

# PINEDALE REGION

## HABITAT PROJECTS

### Smithsfork Allotment

Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) data collected in 2007 were reviewed and discussed with the BLM. The BLM completed rereads on all 17 greenline monitoring transects in the Smithsfork Allotment with assistance from Department personnel. Data collected at each location included the greenlines, woody belt transects, riparian cross sections, and hydrologic cross sections (Figure 1).

The 17 monitoring locations are: 3 on Coal Creek, 3 on Huff Creek, 1 on Stoner Creek, 3 on Little Muddy Creek, 2 on Raymond Creek, 1 on Muddy Creek, 1 on First Creek, 1 on North Corral Creek, and 2 on Mill Creek.



Figure 1. WGFD personnel assisted BLM with collecting riparian and hydrologic cross section data in the Smithsfork Allotment.

This data has not been summarized so trends have not yet been evaluated. Due to personnel turnover BLM has postponed the allotment evaluation scheduled for the winter of 2008-2009 until the winter of 2009-2010. The current “Smithsfork Allotment Management Plan” approved in 2003 was largely based on an earlier allotment evaluation completed in 2000.

### Wyoming Range Front Aspen Restoration Project (WFARP)

With cooperation among WGFD, BLM, RY Timber, and RMEF, on-ground and logistical progress continued on the WFARP in 2008. Through summer 2008, about 1500 acres of conifer, primarily subalpine fir, were slashed and/or harvested on the Maki Creek Individual allotment and Red Canyon Common allotments from aspen stands substantially encroached by conifers. Harvested trees were shipped to Montana for milling and sale, while slashed trees were left to provide a fuel base for prescribed fires scheduled to occur in spring or autumn of 2009. In addition, about 2000 subalpine fir trees were harvested from the Red Canyon allotment and shipped to Utah for sale as Christmas trees. In summer 2009, about 900 acres of conifer encroached aspen are scheduled for slash/harvest treatment on the Camp Creek Individual allotment.

Pre-treatment data from the Maki Creek and Red Canyon allotments, along with additional data collected from the Camp Creek allotment in summer 2008, suggest that aspen recruitment along the east-central slope of the Wyoming Range remains minimal, with sucker densities ranging from 457 to 735 stems/acre at Camp Creek and Maki Creek, respectively. Most suckers occur in the 1-3' and 3-6' height classes, but overall browse use has not exceeded 20% on any stand monitored. Additionally, herbaceous species richness (total = 3) and production (not monitored) on Camp Creek were or appeared very low, likely from extreme conifer encroachment and near 100% canopy cover (Figure 2).

- 1300 acres of RX burns completed on BTNF lands.
- Wyoming Range Mule Deer Initiative continued in the Green River, Pinedale and Jackson regions.
- Moose and WY Range Mule Deer Habitat Assessments conducted.
- Wildfires with long term management prove to be excellent habitat enhancement tool on BTNF lands.
- Ranch Planning and Allotment Management increase coordination between wildlife and live-stock goals.
- Maki, Cottonwood II and WFARP projects enhance over 3000 acres of aspen communities along the Wyoming Range Front.
- Private Land-owner projects utilizing Lawson Aerator to improve sagebrush communities.

Because of an unpredictable market in 2008 and the overall un-merchantability of subalpine fir, a meeting was held in December 2008 regarding the production and use of subalpine fir mulch from the WFARP project on local oil/gas reclamation projects. WGFD, BLM, RMEF, SCW&P, NRCS, Questar, Encana, and others attended the meeting to brainstorm on the idea adapted from Larry Hicks, Little Snake River Conservation District, regarding similar successful projects in the Sierra Madre Range and Atlantic Rim gas field. From the meeting, plans were made to borrow a mulcher from Terra Firma (Jackson, WY) to produce about 120 tons of mulch in summer 2009. Questar and Encana both agreed to pay \$150/ton and use the mulch, along with various seed and fertilizer/additive applications on several trial sites in 2009 and 2010 to assess future vegetation responses and overall utility of the mulch. WYDOT, Sublette Co. CD, and other local oil/gas companies are scheduled for solicitation of potential mulch/biomass products in spring 2009. Please see figure 3 for vicinity map.



Figure 2. Comparison of slashed and unslashed conifer from aspen stands in the Red Canyon Common allotment, western Wyoming, in 2007 (top) and 2008 (bottom). Residual slash will provide fuel base for prescribed fires scheduled for 2009 - 2010.

