



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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To: District Manager, CDD and All Field Office Managers
(*Attention - District/Regional and Field Office FMO's*)

From: State Director

Subject: Hazardous Fuels and Community Assistance Programs - 2004 Accomplishments and 2005 Targets and Goals

This Information Bulletin provides information pertaining to the California Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) program (fuels and Mitigation) and identifies resources available to help implement the program.

The common goal of the Hazardous Fuels and Community Assistance programs is to provide safe, effective, and efficient methods to mitigate wildland fire risks to communities and natural resources through partnerships with local, tribal, State, Federal and other interested stakeholders. Program direction comes from national and interagency directives as well as state-level initiatives. Primary guidance for the aforementioned programs includes the National Fire Plan, 10-Year Cohesive Strategy, Healthy Forest Initiative and Healthy Forest Restoration Act.

California, BLM direction for the 2004 fiscal year was to implement hazardous fuels treatments on at least 15,000 acres and coordinate collaborative fire protection plans and risk assessments with communities at risk to wildfire. A few 2004 program highlights include:

- Accomplished just over 14,000 acres across the state
 - Community assistance projects treated 9,000 acres
 - Surprise Field Office treated over 2,000 acres
- Coordinated various site visits for the DOI Under-Secretary and BLM Director
- Prepared and advertised four stewardship projects. Three have been awarded and are in various stages of implementation.
- Received the national spotlight on several occasions for community assistance projects successful in reducing wildfire impacts
- Funded and supported numerous collaborative planning, education, and outreach efforts across the state

Our 2005 hazardous fuels and community assistance budget is similar to last year, less the inflation cost. We are working closely with the national office to try and acquire additional funding which will help us better meet the needs of our programs. The current funding strategy is to first fund Stewardship projects followed by community assistance and BLM hazardous fuels projects. We expect to allocate \$932,000 for projects under the 2823 sub-activity and \$5,260,000 under the 2824 sub-activity. Our funding split between community assistance and federal (BLM) projects is 58% and 42% of the 2824 budget, respectively, which is the same ratio used over the past two-years.

Priority goals for the 2005 Hazardous Fuels and Community Assistance programs include the following Departmental targets:

- Implement six stewardship projects (funding will be from a combination of 2823, 2824, 5900, and 1030 sub-activities);
- Treat 3,200 acres under the 2823 sub-activity;
- Treat 11,265 acres under the 2824 sub-activity (combined field office and community assistance projects)
- Coordinate the development/review of Community Wildfire Protection Plans with local BLM stakeholders
- Update and maintain RAMS reports and other fire plans to include collaborative community treatments and activities
- Implement cooperative interagency fuels projects under the guidance of IM OF&A 2004-032, dated September 27,2004
- Agency administrators will have the required qualifications prior to the approval of any prescribed fire plans. The minimum qualification is “Fire Management Leadership” training.

A detailed program schedule and guidance for the WUI program is enclosed for your review and reference. This guidance also includes a breakdown of staffing responsibilities and duties.

If you have questions related to the hazardous fuels program please contact the State Fuels Specialist, Craig Barnes at 916-978-4433 or for questions related to the community assistance program contact the State Fire Mitigation Specialist, Miriam Morrill at 916-978-4436.

Signed by:
James Wesley Abbott
Associate State Director

Authenticated by:
Richard A. Erickson
Records Management

Attachment:

Program Schedule and guidance for Hazardous Fuels and Community Assistance (6pp)

BLM California Community Assistance and Hazardous Fuels Programs

Staff Responsibilities and Schedule

Community Assistance Program

The purpose of this program is to assist and fund local non-profit groups in hazardous fuel reduction projects, fire protection planning, community risk assessments, and prevention/education to reduce the wildfire threat to California's Communities-at-Risk.

The program uses wildland-urban interface (2824) fuels funding which is budgeted at the State Office.

Community Assistance Grant Program

In California, BLM does not make the grant selections; instead a panel is convened by our various grant administrators consisting of California Fire Alliance representatives. BLM provides the review committee with grant selection criteria and priorities and can make recommendations to the selection panel but does not make actual selections. For general grant criteria visit the California Fire Safe Council Grants Clearinghouse website at <http://grants.firesafecouncil.org/>. For information related to qualifying projects and priorities contact the State Mitigation Specialist.

