

DOMINIQUE WOODHAM
MSU Extension, Natural Resources



Wildfire Preparedness Kits to Improve Agriculture Sustainability
 made possible by WSARE grant & MFBF grant



Quick
 Guide for
 Landowners
 to Manage their
 Noxious Weeds
 After Fire

**MONTANA WILDFIRE
 INFORMATION
 DIRECTORY**

MANY THANKS
 TO
 OUR
 FIRE FIGHTERS

VACANCY

Connecting communities with wildfire information
 to increase understanding
 and improve wildfire preparedness and recovery

Devinne Woodman, MSU Extension, Gallatin County,
 and the Montana Farm Bureau Foundation

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
 EXTENSION

**Fire Prevention on the
 Farm and Ranch**
 What every country homeowner
 needs to know about fire

The Northern Rockies
 Fire Prevention & Education
 From the Field to the Practice

READY, SET, GO!
 Montana
 Your Personal Wildland Fire Action Guide

READY, SET, GO!

**INTEGRATED
 NOXIOUS WEED
 MANAGEMENT
 AFTER WILDFIRES**
 Gaudin - Skelly Clark
 MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
 EXTENSION

**HOW TO
 PREPARE
 YOUR HOME
 FOR WILDFIRES**

WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION LEVELS
 THAT CAN MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER
 LIVING & WORKING

FIREWISE USA

**IMPROVING
 AGRICULTURAL
 SUSTAINABILITY
 FOLLOWING WILDFIRE**

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
 EXTENSION

SARE

LET'S ALL YEAR
 GUARANTEED!

2 COLLEGE
 RULED
 NOTEBOOK
 5 SUBJECT | 150 SHEETS

FIVE STAR
 ★★★★★

FIVE STAR
 ★★★★★

LIVING WITH FIRE

**HOMEOWNERS' FIRESAFE
 GUIDE FOR MONTANA**

Thank you for completing this survey!

Additional questions regarding MSU Extension's role in wildfire risk reduction, wildfire preparedness & recovery education can be directed towards: info@msu.edu

INDEPENDENCE WOODSTREAM
 MSU Extension
 900 N. Island Ave
 Bozeman, MT

SARE

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
 EXTENSION

Wildfire Preparedness Kit Survey

Please help MSU Extension to improve its quality of service in relation to wildfire preparedness materials & education by completing this survey made possible by a mini grant through Western Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education. Please circle your response or fill in with your own words.

Questions of kit?	High	Moderate	Low
Excellence of kit?	Yes	Possibly	No
Did it lead to implementation of fire preparedness activities?	Yes	Possibly	No
Would you recommend this kit to another?	Yes	Possibly	No
Did you learn something from the kit?	Yes	Possibly	No
Did you learn something from the kit?	Yes	Possibly	No
Suggestions for additional kit items?			

Wildfire Lessons Learned for Livestock Producers

thoughts from Trey Patterson,
Padlock Ranch, Wyoming & Montana

Question: Did you have a cheatgrass issue following your wildfire?

“Even after complete deferment and fencing that off, we had a lot of annuals come back in that area, some cheatgrass, but just a lot of weeds, different type of weeds. There’s still a weed problem in that area today.”

“Now other areas... we’ve actually seen a reduction in cheatgrass following the fire... After this 2017 fire, the study was done this year in 2018, we had less cheatgrass in the burned area than we did in the non-burned area [with moisture]... So there may be some interaction in terms of subsequent moisture.... While we saw a reduction in year one, my concern is that in year five, it may be elevated.”

Question: What is necessary for recovery?

“Of course we need some recovery... every year is different, the timing of every fire is different, the landscapes are different. I think we’re trying to look at it pragmatically, but also scientifically as to how these plants are responding. What kind of moisture we’re getting post fire? What kind of recovery we’re getting?”

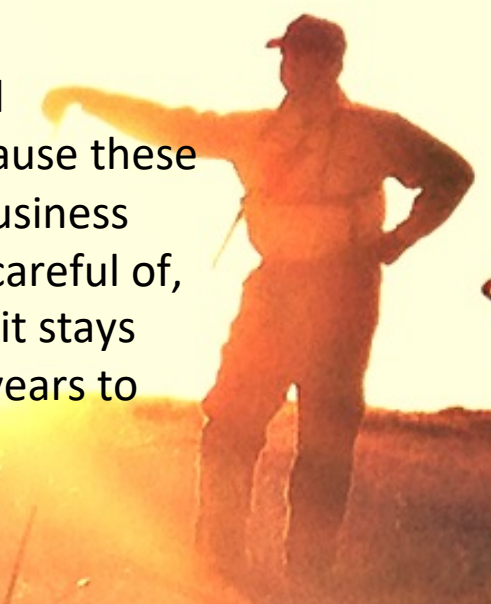
“There’s some great research being done at the Miles City USDA station, Dr. Lance Vermier is doing work where they’re actually showing they could not create a fire hot enough to kill western wheatgrass- to effect the buds on western wheatgrass. What he found through his research was that actually at the next growing season, the short term planned, time controlled grazing on these burned areas actually stimulated recovery and reduced the number of annuals that were available.”