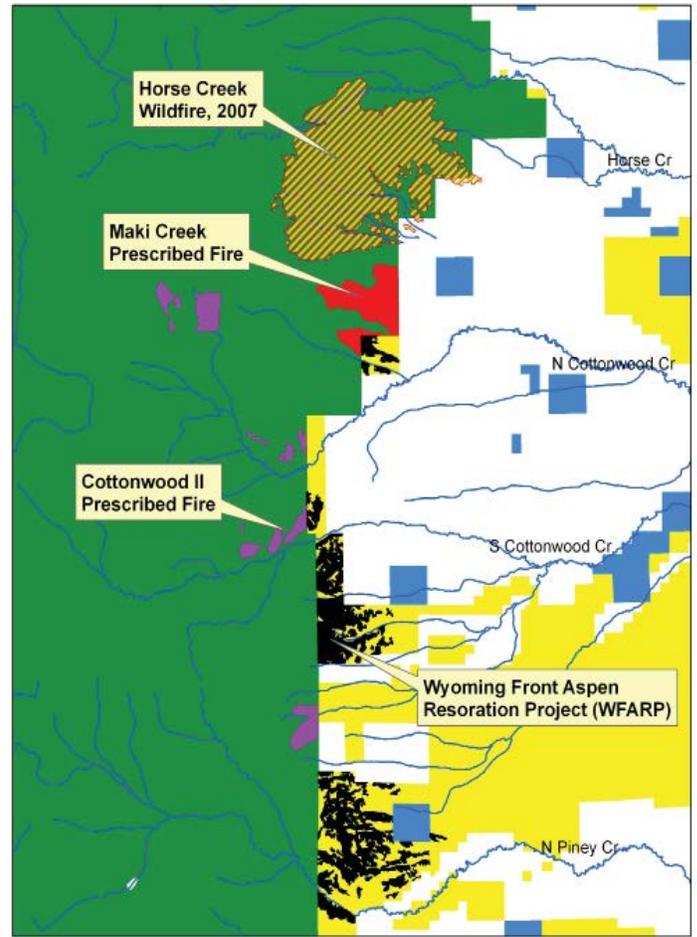


Figure 3. Map of Maki prescribed burn, Cottonwood II prescribed burn, WFARP prescribed burn and the Horse Creek Wildfire, BTNF Big Piney Ranger District and BLM Pinedale Field Office.

## LaBarge Creek Watershed Projects

LWGFD personnel coordinated with the Forest Service Range Specialist regarding allotment planning and utilization literature and monitoring. Permit renewal NEPA work (either an EA or EIS) for the LaBarge Allotment Management Plan has tentatively been scheduled for completion in 2010.

A large utilization and trend monitoring cage was established in LaBarge Meadows and annual maintenance was completed on the Nameless Creek riparian enclosure. To alleviate the need for this poorly designed enclosure, a potential location to build a new watershed boundary fence on the divide between Nameless and Cabin Creek was evaluated and discussed with the Forest Service. Unfortunately, this project remains a low priority for the Forest Service. Therefore, until permit renewal NEPA work is completed this potential project appears unlikely to move forward.

The “LaBarge Watershed Habitat Assessment Administrative Report” was finalized and distributed to internal and external audiences. Greenline trend transects, summarized in this report, should be reread again and become part of the evaluation when permit renewal work in this allotment proceeds.

## Moose Habitat Assessment

The moose habitat assessment was initiated in 2007 in the Jackson Herd Unit (HU) and continued in 2008 to the Sublette Herd Unit. The impetus behind conducting a moose habitat assessment were concerns that several of the moose her units in Wyoming are experiencing poor calf recruitment and recent population declines. While the specific reasons for the declines are not fully understood, habitat conditions remain a common theme and are generally an important component of the decline equation. Thus, managers at recent herd unit review meetings have recommended field personnel develop habitat enhancement proposals benefiting moose. A proposal was developed to address the above recommendations by providing a systematic and comprehensive review, including management recommendations, of important moose habitats on a HU basis. The primary objectives of the inventory assessment are:

1. Accelerate WGFDD efforts to implement Strategic Habitat Plan and wildlife habitat productivity with emphasis on moose;
2. Provide moose HU based maps and reports depicting current ecological conditions for important moose habitats;
3. Provide prioritized list of future management recommendations for important habitats within HUs; and
4. Use above prioritized list to submit and solicit funding for habitat enhancement project proposals.

