

Fire Rehab Resources List

Established by the Multi-agency Cooperation Team
July 2012

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service has two financial assistance programs that may be used on private, state, and tribal land following fire damages.

Landowners should contact their local USDA Service Center or Conservation District office for more information.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program, EQIP

NRCS offers financial assistance to agricultural producers through EQIP. Financial assistance is available to assist landowners with deferred grazing after the fire, weed control, re-seeding, and in some cases fencing. Additional funding may also be available to address longer-term restoration activities. Agricultural producers and forest landowners can apply for EQIP financial assistance at any time. Applications are competitively ranked periodically.

Emergency Watershed Protection Program, EWP

EWP is available to local sponsors, such as a county government or conservation district, to aid in recovery work. NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to install measures that will reduce post-fire damage. The measures are intended to reduce threats to life or property, retard runoff, restore capacity of waterways, prevent flooding and/or soil erosion, and reduce damage from sediment and debris. The removal of debris deposited by the disaster that is a health or safety hazard can be a part of such measures as well. Applications must be made to NRCS within 60 days of the disaster.

Contact:

Kris Berg
Program Specialist
Bozeman, MT
(406)587-6849

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

When BLM lands are impacted by wildfire the agency uses an interdisciplinary (ID) team approach to evaluate threats to life, property, natural and cultural resources, and infrastructure. These ID teams document threats, as well as potential treatments and monitoring, in Emergency Stabilization (ES) and Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) plans. ES funds are available immediately after the fire for projects that mitigate imminent threats to life or property (treatments that reduce the likelihood, magnitude, and/or consequence of an events occurrence). Allowable treatments include soil and slope stabilization, flood hazard reduction, stream channel stabilization, hazard tree removal, and the repair or replacement of infrastructure (to maintain emergency access and egress). BAR projects such as fence replacement and noxious weed control are usually available the following spring. Since many of the areas we're striving to protect are on down slope private lands, these plans can be very helpful to adjacent landowners.

Contact:

For more information or assistance, contact your local BLM office (in Billings, Butte, Dillon, Glasgow, Great Falls, Havre, Lewistown, Malta, Miles City, or Missoula) or call Mike Philbin at the Montana State BLM Office at: (406) 896-5041.

Ash Creek Fire – Local Contact:

Todd Yeager at the BLM Miles City Field Office (406) 233-2837

Forest Service (FS)

Two BAER Teams are now established, the first on the Ash Creek Fire, Custer National Forest and the second on the Pony Fire, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. BAER assessments and funding requests should be completed on the Ash Creek Fire, by July 23 and days and July 18 on the Pony Fire. Both teams are coordinating with appropriate sister agencies (NRCS, Montana DNRC, BLM, and BIA). Mark Story, retired Gallatin N. F. Hydrologist leads the Ash Team and Craig Kendall, Watershed Program Manager on the Flathead leads the Pony Team. Funding approval should be within 5 working days on the Ash Creek Fire and 3 working days on the Pony Fire.

The Ash creek Fire values at risk are primarily focused on archeological site protection and stabilization of the existing road network. The NRCS in coordination with the Custer National Forest has buried a total of 127 cattle at two locations to protect public health.

The Pony Fire values at risk are primarily focused on reducing the spread of noxious weeds into the burned area.

Burned area severity maps will be made available for distribution as soon as they are finalized. There are no significant risks to homes of downstream flooding identified at this time on either fire. There may be several downstream stream road crossings that are at risk but analysis is not yet complete.

Long Term Rehabilitation and Restoration Needs

A long term burned fencing rehabilitation and restoration need has been recognized on these fires. In total, several hundred miles of fencing has been destroyed. BAER policies do not allow for general replacement of fencing (FSM 2523.2.2.b & c). It is anticipated that the need to replace this fencing will be raised with the Congressional Delegation and State Governor. At present there are no know funds available sufficient to address this need.

Contacts:

Bruce Sims – Regional BAER Coordinator
406-329-3447

Pony Fire - Peri Suenram – Acting District Ranger, Jefferson Ranger District, Whitehall, MT
406-287-3223

Ash Creek, Taylor, and Boyce Fires - Walt Allen – District Ranger, Ashland Ranger District, Ashland, MT 406-784-2334

Montana Conservation Corp (MCC)

The Montana Conservation Corps is a statewide nonprofit that provides crews to address a variety environmental needs throughout the region. Crews can complete manual labor projects such as the removal, repair or installation of fencing, removal of hazard trees, re-planting trees and shrubs, erosion control, streambank restoration and stabilization or trail rehabilitation. As an AmeriCorps program, crews can work for governmental or other nonprofit entities or on private lands when the project is for the ‘public good’. But, in those cases, the project must have a public entity sponsor such as the Bureau of Land Management, DNRC or a Conservation District.

