

## **A1 – APPENDIX 1: FIRE MANAGEMENT CLASSES.**

Fire Management Polygons overlapping, or in close proximity to, treatment areas. Descriptions are from the Fire Management Amendment to the Elko and Wells Resource Management Plans (Elko District 2004).

### **A1.1 FMC A – Full Suppression.**

This strategy for maximum suppression activity applies to areas where wildland fire is not desired at all. These include the urban interface, active mining operations, oil and gas fields, recreation sites, critical watersheds, and areas of significant noxious weed infestation. Fuels reduction activities are acceptable, but prescribed fire opportunities will be limited due to close proximity of structures and improvements.

#### **A1.1.1 Class A-1 Urban Interface / Mining Areas / Areas of Development**

**Current Condition:** The primary vegetation type around these areas is sagebrush and perennial grasses with intrusions of cheatgrass and other annual vegetation. The management objective for these areas is to preserve and protect the developed features, life and property. This area also includes the rapidly growing urban interface around Elko and Spring Creek. Recreation sites may be developed or undeveloped, but are moderately to heavily used during the summer and fall months. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 3 and in Fire Condition Class 3.

**Future Desired Condition:** Maintain or improve the native vegetation in the area. Use vegetation manipulation to create buffer areas around critical developed sites to provide for public safety.

#### **A1.1.2 Class A-2 Cultural Sites - Historic, Prehistoric and Native American Heritage Resources**

**Current Condition:** These areas are of high cultural concern due to their susceptibility to damage from wildfire or to damage from fire suppression activities. A wide variety of cultural resources are represented. Some of the polygons represent historic towns, mining districts, cabins, wickiups, game drives or other sites with organic or heat sensitive artifacts and features that can be damaged or destroyed by wildfire. Other areas have high site densities or rare site types and while these are not highly sensitive to fire, they can be severely impacted by fire suppression activities, especially construction of fire line with mechanized equipment. They occur within vegetation types ranging from low sagebrush to pinyon-juniper woodlands. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 3 and in Fire Condition Class 2.

**Future Desired Condition:** Maintain integrity of these cultural resources.

### **A1.2 FMC B – High Suppression.**

This category applies to areas where wildfire is likely to cause negative effects, but these effects could be mitigated or avoided through fuels management, prescribed fire or other strategies. These areas include a less strict acreage guideline than A and include vegetative treatments to reduce fuel loading as a management technique to a greater degree than A. Unplanned ignitions will be managed using the most appropriate and cost-effective suppression response based on threats to life, safety, structures, developments and other resource values. Where streams, riparian areas, or watersheds exist that provide habitat for federally listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species, suppression tactics will include appropriate standard operating procedures for species protection, except when a threat to human life exists. Mechanized equipment use will be consistent with the District's Guidelines. Unplanned ignitions will also be managed using current guidelines for sage grouse and sagebrush ecosystems.

### **A1.2.1 Class B-1 District-wide Areas of Exotic Vegetation Invasion**

**Current Condition:** Cheatgrass and other annual invasive species dominate these polygons. Isolated areas of sagebrush in early to mid seral condition and native perennial grasses are also present. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 2 and in Fire Condition Class 2.

**Future Desired Condition:** Resource management objectives for these areas are to restrict the expansion of cheatgrass and other invasive vegetation into surrounding native plant communities and to increase the amount of perennial native vegetation available for livestock grazing, wildlife habitat and improvement.

### **A1.2.2 Class B-3 Low Sagebrush and Desert Shrub**

**Current Condition:** These areas are dominated by plant communities that do not have fire as part of their natural ecology. Vegetation types are dominated by desert shrub and low sage communities with varying degrees of perennial grasses and forb composition. Management objectives in these areas are to maintain the native community, to provide for livestock and wildlife forage. Some of the areas are important for winter antelope habitat. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 1 and in Fire Condition Class 1.

**Future Desired Condition:** Prevent annual vegetation or non-native plant incursion into this vegetation type resulting from disturbance of the existing community. Maintain native vegetation composition.

### **A1.2.3 Class B-4 Areas of Primarily Private Lands**

**Current Condition:** The vegetation type of these polygons is primarily sagebrush and perennial grasses. Large acreages have been converted to crested wheatgrass seedings. The native vegetative response ranges from low to good. Due to low to moderate precipitation and current range conditions, previous wildfires have resulted in the invasion of annual vegetation. This demonstrates the potential for significant annual and non-native species invasion within portions of this polygon. The management objectives within these areas are to maintain and improve native vegetation conditions, maintain some crucial big game habitat, provide forage for livestock and protect private property. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 3 and in Fire Condition Class 3.

