

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Office of Fire and Aviation
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

July 6, 2001

In Reply Refer To:
9210 (FA-130) P

EMS Transmission 07/09/01
Instruction Memorandum No. OF&A 2001-020
Expires: 09/30/02

To: All Field Officials

From: Director, Office of Fire and Aviation

Subject: FY 2002/2003 Wildland Urban Interface Fuel Projects DD: 07/30/01

Program Area: This Instruction Memorandum provides Bureau direction for developing and funding FY 2002 and 2003 Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) fuels reduction projects (subactivity 2824).

Background: An interagency (DOI, U.S. Forest Service, and National Association of State Foresters) memo was issued on May 10, 2001, (Attachment 1) outlining the process for the interagency development and submission of DOI WUI fuels projects. It included the *Wildland Urban Interface Initiative Project Data Form* to identify project funding for Fiscal Years 2002-2003. The June 15, 2001, deadline for receipt of the WUI Project Data Forms identified in this memo has been extended to July 30, 2001. Field Offices are encouraged to submit these WUI project lists through their state interagency collaborative groups to the national interagency WUI oversight group as soon as they are developed, **but no later than July 30, 2001.**

Purpose: This national interagency group will compile all WUI Project Data Forms, develop a final priority listing, and recommend DOI agency WUI fuels program funding levels. The national group will also develop the necessary work plan, budget submissions, and requests for FY 2002 and 2003. This would include community risk assessments, plan development and implementation; grants to communities or other entities; community action programs and education projects (Firewise Workshops, PSAs, etc.), and fuels treatment projects on Federal and non-Federal lands that will reduce wildfire risk to communities.

Completed WUI Project Data Forms should cover all projects that will require funding in 2002 and 2003. The WUI community projects that will require funding over two or more years need to be identified as multi-year projects. Projects that were initiated in 2001 and require additional funding should be resubmitted using the WUI Project Data Form and identified as multi-year projects.

Guidance for developing the WUI projects provided in the original Departmental memo should be the primary reference for the collaborative development of your submissions. When developing specific projects, consider the emphasis both the Bureau and the Department have placed on contracting and local hire. When assigning costs to specific projects, include only the direct project costs. Base program costs will be funded through the Bureau's Annual Work Plan (AWP) process.

Original WUI Project Data Forms should be e-mailed to Dick Bahr, National Park Service, at dick_bahr@nps.gov, and "copies" should be mailed to the Chief, Community Protection and Assistance (acting, Pat Durland) at the Office of Fire and Aviation.

Time frame: The deadline for submission of Project Data Forms is **July 30, 2001**.

Budget Impact: Project approval and funding for 2002 and 2003 WUI projects (subactivity 2824) will be determined from the WUI Project Data Forms submitted by each state. Once the project funding for each state has been determined, the base program funding will be determined through the normal AWP process.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: None.

Coordination: This direction has been coordinated with the USDI Wildland Fire Coordination Group.

Contact: Questions regarding this IM should be referred to Pat Durland, 208-387-5162.

Signed by:
Timothy M. Murphy
Acting Director, Office of Fire and Aviation

Authenticated by:
Pat Lewis
Supervisory Mgmt. Asst.

2 - Attachments

1 - Memo "Guidance for developing FY 2002 & 2003 national project lists to implement fuels reduction projects in the Wildland Urban Interface on Department of the Interior administered Federal lands" (5 pp.)

2 - WUI Initiative Project Data Form (4 pp.)

TO: State Foresters
State Directors, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
Regional Administrators, Department of Commerce, National Oceanic &
Atmospheric Administration – Fisheries
Regional Directors, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Regional Directors, Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
Regional Directors, Department of the Interior, National Park Service

FROM: Tim Hartzell
Department of the Interior
Wildland Fire Coordinator

Lyle Laverty
Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
National Fire Plan Coordinator

Jim Hubbard
National Association of State Foresters

DATE: May 10, 2001

SUBJECT: Guidance for developing FY 2002 & 2003 national project lists to
implement fuels reduction projects in the Wildland Urban Interface on
Department of the Interior administered Federal lands.

DUE DATE: 6/15/2001

SUMMARY

This memorandum is intended to guide interagency collaborative working groups in each State in developing a list of hazardous fuels reduction projects for priority wildland urban interface communities in the vicinity of Department of the Interior administered Federal lands. This project list will guide implementation of the national fuels reduction program in FY 2002 and provide a preliminary list of FY 2003 projects.

Attachment 1-1

An initial list of highest-risk communities is attached, this list was compiled by analyzing the risk assessment information provided by the States as they identified communities at

risk for the May 2001 Federal Register Notice. This will serve as a baseline or departure point for discussions about FY 2002 fuels treatment projects on Department of the Interior administered Federal lands in the wildland urban interface (WUI).

