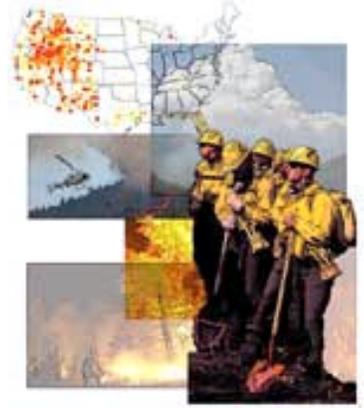




The National Fire Plan

FY 2001 Programs in Montana



Updated 8/13/01

Overview

The National Fire Plan implements program activities in five key program areas. These key points are designed to respond to the severe wildfires of 2000, reduce their impacts on rural communities, and enhance firefighting capabilities in the future. Estimated National Fire Plan allocations to Montana include (\$ in thousands):

Firefighting		Rehab and Restoration	Hazardous Fuel Treatment	Forest Health Projects	Community Assistance				TOTAL
Preparedness	Facilities				State Fire Assistance	Volunteer Fire Assistance	Economic Action Programs	Comm'ty & Private Land Fire Assist..	
35,788	8,645	62,119	8,008	1,566	844	239	478	6,914	125,751

* Includes \$1,150,000 Research and Development activities in Montana in support of the National Fire Plan.

Firefighting Resources

Staffing the most efficient organizational level (MEL) to provide prompt initial attack suppression on wildfires.

- Preparedness Organization
 - \$35,788,200 allocated to build the most efficient level of fire preparedness organization.
 - 730 positions (permanent and temporary) planned for hire in FY 2001 to meet 100% MEL.
 - As of 7/10/01, 261 permanent employees have been hired to meet MEL.
 - As of 7/10/01, 627 temporary employees have been hired to meet MEL.
 - 1 additional Interagency Hotshot Crew is located in Montana (20 positions, Lewis and Clark National Forest, Great Falls, MT.)
 - Equipment available for firefighting this year: 82 engines, 7 helicopters, 33 lookouts
- Fire Facilities
 - \$3.2 million invested in new Air Tanker Base Facility in Helena. Ground breaking ceremony on May 19, 2001 (ramp and runway are shared with the MT National Guard).
 - Ground breaking for replacement of the Lookout tower on Sula Peak in the Bitterroot Valley that burned in the 2000 fires in Montana.
 - \$3,450,000 Task order with Corps of Engineers for helibase in Lincoln/Gallatin Counties.
 - \$1,566,000 Task order with Corps of Engineers for fire warehouses in Ravalli/Lewis & Clark/Rosebud and Beaverhead Counties.
 - \$1,044,000 Task order with Corps of Engineers for tanker base in Missoula County.

- \$990,000 Task order with Corps of Engineers for 20 fire warehouses to be placed in multiple counties in MT, ID and ND.

Rehabilitation and Restoration

Assuring long-term efforts to improve lands unlikely to recover naturally from fire damage.

- 477,500 acres of National Forest System lands burned in the 2000 fire season.
- 121 rehabilitation and restoration projects are funded in FY 2001 in Montana.
- \$54,119,000 of the \$141,688,000 national total was allocated to projects in Montana, with an additional \$16 million available for combined projects in the Northern and Intermountain Regions.
- 2 vehicle rental contracts in support of the restoration team on the Helena NF.
- Lolo NF entered into an agreement with the Bitterroot RC&D Area, Bitterroot Job Service, and AFL-CIO Project Challenge to host a National Emergency Grant program on NFS lands, to provide work projects to the partners to employ workers directly affected by the 2000 wildfires.
- 8 contracts awarded in Ravalli County for water quality study, planting, GPS, A&E, building construction and noxious weed projects, totaling \$570,226.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction

Targeting fuel management and reduction on high priority areas, especially wildland-urban interface areas.

- More than 14,200 acres of hazardous fuels treatment has been accomplished and entered into the National Database as of July 27, 2001.
- \$41,320 in contracts for fuels reduction thinning awarded in Lincoln County.
- Contract awarded in Lewis and Clark County totaling \$41,000.
- 4 contracts awarded in Broadwater County totaling \$234,528.
- 2 contracts awarded in Missoula County for archaeological study and A&E totaling \$119,000.
- Pinkham fire restoration project in Eureka, a fuels reduction project in a drainage where over 45 homes and ranches are located, includes burning, thinning and intermediate harvest.
- Sheldon Flats project in Libby is a thinning and prescribed burning project for ecological restoration and reducing hazardous fuels in the urban interface.
- Elk Creek interface project near Heron, a small acreage fuels reduction project, is community driven and involves local residents to identify and prioritize the treatment areas.

