

# APPENDIX **J**

## **FIRE MANAGEMENT AND VEGETATION TREATMENT PROTOCOLS**

Wildland fire suppression and vegetation treatment protocols would be implemented under all alternatives. These protocols would be applied to fire suppression and vegetation treatment activities with the intent of protecting sensitive resources. However, wildland fire suppression is generally an emergency activity and the Monument Manager or Park Superintendent could choose to override the protocols to protect life, property, or valuable resources. Suppression protocols would be further defined within the Monument FMP. Treatment protocols would be addressed in project-specific NEPA documents. All protocols are intended to prevent significant impacts to natural and human resources.

### **Wildland Fire Suppression Protocols Common to All Alternatives**

- Dozer blading should not occur within 300 feet of playas or dry lakebeds to protect cultural resources. Buffer zones greater than 300 feet from playas and dry lakebeds are preferable.
- Dozer blading should not occur within 300 feet of known historic trails and cultural sites.
- Dozer blading should not occur within 300 feet of perennial streams unless approved by the authorized officer. Buffer zones greater than 300 feet from riparian areas are preferable. Exceptions would be made to protect lives and property when safety is an immediate concern, or under the direction of a Resource Advisor when an escape would cause more long-term damage to resources.
- Within the NPS Monument and Preserve, dozers shall not be used for line construction or driven off-road across NPS lands unless a fire poses an immediate threat to life or property and with the approval of the NPS Monument Superintendent.
- Within Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) and the Pristine Zone, wildland fire management activities should follow BLM Manual H-8550-1, Interim Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review. The use of earth-moving equipment within these areas requires approval of the authorized officer.
- Within the Craters of the Moon Wilderness, motorized equipment or mechanized transportation shall not be used unless emergency conditions threaten life or property.
- Fire camps and staging areas shall be placed outside of the Pristine Zone.
- Use of natural firebreaks and existing roads and trails to contain a wildland fire will be encouraged.
- Establishment of control lines, base camps, and support facilities should be avoided in known habitat for special status species unless life and property are threatened.
- When a wildland fire escapes initial attack, BLM and/or NPS Resource Advisors will be assigned to ensure that resource management concerns are adequately addressed and that necessary mitigation occurs.
- The Resource Advisor(s) will ensure emergency consultation is initiated with the USFWS whenever suppression activities impact listed species habitat.

- Application of retardant or foam will be avoided within 300 feet of waterways. Exceptions would be made to protect lives and property when safety is an immediate imperative, or under the direction of a Resource Advisor when an escape would cause more long-term damage to aquatic resources.
- To minimize spread of noxious and invasive plant species, equipment used for extended attack or Type I or II incidents should be cleaned before arriving on site and prior to leaving the incident. Staging areas and fire camps should avoid sites with noxious weed infestations.
- Developed recreation sites and structures on public lands will be protected.
- Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) guidelines will be followed where appropriate.
- Prior to fire season, potential areas of conflict between archaeological resources and fire suppression activities should be identified.
- An archaeologist will be notified of any cultural resources encountered during suppression activities. Where feasible, line construction will be preceded by assessment by an archaeologist.

### **Restoration Treatment Protocols Common to All Alternatives**

- Noxious/invasive species inventory, and pre- and post-burn treatments will be utilized to reduce the overall threat of noxious and invasive species establishment and spread.
- All herbicides will be applied by certified applicators following label directions.
- Prescribed fire treatments and wildland fire for resource use will follow pre-approved fire management plans or project-specific burn plans that restrict when, where, and the conditions under which fire can be used.
- Plant materials used in vegetation treatments would be predominately native. However, non-native species may be used in vegetation treatments in the BLM portion of the Monument on harsh or degraded sites where they are needed to structurally mimic the natural plant community and prevent soil loss and invasion by exotic annual grasses and noxious weeds. The species used would be those that have the highest probability of establishment on these sites without invading surrounding areas. These “placeholders” would maintain the area for future native restoration. Native seed would be used more frequently and at larger scales as species adapted to the local area become available.
- All prescribed fire treatment areas would be rested from livestock grazing for a minimum of two growing seasons or until vegetation establishment and resource objectives are achieved, including soil stability and desired vegetation cover, or as defined in site-specific plans.
- Cultural resource inventories/surveys will be completed prior to implementing site-specific restoration projects.
- Dozer blading should not occur within 300 feet of known historic trails and cultural sites.
- No dozer blading should occur within 300 feet of perennial streams. Buffer zones greater than 300 feet are preferable.
- Within WSAs and the Pristine Zone, vegetation treatment activities should follow BLM Manual H-8550-1, Interim Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review.
- All restoration treatments in areas supporting threatened and endangered species would be



conducted in consultation with the USFWS.

- From February 1 through August 15, restrictions may be imposed on restoration treatments in areas supporting nesting raptors. Treatment proposals would be coordinated with IDFG.
- Restoration treatments proposed in areas supporting sage-grouse would be coordinated with IDFG.
- Restoration treatments in areas supporting sage-grouse breeding habitat would be limited from March 1 through April 30, and grouse nesting habitat April 30 through June 15.
- Restoration treatments in areas supporting sage-grouse wintering habitats would be limited from December 1 through March 1.
- Sage-grouse Key and Source habitats would be maintained and enhanced when possible within Low- and Mid-Elevation Shrub types. Restoration treatments would generally be limited in habitats supporting live sagebrush communities. Treatments to enhance and restore habitat would be focused in areas where the sagebrush component is lost or dead and the understory degraded.
- Seasonal guidelines may be applied if needed to mitigate the impacts to big game species from planned restoration treatments (Table J-1).

| <b>Table J-1</b>  |  |
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| <b>Seasonal Big Game Guidelines for Restoration Treatments.</b> |  |
| Habitat   | Restricted Period  |
| Crucial big game winter range                                   | Limited activities from November 15 through April 30. Pile burning permitted on a case-by-case basis. Treatments occurring on crucial winter range would be coordinated with IDFG. |
| Elk calving area  | Limited activities from May 15 through June 30. Treatments occurring in elk calving areas would be coordinated with IDFG.  |
| Pronghorn and mule deer fawning ground                          | Treatments occurring in fawning areas would be coordinated with IDFG with limited activities occurring from May 15 through June 30.  |

- Treatments would consider visual qualities to preserve the landscape character. Wherever possible, landscape modifications would replicate a natural line, form, color and texture found in the surrounding area. Treatments that result in long-term disruption of natural visual qualities (e.g., drill seeding that establishes vegetation rows) should be avoided or hidden by design.
- Treatments in developed or high-use recreation areas would be designed to minimize impacts to the recreational resource or users.
- All prescribed fire would be done in coordination with the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group Smoke Management Program.
- The economic effects of alternative fuels management practices should be considered. Local involvement and economic benefits from restoration projects will be promoted.

**Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Protocols Common to All Alternatives**

- When conducting ESR actions on BLM lands, standard operating procedures outlined in the Normal Year Fire Rehabilitation Plan for the Shoshone and Burley Field offices (USDI BLM 2005) will be followed.

