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# Appendix H

Required Design Features for Fire and Fuels



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## REQUIRED DESIGN FEATURES FOR FIRE AND FUELS

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### FIRE OPERATIONS

1. Compile District/Forest level information into state-wide GRSG tool boxes. Tool boxes will contain maps, listing of resource advisors, contact information, local guidance, and other relevant information for each District/Forest, which will be aggregated into a state-wide document.
2. Provide localized maps to dispatch offices and extended attack incident commanders for use in prioritizing wildfire suppression resources and designing suppression tactics.
3. Assign a resource advisor who has GRSG expertise or access to GRSG expertise to all extended attack fires in or near GRSG habitat. Prior to the fire season, provide training to GRSG resource advisors on wildfire suppression organization, objectives, tactics, and procedures to develop a cadre of qualified individuals. Involve state wildlife agency expertise in fire operations through:
  - instructing resource advisors during preseason trainings
  - qualification as resource advisors
  - coordination with resource advisors during fire incidents
  - contributing to incident planning with information such as habitat features or other key data useful in fire decision making
4. On critical fire weather days, pre-position additional fire suppression resources to optimize a quick and efficient response in GRSG habitat areas.
5. As appropriate, utilize existing fuel breaks, such as roads or discrete changes in fuel type, as control lines in order to minimize fire spread.
6. During periods of multiple fires, ensure line officers are involved in setting priorities.

7. To the extent possible, locate wildfire suppression facilities (e.g., base camps, spike camps, drop points, staging areas, and heli-bases) in areas where physical disturbance to GRSG habitat can be minimized. These include disturbed areas, grasslands, near roads/trails, or other areas where there is existing disturbance or minimal sagebrush cover.
8. Power-wash all firefighting vehicles, to the extent possible, including engines, water tenders, personnel vehicles, and all-terrain vehicles prior to deploying in or near GRSG habitat areas to minimize noxious weed spread.
9. Minimize unnecessary cross-country vehicle travel during fire operations in GRSG habitat.
10. Minimize burnout operations in key GRSG habitat areas by constructing direct fireline whenever safe and practical to do so.
11. Utilize retardant, mechanized equipment, and other available resources to minimize burned acreage during initial attack.
12. As safety allows, conduct mop-up where the black adjoins unburned islands, dog legs, or other habitat features to minimize sagebrush loss.
13. Adequately document fire operation activities in GRSG habitat for potential follow-up coordination activities.

## **FUELS MANAGEMENT**

1. Where applicable, design fuels treatment objectives to protect existing sagebrush ecosystems, modify fire behavior, restore native plants, and create landscape patterns that most benefit GRSG habitat.
2. Provide training to fuels treatment personnel on GRSG biology, habitat requirements, and identification of areas utilized locally.
3. Use burning prescriptions which minimize undesirable effects on vegetation or soils (e.g., minimize mortality of desirable perennial plant species and reduce risk of annual grass invasion).
4. Ensure proposed sagebrush treatments are planned with full interdisciplinary input pursuant to the NEPA and coordination with state fish and wildlife agencies, and that treatment acreage is conservative in the context of surrounding GRSG seasonal habitats and landscape.
5. Where appropriate, ensure that treatments are configured in a manner that promotes use by GRSG.
6. Where applicable, incorporate roads and natural fuel breaks into fuel break design.
7. Power-wash all vehicles and equipment involved in fuels management activities, prior to entering the area, to minimize the introduction of undesirable and/or invasive plant species.
8. Design vegetation treatments in areas of high fire frequency that facilitate firefighter safety, reduce the potential acres burned, and reduce the fire risk to GRSG habitat.

Additionally, develop maps for GRSG habitat which spatially display existing fuels treatments that can be used to assist suppression activities.

9. Give priority for implementing specific GRSG habitat restoration projects in annual grasslands, first to sites which are adjacent to or surrounded by preliminary priority management areas (PPMAs) or that reestablish continuity between priority habitats. Annual grasslands are a second priority for restoration when the sites are not adjacent to PPMA, but within 2 miles of PPMA. The third priority for annual grassland habitat restoration projects are sites beyond 2 miles of PPMA. The intent is to focus restoration outward from existing, intact habitat.
10. As funding and logistics permit, restore annual grasslands to a species composition characterized by perennial grasses, forbs, and shrubs or one of that referenced in land use planning documentation.
11. Emphasize the use of native plant species, recognizing that non-native species may be necessary depending on the availability of native seed and prevailing site conditions.
12. Remove standing and encroaching trees within at least 110 yards of occupied GRSG leks and other habitats (e.g., nesting, wintering, and brood rearing) to reduce the availability of perch sites for avian predators, as resources permit.
13. Protect wildland areas from wildfire originating on private lands, infrastructure corridors, and recreational areas.
14. Reduce the risk of vehicle- or human-caused wildfires and the spread of invasive species by installing fuel breaks and/or planting perennial vegetation (e.g., greenstrips) paralleling road rights-of-way.
15. Strategically place and maintain pre-treated strips/areas (e.g., mowing and herbicide application) to aid in controlling wildfire should wildfire occur near PPMA or important restoration areas (such as where investments in restoration have already been made).

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