“Obviously that has to be managed. It’s planned and time controlled, but I think there’s some real benefit to being adaptive and smart how we do that... you do need to understand the science and the biology behind it, but there also is an art to management, you have got to be looking at the resource.”

Question: What was the toughest challenge to overcome?

“It’s like a terrible drought just hit you, but it hit you immediately. You have this immediate loss of feed and sometime infrastructure. So working through that pragmatically becomes very, very important. When you’re making decisions relative to your production system or your grazing management or your financial decisions, it has to be done with a long term perspective...When that dust settles, get back & get your fire clothes off. Get at your desk and start thinking about this as a business decision and just simply not panicking.”

“Having a rested mind and really being thoughtful and intentional about how you deal with this because these fires are generally short term disasters...From a business standpoint, that’s what we have to be very, very careful of, is making sure that we manage the crisis such that it stays short term and doesn’t impact your business for years to come.”



During the 2018 Wyoming Stock Growers Association Winter Round Up, ranchers from Wyoming, along with specialists from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service & USDA Forest Service shared their experiences with wildfire during the Progressive Rancher Forum. These are their lessons learned, shared in an effort to help others prepare, respond & recover from wildfire.

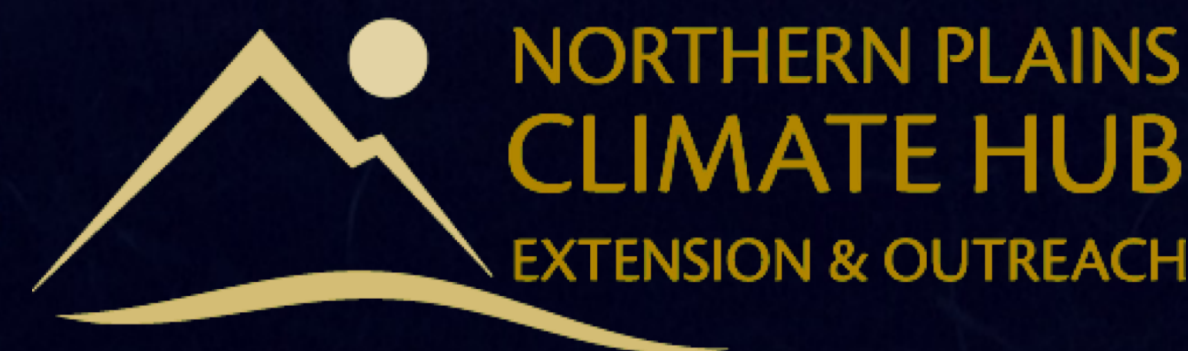


Photo courtesy of Lance Vermier, USDA ARS-Fort Keogh

Wildfire Lessons Learned for Livestock Producers

thoughts from Wayne Barlow,
Rancher, Wyoming

Question: What was the toughest challenge to overcome following wildfire?

"For me being out there on the ground and a permit holder, the toughest challenge for us is where do we go now? Because you know you're not going back where you were for at least two years. You're pretty much in a real bad spot to try to find somewhere to go. On these Forest and BLM permits, generally speaking, those are all being used. On the side of the state where we're at, there is very little private ground where you could potentially go to replace that loss that you're going to have on federal allotments."

"If it wouldn't have been for these folks coming together {Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Wyoming Game and Fish} and finding out where there were available spots to go at some of these places, or for some of these cattle, it would have been really hard to try to do that individually."

"We moved from where we were 60 miles to a Game and Fish habitat area, is where we ended up going for two years. That's a long way from home to try to keep track of what's going on."

Question: Any experience using the Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQUIP)?

"In our 10,000 acre allotment, we have a 10 acre wet meadow area that's under scrutiny, always, but it's important for our cattle. We got EQUIP monies to protect the area by piping water away from the wetland. We also added fencing to keep cows away without needing a daily rider."

