

Chapter 5: Treatment Recommendations

5 Overview

In this chapter, you will find the administration and implementation strategy, including prioritization of mitigation activities, possible mitigation activities, WUI safety and policy activities, people and structures activities, infrastructure activities, resource and capability enhancements, and regional land management recommendations.

5.1 Administration and Implementation Strategy

Critical to the implementation of this Wildfire Mitigation Plan will be the identification of and implementation of, an integrated schedule of treatments targeted at preventing death, structure and infrastructure damage, and unique ecosystems damage. Since there are many land management agencies and thousands of private landowners in Idaho County, it is reasonable to expect that differing schedules of adoption will be made and varying degrees of compliance will be observed across all ownerships.

Idaho County encourages the philosophy of disaster prevention in normal day-to-day operations. By implementing plan activities through existing programs and resources, the cost of mitigation is often a small portion of the overall cost of a project's design or program.

The federal land management agencies in Idaho County, specifically the USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management, participated in this planning process and have contributed to its development. Where available, their schedule of land treatments have been considered in this planning process to better facilitate a correlation between their identified planning efforts and the efforts of Idaho County.

All risk assessments were made based on the conditions existing during 2004 and 2005, thus, the recommendations in this section have been made in light of those conditions. However, the components of risk and the preparedness of the county's resources are not static. It will be necessary to fine-tune this plan's recommendations annually to adjust for changes in the components of risk, population density changes, infrastructure modifications, and other factors.

As part of the policy of Idaho County in relation to this planning document, this entire *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan* should be reviewed annually at a special meeting of the Idaho County Commissioners, open to the public and involving all municipalities and jurisdictions, where action items, priorities, budgets, and modifications can be made or confirmed. It is the responsibility of the County Commissioners Office through the County Disaster Manager to organize an annual meeting of the *Fire Mitigation Working Group* to review existing projects, add new ones, and discuss new wildfire related issues in the county. A written review of the plan should be prepared (or arranged) by the Chairman of the County Commissioners, detailing plans for the year's activities, and made available to the general public ahead of the meeting (in accord with the Idaho Open Public Meeting Laws). Amendments to the plan should be detailed at this meeting, documented, and attached to the formal plan as an amendment to the Wildfire Mitigation Plan. Re-evaluation of this plan should be made on the fifth anniversary of its acceptance, and every five-year period following.

The planning committee convened to review the WUI Wildfire Mitigation Plan in 2007 and again in 2009 to provide a status report for each of the projects listed below, to identify new projects, and to discuss relevant topics to Idaho County wildfire mitigation. Several of the recommendations from the 2005 Plan and the 2007 Addendum have been completed, some are still on-going, and some have yet to begin. The following tables reflect the status of each project.

5.2 Prioritization of Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan Activities

Prioritization of projects will occur at the county, city, agency, and private levels. Differing prioritization processes will occur, however, the county and cities will adopt the following prioritization process, as indicated through the adoption of this plan by each municipality.

The prioritization process will include a special emphasis on cost-benefit analysis review. The process will reflect a key component in funding decision is a determination that the project will provide an equivalent or more in benefits over the life of the project when compared with the costs. County and local jurisdictions will administer project, with overall coordination provided by the County Disaster Management Coordinator.

County Commissioners and the elected officials of all jurisdictions will evaluate opportunities and establish their own unique priorities to accomplish mitigation activities where existing funds and resources are available and there is community interest in implementing mitigation measures. If no federal funding is used in these situations, the prioritization process may be less formal. Often the types of projects that the County can afford to do on their own are in relation to improved codes and standards, departmental planning and preparedness, and education. These types of projects may not meet the traditional project model, selection criteria, and benefit-cost model. The County will consider all pre-disaster mitigation proposals brought before the County Commissioners by department heads, city officials, fire districts, and local civic groups.

When federal or state funding is available for hazard mitigation, there are usually requirements that establish a rigorous benefit-cost analysis as a guiding criterion in establishing project priorities. The County will understand the basic federal grant program criteria which will drive the identification, selection, and funding of the most competitive and worthy mitigation projects. FEMA's three grant programs (the post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the pre-disaster Flood Mitigation Assistance, and the pre-disaster Mitigation grant programs) that offer federal mitigation funding to state and local governments all include the benefit-cost and repetitive loss selection criteria.

