

# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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EMAIL TRANSMISSION – 3/25/2014  
Instruction Memorandum No. MT-2014-040  
Expires: 09/30/2019

To: Montana Dakotas Leadership  
Attention: Fuels Specialists, Mitigation/Education Leads, and Fire Management

From: State Director

Subject: Statewide Guidance on Fire and Fuels Funded Expiring Assistance Agreement Funds

**Program Areas:** Hazardous Fuels and Community Assistance

**Purpose:** This Instruction Memorandum (IM) issues statewide guidance on assistance agreement funds when agreements expire.

**Background:** Since the 2000 National Fire Plan and the goal of promoting community assistance the Bureau of Land Management has been working with communities and cooperators on hazardous fuels mitigation. Assistance agreements are made with cooperators and communities for funding of projects associated with mitigation, education, and hazardous fuels removal in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). These agreements are five-year agreements. Funds may be added to an agreement anytime during the five years that an agreement is open. After five years, any remaining funds are returned to the activity from which the funds came from, and then redistributed.

**Policy/Action:** In January 2011, the Montana/Dakotas Budget Team adopted a budget strategy for the distribution of fuel's project funds to the district/field office. Specific guidance on the remaining funds with expiring Assistance Agreements was not addressed. When an assistance agreement expires, the process of redistribution of the remaining funds is as follows:

1. If the cooperator who held the agreement is in good standing and reapplies for all or some of the remaining funds, with concurrence from the District Manager (or Billings Field Office Manager), those funds would be reallocated into a new agreement with the same cooperator.
2. If the cooperator who held the agreement does not submit for a new agreement or a District (or Billings Field Office) wishes to not fund or only partially fund the cooperator, then the remaining funds will be reallocated based on statewide priorities. The fuels and mitigation/education specialists from the Montana/Dakotas Program will work together to make a recommendation for reallocation of the remaining funds. Priorities will be based on the original intent of the funds, additional local assistance agreement requests, statewide assistance agreements requests, and projects which benefit communities where the Bureau of Land Management does the work. District Managers (Billings Field Office Manager included) will then approve or redistribute the allocation recommendations (via email or conference call).

Although the majority of funding for assistance agreements comes from hazardous fuels funding (LF3100), some previous years funding has come from pre-suppression funds (LF10 or LF5710) and trespass funds (L5320). Any pre-suppression funds or trespass funds that remain when an agreement expires will follow step 1 outlined above or will be returned to those activities for distribution through established processes.

If a cooperator is not fully funded in a new agreement, managers will need to ensure that cooperators are provided information as to the reasons why so as to maintain positive relationships that have been built with the community assistance program.

**Timeframe:** This direction is effective immediately. Assistance agreements expire throughout each year and may require allocation of funds periodically.

**Budget Impact:** None.

**Contact:** If you have any questions about this guidance or implementation procedures issues, please contact Mike Dannenberg, Community Assistance/ Mitigation/ Education Lead, at 406-896-2913.

Signed By:  
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For Jamie E. Connell  
State Director

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