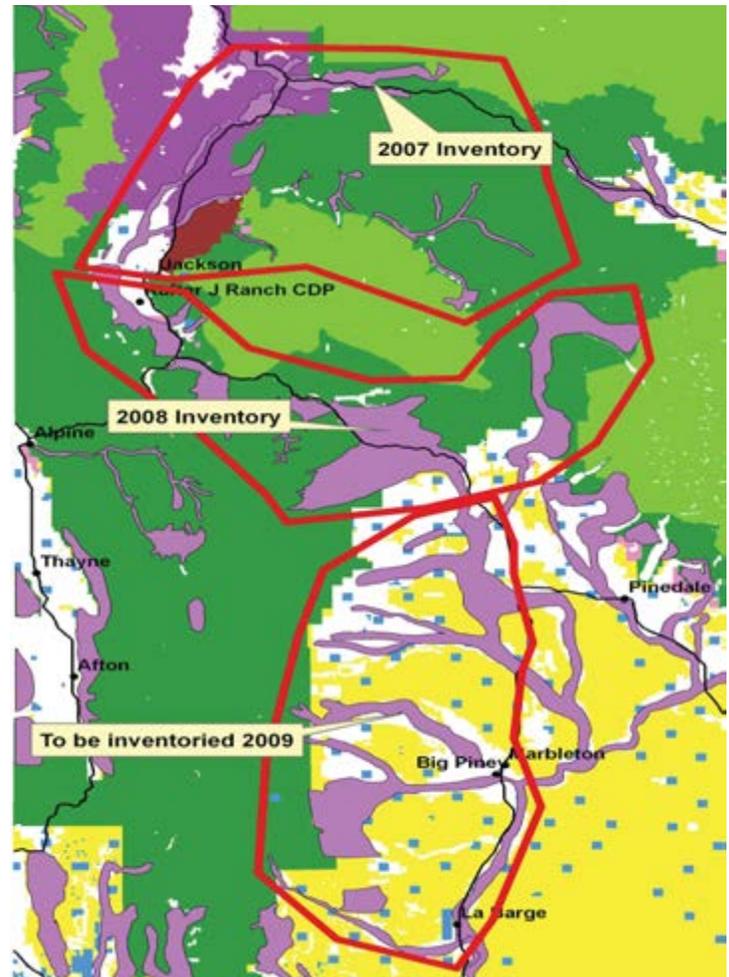


Figure 4. Map of the Moose Habitat Assessment areas.

During 2007, the TSS completed habitat assessment for most of the Jackson Moose HU (approximately 95,000 acres) and provided a report. Habitat evaluation components included: 1) dominant understory and overstory species composition; 2) site potential evaluation; 3) digital photos hyperlinked to display in ArcMap; and 4) management recommendations by geographic area. The 2008 progress included 160,000 acres in the Sublette Moose HU in the Hoback drainage and Upper Green River areas. In 2009, the assessment will be continued along the west slope of the Wyoming Range from the Rim (Upper Hoback River) to LaBarge Creek.

## Rock Creek / Twin Creek Riparian Improvement and Fish Passage Projects

WGFDD personnel worked cooperatively with TU and a contract engineer to design and replace 3 existing irrigation diversion structures and add fish screens (2 existing diversions were consolidated into one) for a landowner on Rock Creek (Figures 5a and 5b). A grant agreement was developed and approved to assist with design. Screen housings and return flow pipes were installed in the fall of 2008. The actual screens and rock weirs to elevate the water at each diversion will be installed in the spring of 2009 prior to irrigation season. Assistance was also provided to TU in preparing a funding proposal to WWNRT for this project.



Figure 5a and Figure 5b. TU installed screen housings at 3 irrigation diversions on Rock Creek.

Department personnel also assisted the landowner with constructing 3960 feet of new fence, creating 3 management pastures totaling 46 acres along Rock Creek. Riparian conditions along approximately 0.3 mile of stream will be improved through implementation of sound grazing management strategies, woody vegetation plantings, and possibly installation of in stream structures. Approximately 50 willow and 15 cottonwood cuttings were planted in the upper end of the primary riparian management pasture.

Opportunities to address fish passage concerns at the Highway 30 culvert were evaluated during an on-site meeting with TU and the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT). To elevate the pool level at the culvert outlet, contractors for WYDOT installed a rock weir that should reduce the partial barrier created by the drop from the culvert. An option of installing baffles in the culvert was also discussed and potential baffle systems are being evaluated.

### **Chicken Creek Prescribed Burn**

Chicken Creek is a 1000 acre prescribed burn project planned on the Pinedale Ranger District. Burn goals include aspen regeneration and a desired burn mosaic in sagebrush. Aspen stands can be improved by introducing a disturbance to this landscape. The project was ready for implementation in 2008 but did not meet fuels and weather prescriptions for favorable fire behavior. We anticipate this project will be implemented in 2009. Post-burn monitoring will include aspen density, browsing levels, burn mosaic and ground cover. This project area includes elk winter range and transitional habitat for mule deer, elk, and moose.



Figure 6. Photo of the Chicken Creek prescribed burn area.

## Triple Peak Forage Reserve Project

Following several revisions, a meeting, and numerous comments and discussions a “Final Allotment Management Plan for the Triple Peak Forage Reserve” was approved by the FS and circulated to partners in December. This document, combined with the operating instructions previously agreed upon will guide future management of this forage reserve.

An additional nested frequency trend monitoring site in tall forb communities above 9,700’ elevation was located and established in cooperation with the FS (Figure 7). The site selected is in the general vicinity of where the South Cottonwood/Menace Falls trail intersects the Wyoming Range National Recreation Trail. Ground cover and species composition will need to improve before the area above 9,700’ is available for use by domestic sheep.

## Maki Creek Aspen Enhancement Project

With mechanical felling, slashing, and piling or broadcasting of conifers completed in autumn 2007 on about 1,000 acres of aspen, a robust fuel base was prepared for later prescribed burning on the Maki Creek Aspen Enhancement project in 2008. Following several late spring snowstorms that persisted thru June, prescribed burning was postponed until autumn. This accommodated seasonal calving restrictions and allowed fuels additional drying time. Prescribed burns were conducted in late September/early October on about 1,300 acres of aspen and sagebrush habitats on the northern portion of the project area, north of Maki Creek proper (Figures 8 and 9). Crews initiated burns via heli-torch and driptorch during slightly dry conditions, but spotting and containment activities were minimal. Later burns were conducted during rain/snow events, resulting in excellent burn conditions. Fuels within aspen stands as well as sagebrush burned vigorously but were easily controlled because of precipitation. One-year post-treatment monitoring will occur likely on two stands burned in 2009. Burning of the additional 900 acres of aspen and sagebrush on the southern end of the project area are scheduled for spring or autumn of 2009. Completion of this project is the result of nearly 20 years of planning, coordination, and teamwork between WGFD and USFS, as well as funding provided by USFS, WVNRT, and WGFD. Please see Figure 3 for a vicinity map.