The prioritization of projects will occur annually and be facilitated by the County Disaster Management Coordinator and the County Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator to include the County Commissioner's Office, City Mayors and Councils, Fire District Chiefs and Commissioners, agency representatives (USDA Forest Service, USDI Bureau of Land Management, State Lands, etc.) and the Nez Perce Tribe. The prioritization of projects will be based on the selection of projects that create a balanced approach to pre-disaster mitigation and recognize the hierarchy of treatment priorities, as follows (highest first):

- People and Structures
- Infrastructure
- Local and Regional Economy
- Traditional Way of Life
- Ecosystems

PRIORITIZATION METHOD

The planning committee uses a numerical scoring system to prioritize projects. This prioritization serves as a guide for the county when developing mitigation activities. This project prioritization scheme has been designed to rank projects on a case-by-case basis. In many cases, a very good project in a lower priority category could outrank a mediocre project in a higher priority. The County mitigation program does not want to restrict funding to only those projects that meet the high priorities because what may be a high priority for a specific community may not be a high priority at the county level. Regardless, the

project may be just what the community needs to mitigate disaster. The flexibility to fund a variety of diverse projects based on varying reasons and criteria is a necessity for a functional mitigation program at the County and community level.

To implement this “case-by-case” concept, the planning committee has developed a more detailed process for evaluating and prioritizing projects. Any type of project, whether county or site specific, will be prioritized in this more formal manner.

To prioritize projects, a general scoring system has been developed. This prioritization scheme has been used in statewide all hazard mitigations plans. These factors range from cost-benefit ratios, to details on the hazard being mitigated, to environmental impacts.

Since planning projects (i.e. hazardous fuel treatments) are somewhat different from non-planning projects (i.e. preparedness) when it comes to reviewing them, different criteria will be considered, depending on the type of project.

The factors for the non-planning projects include:

- Cost/Benefit
- Population Benefit
- Property Benefit
- Economic Benefit
- Project Feasibility (environmentally, politically, socially)
- Hazard Magnitude/Frequency
- Potential for repetitive loss reduction
- Potential to mitigate hazards to future development
- Potential project effectiveness and sustainability

The factors for the planning projects include:

- Cost/Benefit
- Vulnerability of the community or communities
- Potential for repetitive loss reduction
- Potential to mitigate hazards to future development

Since certain factors are considered more critical than others are, two ranking scales have been developed. A scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the best, has been used for cost, population benefit, property benefit, economic benefit, and vulnerability of the community. Project feasibility, hazard magnitude/frequency, potential for repetitive loss reduction, potential to mitigate hazards to future development, and potential project effectiveness and sustainability are all rated on a 1 to 5 scale, with five being the best. The highest possible score for a non-planning project is 65 and for a planning project is 30.

The guidelines for ranking each factor follow.

Benefit / Cost

The analysis process will include summaries as appropriate for each project, but will include benefit/cost analysis results. Projects with a negative benefit/cost analysis result will be ranked as a zero. Projects with a positive Benefit/Cost analysis will receive a score equal to the projects Benefit/Cost Analysis results divided by 10. Therefore, a project with a Benefit/Cost ratio of 50:1 would receive five points; a project with a Benefit/Cost ratio of 100:1 (or higher) would receive the maximum points of ten.

Population Benefit

Population Benefit relates to the ability of the project to prevent the loss of life or injuries. A ranking of 10 has the potential to impact over 3,000 people. A ranking of five has the potential to impact 100 people, and a ranking of one will not impact the population. In a number of cases, a project may not

directly provide population benefits, but may lead to actions that do, such as in the case of a study. Those projects will not receive as high of a rating as one that directly affects the population, but should not be considered to have no population benefit.

Property Benefit

Property Benefit relates to the prevention of physical losses to structures, infrastructure, and personal property. These losses can be attributed to potential dollar losses. Similar to cost, a ranking of 10 has the potential to save over \$1,000,000 in losses, a ranking of five has the potential to save roughly \$100,000 in losses, and a ranking of one only has the potential to save less than \$100 in losses. In a number of cases, a project may not directly provide property benefits, but may lead to actions that do, such as in the case of a study. Those projects will not receive as high of a rating as one that directly affects property, but should not be considered to have no property benefit.

