

# Firefighters Use Seeding to Contain Black Mountain Fire

*-The future of land management is here-*



On June 28, 2018 the southwest Utah Black Mountain Fire ignited on Highway 130, rapidly growing to 5,988 acres in one afternoon. When firefighters from Color Country Interagency Fire arrived, the fire progressed into the rolling hills north of Cedar City, escaping initial attack forces until the fire burned into a previous wildfire from 2013. This previous fire was seeded and chained through a partnership called the Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI) and is geared toward proactively managing Utah's landscapes.

After the fire, the Color Country District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in conjunction with WRI, implemented a plan to rehabilitate the burn site to create a resilient landscape and provide for productive wildlife habitat. "Seeding the site in 2013 with desired grasses, forbs, and shrubs created healthy rangeland conditions and reduced the risk of catastrophic wildfire, as proven during this year's Black Mountain Fire," said Shawn Peterson, Fuels Program Manager. "The best part about investing in wildfire rehab is now the cost is much less because the fire intensity was much lower in the previously seeded areas." When resilient landscapes are in place, healthy landscapes return to a productive state in much less time, and without more human intervention.

The BLM plans to again work with WRI partners to rehabilitate portions of this year's fire. This process typically occurs in the late fall or winter and involves an aerial seeding application, followed by pulling a ship anchor chain with two bulldozers over the more moderate slopes to cover the seed with soil.

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Black Mountain Fire— July 1, 2018 was contained in the seeding wildfire area of 2013.

Results of wildfire rehabilitation

Fire Adapted Communities and resilient landscapes are the future of public land management in southwest Utah. A combination of proactive mechanical treatments and fire rehabilitation projects are proving to cut fire suppression and rehabilitation costs significantly, while preventing thousands of acres of critical wildlife habitat loss annually. These projects also improve firefighter and public safety by providing firefighters with areas to be more effective with resources and tactics available to them.