The community assistance grants are 18 months in length, which can be extend up to 3-months if needed (request made through the Clearinghouse to BLM). The applicants are required to report accomplishments quarterly to the Clearinghouse and those reports are then forwarded to the BLM State Office.

BLM Community Assistance Planning and Activities

BLM field offices should be partners in the preparation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) to the extent that a community desires and within budgetary constraints. In the Wildland-Urban Interface, these plans will provide a seamless guide for fuel reduction across ownerships, identifying those treatments to be completed by public agencies and those to be completed by private landowners, thus, identifying our grant priorities. Our recommended format for developing a CWPP can be found at <http://www.safnet.org/policyandpress/cwpphandbook.pdf>. Other guidance for collaborative fire planning is listed at the end of this document.

BLM California field offices should utilize CWPP strategies in their own Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies (RAMS) and Fire Management Plans (FMP) when and where possible. This may include various levels of public input above and beyond the NEPA process. BLM Fire and Mitigation/Prevention staff should be involved with community fire planning and implementation efforts. BLM staff should provide technical assistance on developing and implementing strategic fuel treatments and education programs, Community assistance program goals and the grant application requirements and process.

BLM Community Assistance Program Staff Responsibilities

Community Assistance and Fuels Program Managers

- Provide guidance and recommendations about the grant selection process to the California Fire Safe Council administering the "Clearinghouse".

- Provide guidance to BLM fire and mitigation/prevention staff about national and state guidance and direction for the Community Assistance Program.
- Enter and track Community Assistance grant projects in NFORS
- Work with the BLM State Office Grant Agreement Specialist (Julia Lang) to coordinate grant agreements and modifications as well as tracking and reporting of funds.
- Participate with the Alliance Clearinghouse Grant Review Committee as a technical expert and provide grant selection requirements/criteria.
- Provide budget and program information to community and fire safe council members
- Work with the CA Fire Alliance to develop statewide assistance strategies

Contacts:

Miriam Morrill, Community Assistance Program Manager (916) 978-4436

Craig Barnes, BLM Fuels Program Manager (916) 978-4433

Julia Lang, Agreement Specialist (916) 978-4527

Regional/District Fire Management Officers:

- Provide guidance to the field on appropriate fuels treatments and landscape strategies
- Assist coordination efforts between the field and state office program leads
- Assist in developing regional project and funding strategies
- Assist with annual RAMS reviews to update workload strategies that correspond to the Community Assistance Program.

Field Office Fire, Fuels, and Mitigation/Prevention Staff:

- Provide guidance and recommendations to fire safe councils and other local partners on the community assistance program and grant process.
- Provide technical assistance on strategic and collaborative fuels treatments and mitigation and prevention activities in the local area.
- Incorporate CWPP or other community planning strategies into RAMS updates for priority selection of BLM and fire safe council mitigation projects
- Update RAMS reports annually with community assistance program (BLM WUI mitigation activities) updates and provide to the State Office leads (Miriam) for review and funding/implementation strategies.
- Enter and track BLM Mitigation (WUI) workload into NFORS (proposals and accomplishments)
- Review grant proposals submitted through the Clearinghouse that are applicable to the field office area
- Provide comments, recommendations and alternative strategies to the Program Manager for incorporation into the Review Committee grant selection criteria process
- Review and evaluate applicable community projects to determine effectiveness and provide comments to the Program Manager for program and budget assessment

Hazardous Fuels Program

The goal of the hazardous fuels program is to provide a safe, effective, and efficient hazard reduction program to mitigate wildland fire risks to people and their communities, through partnerships with local, tribal, State, and federal governments, and interested stakeholders. In addition these treatments should strive to improve the resiliency and sustainability of wildland ecosystems to benefit and maintain water quality, air quality wildlife and fisheries habitat, and threatened, endangered, or other special status plant and animal species/habitat. All fuels management projects will support land and resource management

Plans. The program uses both wildland-urban interface (2824) fuels funding and Hazardous Fuels (2823) funding.