Economic Benefit

Economic Benefit is related to the savings from mitigation to the economy. This benefit includes reduction of losses in revenues, jobs, and facility shut downs. Since this benefit can be difficult to evaluate, a ranking of 10 would prevent a total economic collapse, a ranking of five could prevent losses to about half the economy, and a ranking of one would not prevent any economic losses. In a number of cases, a project may not directly provide economic benefits, but may lead to actions that do, such as in the case of a study. Those projects will not receive as high of a rating as one that directly affects the economy, but should not be considered to have no economic benefit.

Vulnerability of the Community

For planning projects, the vulnerability of the community is considered. A community that has a high vulnerability with respect to other jurisdictions to the hazard or hazards being studied or planned for will receive a higher score. To promote planning participation by the smaller or less vulnerable communities in the state, the score will be based on the other communities being considered for planning grants. A community that is the most vulnerable will receive a score of 10, and one that is the least, a score of 1.

Project Feasibility (Environmental, Political and Social)

Project Feasibility relates to the likelihood that such a project could be completed. Projects with low feasibility would include projects with significant environmental concerns or public opposition. A project with high feasibility has public and political support without environmental concerns. Those projects with very high feasibility would receive a ranking of five and those with very low would receive a ranking of one.

Hazard Magnitude/Frequency

The Hazard Magnitude/Frequency rating is a combination of the recurrence period and magnitude of a hazard. The severity of the hazard being mitigated and the frequency of that event must both be considered. For example, a project mitigating a 10-year event that causes significant damage would receive a higher rating than one that mitigates a 500-year event that causes minimal damage. For a ranking of five, the project mitigates a high frequency, high magnitude event. A one ranking is for a low frequency, low magnitude event. Note that only the damages being mitigated should be considered here, not the entire losses from that event.

Potential for Repetitive Loss Reduction

Those projects that mitigate repetitive losses receive priority consideration here. Common sense dictates that losses that occur frequently will continue to do so until the hazard is mitigated. Projects that will reduce losses that have occurred more than three times receive a rating of five. Those that do not address repetitive losses receive a rating of one. Proposed actions that can have a direct impact on the vulnerability of future development are given additional consideration. If hazards can be mitigated on the

onset of the development, the County will be less vulnerable in the future. Projects that will have a significant effect on all future development receive a rating of five. Those that do not affect development should receive a rating of one.

Potential Project Effectiveness and Sustainability

Two important aspects of all projects are effectiveness and sustainability. For a project to be worthwhile, it needs to be effective and actually mitigate the hazard. A project that is questionable in its effectiveness will score lower in this category. Sustainability is the ability for the project to be maintained. Can the project sustain itself after grant funding is spent? Is maintenance required? If so, are or will the resources be in place to maintain the project. An action that is highly effective and sustainable will receive a ranking of five. A project with effectiveness that is highly questionable and not easily sustained should receive a ranking of one.

Final Ranking

Upon ranking a project in each of these categories, a total score can be derived by adding together each of the scores. The project can then be ranked high, medium, or low based on the following non-planning project thresholds.

- **High:** 40-65
- **Medium:** 25-39
- **Low:** 9-25

5.3 Identification of High Risk Areas and Potential Projects

During the planning committee meetings, a number of areas were identified as being at high risk of wildfire. The following areas have been identified on maps to be included in the plan as proposed treatment areas.

5.3.1 Home Defensible Space Projects

The planning committee identified the following areas specifically as needing fuels treatments around homes. Two different categories of treatment are recommended, proposed defensible space/fuels mitigation treatment and homeowner education and weeds eradication.

These projects could consist of individual home site assessments conducted by professionals to identify needed actions to help homeowners prepare for wildland fires. The assessments generally benefit the homeowner by providing specific wildfire information and preventative measures that they can take to improve the safety of their homes and families. If the homeowner agrees to these recommendations, a professional contractor would then complete the defensible space project. Individual home projects vary, but usually consist of brush clearing, very selective tree removal, pruning, slash removal, and weed eradication. These projects along are included in Table B-2 in *Appendix 2009* in this Volume.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE/FUELS MITIGATION TREATMENT

Powell/Lolo Pass Area

- Many structures in this area need defensible space/ fuel mitigation treatments. Areas include State Fish Hatchery, State Highway Department facility, and USDA Forest Service Ranger Station.