**Future Desired Condition:** Maintenance.

### **A1.2.4 Class B-6 Dixie**

**Current Condition:** The primary vegetation type in this area is sagebrush and perennial grasses with intrusions of cheatgrass at the lower elevations and Utah juniper and pinyon pine at the higher elevations. The management objectives for this area are to maintain and improve native vegetation conditions, limit the spread of cheatgrass, protect critical watersheds, provide wildlife and livestock forage and provide woodland products from the higher elevations. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 1 and in Fire Condition Class 3.

A watershed management plan was written and approved in 1988 for Dixie Creek. Erosional damage in the watershed has been the result of heavy grazing and fires followed by large and frequent peak flows. The plan recommends designating the Dixie Creek watershed as a fire rehabilitation priority area. One of the objectives of the plan is to reduce the sediment yield into the South Fork of the Humboldt River by 50% by 2008. Conversion of vegetation from perennial grasses to annual grasses has increased the fire cycle and thus increased runoff and sediment yield following fire.

**Future Desired Condition:** Maintain sagebrush/perennial grass diversity. Reduce and prevent further encroachment of annual and non-native vegetation in the area. This area is targeted as a fire restoration priority area.

### **A1.2.5 Class B-8 Early Seral Sagebrush Grasslands**

**Current Condition:** The primary vegetation type in this area is sagebrush and perennial grasses in lower elevations and Utah juniper and pinyon pine at the higher elevations. However, because of frequent fire history and other vegetative disturbances in these areas, intrusions of annual invasive species and noxious weeds exist but do not dominate the area. Because of the current early seral conditions and low response potentials within these areas, future fire occurrences could potentially increase the amount of undesirable and invasive species in these areas to the extent that they could dominate the site. The management objectives for this area are to maintain and improve native vegetation conditions, limit the spread of annual invasive species and noxious weeds, protect critical watersheds, provide wildlife and livestock forage and provide woodland products from higher elevations. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 3 and in Fire Condition Class 3.

**Future Desired Condition:** Maintain and/or improve sagebrush/perennial grass diversity. Prevent further encroachment of annual and non-native vegetation in the area.

### **A1.2.6 Class B-9 Crucial Mule Deer Winter Range**

**Current Condition:** The vegetation types in these crucial deer winter range areas vary from sagebrush and perennial grasses at lower elevations in western portions of the field office to pinyon pine, Utah juniper, bitterbrush and mountain mahogany with associated perennial grasses and sagebrush in eastern regions. Vegetation types and current conditions vary depending upon elevation and fire history. Many of the mule deer winter ranges in western Elko County, including some of these crucial deer winter ranges, have been impacted by wildfire in the past several years. Rehabilitation efforts have been implemented in many areas. However, due to varying degrees of aspect and elevation, range site potentials, and pre-fire ecological conditions, the shrub component on these western ranges is limited in many areas. Because of the severe impacts that wildfires have had on mule deer winter ranges in western Elko County the past several years, protection of seeded areas and the remaining intact portions of these crucial winter ranges from further fire impacts is critical. Because of current early seral conditions in some of these areas, future fire occurrences could potentially increase the amount of undesirable and invasive species, particularly within western regions of the county. The management objectives for these areas are to maintain and improve vegetative conditions, protect critical watersheds, provide wildlife and livestock forage and provide woodland products in pinyon/juniper areas. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 5 and in Fire Condition Class 1.

**Future Desired Condition:** Improve shrub cover and densities in western regions affected by fire in recent years. Maintain big game habitat and woodland integrity at higher elevations. Maintain sagebrush/perennial grass diversity at lower elevations. Prevent annual non-native plant encroachment.

## **A1.3 FMC C – Moderate Suppression.**

This applies to areas where fire may be desirable to manage ecosystems, but where various factors place constraints on fire use for resource benefit. These areas may have larger acreage guidelines than B and can include increased use of fuels/vegetation manipulation. Unplanned ignitions will be managed using the most appropriate and cost-effective suppression response based on threats to life, safety, structures, developments, and other resource values. Where streams, riparian areas, or watersheds exist that provide habitat for federally listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species, suppression tactics will include appropriate standard operating procedures for species protection, except when a threat to life exists. Mechanized equipment use will be consistent with District Guidelines. Unplanned ignitions will also be managed using current guidelines for sage grouse and sagebrush ecosystems.

### **A1.3.1 Class C-1 Woodlands**

**Current Condition:** The primary vegetation type in these polygons is woody vegetation dominated by Utah juniper, pinyon pine, bitterbrush and mountain mahogany with associated perennial grasses and shrubs. Management objectives are for woodland products and big game habitat. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 5 and in Fire Condition Class 1.

