

National Fire Plan

Fuels Reduction

Idaho

2003



There was no heavy machinery. There were no complex burn plans. But with the help of about 1,000 sheep there is a fuel break along the wildland-urban interface south of Kuna, Idaho, in BLM's Lower Snake River District.

The rangeland south of Kuna includes one of the most popular and heavily used portions of the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. It also has a history of frequent fires that threaten homes on the outskirts of Kuna.

In the past decade, a number of ideas for creating firebreaks have been discussed by the Bureau of Land Management, local officials, and the public. The use of sheep was one of those ideas, but until this year, most contractors who grazed livestock had shied away from the project due to the roads and traffic in the interface area.



A herd of sheep finish grazing down the fuels in one area and begin in the next to create a fuels break near a subdivision south of Kuna, Idaho in BLM's Lower Snake

However, this year, a contractor from Redmond, Oregon, who had other experience with creating such fuel breaks, took on the task. Using and moving temporary fencing to direct his herd along 300-foot wide strips adjacent to roads in the interface area, the contractor created an estimated 330 acres worth of fuel breaks by the end of June.

Elsewhere in the Lower Snake River District, the BLM worked with local county partners involved in weed control using sheep to cover the double duty of eradicating noxious weeds creating fuel breaks. As a result, both goals are being accomplished along a popular trail, a major highway, and through rural interface areas in the communities of Midvale and Cambridge.

For additional information on the National Fire Plan, visit www.fireplan.gov