



Webinar Brief for Resource Managers

Great Basin Fire Science Exchange | 1664 N. Virginia St., Reno, NV 89557 | 775-784-1107 | geniemb@unr.edu

Assessing the Impacts of Post-Fire Drill Seeding on Archaeological Resources: A case study from the Owyhee Uplands in SW Idaho

Presented on 15 February 2017 by F. Kirk Halford, Deputy Preservation Officer/State Archaeologist, Bureau of Land Management, Idaho State Office

Project Summary: To better understand and quantify the effects of post fire drill seeding applications we evaluated four archaeological sites characterized as lithic scatters. Artifacts were documented and point-plotted using sub-centimeter GPS technology, subjected to drill seeding, and subsequently replotted and reevaluated. We believe similar studies should be conducted in varying environmental contexts to fully understand and quantify the effects of drill seeding on cultural resources for more informed decision making.

Abstract: Rangeland drills are commonly employed for post fire rehab and emergency stabilization. With the assumption that adverse effects will occur, archaeological sites are flagged and avoided. This can cause a site stranding effect and greater potential for post fire erosion. To better understand and quantify the effects we evaluated four archaeological sites characterized as lithic scatters. Artifacts were documented and point-plotted using sub-centimeter GPS technology, subjected to drill seeding, and subsequently replotted and reevaluated. Our study showed that minimal impact occurred to the spatial and physical integrity of the sites and their artifact constituents. Limited to no impacts to individual artifacts and on the overall distribution of artifacts suggest that, in the environmental context we worked in, rangeland drill seeding will have no significant effect to sites characterized as lithic scatters. This presentation details the methods and results of this study.

Management Implications

- Drill seeding in certain environmental contexts have limited impact to sites described as lithic scatters
- Drill seeding applications may be beneficial in reducing site erosion and site stranding effects
- In some contexts, site protection will be better achieved through treatment than through avoidance

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