**Future Desired Condition:** Maintain woodlands.

### **A1.3.2 Class C-2 Owyhee Desert**

**Current Condition:** The primary vegetation in this polygon is sagebrush with perennial grasses. Due to the current ecological conditions this is a potentially high vegetative response area with most of the area receiving 8 to 14+ inches of precipitation per year. The management objectives are to maintain fire as part of the natural ecological process and to achieve desired plant communities for grazing and wildlife management. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 3 and in Fire Condition Class 1.

**Future Desired Condition:** Maintain native vegetation diversity and prevent the encroachment of annual and non-native plant species.

### **A1.3.3 Class C-3 Sage/Mountain Brush/Perennial Grass**

**Current Condition:** Big sagebrush and perennial grasses dominate the vegetation in these areas. Lower elevation sites contain intrusions of cheatgrass. Bitterbrush and inclusions of mountain mahogany and aspen occur at higher elevations. The response potentials following fire is variable depending upon elevation and current ecological conditions. Lower precipitation areas (i.e. 8-10"/year precipitation zones below 6,000 ft. elevation) generally have lower response potentials and will need rehabilitation following fire events to restore the native community and ground cover. Areas above 6,000 ft. elevation (i.e. 10"+ /year precipitation zones) have higher response potentials due to increased available moisture and current ecological conditions. Prescribed fire to achieve site-specific resource management goals, whether planned or unplanned ignitions, should be limited in areas with low response potentials. Prescribed fire may be utilized more extensively as a management tool to achieve multiple use objectives at higher elevations where increased response potentials exist. Management objectives for these areas include the protection and maintenance of crucial big game habitat, protection of extensive cultural resources, protection of crucial watersheds, achieving desired plant communities for grazing and wildlife management, and limiting cheatgrass colonization into native vegetation. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 1 and in Fire Condition Class 2.

**Future Desired Condition:** Maintain and/or improve age class diversity of sagebrush. Maintain and/or improve the diversity of sagebrush and perennial grasses and forbs. Prevent further encroachment of annual and non-native plant species. Improve and/or maintain riparian areas to achieve proper functioning condition and other site specific multiple use objectives.

### **A1.3.4 Class C-4 Intermixed Woodlands, NE Corner**

**Current Condition:** The vegetation in this area is characterized by pinyon-juniper woodlands at the higher elevations and native perennial grasses and sagebrush at lower elevations. The management objectives for this area include maintaining crucial big game habitat, maintaining the woodlands, providing livestock forage and protecting critical watersheds. Plant communities within this area have a high response potential following wildfire due to higher precipitation and current ecological conditions. There are various significant cultural sites in this polygon requiring mitigation during wildfire suppression. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 5 and in Fire Condition Class 2.

**Future Desired Condition:** Maintain big game habitat and woodland integrity at higher elevations. Maintain sagebrush/perennial grass diversity at lower elevations by preventing juniper encroachment. Prevent annual non-native plant encroachment.

## **A1.4 FMC D – Limited Suppression.**

This strategy applies to areas where fire is desired under various environmental conditions and there are few constraints associated with resources or social, economic or political considerations. These areas will receive the least level of suppression, some level of fire use for resource benefit and can include the extensive use of prescribed

fire. Mechanized equipment use will be consistent with District Guidelines and the Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review. For the Elko Field Office these areas would be limited to Wilderness Study Areas and the Cherry Creek Range.

#### **A1.4.1 Class D-2 Owyhee Canyon WSA**

**Current Condition:** The vegetation types in these areas vary from sagebrush and perennial grasses to riparian areas. Primary management objectives for these areas are to maintain their natural characteristics and to comply with the Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review. This polygon includes; South Fork Owyhee WSA, Rough Hills WSA, Owyhee Canyon WSA, and Badlands WSA. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 3 and in Fire Condition Class 1.

**Future Desired Condition:** Maintain the natural ecology of the areas including pre-settlement fire activity. Prevent the encroachment of annual and non-native vegetation into the areas.

#### **A1.4.2 Class D-5 Cedar Ridge and Red Springs WSAs**

**Current Condition:** The vegetation types in these areas vary from sagebrush and perennial grasses to juniper woodlands. Much of these areas have considerable amounts of cheatgrass. Primary management objectives for these areas are to maintain their natural characteristics and to comply with the Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review. This polygon is generally represented as Fire Regime 2 and in Fire Condition Class 3.

**Future Desired Condition:** Maintain the natural ecology of the areas including pre-settlement fire activity. Prevent the encroachment of annual and non-native vegetation into the areas