Figure 7. WGFD personnel assisted the Forest Service with establishing a new nested frequency monitoring location above 9,700’ elevation in the TPFR.



Figure 8. Immediate post-fire mosaic in mountain big sagebrush and conifer/aspen habitats of the Maki Aspen Enhancement Project along the east-central slope of the Wyoming Range, western Wyoming.



Figure 9. Typical fire behavior demonstrated on the Maki Aspen Enhancement Project, Fall 2008.

## Cottonwood II Vegetation Treatments

Cottonwood II is a mechanical thinning and prescribed burn project on the Big Piney RD, immediately following up the Maki Creek Aspen Regeneration Project (Figure 10). This area is important transitional range for mule deer, elk and moose among other species. It is also close to Jewett feedground and the project will encourage elk in spring and fall to use native range instead of supplemental feed. In 2008, portions of the target stands were mechanically pre-treated with the remainder of that contract to be completed spring 2009. Burning will follow the mechanical work in these stands in 2009 or 2010. Please see figure 3 for a vicinity map.



Figure 10. Conifer encroached aspen stands targeted for treatment in the Cottonwood II Vegetation Treatment.

## Monument Ridge Prescribed Burn

The Monument Ridge prescribed burn project comprises approximately 11,000 acres of mixed aspen-conifer and sagebrush vegetation types that are in late successional stages on the BTNF in the Bondurant area (Figure 11). Monument Ridge provides important spring-summer forage and parturition habitat for mule deer, antelope, elk, moose, and several other wildlife species. Objectives for burning are to improve the vigor and production of these vegetative communities to maintain healthy wildlife populations.

In 2006, 1,000 acres were treated with prescribed fire and have been rested from cattle since implementation. Burn mosaic and ground cover monitoring have been completed throughout the 2007 and 2008 field seasons. In 2009, the BTNF anticipates allowing cattle back into the first unit and resting 900 acres in the next unit to the south for a fall 2009 burn.

## Wyoming Range Allotment Complex Forage Reserve (WRAC)

Regional personnel assisted the FS with rereading three established nested frequency trend monitoring sites on this Forage Reserve area. To guide future management of the forage reserve the data will be evaluated and trends assessed cooperatively between the FS, regional personnel, and other partners. Forage abundance appeared noticeable greater in the upper South Horse Creek watershed portion of the WRAC than on an adjacent allotment west of the divide.

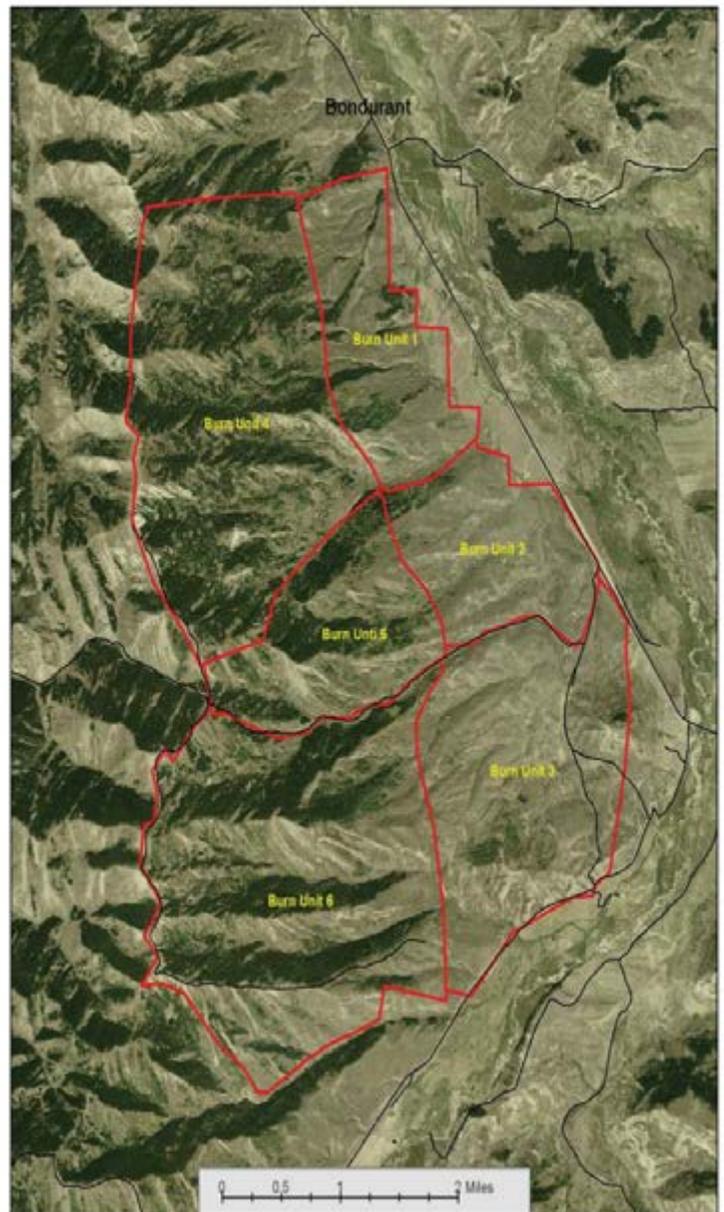


Figure 11. Map of the Monument Ridge prescribed burn units.

