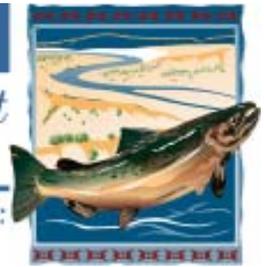


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

*Hanford Reach National Monument
Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge*

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



March 10, 2005

Recovery and Rehabilitation of Vegetation Following the 24 Command Wildfire: Final Report Issued

The Nature Conservancy has issued a final report documenting a vegetation monitoring program that has been on-going since 2001. The 24 Command wildfire burned across the Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology (ALE) Reserve Unit in June, 2000. The report entitled "Recovery and Rehabilitation of Vegetation on the Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve, Hanford Reach National Monument, Following the 24 Command Fire," documents the effect of the wildfire on native and invasive plant species and their communities. Monitoring was conducted from March through July each year from 2001 to 2004. Efforts focused on



sampling three different sets of permanent vegetation plots on ALE where detailed pre-fire vegetation data was available. Two new series of plots were added to facilitate tracking the abundance and distribution of invasive cheatgrass. The study looked at the effects and success of varied restoration techniques. It compared the planting of sagebrush seedlings with aerial seeding, aerial and drill application of native grass seed, and how herbicide application affected cheat grass abundance.



This study was conducted as part of a cooperative agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nature Conservancy of Washington State and involved numerous partners. Volunteers played an extremely important part in data collection for this project, and our ambitious field objectives could not have been achieved without their generous assistance. The Nature Conservancy expressed thanks to the entire staff of Hanford

Reach National Monument for their help in all aspects of this project, stating "It is a pleasure to work with such dedicated stewards of our public lands; they are too often unappreciated. Heidi Newsome, Wildlife Biologist, Dave Smith, Resource Management Specialist, and Jennie Meisel, Biological Technician, all were particularly generous with their time and assistance during the course of multiple studies on the Monument over the past four years." The staff at Hanford wish to return the appreciation to the Nature Conservancy for their continuing support.