Collaborative planning and implementation is of the highest priority for funding and includes community-based projects and other agency stakeholder projects. BLM Fire Management Plans (FMP), Risk Assessment Mitigation Strategies (RAMS) and other planning documents (fuels plans, MOUs, etc) should be compatible with, reference or incorporate CWPP strategies, treatments, and activities. Cooperative projects with other Federal agencies should follow the guidance as laid out under IM OF&A 2004-032, dated September 27, 2004.

Funding of Field Office Resource Staff with 2823 or 2824 funding will follow the guidance provided in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (the Red book) chapter 18 page 14 . “It is the responsibility of each Program area (non-fire) to cover its own regular (base eight) salaries and fixed cost”. Identical direction is also stated in the *Prescribed Fire Management Plan* (updated October of 2003) chapter 6, page 31. The only caveat to this situation is: the non- fire person /specialist can charge to the fuels project only for the time the basic tasks require and only for projects when their discipline is a not a benefiting activity. This applies to items such as site assessments, NEPA, and obtaining clearances. Any deviance from this direction will need to be coordinated with the appropriate Regional FMO, and have concurrence by the State Fuels Specialist prior to any expenditure.

Accomplishments of fire and fuels hazard reduction projects will be reported in the Management Information System (MIS), and the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS). All Fuels projects will meet the standards and guidelines as outlined in Chapter 18 of the “Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations”(NFES 2724).

The Hazardous Fuels module of NFPORS has been selected as the national interagency standard for:

- Submitting proposed projects for funding,
- Tracking and managing the program,
- Reporting performance, measuring accomplishments and accountability.

BLM Hazardous Fuels Program Staff Responsibilities

California State Fuels Specialist

- Provide guidance to BLM fire and mitigation/prevention staff about national and state guidance and direction for the WUI (2824) and Non-WUI (2823) fuels reduction programs.
- Provide budget and program information to BLM Fire and Mitigation /Prevention staff
- Participate with the Alliance Clearinghouse Grant Review Committee as a technical expert and provide grant selection requirements/criteria.
- Work with the CA Fire Alliance to develop statewide assistance strategies.
- Monitors the statewide NFPORS data base to ensure national standards are being met and program activities and treatments are reported in a timely manner. Coordinates all aspects of the NFPORS program with the National Office, regions, and field offices.
- Ensures that the MIS Data base reflects accomplishments and spending in accordance with budgetary constraints and NFPORS accomplishments.
- Coordinate with the National Office on all aspects of the fuels reduction programs.
- Functions as the State Stewardship Coordinator with oversight on all aspects of the stewardship program.
- Provides technical assistance on review on all prescribed fire Plans.
- Serves as the BLM representative on the Interagency Smoke Council.

Contacts:

Miriam Morrill, Community Assistance Program Manager (916) 978-4436

Craig Barnes, BLM State Fuels Specialist (916) 978-4433

Julia Lang, Agreement Specialist (916) 978-4527

James Newman, State Fire Planner (916) 978-4635

Regional/District Fire Management Officers:

- Provide guidance to the field in appropriate fuels treatments and landscape strategies.
- Assist coordination efforts between the field and state office program leads.
- Assist in developing regional project and funding strategies.
- Assist with annual RAMS reviews to update workload strategies that correspond to the Community Assistance Program.
- Designates a Regional NFPORS coordinator to ensure that all data entry into NFPORS is correct, timely and compliant with national standards.
- Reviews all prescribed fire plans to ensure that agency standards are being met.

Field Office Fire, Fuels, and Mitigation/Prevention Staff:

- Provide guidance and recommendations to fire safe councils and other local partners on the community assistance program and provide technical assistance on strategic and collaborative fuels treatments and mitigation and prevention activities in the local area.
- Incorporate BLM fuels projects into CWPP or other community planning strategies.
- Each Field Office will have a designated NFPORS coordinator to ensure that all data entry into NFPORS is correct, timely and compliant with national standards.
- Update RAMS reports annually with all fuels projects.

