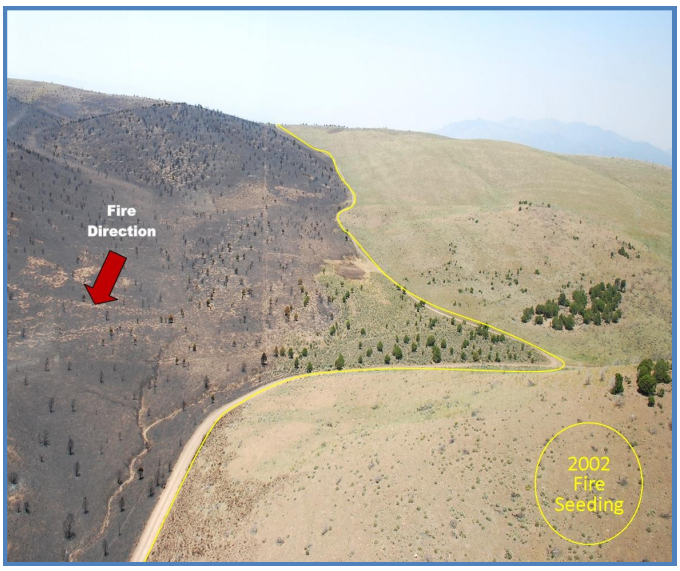


The Black Mountain Fire was suppressed at 4,566 acres in the 2002 Maple Springs post fire seeding, under critical drought conditions.

Not only did this post fire seeding provide an effective fuel break from a large, fast moving fire, but it also provided fire fighters with a safe place to work.

Sage grouse and mule deer have benefited from the Maple Springs seeding and similar projects in the area for decades. Some of the largest mule deer in southern Utah have been harvested in this general unit by sportsmen over the past 10 years. It's hard to deny the multiple benefits of prescribed fire and post wildfire rehabilitation treatments as land management agencies are enjoying great success with diverse seed mixes that include grasses, forbs and shrubs, important to the habitat. Most of the seed is provided by partners through the Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI).

"The return on the investment from this one wildfire alone potentially saved millions of fire suppression dollars and clearly shows how healthy ecosystems are likely to thrive when post fire rehabilitation efforts are implemented successfully."

Eliminating or reducing funding for these post fire treatments and pro-active hazardous fuels reduction treatments is not good business as evidenced by the photos.

- Paul Briggs, District Fuels Program Manager