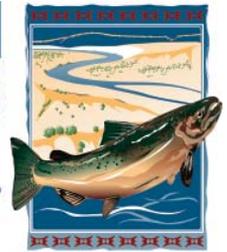


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – Pacific Region

Hanford Reach National Monument Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge

... protecting the last of the free-flowing Columbia River.



News from Hanford Reach National Monument January 7, 2004

Shooting Range Fire Habitat Rehabilitation

The Hanford Reach National Monument has recently conducted emergency stabilization efforts on three fire areas. In July, 2003, the human-caused “Shooting Range” wildland fire burned 1300 acres, 507 of which were on the Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology (ALE) Reserve Unit and negatively impacted the ALE’s ecology and landscape by removing native grasses and shrubs. During the months of November and December, 2003, treatments were implemented to stabilize erosive soils, prevent the spread of non-native invasive plant species (e.g. cheatgrass), and to restore native plant communities.

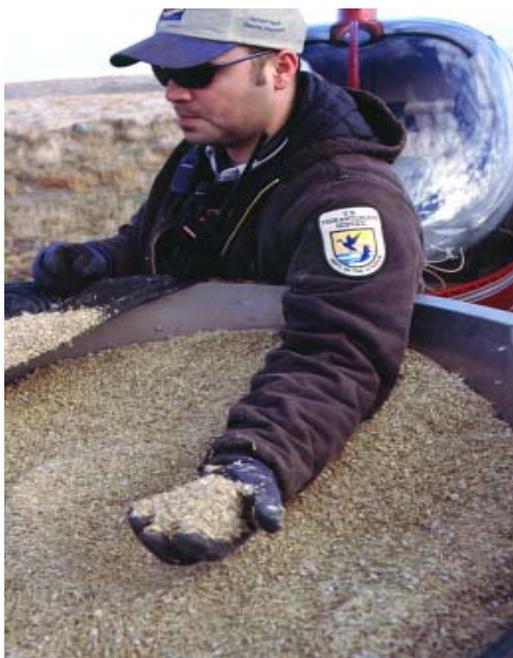


Helicopter landing atop support vehicle



An aerial spray operation delivered a light dose of Plateau® (3.5 ounces per acre) on 507 acres within the ALE where most native vegetation and seed sources were killed due to the intense heat of the fire. Since the fire, these areas are either bare soil or contain a large percentage of undesirable annual species including cheatgrass, tumble mustard and tumbleweeds. The application of Plateau® will control cheatgrass and other annual species, allowing the reintroduction and establishment of native species. The spraying areas were clearly defined and mapped for treatment using Global Positioning Systems (GPS) to avoid impacts to other native species.

An aerial seeding operation followed which applied 10,140 pounds of Bluebunch wheatgrass, Indian ricegrass, Sandberg's bluegrass, Squirreltail, Wyoming big sagebrush, Yarrow and Winterfat to the 507 acres of high burn severity lands. Seed mixes were chosen using local and eco-region derived species which were produced by a local seed grower. The aerial operation used state-of-the-art equipment and fire rehabilitation techniques to complete this effort. Aircraft used in the treatments were equipped with an onboard GPS system capable of receiving GPS data input from FWS targeted treatment areas and provided a daily log of flight paths and treated acres.



Seed mix

In addition, two previous fire areas that were seeded with native grass species last winter were re-treated with herbicide during this winter dormancy period. The "Vernita" fire of 2001, at 160 acres, and the 2002 "White Bluffs" fire, at 285 acres, were treated with chemical that specifically targeted annual species such as cheatgrass, mustard, and annual broadleaves. The purpose of this treatment was to reduce competition between annual species and recovering native species and native grass species that are re-establishing following our native seeding.



Onboard GPS system