Kooskia/Stites Area

- Timbered areas next to town
- Clear Creek breaks, north aspect

- Upper Clear Creek area
- Button Bench east aspect on edge of Kamiah Fire District
- Slopes along Highway 12
- Kooskia area, high habitation areas such as subdivisions
- Harpster, west of river
- Harris Ridge
- Kidder Ridge
- Stites Canyon
- Rabbit Creek
- Button Beach

Grangeville Area

- Old Fish Hatchery area
- Harpster Grade/Mount Idaho Grade Loop
- Old White Bird Grade Subdivisions
- Happy Hollow/Grangeville-Salmon Road
- Cove Road area

Burgdorf/Warren Area

- Burgdorf town site
- Warren town site
- Secesh and other homes along Warren Wagon Road

Harpster Area

- Urban interface areas west of Harpster to USDA Forest Service boundary south.
- Wall Creek area
- Sally Ann Creek/Silt Creek Estates
- Sears Creek Area

Syringa

- High value homes along Highway 12 in the Wild and Scenic River Corridor.
- Sutter Creek (Milepost 79 to Syringa).

Ridge Runner Fire Department Area

- Leitch Creek Subdivision
- Big Cedar/Crane Hill Area
- Big Horse Canyon/The Horn

HOMEOWNER EDUCATION AND WEEDS ERADICATION

White Bird Area

- Twin Rivers Subdivision

5.3.2 Road Improvement and Fuels Treatment Projects

The following are specific roadways identified by the planning committee as needing construction improvements and hazardous fuels treatments in the timbered areas adjacent to the road corridor. These projects would create a more fire resistant buffer, which not only helps slow a wildfire, but also helps keep the ingress/egress routes open for emergency vehicles and evacuation purposes.

These projects are highly variable, but usually consist of thinning to a predetermined distance above and below the road, pruning, and clearing brush and other ladder fuels. Construction improvements generally include widening the drivable surface, creating turnouts, upgrading bridges and cattle guards, and enhancing the surface. These projects are included in Table B.2 in *Appendix 2009* in this Volume.

Kamiah Area

- Woodland Grade
- Adams Grade
- Tom Taha Grade
- Beaver Slide

Grangeville Area

- Harpster Grade/Mount Idaho Grade Loop
- Cove Road
- Butcher Creek

Burgdorf/Warren Area

- French Creek Road (Forest Road 246)
- Warren Wagon Road from Burgdorf to Warren

Kooskia Area

- Kidder Ridge Road
- Harris Ridge Road
- Sutter Creek Road
- Wilson Road
- Red Fir Road
- Trenary Road
- Crane Hill Road
- Big Cedar Road
- Long Bluff Road
- Mulledy Road
- Clear Creek Road
- Sally Ann Creek Road
- Leitch Creek Road

Woodland Area

- Pardee Corner Roads, adjacent to USDI Bureau of Land Management lands qualify for partnership funds
- Carrot Ridge Road (used in past as alternate emergency bypass route)

Elk City Area

- State Highway 14 from Elk City to Mount Idaho
- Forest Road 1858 from Newsome to Highway 14
- Crooked River Road from Highway 14 to Orogrande
- Dixie Road from Elk City to Dixie
- Red River Road from Dixie Road to Red River Hot Springs
- Jack Mountain Road from Dixie Road through Big Mallard Creek Road

5.3.3 Elk City Region

The committee participants felt strongly that the proposed USDI Bureau of Land Management and USDA Forest Service projects detailed in Sections 5.9 and B.5 of Appendix 2009 were critical to their ability to sustain wildfire defense activities in the Elk City region. They expressed their overwhelming support for those projects to be implemented. The following summarizes their support for a variety of projects.

- High priority support for the Eastside Township project by the USDI Bureau of Land Management;
- High priority support for the Whiskey South II project by the USDI Bureau of Land Management;
- High priority support for the Transportation Corridors project by the USDI Bureau of Land Management;
- High priority support for the American and Crooked River project by the USDA Forest Service;
- High priority support for the Red Pines project by the USDA Forest Service; and
- High priority support for the Dixie Fuelbreak project by the USDA Forest Service.