## Coal Creek Fish Passage Project

A Cooperative Agreement was developed with TU for the “Coal Creek Fish Passage, Phase I – Design” trust fund project proposal. This agreement approved \$5,000 to assist TU with engineering and design costs for a fish screen and new diversion structure on Coal Creek. A design was completed and the new structure is scheduled for installation in the spring of 2009 prior to irrigation season.

## Vegetation Differences Among Habitat and Treatment Types in Western Wyoming, Part 1: Fire vs. Mechanical

In summer 2008, Brucellosis-Feedground-Habitat (BFH) and Terrestrial Habitat personnel were assisted by BLM and USGS staff in post- and pre-treatment vegetation monitoring of several sites throughout the east-central slope of the Wyoming Range front, western Wyoming. Previous treatments (prescribed fire, mechanical) occurred from 1993 through 2005 in aspen, sagebrush (Wyoming big, low, mountain big), and mountain mahogany habitats. The goals of this effort were to 1) document and compare vegetation characteristics among habitat and treatment types and 2) assess potential long-term effects of treatments. Ultimately, these results will be compared with results of other treatments (particularly herbicide) from monitoring scheduled in 2009 to help identify possible treatments types most suitable for particular habitat and wildlife needs in the area.

Prior to 1998, data were collected by use of nested frequency (species composition and richness), line-point intercept (% basal cover), and point-center-quarter (density and % occurrence of dominant/targeted species by age/height classes) methods conducted in late July through late August, as well as production clipping conducted from September through October. After 1998, methods included

line-point intercept (species

composition and richness, % basal ground cover) and shrub/tree belt (density and % occurrence of dominant/targeted species by age/height classes) conducted from mid-June through early July, as well as herbaceous production clipping conducted from mid-August through early September. In all years, data were collected on treatment and paired control plots. Specific locations monitored in this study included Gentle Annie Springs, Camp Creek Individual allotment, two sites on Cretaceous Mountain, two sites on Bench Corral, and Ryegrass Individual allotment (Table 1). To assess potential differences in herbaceous production, species richness, shrub density and composition, and basal cover, we averaged all historic and current data from each site. We then compared parameters between paired treatment and control sites, and further compared these among habitat and treatment types.

We found that regardless of habitat or treatment type, production of grasses and forbs were generally greater on treatment than control plots (Figure 12). Fire appeared to have a greater effect than mechanical treatment on grass production in shrub habitats, while production of forbs is enhanced similarly between treatment and among habitat types. Although the mountain big sagebrush mowing treatment showed lower grass and forb production than the control plot, this is likely a result of fewer years of data collection (i.e., smaller sample size) particularly during a period of well below to average spring/summer precipitation.

Table 1. Habitats, treatments, and dates of implementation on sites monitored for vegetation characteristics along the Wyoming Range front, western Wyoming, 2008.

<u>Site Location</u>	<u>Habitat Type</u>	<u>Treatment Type</u>	<u>Date Implemented</u>
Gentle Annie	Aspen	RX Fire	1998
Camp Creek Ind.	Aspen	Mech/RX Fire	N/A, pre-treatment
Cretaceous	Wyo big sage	RX Fire	1993
Cretaceous	Mahogany	RX Fire	1993
Bench Corral	Low sage	Pitting	1995
Bench Corral	Low sage	Ripping	1994
Ryegrass Ind.	Mt big sage	Mowing	2005

Total herbaceous species richness did not appear to be affected by any treatment, but was likely more influenced by site potential. With respect to forbs, richness was low to modestly correlated with annual production of grasses (used as a surrogate index for annual precipitation,  $R^2 = 0.12$  to  $0.40$ ) within treatment and control sites, suggesting that annual precipitation rather than treatment enhances recruitment of annuals. Based on data from all years combined, shrub densities were (and continue to remain) reduced substantially in sites treated with fire, while those treated mechanically were much more similar to control sites (Figure 13). Regardless of treatment type, proportions of shrubs encountered in seedling and young categories were typically higher on treated than control sites, whereas untreated sites tended to have greater proportions in mature and decadent shrubs. Basal cover of bare ground and litter was higher and lower, respectively, on sites treated with fire rather than control sites. All basal cover categories were similar between mechanically treated and control sites.