BLM California Fuels and Community Assistance Program Schedule		
January	February	March
California State Office (CSO) Program Managers track MLR in the BPS and MIS system for current FY (Dec-Jan)		
Community Assistance Program Manager incorporates field office recommendations on grant proposals (concept papers) into selection criteria.		
CSO receives the out-year planning target allocation (PTA) from the national office		
Field Offices identify priority projects (fuels and mitigation) and update RAMS reports for out-year planning		
Field Office and or Region enter their out-year targets in NFPORS		
CSO Program Managers review RAMS reports for out-year fuels and mitigation projects		
CSO Program Managers work with field offices to develop funding priorities and strategies (<i>BLM and Community grant projects that are tied to a Community Wildfire Protection Plan receive high priority funding</i>)		
	Fire Alliance Grant Review Committee is assembled to review Community Assistance Grants for the USFS and DOI	
		California Fire Safe Council- Grants Clearinghouse announces grant awards to agencies and applicants
		Community Assistance Program Manager enters grant proposals into NFPORS (prior to April 15)
April-May	June-Aug	Sept-Dec
Grant application packet (agency-specific) due back to Clearinghouse/Fire Safe Council	BLM field offices and state office work with interagency and community partners on strategic projects and activities. Provide input on Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) and incorporate CWPP project priorities into FMPs, RAMS and or MOUs (updated as necessary). Information sharing and developing project priorities to assist with funding strategies.	
CSO enters/updates BLM FO and Grant project priorities in NFPORS (P.O.W.) for out-year (current year+1) by April 15 th .	Update RAMS reports with out-year fuels and mitigation projects and provide to State Leads for review and funding priorities	
Mid-year review of FY fuels and mitigation targets tracked in NFPORS and MIS	Late July/Aug, 3 rd quarter review of current spending and accomplishments, adjustments between states	Late Sept/Oct close-out and review of program targets tracked in NFPORS and MIS
National Office sends workload priorities to WFLC for approval for out-year planning		In October, Community-based project "Concept Papers" due into Grant Clearinghouse for NFP funding from USFS and DOI.
		In November, the CSO provides FOs with Community Assistance grant proposals (concept papers) for review and comment.
		Between Nov and Jan, BLM field offices provide CSO with Community Assistance grant proposal comments and recommendations
		In Nov, the CA Fire Safe Council provides grant writing workshops to applicants

NFPORS and MIS updated and adjusted as necessary

Guidance and References for BLM Collaborative Fire Protection Planning

Developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans. The Healthy Forests Initiative and Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/hfi/field-guide/web/page15.php>

July 9, 2004. Memo: *Community Wildfire Protection Plans and the Federal Emergency Management Agency Local Mitigation Plans* (Can't find on the web, but have an electronic)

May 2004. *Field Guide for Implementing Hazardous Fuel Reduction, Using the Healthy Forest Initiative and Healthy Forests Restoration Act*. Section: Setting Priorities and Collaborating.

March 2004. Handbook: *Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan*

<http://www.safnet.org/policyandpress/cwpphandbook.pdf>

July 23, 2003. *Wildland Fire Management Planning and Workload for Fiscal Years 2003-2005* (IB No. OF&A-2003-059) and July 11, 2003. *Interim Guidance for Completion of Fire Management Plan Revisions Using the Interagency Template* (IM No. OF&A 2003-038). See sections on Community Protection/Community Assistance and Collaboration.

May, 2003. *Risk Assessment & Mitigation Strategies* (RAMS) (IM No.CA-2003-040)

January, 2003. MOU: *The Development of a Collaborative Fuels Treatment Program*

<http://www.fireplan.gov/reports/9-21-en.pdf>

May 2002. Handbook: *A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan*.

http://www.westgov.org/wga/initiatives/fire/implem_plan.pdf

March 20, 2002. Memo: *Fuel Treatment Program and Collaborative Process*

<http://www.fireplan.gov/reports/10-22-en.pdf>

Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies Overview and other Guidance

http://www.nifc.blm.gov/nsdu/fire_planning/rams/