The interagency collaborative groups in each State can be the same ones that developed the Federal Register list of communities at risk. Groups should consist of at least one representative from each Federal bureau that will be involved in proposing and implementing projects, a State forestry representative and representatives from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) compliance sections for advice on project planning and mitigation actions for threatened or endangered species. Representatives from Tribal governments should be included if they own or manage land within the State's boundary. Fire Management Officers from the Bureau of Indian Affairs are expected to consult with Tribes for which they are responsible in order to determine if those Tribes wish to send a representative or choose to delegate their representation to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) or someone from another Tribe. This consultation effort should be coordinated with Forest Service line officers with responsibility for Tribal liaison.

The interagency collaborative groups must submit these projects for Department of the Interior lands by June 15 for review by the national interagency oversight group by June 30. The national oversight group will review the State lists for consistency with Federal guidance and for equitable distribution of funding. The national group will consist of one representative each from the Western States Fire Managers, the Northeast Forest Fire Supervisors, the Southern Fire Chiefs, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the National Park Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Each affected Tribe shall have the option to send a representative or to designate the BIA or other entity to represent it. The primary purpose of the June deadline is so that the Department of the Interior can develop a detailed workplan to support their FY2002 budget request and initiate the necessary public scoping, environmental and regulatory compliance work to permit fuels treatment work to be initiated early this fall. Project information from this process will also be used to initiate preparation of a budget request for FY2003. State project lists will be documented using the attached Project Data Form, which can be downloaded from the Internet at <ftp://ftp.nifc.blm.gov/nfp/wui/>. Completed forms should be e-mailed to Dick_Bahr@nps.gov, by June 15, 2001. Questions should be addressed to Dick Bahr, National Park Service, National Interagency Fire Center, Telephone 208-387-5217, Fax 208-387-5250.

The interagency collaborative groups may propose fuels reduction projects for communities that are not on the highest priority community list provided by the Federal bureaus, however they must document the reasoning for such a decision on the project

data form. For example, it may be advantageous to augment ongoing projects within existing State and Federal programs, or to focus initial efforts on communities that are ready and willing to participate.

BACKGROUND

Congress, the Administration, States and Tribes have all expressed a desire to see significant accomplishments in reducing wildland urban interface (WUI) wildfire risk within a short time frame. In order to achieve this, the bureaus need a process for identifying high priority communities and defining projects to mitigate the risk facing them. In order to publish the May 2001 Federal Register list, States were asked to identify (but not prioritize) high risk communities, and indicate those communities that already have ongoing hazard reduction treatments or for which treatments are planned to begin in 2001. The national-level Federal/State WUI oversight group asked the State/Federal collaborative groups and Tribes to apply a standard set of risk assessment criteria that could be used to develop a list of those communities at highest risk. However, States were free to use other risk assessment criteria if they met or exceeded the standard.

The Federal bureaus have a mandate to implement a program to mitigate the risk of wildfires originating on Federal land from burning into wildland interface communities. They need a process that is national in scope, but allows flexibility for the States to play a major role in developing and implementing programs.

For FY2001, it was impossible to devise and apply such a process. There was not enough time to bring together Federal/State and Tribal representatives at the State level, agree upon a process, identify and rank projects, and complete all the planning and environmental clearances required. Consequently, the bureaus and States agreed that the best that could be accomplished was to fund projects already identified, with planning and compliance completed and ready for implementation.

Planning, implementing and expanding a wildland urban hazard mitigation program for FY2002 and beyond on Department of the Interior administered Federal lands will benefit from a more systematic analysis and funding process. This process involves the following steps:

- ▼ For the FY2002 and out-year budget cycles, the Department of the Interior bureaus will use risk assessment information provided by the States and Tribes in response to the January 2001 Federal Register Notice to identify those communities that rank highest for each risk factor (fuels and fire behavior, values at risk, and fire protection capability). This information will be used to identify the highest priority communities for fuels treatment within each State. The wildland urban interface communities listed in the May 2001 Federal register notice will be updated annually by the State/Federal groups and Tribes so that funding can continue to be directed to the highest priority

communities or project areas. These interface community lists will be maintained by each State interagency working group and will not be re-published in the Federal Register.

- ▼ The interagency collaborative working groups within each State will then identify proposed treatments to begin reducing the fuels risk around these priority communities. Since Congress provided WUI funds to reduce the threat to communities from wildfires originating on Federal land, all Federally funded WUI projects will involve treatments that are at least partially on Department of the Interior administered Federal land. Some projects may also involve efforts to educate homeowners about actions they can take to reduce their risk. If the interagency groups cannot identify sufficient projects to obligate projected funding, the responsible Federal bureaus will identify projects on their lands. A lead bureau and Federal partner will be identified for each collaborative project to guide funding allocations, and a detailed cost assessment will be provided.
- ▼ In developing the proposed FY2002 Department of the Interior project list, the States, Tribes and Federal bureaus may propose to treat some communities that are not on the highest priority list. Such a decision must be based on the ability and willingness of communities and Federal partners to participate and achieve significant risk reduction. They also may propose not to begin treatments in FY2002 around some of the listed communities if those communities do not support risk reduction activities. However, the Department of the Interior bureaus may undertake treatments on their lands adjacent to such communities even if a community is not ready to join in a collaborative effort.
- ▼ The State-level collaborative groups will submit a prioritized list of projects for review, using the following criteria:

