

Nevada Farm Bureau 2019 Fire-Related Policy...

Fire – Fuels Management:

229

Federal agency land use policies over the past 40-plus years have steadily reduced numbers of domestic grazing animals permitted on the range, thereby allowing natural fuels to become overgrown and burden the landscape. The results are seen in devastating, uncontrollable wildfires, incinerating everything in their path, burning thousands of animals alive including threatened and Endangered Species while devastating habitat. Increasing numbers of grazing livestock would reduce the range fuel load vegetation as well as producing food necessary for our nation and the world. We support the innovative, positive message of promoting the protection of our land and natural resources by increasing numbers of domestic grazing animals which will decrease fuel loads and help reduce catastrophic wild land and range fires.

It is proven largely ineffective to exclusively use native species for rehab work. We support the inclusion of fire-resistant crested wheat grass seed and forage Kochia and other beneficial species in all possible local, state, regional and federal reseeded projects where it is adapted.

Livestock grazing has been shown to be a valuable tool, especially after wildfires. We urge that the moratorium after burns be removed and appropriate grazing to be used for rehabilitation.

We support the removal of dead and dying trees from our forest as a tool for fuel reduction. We also support a requirement that every grazing and logging permit issued should include a dangerous fuels reduction plan and insure that every plan has mandatory triggers which federal land managers may not deviate from or contest. Mandatory triggers should be implemented when fuel loads exceed ten percent over normal maximum or when a livestock grazing permit owner has utilized less than 90 percent of allowable forage with normally permitted numbers during a regular grazing season.

Limit or eliminate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews in areas where activity such as grazing or logging are already permitted. Categorize dangerous fuel reduction activity and development under emergency and public safety rather than general grazing or logging, thus eliminating most legal challenges to this necessary activity.

Fire Control – Federally-Managed Lands Agency Policy: 230

We support mutual aid agreements between counties and all government agencies.

With the Governor agreeing to form an interstate working group addressing wildfires, we believe Nevada Farm Bureau, representing the agricultural producer's perspective in fire planning, response and rehabilitation, should make every effort possible to participate in that working group.

We believe that fire program funding should be committed in greater proportion to prevention of wildfire through fuels management, pre-suppression and rehabilitation than that allocated for fighting the fires.

We believe that, working with others interested in addressing immediate fire attack, a comprehensive plan be developed organizing and training a force of "Emergency Fire Technicians" to be certified as "red card" First Responders, able to attack fires immediately and otherwise respond to such emergencies.

1. We believe that any First Responder's group should have ready and at their disposal all manner of suppression and firefighting equipment for immediate fire attack.
2. We support development of a communication network for reporting fire discovery, equipment and First Responders addressing fires, which includes local fire districts, county sheriffs and First Responders so that fires may be attacked without interference.
3. Working in concert with the interstate Governors group, the United States Secretary of Agriculture and others, we support any highly specialized communications equipment, training and upgrades/updates required by the FCC for firefighting situations being made available to First Responders at the least possible cost.

We support a survey including anyone affected by wildfires since the 1980's to ascertain if accounts of federal employee threats, including hefty fines, imprisonment, or both, and/or grazing permit revocation have any basis.

1. Surveys should include the approximate year, number of incidents, penalties threatened, etc.
2. Verified reports should be provided to the Governor requesting legislative resolution, and also the multi-state working group for consideration.
3. We support the use of controlled and managed burning during fall and winter months to remove massive fuels buildup of non-grazeable vegetation such as sagebrush, Juniper, Piñon Pine, willows, etc.

Fire Control – Local Fire Districts: 231

We direct County Commissioners to work cooperatively with state and federal agencies, other public firefighting agencies and private property owners (ranchers) to set up a local fire management plan.

The County Commissioners need to provide for local control of firefighting efforts within the county. Local volunteer fire departments need to be recognized as having authority and incentive to put out fires that originate in or invade the area.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) should treat catastrophic fires on a par with other natural resource disasters and should provide emergency assistance and access to low interest loans for ranchers. We encourage county Farm Bureaus to review local FEMA fire plans to determine the status of local conditions.

Because smoke inhalation will bring about dust pneumonia weeks after a fire, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) should amend its current policy of limiting claims to those livestock deaths occurring when the fire is put out and the grazing permit owners are allowed back into the area. Animals terminally affected may be discovered and diminished values will be compensated at the difference between the damaged value and full useable value.

USDA Farm Services must recognize the need for immediate action where livestock are concerned and allow costs-sharing for emergency rebuilds of infrastructure that ranchers do on their own before official approval.

Federal agency officials should either provide assistance in documenting lost animals, fences and other structures or accept anecdotal testimony from locals.