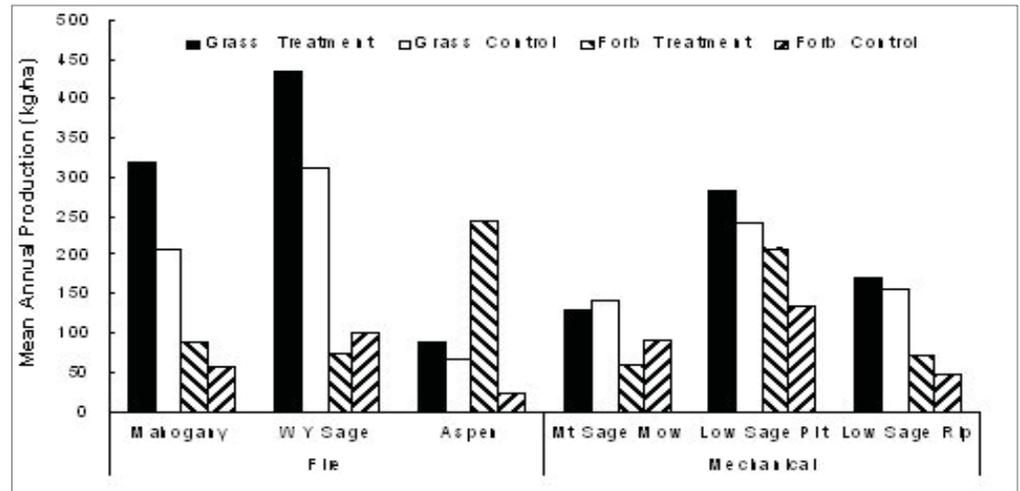


Figure 12. Mean annual production of grasses and forbs from treatment and paired control plots, western Wyoming, 1993-2008.

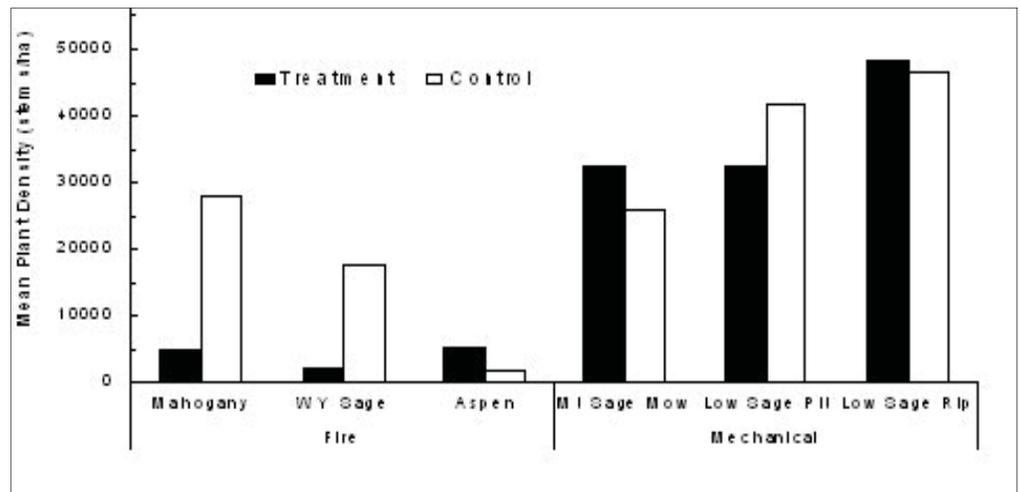


Figure 13. Mean density of stems from treatment and paired control plots, western Wyoming, 1993-2008

In summary, fire and mechanical treatments appear to boost grass and, to a lesser extent, forb production in all habitat types, yet fire has the most long-term impact to shrub densities and age/size composition, as well as associated basal cover. Similar data to be collected in 2009 from fire and herbicide treated sites should facilitate greater understanding of shrub community vegetation responses to various treatment types throughout the east slope of the Wyoming Range and possibly other locations in Wyoming. Land and wildlife stewards planning future habitat treatments should consider potential vegetation responses within treatment and habitat types, land use of the area, as well as local habitat, wildlife, and possible livestock needs prior to implementing any treatment.

## **P**inyon Osborn Prescribed Burn

The Pinyon Osborn prescribed burn project comprises approximately 24,000 acres of mixed aspen-conifer and sagebrush vegetation types that are in late successional stages. In 2008, the fire effects crew joined the WGFD to conduct pre-burn monitoring at the Pinyon-Osborn Project, near Green River Lakes north of Pine-dale. This is a very large project, which will be broken into sections for implementation. The first two burn units treated will be the 7,600 acre Roaring Fork Unit, and the 2460 acre Wilderness Unit. The Wilderness unit is located in congressionally designated wilderness, which has never been part of a prescribed burn before on the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

The Wilderness unit includes a very steep and rugged mountainside (Osborn Mountain) featuring dense conifer growth encroaching onto formerly open cliff bands and gullies. Wildlife biologists concerned about bighorn sheep habitat are hoping to remove many of these conifers to improve sight distances for the sheep, which tend to avoid areas with poor visibility.

The Roaring Fork unit includes lower-elevation benches and foothills with sagebrush, aspen, and conifer stands. It is an important area for elk transitional range and cattle grazing. The WGFD has recommended prescribed fire for this area to attract elk away from the Upper Green River Elk Feedground, where they are crowded together during the peak transmission period for the disease brucellosis. In addition, mixed aspen and conifer stands will be targeted for treatment with fire.

