10.0 ALCOVA RECREATION AREAS

10.1 Area Description

Number of Points: 78
Number of Structures: 130
BLM Ownership: 4,741 acres (3 parcels)

Alcova Reservoir is an 184,405-acre foot water impoundment built for irrigation and hydroelectric power production. It is the highest use recreation area in Natrona County, receiving over 100,000 user days a year. There is a privately owned subdivision west of the reservoir consisting of about 30 houses. Two Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) lease areas west and north of the lake contain approximately 100 structures. The west lease is a trailer court with 1970-1980's era house trailers, most with elaborate deck systems attached. Rocky Mountain Juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*) is the primary overstory species in the Alcova area with a limited grass and sage understory. Small pockets of ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) exist near the old landfill. The main concentration of pine is located on BOR land near Fremont Canyon. BLM land borders all of the

residential areas. The Alcova area is broken up by large boulders, rock faces, steep washes, draws, and an abundance of bare ground due to extremely low precipitation (less than 5 inches annually). Thus, the plant community is more likely to be impacted by a juniper crown fire than a grass-shrub surface fire.

BLM land located on the backside of the dam has a higher concentration of sage and Rocky Mountain Juniper. There is a small spring located on the downstream side of the dam (Point 459). Willow (*Salix sp*.) and Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) are present as well as smooth brome (*Bromis inermis*), bluegrass (*Poa sp.*), and other grass species. The riparian zone is less then 1-acre in size and has little water.

10.2 Management Recommendations

1. *Public Outreach and Education*. It is recommended that a public meeting be held to inform homeowners of the dangers associated with living in a wildland-urban interface environment and provide homeowners with home specific recommendations to mitigate this hazard. Mitigation measures could be developed from the literature and collaborative agency assessments conducted at each residence. One such recommendation would be to remove junipers found against or in close proximity to homes.

2. *Increase Road Effectiveness as Fire Breaks*. The effectiveness of roads as fire breaks is dependent on adjoining vegetation, terrain, weather conditions, and road width. Juniper along roadsides can be thinned to minimize fire from crossing roads. When fire fighters are present, suppression and burn out operations are made safer and easier.

3. *Thinning and Pile Burning*. Although it is unlikely a fuel treatment on BLM lands above Alcova Lake View Estates will stop a fire, thinning and pile burning of Juniper may modify the spread and intensity of an approaching wildfire and provide suppression forces with additional time and increased tactical opportunities.

10.3 Alcova Recreation Areas Hazard Assessment Rating

Total Rating Score	Hazard Level	Amount (%)
1-14	Low	5
15-21	Moderate	94
21-28	High	1
29-35	Extreme	0