



Improving forest and wildlife habitat in the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area

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(LEWISTON) - Three years of work by multiple partners is reducing fire threats and restoring forest health and wildlife habitat in Idaho's Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area (CMA).

The **Idaho Department of Lands (IDL)**, **Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG)**, and **Nez Perce County** are working together on the project.

The Craig Mountain WMA covers 115,000 acres near Lewiston in north central Idaho, and provides habitat for mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, black bear, mountain lion, wild turkey, upland and songbirds, and other animals. In addition to the wildlife, this forest provides important timber resources and recreational opportunities.

Land ownerships within the project are mixed between IDL, IDFG, and private. **Rather than functioning independently to address resource issues, organizations and landowners have come together to tackle insect, disease, weeds and wildfire issues - elements in nature that know no boundary.**

The approach has created healthy dialogue, mutual respect, and a better understanding of the various land management objectives and organizational goals.

Each landowner has specific goals they want to achieve, but **IDL, IDFG, and the county all agree that in order to reduce fire threats, coordinating with partners is about the only way we can do it.**

By treating hazardous fuels, weeds, insects and disease, landowners reap mutually beneficial outcomes for healthy forest and wildlife habitat.

The coordinated effort has resulted in the extension of adjacent projects to strategically address overall landscape goals.

Treatments were designed to complement other work completed by state, private, federal, and tribal entities, and have increased the quality of wildlife habitat and fire resilience in the Craig Mountain WMA.

Throughout the project, proximity to adjacent harvests or previously burned and treated areas were considered in determining where to coordinate efforts on the land.

Creating healthy forests reduces the threat of fire, provides wildlife habitat, ensures future timber resources and improves recreational experiences.

To learn more about the issues facing Idaho forests check out [Idaho's Forest Action Plan](#).

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Located south of Lewiston, the Craig Mountain WMA is flanked on the west by the Snake and Salmon Rivers and east of the Camas Prairie near Grangeville.



Nez Perce County Fire Mitigation Manager, Thom Hawkins, looks out over an area burned during the 2007 Chimney Complex Fire. A goal of this project is to strengthen and build off existing fire lines to prevent fires from coming up out of the canyons.



Partners discuss the benefits of fortifying this section of the firebreak. As a preventative measure, dead trees from a previous wildfire were removed to reduce fuel loads. Locals benefited by cutting the trees for firewood.



Using funds provided by the U.S. Forest Service, since 2011 partners have thinned trees to improve 200 acres of forest and wildlife habitat and added 120 acres of fuel breaks.

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To improve wildlife browse and to prevent the spread of noxious weeds, weeds were treated in timber sale areas across 53 acres and along 42 miles of haul routes.



Idaho Department of Lands

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