Residents identified the need for a Forest Service fuel treatment project in the areas surrounding Dixie to build on the treatments completed by the Forest Service and area residents. This would be a mechanical treatment extending beyond the community borders to the ridge tops. These areas were marked on maps and will be included in the mapping section of the plan.

Residents also identified another Forest Service proposed treatment area northwest of Elk City along the Old Wagon Trail Road in the direction of Newsome. This area was identified as part of the Elk City Watershed and is currently experiencing mountain pine beetle losses. Mechanical treatments in this area combined with prescribed burning to achieve wildfire resilience and forest health was identified as a need by the community.

An area to the east and north of the Elk City Township that is currently a part of the roadless area was identified by residents, but not included as treatment area by the Forest Service. This region extends to the edge of the recent Slims Fire. Participants felt that mechanical treatments, which tie the recent burn edge to other treatments adjacent to the Elk City Township, are needed to provide protection in the case of a wildfire.

5.4 ***Wildfire Mitigation Activities Applicable to all Communities***

There are three basic opportunities for reducing the loss of homes and lives to fires. Although there are many single actions that can be taken, in general, mitigation activities can be lumped into one of the following categories:

- ***Prevention***
- ***Education***
- ***Readiness***

Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities. Risks and uncertainties relating to fire management activities must be understood, analyzed, communicated, and managed as they relate to the cost of either doing or not doing an activity. Net gains to the public benefit will be an important component of decisions. Maintaining private property rights will continue to be one of the guiding principles of this plan's implementation.

PREVENTION

Prevention Campaigns

The safest, easiest, and most economical way to mitigate unwanted fires is to stop them before they start. Generally, prevention actions attempt to prevent human-caused fires. Campaigns designed to reduce the number and sources of ignitions can be quite effective. Prevention campaigns can take many forms. Traditional “Smokey Bear” type campaigns that spread the message passively through signage can be quite effective. Comprehensible signs that remind folks of the dangers of careless use of fireworks, burning when windy and leaving unattended campfires can be quite effective. The low cost associated with posting of a few signs is inconsequential compared to the potential cost of fighting a fire.

Slightly more active prevention techniques may involve mass media, such as radio or the local newspaper. Fire districts in other counties have contributed to the reduction in human-caused ignitions by running a weekly “run blotter,” similar to a police blotter, each week in the paper. The blotter briefly describes the runs of the week and is followed by a weekly “tip of the week” to reduce the threat from wildland and structure fires. The federal government has been a champion of prevention, and could provide ideas for such tips. When fire conditions become high, brief public service messages could warn of the hazards of misuse of fire or any other incendiary devices. Such a campaign would require coordination and cooperation with local media outlets. However, the effort is likely to be worth the efforts, costs, and risks associated with fighting unwanted fires.

A five county prevention Coop was formed in 2009 to plan and implement a coordinated prevention effort in the central Idaho area. The prevention coop consists of City, State, and Federal Agencies, the Nez Perce Tribe and rural fire districts to provide uniformity in the prevention message.

Fire Reporting

Fires cannot be suppressed until they are detected and reported. As the number and popularity of cellular phones has increased, expansion of the “#FIRE” program throughout Idaho may provide an effective means for turning the passing motorist into a detection resource. Additionally, the Forest Service has several mountain-top lookouts posted strategically around the County to help detect fires at an early stage. Several federal and state agencies also fly aerial detection flights, which generally cover more than their respective jurisdictions.

Burn Permits

The issues associated with debris burning during certain times of the year are difficult to negotiate and enforce. However, there are significant risks associated with the use of fire adjacent to expanses of flammable vegetation under certain scenarios. Fire departments typically observe the State of Idaho closed fire season between May 10 and October 20. During this time, an individual seeking to conduct any type of burn shall obtain a permit, which prescribes the conditions under which the burn can be conducted and the resources that need to be on hand to suppress the fire from a State of Idaho fire warden. Although this is a statewide regulation, compliance and enforcement has been variable between fire districts. Tackling this issue is difficult. Typically, the duty falls to the chief within whichever fire protection district the burning is planned. However, this leads to an increased burden on the fire chiefs, who are already juggling other department commitments with obligations to work and to home. There is also considerable confusion on the part of the public as to when a permit is necessary and the procedure for which to obtain the permit. The best-intentioned citizen may unknowingly break this law for a lack of understanding. Clearly, there is a need to coordinate this process and educate the public on when a permit is needed and the necessary channels to obtain a permit.