The Roaring Fork – Wilderness Fire Effects Monitoring Plan includes the following draft objectives:

1. Burn Mosaic Mapping to indicate how the treatment helps to meet desired landscape-level seral diversity conditions;
2. Attain at least 85% ground cover in burned sagebrush and 95% ground cover in burned aspen 3 years post treatment; and
3. Attain at least 1000 live aspen suckers per acre in burned aspen stands greater than 10 feet tall, 15 years post treatment.

The planned prescribed burn for these units is on hold until 2010. The monitoring objectives may change and additional items may be added prior to implementation. In 2008, pre-burn ground cover measurements were made in sagebrush vegetation. With 29 randomly located transects, bare ground was estimated to be only 6.2 +/- 2.0% (80% confidence). Aspen ground cover monitoring will be conducted three years post burn in a stand to be designated after the treatment. Given the steep and rugged nature of the Wilderness Unit, photopoints were used to document the pre-burn status of conifer forest (Figure 14). Two locations were established, where post burn pictures will be obtained for comparison.

Several BFH macroplots have also been installed in the Pinyon-Osborn project area over the years. The USFS Fire Effects Crew and WGFD will review the plot data and determine how to proceed. It may be necessary to re-collect some of the pre-burn data collection at some of these plots.



Figure 14. Photopoint showing the sagebrush in the Roaring Fork Unit with the Wilderness Unit in the background

## **D**ouble J Ranch Lawson Aerator

Project planning began with this landowner in the summer of 2007 to implement a 355 acre Lawson Aerator treatment on his property (Figure 15). The Habitat and Access Statewide crew completed project implementation in July 2008. This is a cooperative project with NRCS, who utilized Farm Bill EQIP dollars for implementation. The project goals are to reduce the density of decadent mountain big sagebrush cover and provide a diversity of age classes across this property. Prior to treatment, NRCS and WGFD established pre treatment line intercept data and shrub cover data with the landowner to measure our success. This private property is in important transitional range for mule deer and antelope and is seasonally used by sage grouse. Increasing age class diversity should assist in maintaining productive habitats for these species into the future.



Figure 15. Photo showing the Lawson Aerator at work on the Double J Ranch treatment in 2008.

## **H**orse Creek Wildfire

In 2007, approximately 10,000 acres were burned in a wildfire in the Horse Creek and Prospect Mountain areas on the Big Piney Ranger District of the BTNF (Figure 16). During the 2008 field season WGFD and Fire Effects Crew personnel established aspen monitoring in the area that burned. Sucker density and browse utilization were monitored in an area that had an aspen component prior to the fire. Livestock grazing has been excluded from this burn since the 2007 fire to assist with aspen response and watershed objectives. We have a unique opportunity to monitor aspen response to this wildfire compared to the Maki and Cottonwood II mechanical/prescribed burn treatments due to their proximity to one another.



Figure 16. Photo showing aspen regeneration one season after the Horse Creek wildfire in 2007.

## **R**anch Planning

During 2008, several ranches have begun ranch plans through NRCS, JIO or other cooperative efforts. These ranch plans are critically important for maintaining wildlife habitat across a landscape of mixed ownerships. East Fork Livestock, Cottonwood Ranches and High Lonesome Ranch have all engaged in various levels of landscape planning. These plans include goals such as maintaining a financially viable livestock operation, increasing habitat for sage grouse, improving migration corridors for wildlife, and improving condition of rangelands. Many of these landowners are engaged with federal agencies on allotment management as well.

## **A**llotment Planning

During 2008, several allotments and permittees have been involved in planning efforts to improve the function of their federal allotment for both livestock and wildlife goals. On BLM Pinedale Field Office lands, permittees and range staff for North LaBarge Common, Squaretop Common, and Bench Corral Individual allotments are all engaged in a process of inventory and/or project planning. Various goals are being discussed such as increasing wildlife habitat for sage grouse and big game, improving migration corridors for wildlife, improving water sources, and improving condition of rangelands. Landscape level planning has resulted in many new concepts and changing traditional management plans to better balance of a variety of objectives.

## New Fork Wildfire

In 2008, approximately 15,000 acres were burned in the New Fork wildfire that was placed in a long-term management plan (Figure 17). The fire was managed at certain strategic locations and directed to avoid certain areas on the west edge of fire activity adjacent to private property (Figure 18). Otherwise the fire behaved naturally and created an excellent natural mosaic across many acres of wildlife habitat. This fire created a mix of age classes across the landscape that will benefit a wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic species. Watershed benefits will be present for many years into the future.



Figure 17. New Fork Fire behavior, summer 2008.

