



Montana Mountains Cooperative Fuels Management and Habitat Restoration Plan Update

Montana Mountains Project Current News

What's New:

- The Nevada Department of Wildlife has signed on as a Cooperating Agency to the PLAN and EA.
- Voluntary enhancement funds provided by Ruby Pipeline LLC may be made available based on the Ruby Project Cooperative Conservation Agreement.
- BLM WDO has been working with Vale District BLM (Oregon) to further identify projects to be incorporated.
- Preliminary scoping period is finished. Some potential issues identified.

The BLM continues to work on the Montana Mountains project. This project has been assigned a high priority for completion by the District Management Team. This is good news as the District is processing many priority federal actions.

Proposed Actions are being finalized and the staff is working on drafting the Preliminary EA, and completing the necessary surveys, Native American Consultation, and fieldwork for the EA.

The BLM is coordinating with other offices and agencies including Vale District BLM (Vale, Oregon), the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), various mining companies, and others.

The BLM is hoping to have the Preliminary EA out sometime this summer.



(Top) On the Montana's Looking North towards the Trout Creek Range.
(Bottom) Spring Flowers on the Montana's



Montana Mountains Scoping Comments

The public scoping period for the Montana Mountains Project ended on September 25, 2010.

A number of comments were received from multiple interested parties. Based on comments received

several notable issues have been identified and incorporated in the EA:

*Potential public safety and health concerns from the use of herbicides.

*Possible detrimental effects to Sage-grouse habi-

tat by constructing fuel-breaks.

*Potential for wildfire to spread from the valley floors, up drainages into upper elevations containing important Sage-grouse habitat and ways to address this issue.

Montana Mtns. PLAN Goals and Objectives

Based on meetings held through the spring and summer of 2010 the plan goals and objectives are as follows:

Goals: The goal of the Montana Mountains Cooperative Fuels Management and Habitat Restoration PLAN is to reduce the risk of unwanted wildland fire and to protect and maintain healthy resilient, ecologically diverse habitats and rangeland within the Montana Mountains.

Objectives:

- *Improve and restore vegetation communities, habitats, and rangeland.
- *Design fuels treatments

that improve ecological condition, and are compatible with sagebrush obligate species, livestock grazing, and existing plans.

- *Utilize existing fuelbreaks and natural or man made barriers to create or support fuelbreaks.
- *Strategically place fuelbreaks for effectiveness and to support fire suppression operations.
- *Design treatments to blend with natural topography and create natural mosaics within sagebrush communities to allow for regeneration of sagebrush and increased forbs and grasses.
- *Consider cumulative ef-

fects to vegetation and habitats when developing treatments.

- *Protect Threatened and Endangered, candidate and sensitive species habitat.
- *Provide long term maintenance to ensure effectiveness and viability of treatments.
- *Utilize monitoring to ensure fuelbreak effectiveness, maintain ecosystem health and ensure achievement of goal and objectives.



Pygmy Rabbit

Ruby Pipeline Voluntary Enhancement Funds and the Montanan Mountains Project

“Plan Goals include protecting and maintaining healthy, resilient, and ecologically diverse habitats...”

The BLM and NDOW are working cooperatively to design projects that would restore and improve Sage-grouse habitat that would be eligible for funding under the Ruby Conservation Agreement. Potential Projects include:

Fencing and restoring five important spring and meadow areas .

Other potential projects include Pygmy Rabbit Surveys and Studies to learn more about the Pygmy rabbits and their needs within the Montana Mountains area .



Sage-Grouse

Project Status and Contact Information

The BLM WDO is finalizing the Proposed Action based on Ruby Pipeline Mitigation, input from NDOW, and Vale District BLM. The Preliminary EA is scheduled to be out for public review and comment sometime in early summer.

If you have questions or comments about the PLAN please contact:

Jeff Johnson
Supervisory Fire Management Specialist at:
(775) 623-1538.
Jeff_Johnson@nv.blm.gov

Updates and Newsletters will be available on the following website: http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/wfo/blm_information/nepa0.html