The Nez Perce Tribe is now issuing air quality permits for all property owners on the reservation on a year around basis, and fire safety permits are issued from May 10 thru Oct 20. This permitting system allows them to manage the air quality on the reservation.

The Nez Perce Tribe is now issuing burning permits for all property owners on the reservation on a year around basis. This permitting system allows them to manage the air quality on the reservation.

Home site and Community Evaluations and Creation of Defensible Space

Individual home site evaluations can increase homeowners' awareness and improve the survivability of structures in the event of a wildfire. Likewise, community wide assessments and creation of defensible space will lower risks of entire communities.

Current management of the vegetation surrounding homes and communities can provide protection; however, maintaining a clean, green zone within 100 feet of structures to reduce the potential loss of life and property is recommended.

Assessing individual homes and communities in the outlying areas can address the issue of escape routes and home defensibility characteristics. Educating the homeowners in techniques for protecting their homes is critical in these hot, dry environments.

The use of the RedZone software and inventorying the residences in each rural fire district began in 2008 and is currently in progress across the County. The main bottleneck in completing the inventory is the time it takes for the rural fire districts to do the inventory with an all volunteer group. Hiring a team to complete the inventories would be one solution, however, it is advantageous for the rural districts to visit each property and get to know the residents.

Travel Corridor Fuel Breaks

Ignition points are likely to continue to be concentrated along the roads and railway lines that run through the county. These travel routes have historically served as the primary source of human-caused ignitions, particularly along U.S. Highway 95. Passage with a mower parallel to an access route can provide an adequate control line under normal fire conditions. Other alternatives include planting more fire-resistant vegetation along roadsides or installing permanent fuel breaks in order to reduce the potential for ignitions originating from the highway to spread into the surrounding lands.

Power Line Corridor Fuel breaks

The treatment opportunities specified for travel corridor fuel breaks apply equally for power line corridors. The obvious difference between the two is that the focus area is not an area parallel to and adjacent to the road, but instead focuses on the area immediately below the infrastructure element. Fuel reduction projects under the high tension power lines are strongly recommended.

Rural Addressing

The county is currently updating its rural addressing system. It is very important for road names and house numbers to be readily visible to firefighters who are often unfamiliar with an area. The ability for all emergency services quickly and concisely to locate homes is critical in responding to fires. Addresses need to be clearly marked on the home, not just a mailbox that may be many hundreds of feet or yards from a home. Also numbering should be sequential to facilitate easy location as fire personnel are moving up and down roadways.

Once physical addresses are established and marked, accurate county maps showing the location of the named roads and addresses need to be available on short notice to fire crews. The ability to get local crews possession of accurate maps will significantly help fire management teams to plan for structural protection, and to implement those plans.

Accessibility to Emergency Apparatus

Also of vital importance is the accessibility of the home to emergency apparatus. If the home cannot be protected safely, firefighting resources will not jeopardize lives to protect a structure. Thus, the fate of the home will largely be determined by homeowner actions prior to the event. In many cases, homes'

survivability can be greatly enhanced by following a few simple guidelines to increase accessibility such as widening or pruning driveways and creating a turnaround area for large vehicles.

Building Codes to Protect Residents from Effects of Wildfire

New developments in the wildland urban interface should be regulated by building codes that protect residents from the effects of wildfire. Ensuring that there are adequate water resources available for emergency use and that new roads and driveways are accessible to emergency apparatus will become increasingly important as the community expands.

Regional Land Management Recommendations for Private, State, and Federal Landowners

Individuals, organizations, and agencies are encouraged to follow regional land management recommendations.

Treatment of Structural Ignitability

Measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area can be found in the publication “Safer from the Start” available at www.firewise.org.

EDUCATION

Once a fire has started and is moving toward homes or other valued resources, the probability of that structure surviving is largely dependent on the structural and landscaping characteristics of land surrounding the home as to whether the home will survive the passing fire front. Also of vital importance is the accessibility of the home to emergency apparatus. If the home cannot be protected safely, firefighting resources will not jeopardize lives to protect a structure. Thus, the fate of the home will largely be determined by homeowner actions prior to the event.