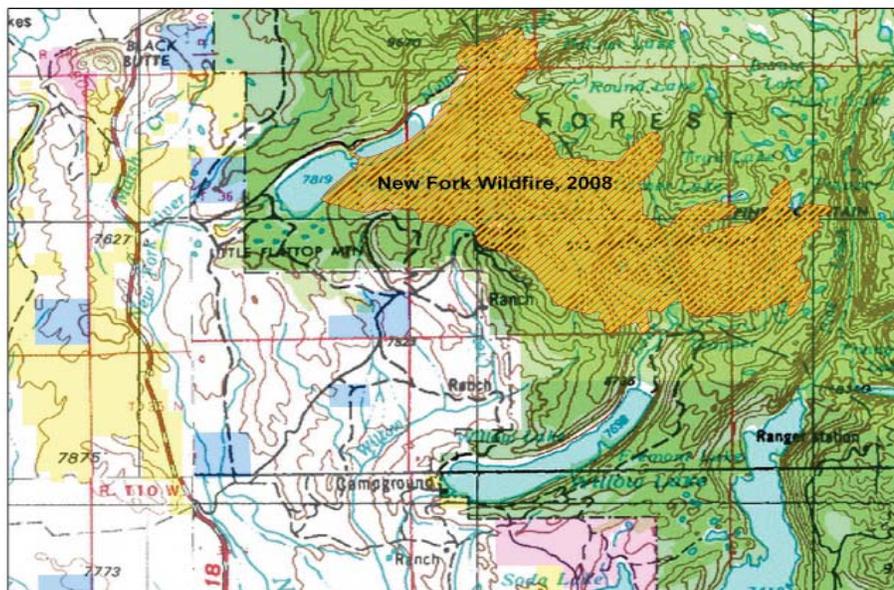


Figure 18. New Fork Wildfire location.

## OTHER SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Wyoming Range Mule Deer Initiative was started and will have a large habitat component to it. The Wyoming Range Mule Deer Habitat Assessment started in 2008 south of LaBarge Creek in the Green River District. This effort is contracted out to the TSS and will assist with improving management of important habitats for the Wyoming Range mule deer herd.
- Wyoming Range Interagency Habitat Initiative (WRIHI) worked cooperatively on project implementation and discussions across landownership and management boundaries.
- Continued involvement with the Mesa Sagebrush Enhancement Project, which was implemented in 2006 and remains excluded from grazing management for research purposes.
- Worked with Regional personnel to develop a mitigation plan for the Cimarex Development that includes \$350,000 for habitat enhancement work over the next ten years.
- Provided comments on a “Preliminary Proposed RMP and Final EIS” in May and on the “Proposed Resource Management Plan / Final EIS” released for a 30 day protest period in August. The “Cooperator” role on the Kemmerer BLM Resource Management Plan (RMP) has now been fulfilled.

- Provided extensive comments pertaining to development of SHP prioritization criteria. Seven regional Aquatic Crucial Habitat Areas and two Enhancement Areas were identified and narratives were developed for each. Also, regionally developed lists of “Values” & “Issues” were prepared.
- Evaluated the state land parcel bisected by Rock Creek with the grazing lessee and discussed opportunities to improve management including riparian corridor fencing, drift fences, revisions to the BLM’s Rock Creek AMP, and alternative areas to graze.
- Commented on Wyoming Water Development Commission’s Level II Study Report for the proposed Sublette Creek Reservoir and Covey/Mau Canal Rehabilitation Project.
- Coordinated internal comments and discussion regarding potential Department involvement and support for The Nature Conservancy proposed development of a Conservation Action Plan (CAP) for the Bear River watershed.
- Coordinated with The Conservation Fund regarding the WWNRT proposal and other on-going efforts to secure funding for the Carney Conservation Easement on the upper Green River. Acreage previously owned by two families has been consolidated increasing the total available for CE to 3,750.
- Coordinated with various private partners and the NRCS on the East Fork River, Faler Creek, 40 Rod Creek, and Big Twin Creek to review and assist with development of stream enhancement and wildlife friendly fencing projects. Formal comments and a WWNRT support letter were provided. These projects are scheduled for implementation in 2009.
- Coordinated with the FS, TU, irrigators, and a consultant regarding the potential need, designs, and cost estimates for fish screens on the Highland and Fremont ditches at Fremont Lake dam on Pine Creek. Additional monitoring should be conducted to assess fish loss in these canals and possible alternatives to screening.
- Toured with the Sublette County Conservation District (SCCD) to evaluate opportunities and ideas to address sediment run off in the Alkali and Sand Draw watersheds. Written recommendations and suggestions were provided to SCCD.
- Evaluated and discussed opportunities to enhance spawning habitats and riparian conditions at the Exxon/Mobile Sawmill Creek CRC pond in the Dry Piney Creek watershed.
- Assisted FMPE with WHAM surveys in Sjhoberg and Nylander Creek watersheds. An administrative report summarizing these and other WHAM surveys and fish population / distribution evaluations throughout the Forest Service portions of the South and North Cottonwood watersheds has been drafted by FMPE and reviewed by the PE-AHAB.
- Coordinated a meeting between Department personnel and owners of the High Lonesome Ranch on South Cottonwood Creek. Opportunities to meet mutual wildlife/fisheries goals and objectives were discussed, including JIO baseline vegetation inventories, sage grouse habitat/use inventories, fish population and riparian habitat assessments, weed control, and fence modification.