MCC provides 6-7 person crews of young adults who come self-contained with crew leaders, a vehicle, hand tools, and the ability to camp out in all weather conditions. Sponsor must provide any specialized tools or equipment and in some cases may need to provide some training and instruction. Crews are covered by workers compensation and liability insurance. Crew have flexible schedules, working hitches from 4 to 40 days as the project dictates and are available from mid-March through the end of October. Crew costs are \$4300/crew week this year and will be \$4500/crew week in 2013.

Please contact our state office in Bozeman at 406.587.4475 for more information.

Contact:

Lee Gault" <lee@mtcorps.org
Cell 406-949-4618

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)

DNRC Forestry Assistance does support a wildfire rehab webpage at <http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/Forestry/Assistance/FireRehab/default.asp> . This will take you directly to the rehab page for the Multi Agency Wildfire Rehab group. <http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry> will get you close then click on wildfire rehabilitation information to get to the same place.

Contact:

Rob Ethridge
406-542-4303
rethridge@mt.gov

DNRC has available \$125,000 to be used for fire rehab efforts, including erosion control and water quality work. The emphasis is for local conservation districts to apply for the grant dollars and to have the grants/projects administered locally.

Contact:

Ray Beck
406-444-6671
rbeck@mt.gov

Montana Department of Agriculture

The Noxious Weed Emergency Grant program will provide cost-share funding from the Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant program and the USDA Forest Service Cooperative Assistance program for local cooperative weed management areas affected by wildfires. All projects must be in areas associated with a **Named Fire** and should focus on monitoring and eliminating the spread of existing or newly introduced noxious weed infestations and monitoring. It can also provide for re-vegetation efforts to help in the recovery process. Dept. of Ag. can also provide technical assistance on weed related issues.

Contacts:

Kim Johnson at 406-438-1964 or 406-444-1517 or by email at kijohnson@mt.gov
Dave Burch at 406-438-2558 or 406-444-3140 or by email at dburch@mt.gov.

The Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage program can also assist with finding certified forage for livestock and certified straw products for mulch and other re-vegetation efforts. Contact Jeremy Seidlitz by calling 406-438-1313 or 406-652-2823 or by email at jseidlitz@mt.gov.

Montana also has a Hay Hotline that producers can list hay for sale or pasture for rent and they can also find hay or available pasture. The Hay Hotline webpage is, <http://agr.mt.gov/agr/Producer/HayHotline/> or contact: **Montana Department of Agriculture** at (406) 444-2402 Fax: (406) 444-9442 E-mail: <mailto://agr@mt.gov>.

USDA Montana Farm Service Agency (FSA)

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides assistance for natural disaster losses, resulting from drought, flood, fire, freeze, tornadoes, pest infestation, and other calamities. FSA programs are administered in the 48 FSA county offices located in communities across Montana.

Loans for losses to crops, trees, livestock, farm land and farm property:

The **Emergency Loan Program** provides low-interest 2.25 percent loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters, or quarantine. A secretarial, presidential or FSA administrator's disaster declaration is required.

The **Disaster Debt Set-Aside Program** provides producers who have existing direct loans with FSA who are unable to make the scheduled payments to move up to one full year's payment to the end of the loan. Assistance is available in counties, or contiguous counties, who have been designated as emergencies by the President, Secretary or FSA Administrator.

Farm land damage:

The **Emergency Conservation Program** (ECP) provides assistance to producers if their land was damaged by a natural disaster and needs conservation practices. Examples include removing debris; restoring fences and conservation structures; and providing water for livestock in drought situations.

Crop Losses:

The **Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** provides assistance for crop losses when federal crop insurance is not available. A policy must be purchased by sales closing date.

Tree Losses:

The **Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP)** provides payments to eligible owners of nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) land in order to carry out emergency measures to restore land damaged by a natural disaster.

Livestock and Grazing Losses:

The **Haying and Grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** acres allows producers to hay or graze CRP acreage during an emergency. With prior approval of FSA, emergency haying and grazing of CRP acreage may be authorized to provide relief to livestock producers in areas affected by a severe drought. A CRP payment reduction will apply.

Emergency Use of CRP:

In cases of wildfire/flood, livestock producers in the affected county may get approval to temporarily use CRP in order to protect their livestock. Prior approval is required.

Congress is currently working on the next Farm Bill. FSA county offices administer FSA programs authorized under the federal 2008 Farm Bill of which five disaster programs are only authorized for natural disasters occurring prior to Sept. 30, 2011. These five disaster programs are:

- Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)
- Livestock Forage Program (LFP)

- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)
- **The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Signup for the 2011 crop year is expected to occur this fall/winter of 2012 for the SURE program.**

RECORD KEEPING:

While we do not know what the program requirements will be for any new disaster programs in the new Farm Bill, FSA encourages agricultural producers with 2012 losses to keep records, including photos of dead livestock, receipts, inventories, description of cause of loss, dates of loss, etc. in anticipation of future disaster programs.

CONTACT:

For more information about FSA programs contact your local county FSA Office and/or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/mt. 406-587-6872