The majority of the uncultivated vegetation in Idaho County is comprised of grass and brush rangeland. Although these fuels are very flammable and can support very fast moving fires, fires in these fuel types tend to be of relatively low intensity. In many cases, homes can easily be protected by following a few simple guidelines that reduce the ignitability of the home. There are multiple programs such as FIREWISE detailing precautions that should be taken in order to reduce the threat to homes, such as clearing cured grass and weeds away from structures and establishing a green zone around the home. Education needs to be followed up by action. Any education programs should include an implementation plan. Ideally, funds would be made available to assist financially the landowner making the necessary changes to the home.

Effective mitigation strategies begin with public awareness campaigns designed to educate homeowners of the risks associated with living in a flammable environment. Residents of Idaho County must be made aware that home defensibility starts with the home. Once a fire has started and is moving toward homes or other valued resources, the probability of that structure surviving is largely dependent on the structural and landscaping characteristics of the home. “Are we safe from fire” CD is an excellent tool for educating homeowners as to the steps to take in order to create an effective defensible space.

The survey of the public conducted during the preparation of this WUI Fire Mitigation Plan indicated that approximately 49% of the respondents are interested in participating in this type of activity.

READINESS

Once a fire has started, how much and how large it burns is often dependent on the availability of suppression resources. In most cases, rural fire departments are the first to respond and have the best opportunity to halt the spread of a wildland fire. For many districts, the ability to reach these suppression objectives is largely dependent on the availability of functional resources and trained individuals. Increasing the capacity of departments through funding and equipment acquisition and training can

improve response times and subsequently reduce the potential for resource loss. The creation of new fire districts may be warranted.

In order to assure a quick and efficient response to an event, emergency responders need to know specifically where emergency services are needed. Continued improvement and updating of the rural addressing system is necessary to maximize the effectiveness of a response.

5.5 WUI Safety and Policy Improvement Activities

Wildfire mitigation efforts must be supported by a set of policies and regulations at the county level that set a solid foundation for safety and consistency. The WUI Safety and Policy Improvement Activities for the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan* can be found in *Appendix 2009* in this Volume. This section has been moved to an appendix to facilitate periodic updates of the *Mitigation Plan* without having to disrupt the flow of the document.

5.6 People and Structure Protection Activities

The protection of people and structures are tied closely as the loss of life in the event of a wildland fire is generally linked to a person who could not, or did not, flee a structure threatened by a wildfire. The other potential incident is a firefighter who suffers the loss of life during the combating of a fire. The People and Structure Protection Activities for the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan* can be found in *Appendix 2009* in this Volume. This section has been moved to an appendix to facilitate periodic updates of the *Mitigation Plan* without having to disrupt the flow of the document.

5.7 Infrastructure Protection Activities

Significant infrastructure refers to the communications, transportation (road and rail networks), energy transport supply systems (gas and power lines), and water supplies that service a region or a surrounding area. All of these components are important to the North Central Idaho area and to Idaho County specifically. The Infrastructure Protection Activities for the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan* can be found in *Appendix 2009* in this Volume. This section has been moved to an appendix to facilitate periodic updates of the *Mitigation Plan* without having to disrupt the flow of the document.

5.8 Resource and Capability Enhancement Activities

There are a number of resource and capability enhancements identified by the rural and wildland firefighting districts in Idaho County. The needs identified by the districts are consistent with improving the ability to respond to emergencies in the WUI, and are fully supported by the planning committee. The Resource and Capability Enhancement Activities for the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan* can be found in *Appendix 2009* in this Volume. This section has been moved to an appendix to facilitate periodic updates of the *Mitigation Plan* without having to disrupt the flow of the document.

5.9 Regional Land Management Recommendations

Reference has been given to the role that forestry, grazing and agriculture have in promoting wildfire mitigation services through active management. Idaho County is a rural county by any measure, dominated by wide expanses of forest and rangelands intermixed with communities and rural houses. The Regional Land Management Recommendations for the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan* can be found in *Appendix 2009* in this Volume. This section has been moved to

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