



## Fire, Fuels, Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation BLM West Desert District - 2020

The BLM's West Desert District is responsible for fire suppression, treatment of hazardous fuels, fire prevention and investigation, and rehabilitation across 7.7 million acres of public land in northern and west-central Utah. The district includes the Salt Lake and Fillmore Field Offices.

### Fire

- The Salt Lake Field Office had a record number of human-caused fires this year - approximately 89% of fires on BLM lands in the field office were human-caused.
- Wildfires over ten acres in size in the Salt Lake Field Office burned a total of 21,652 acres.
- In the Fillmore Field Office, 47,372 acres burned across BLM-managed public lands, making 2020 one of the most active wildfire seasons in the past few decades.

### Fuels and Vegetation Treatments

- The BLM completes hazardous fuel reduction projects to decrease catastrophic wildfire risks. These projects reduce fuel loads and alter fuel composition and structure. Fuel is defined as the amount of vegetation available to burn.
- Vegetation treatments modify fire behavior and decrease fire size and intensity. Not only do these projects support the safety of firefighters, they improve ecosystem health supporting a wide array of plant and wildlife species.
- In 2020, BLM fuels staff completed 15,169 acres of treatment in the West Desert District. Treatments included seeding, herbicide application, lop and scatter, prescribed burns, and other methods.
- The BLM's partners help make these landscape-level treatments possible. The Utah Division of Natural Resources, West Box Elder Conservation Resource Management Group, Utah State University, Natural Resource Conservation Service each served important roles in treatment efforts.
- Science-based monitoring is critical to determining how vegetation responded to treatment. BLM staff monitored the vegetation composition of 43 projects, totaling 38,700 acres of treatments, throughout the West Desert District.

### Emergency Stabilization

- Wildfires leave soils vulnerable to erosion and weed invasion. The BLM's emergency stabilization activities stabilize soil, minimize threats to life and property, and prevent degradation of lands or resources.
- The BLM's rehabilitation work focuses on repairing and improving fire-damaged lands unlikely to recover naturally and repairing or replacing facilities damaged by wildfire.
- As a part of these efforts, the BLM plants desirable vegetation to hold the soil in place and compete with weeds, particularly invasive cheat grass.
- In 2020, BLM emergency stabilization and rehabilitation crews seeded 13,051 acres with a rangeland drill seeder and 18,200 acres using aerial seeding methods; tilled 6,610 acres to plant seed into the soil; applied herbicide to 933 acres that burned in 2020 and an additional 1,425 acres that burned prior to 2020 to control weeds; installed approximately 250 large erosion control structures to catch runoff waters, reduce channel cutting, and mitigate water erosion; and monitored approximately 21,925 acres of previously-treated post-burned areas to determine whether the treatment was successful.

### From scorched to seeding success



Dan Osterkamp



Dave Whitaker