



MID-SNAKE RESPONDS TO THE AUGER FALLS FIRE

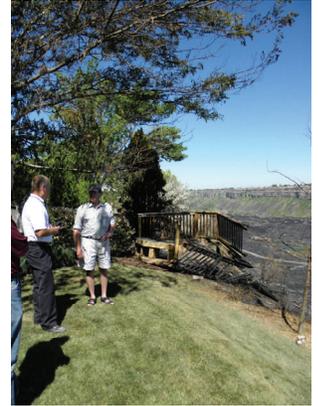
On a hot and windy day this past July, a carelessly thrown cigarette butt ignited a fire in the Idaho's Snake River Canyon that would eventually burn over 500 acres. This included nearly all of the City of Twin Falls owned Auger Falls Park and land managed by Idaho Fish & Game and the BLM.

The fire left the entire park blackened. However, what initially appeared to be a

tragedy for the City of Twin Falls, turned into opportunity. Much of Auger Falls Park's vegetation consisted of cheat grass, which had effectively choked out native vegetation. Twin Falls City Parks and Recreation Director (and Mid-Snake RC&D Council member) Dennis Bowyer recognized that a reseeding effort might reduce the amount of cheat grass in the park and help native species regain a

foothold. While cheat grass is notoriously difficult to get rid of, sustained efforts to reduce its impact can be effective.

As soon as it became clear that a reseeding effort was needed, several community



A homeowner along the canyon rim speaks with Twin Falls Battalion Chief Brian Cunningham about the damage the Auger Falls fire did to his deck.

agencies and businesses offered their support to the City of Twin Falls. Other groups offered donations of money and materials, and Mid-Snake RC&D was no exception. Utilizing an existing agreement with Twin Falls



District BLM, the RC&D provided more than \$21,000 in seed towards the project. Additionally, the LDS church offered hundreds of volunteers to help with the reseeding effort.

The BLM, RC&D, and Twin Falls Parks and Recreation all worked together to develop a plan. On September 11, 2010, this plan came to fruition as more than 400 volun-

teers descended upon Auger Falls Park to spread the seed mix.

Over 8,000 pounds of seed, consisting primarily of native grasses, forbs, and sage brush were put down in Auger Falls on that day. This was the kind of community effort that showed what the Magic Valley is all about.

While it may take years of work to return the canyon to



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something that more closely resembles a natural ecosystem, this project exemplifies how the RC&D program can be a resource for locally-based projects in our community.

A big THANK YOU goes out to the BLM for their expertise in native plants and their skill in organizing volunteers!



A volunteer works to re-seed Auger Falls park on September 11, 2010.