"One take home message- it's devastating and involves change, but it's short term. At the time, you will NOT believe fire could be good. But a few years later, you'll see the fire has good impacts on your forest understory."

"Get rid of and thin trees with no understory, replace it with an amazing diversity of forage that the cows will love! My cows purposely seek out those burned understory areas now rather than the open rangeland areas... eating hollyhocks- they love it! I don't know how much water those trees consumed. We'll see more runoff, new springs popping up everywhere."

"Fire will require change in your operation, but get through those first few years, and you'll be good!"

Question: You alluded that you had to make different management decisions after the fire, could you please elaborate?

"Our normal turnout time is May. Our allotment is 50,000 acres divided into four pastures. The fire affected one pasture, the other three were useable, but using them would have required people to come home early. So we decided to go to the wildlife area instead. One of the guys affected used to run only yearlings. He sold most of those yearlings after the fire so he could focus on feeding his cows. He's never bought back into yearlings {he lost flexibility}."

"In the second year, we found private ground because the wildlife habitat allotment was too difficult to manage. We went to a neighbor's place {rented pasture} for June until we could work out of the wildlife habitat."

"Our other neighbor couldn't get onto his allotment for a month. He had to round up his small herd on 15,000 acres when it was finally time to turn out on wildlife allotments."



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Wildfire Lessons Learned for Livestock Producers

thoughts from Jennifer Hayward,
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Question: Have you developed a longer-term 10 to 20 year grazing plan to prepare better for the next round?

“Drought planning- do you know what your operation is stocked at, 70%? 110%? When an emergency arises, how much wiggle room do you have? Work with your family to make sure THEY know these things too, not just you. You can’t do drought contingency planning without knowing your base. Figure out what resources are available in your community. Don’t assume a team already exists in your community to just tap into. Start with whichever agency is the Rockstar in your community... Don’t discount the Conservation Districts! Ask! Push us!”

Question: What was the toughest challenge to overcome following wildfire?

“We need to think about that seed bank and managing that seed bank... What we learned is we needed to be thinking about weeds right away. So if we have two years of rest and we have the right plants producing seed and really repopulating our seed bank, that gives us that insurance policy to fight against weeds and to help that situation. We need to think about that long term sustainability of that landscape to support cattle grazing, and so we’re thinking about that seed bank and getting it in there, providing more opportunities for competition against the weeds...”

“It’s very dependent on your plant communities, because what we’re experiencing in our plant communities is very different... It’s not a recipe. All of our experiences are not a recipe and even in our own county, what happened on the Fontenelle Fire is not what’s going to happen on the Roosevelt Fire. That inventory of where you operate, the partners involved, the land users, the managers, and your partners in your area would all look very different. I think communication and talking during the season and maybe even trying to be proactive, and think about, “what if a fire impacted me on this part of my operation? What would I do?”

Question: What’s going on at the federal level from the stand point of controlling some of these invasive grasses?

“As an agency, noxious weeds are a problem and our Sage Grouse Initiative really, really is focused on trying to treat noxious weeds. You can enroll for the EQUIP program to either treat on your private, or your federal land, cheatgrass. So if you’re in a sage grouse area, and you’re interested, then you should visit with your local NRCS office to evaluate those opportunities.”

“I can not let this conversation go by without saying how important it is with you guys on the ground, for early detection, rapid response... You need to communicate with your range management specialist, and your Weed and Pest... You might save us so much time by getting there early.”

“If you see a plant you don’t recognize, call it in... we need your help... You are your first line of defense... It’s not my problem, it’s OUR problem. If you want to continue grazing on federal lands like you always have, this annual invasive grass is so very important. I just can’t tell you enough the threat that this is to our way of life. I’m passionate about it too, we need to work together.”

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Photo courtesy of Lance Vermier, USDA ARS-Fort Keogh

WILDFIRE BOOK CLUB

Free books. Free coffee. Free snacks. Just RSVP!!!

Club meets at Gil's Goods,
Livingston, MT:

Thursday, March 28th @ 10am

Thursday, April 25th @ 10am

Are you interested in learning more about wildfire? Join the club! Meet on the following dates to discuss the books:

March 28th- *The Big Burn* by Timothy Egan

April 25th- *Land on Fire* by Gary Ferguson

RSVP by February 28th so you have enough time to read your book before we meet!

Please RSVP MSU Extension 406-531-2229



Montana State University Extension is an ADJUCOMM Veterans' Preference Employer and provider of educational outreach.