Project ranking criteria as identified on the Project Data Forms are:

- ▼ Community description – relative community condition and organization
- ▼ Hazard description – relative severity of hazard
- ▼ Project type(s) – hazard fuels reduction, homeowner & community action, information & education
- ▼ Project description and effectiveness – is the project realistic? Can it be accomplished as defined? How much mitigation does it provide?
- ▼ Extent of mitigation -how much of the total hazard will be mitigated? – will the project or group of linked projects, mitigate a large portion of hazard affecting the community, or is it of limited benefit? For example, 5,000 acres may need thinning in order to mitigate significantly the wildfire hazard around a community. A project that proposed to treat only 100 acres would yield only marginal benefits compared to one proposed to treat 3,000 acres.

Attachment 1-4

- ▼ Number of people affected - how many people and homes will this project affect

- ▼ Project design – are the steps and activities designed to achieve objectives? – will the treatment provide hazard reduction for many years, or is it only short term?
 - ▼ Cost - how does it compare with similar projects? Is there a less expensive way to accomplish the objectives?
 - ▼ Time line of major milestones and accomplishments – will the hazard be significantly mitigated within a reasonable period of time?
 - ▼ Partnerships – is there significant cooperation and collaboration and/or cost sharing between organizations?
 - ▼ Environmental compliance - will there be major impediments or obstacles to implementing the project?
 - ▼ Proximity of DOI lands to community to be protected – projects involving Federal land close to an individual community generally would provide greater benefit than projects far away from that community.
-
- ▼ For 2004 and beyond, these State-level project lists will be reviewed and an orderly process established for funding allocation among the States by three regional interagency groups: the Western States Fire Managers, the Northeast Forest Fire Supervisors, and the Southeast Fire Chiefs. These standing groups, which represent all 50 States, will be expanded to include Federal partners and Tribes to accomplish this task. These groups will use common ranking criteria to help ensure comparability among the regions. It is expected that many communities will require a sequence of projects spanning many years to adequately mitigate wildfire risk, and then enter a maintenance stage requiring a lower, sustained funding level. This means that the initial decisions about which projects to fund, and which communities receive the initial focus will set precedents that will influence the distribution of funds to communities and States for many years.
 - ▼ For 2004 and beyond, the three regional groups will submit their prioritized fuels treatment project lists to the national oversight group. This group will decide how to apportion funds to the different regions of the country.
 - ▼ There will be insufficient time to complete both regional and national-level review for the FY2002 budget cycle, and the FY2003 budget proposal to Congress. Therefore, by 6/15/2001 the State-level interagency collaborative working groups will submit separate lists of FY2002 and FY2003 projects and associated Project Data Forms by e-mail to Dick_Bahr@nps.gov for action by the national oversight group.

**USDI - National Fire Plan
Wildland Urban Interface Initiative
Project Data Form**

1.	Unit Submitting Project				
	Federal Land in Vicinity				
	Lead Federal Bureau		Unit		
	Requested Amount		State Priority		
	Contact:	Name			
		Address			
		Phone			
FAX					
E-Mail					
2.	Interface Community Name				
	Latitude		Datum		
	Longitude		Distance		
	Community Description				
	Hazard Description				

	Scope	
3.	Project Summary	
	Project Type (Check all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazard Fuel Treatment on Federal Land <input type="checkbox"/> Hazard Fuel Treatment on State and/or Private Land(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Information & Education <input type="checkbox"/> Homeowner & Community Action <input type="checkbox"/> Treatment 0 - 1.5 miles from interface community <input type="checkbox"/> Treatment 1.5 - 5 miles from interface community <input type="checkbox"/> Treatment > 5 miles from interface community
	Project Description	
	Effectiveness	
	Extent of Mitigation	
4.	Project Design	
	Give a detailed description of the project steps and activities to achieve objectives.	

	How many people and homes will this project affect? Describe.
	Timeline of major milestones & accomplishments.
	Why were these activities chosen?
5.	Long-term sustainability?
5.	Environmental Compliance
6.	Environmental Compliance

7.	Detailed budget for all private, local, tribal, state and federal organizations involved in this project (include donated services, equipment and supplies). Every 3 rd year, continuing projects will require an updated project data form and validation from the state interagency group. For multi-year projects separate rows should show income and expenditures by federal fiscal year (October 1 st - September 30th).									
	A. Project Income Sources									
	List all contributions of real funds or in kind support.	Organization* (examples: Home owners, Local, Tribal, State, and Federal Gov., etc.) List actual names in the column headings.								
		DOI Bureau								Total
	Dollars									
	Donations									
	Total									
	B. Project Expenditures									
	List by task and/or activity*	Organizations								
		DOI Bureau								Total
Total										
*List expenditures in left column i.e. chipper rental, hand crew labor, inspectors, project management, dozers, etc.										
8.	Additional Comments:									