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Led by the Fire and Fuels Management staff, the ST-Bar Ranch project team set out to accomplish the goal of enhancing the productivity of the Santee Sioux reservation's native rangeland for livestock and wildlife production through hazardous fuel reduction while restoring the balance to its mid-grass prairie ecosystem. The team was able to train and employ tribal members in the elimination of hazardous fuels and utilize local businesses to support fuel reduction crews thereby bringing economic benefits to the tribal communities involved.

The projected long-term outcomes for the project include increased wildland fire safety to the public and firefighters, reduced risk of unwanted fires to communities, infrastructure and resources, strengthened rural economic sustainability, increased public education about the importance of hazardous fuel reduction activities, improved resiliency and sustainability of wildland ecosystems, fewer lands severely degraded by wildland fires and reduced cost to the Federal government for wildfire suppression and rehabilitation.

Introduced in 2000, the Department of the Interior's National Fire Plan is a 10-year comprehensive strategy to suppress wildland fires and rehabilitate fire-damaged areas. The ST-Bar Ranch Fuels Reduction/Range Rehabilitation Project employed three of the four primary goals of the Plan: Reduce hazardous fuel, restore fire-adapted ecosystems and promote community assistance for accomplishing these goals. For more information about the National Fire Plan, visit www.fireplan.gov.

Note to Editors: *The photo of the Winnebago Agency Fire and Fuels Management Group receiving its 2006 NFP Excellence in Hazardous Fuels Reduction award that accompanies this release may be viewed at www.doi.gov.*

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