Community Assistance

*Enhancing community capacity to reduce wildfire risk and expand local economic opportunities on **private, state and tribal lands** through federal:non-federal cost-shares.* The Community Assistance programs in the NFP include:

- **State Fire Assistance** - \$844,000 is granted to the State to increase the readiness level of state and local firefighting organizations, by providing technical training, funding and equipment, and delivery of Firewise workshops. Of the total funding, \$587,000 is dedicated to **Hazardous Fuel Reduction** projects and development of defensible space in high-risk areas in and around communities, evaluated and prioritized through a collaborative process with the State.
- **Volunteer Fire Assistance** - \$239,000 is granted to the State to prepare rural (local and volunteer) fire departments, which protect communities with populations of less than 10,000, to improve their readiness for and response to wildfires- especially in the wildland-urban interface. Provides funding and technical assistance directly to these fire departments for training and equipment to enhance

protection capabilities across all land ownerships.

- **Forest Health Management** - \$1,566,000 supports Forest Service Field Offices and State Foresters in a coordinated effort to detect, monitor, evaluate, prevent and suppress invasive species on federal and nonfederal forestlands between all federal agencies, states, and tribal governments impacted by fire. State Forestry Agencies receive funding to assist private landowners. The funds also support **Noxious Weed Treatment** through grants to local weed districts and cooperatives through the State Departments of Agriculture, to treat noxious weeds on private, state and tribal lands impacted by fire.
 - Weed grant for \$2.1 million was awarded on May 15, 2001 to the MT Dept. of Agriculture.
- **Economic Action Programs** -\$478,000 supports technical assistance and grants to state, federal, county, local, tribal governments and not-for-profit organizations, helps communities develop opportunities and enterprises to diversify uses of forest resources and hazardous fuel byproducts, and increases state utilization and marketing capabilities.
- **Community and Private Land Fire Assistance** - Includes:
 - **Fence and Infrastructure Reconstruction** - Funding for fence projects in the amount of approximately \$2.9 million, with 148 payments totaling \$1,965,000, processed to date. The 1st check was issued the week of April 12th to a rancher in the Bitterroot Valley. The Helena NF is approximately 75% completed with reimbursing landowners and the Bitterroot NF is 100% completed. Overall, Montana is about 70% completed with 1st priority fence projects.
 - **Hazardous Fuels Cost-Share Incentives** -\$721,000 supports grants to State Forester to reduce and remove hazardous fuels in areas impacted by fire. Regions will work with the States to identify needs and priorities on state, private and tribal lands.
 - **Multi-resource Stewardship** -\$1,617,000 supports grants to State Forester to assist landowners to prepare or revise multi-resource management plans on state, private and tribal lands impacted by fire. Funds support restoration projects such as tree planting, revegetation, soil stabilization and watershed restoration work, and target impacted communities and local workers/businesses. Funding also supports Noxious Weed treatments.
 - **Economic Action Pilot Projects** -\$1,117,000 supports grants to state, federal, county, local, tribal governments and not-for-profit organizations, to assist fire-impacted communities to expand and develop markets for wood products resulting from hazardous fuel removal as well underutilized small diameter material. Demonstration projects showing end-use such as timber bridges, round timber construction, and biomass-to-energy projects will be emphasized.
 - **Community Fire Planning** -\$558,000 supports grants awarded directly to communities and a variety of other partners including state, county, and tribal governments, and not-for-profits, to develop and revise Community strategic, action and fire risk management plans targeting those most impacted by fires. Funds increase community resiliency and capacity and encourage strategic growth. Local Forest Service offices are helping to identify communities.

Note: Collection of accomplishment data continues on a daily basis.

<p>Mike Paterni R1 and R4 Regional Fire Plan Coordinator mpaterni@fs.fed.us (406)329-8681</p>	<p>Frank Roth R1 and R4 Deputy Regional Fire Plan Coordinator froth@fs.fed.us (801) 625-5281</p>	<p>Paul Ries R1 and R4 State & Private Forestry Dept. Director pries@fs.fed.us (801) 625-5253</p>	<p>Donald K. Artley State Forester dartley@state.mt. us (406) 542-4300</p>
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