

Protecting Sagebrush Saves Sage Grouse

MANAGING WILDFIRES IN SAGEBRUSH FUEL TYPES PRIORITIES AND GUIDANCE FOR ELY DISTRICT FIRE PERSONNEL SPRING 2018

During periods of high fuel loads and hot, dry, windy weather conditions, wildfires in the sagebrush fuel types have the potential to exhibit extreme fire behavior and grow quickly. Agency administrators must provide guidance to incident commanders on resource values, goals, and constraints through preseason planning and incident specific planning.

1. REGARDLESS OF ALL ELSE, **THE PRIORITY FOR ALL FIRE SUPPRESSION ACTIONS WILL BE TO ENSURE FIREFIGHTER AND PUBLIC SAFETY.**

2. **MINIMIZE ACRES BURNED (HABITAT LOSS) THROUGH EFFICIENT AND RAPID FIRE SUPPRESSION EFFORTS**

3. **MINIMIZE SUPPRESSION DAMAGE TO NATURAL RESOURCES**

Protecting life and property is paramount in every decision and action. Firefighters are encouraged to safely and aggressively suppress wildfires to reduce total acres burned. Consider the current and predicted weather, fire behavior, fuel loading, available suppression tools, and resources that are threatened by the fire, and implement appropriate firefighting methods that will minimize acres burnt and minimize suppression related resource damage. ***Incident commanders should not wait for Resource Advisors before implementing all safe and aggressive suppression tactics necessary during Initial Attack:***

- **Consider immediately the use of air resources to limit fire spread.**
- **Retain remnant stands of sagebrush...mop up islands**
- **Direct tactics are preferred over indirect when they can be implemented safely.**

Using backfires/burnouts, off- road driving or heavy equipment to construct fire line may have resource impacts, but may be justified in order to minimize acres burned. Use tactics appropriate for the area designation and administering agency. ***In designated wilderness, all motorized equipment usage must be approved by the appropriate agency administrator.*** **Stop all habitat damaging tactics when they are no longer required** to prevent a larger or more severe fire. Constantly assess the fire situation and Sage Grouse priorities as they relate to your operations. Document actions to facilitate post-fire rehabilitation of suppression actions. **Upon communication with the Resource Advisor**, incorporate his/her knowledge and advice into the Incident Operations in a safe and efficient manner.

STAY CALM, BE ALERT, THINK CLEARLY, ACT DECISIVELY