

Request for Proposals (RFP) – Western Wildland Urban Interface Grant Program

July 2, 2015

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation is now accepting applications for the 2016 Western Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Grant Program.

Offered by the office of the Montana State Forester in partnership with USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry, the Western WUI Grant Program offers financial assistance to mitigate risk from wildland fire to residents living in and around forested areas of 22 western states and territories. Funds are awarded through a competitive process for projects addressing five key areas: hazardous fuel reduction, restoring resilient landscapes, information and education, assessment and planning, and monitoring through community and landowner action.

Application Submission

Applicants must complete the attached Western WUI grant application, in accordance with the guidelines in the attached document “Criteria and Instructions to States” and additional special instructions included in this document. The application and instructions may also be viewed at <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry/forestry-assistance/forest-stewardship/western-wildland-urban-interface-grant-program>. The 2016 application may have been altered from previous versions - **please be sure to use the 2016 form!**

Application due date: 5pm on August 10, 2015

Submit applications electronically to nfpgrants@mt.gov

Application Review and Selection Process

Applications will be scored and ranked by a statewide selection committee, based on criteria as defined by the Western States Fire Managers (see attached Criteria and Instructions to States) and by a state-specific point system which allows for stratification of applications. **Please read the Criteria and Instructions to States completely and carefully. In addition, please pay close attention to the following special instructions from the state scoring committee:**

Special instructions:

- 1. NEW IN 2016 – STEWARDSHIP PLANS REQUIRED FOR ALL COST-SHARE BENEFICIARIES!** Recipients of FY2016 Western WUI grants will be required to develop a basic forest stewardship plan for each property owner (beneficiary) receiving cost-share assistance through this program. **Proposals should include a statement of intent to develop plans in Box 11, Project Sustainability.** Plans must include the following basic criteria:
 - Document authorship.
 - Clearly state landowner objectives.
 - Describe current and desired forest condition.
 - Include practices and activities aimed at reaching the desired forest condition or condition class.

- Document a feasible strategy and timeline for practice and activity implementation.
- Describe any suggested monitoring activities to be done by the forester or landowner.
- Be developed for a specified management period that adequately allows for progress with the landowner's long term stewardship objectives.

Plans are not intended to be extremely lengthy or technical and may be crafted through a variety of channels. They are intended to take the place of treatment monitoring agreements. Please contact the DNRC Stewardship Program Manager if you require more clarification on plan components.

2. DO NOT alter the application form in any way. It is strongly recommended that applicants use Adobe Reader and not Adobe Acrobat to complete the form, as Adobe Reader only permits completion of fillable form boxes. Alterations to the application form will result in immediate disqualification.
3. Total maximum federal award is \$300,000. DNRC will retain 10% for program management and administrative costs; therefore, the maximum grant request for this application is \$270,000.
4. The WUI grant program requires a match of 1:1 federal to non-federal funds, which DNRC will meet. DNRC also requires an additional match of 3:1 federal to non-federal funds from project partners. For instance, a grant request of \$270,000 on this application will require a match of \$90,000 from the applicant. Applicants must describe their sources of match in Box 9, Project Collaboration.
5. The national instructions ask applicants to address their proposal's relationship to State Forest Action Plans or CWPPs (Box 6). However, the state scoring committee will require applicants to address their proposal's relationship to *both*. The Montana State Forest Action Plan, known as the Montana Statewide Forest Resource Strategy, can be found here: <http://forestactionplans.org/states/montana>. Applicants are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with this document and refer to it in throughout preparation of their grant proposal.
6. Applicants who submit more than one project proposal must prioritize proposals in order of most important to least important. Prioritization of proposals will only be taken into consideration in the event of a tie between multiple proposals. Priority listings may be communicated to the state scoring committee via email at the time of application submission.

Scoring Timeline: The state scoring committee will determine which proposals move on to the western regional scoring process by August 21st, 2015. Applicants will be notified shortly thereafter whether their application will move on for further consideration at the regional level and will work with the program manager to make additional edits necessary for strong performance at the regional level. Regional scoring will take place in late September to early October of 2015. Applicants will be notified of the outcome following approval from the Council of Western State Foresters in December of 2015. Funding will be awarded to successful applicants in August of 2016.

For questions or comments on the application process, scoring and ranking system, or Western WUI Grant Program in general, please contact the program manager.

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