



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION

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MAYOR'S OFFICE

August 1, 2001

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to inform you about the availability of federal grant funds for distribution to communities, designated on the "List of Communities with Wildland Urban Interface Problems". Wildland urban interface is defined as the line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. If you are receiving this letter your community has been listed on the "Communities with Wildland Urban Interface Problems" and is eligible for grant funds.

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture, Wildland Fire Division is accepting the grant applications and submitting them to the federal government for approval. Enclosed is an application form, a guide to completing the application form, and the "Criteria for 2002 Western Wildland Urban Interface Grant Program". Please review the criteria and the guide for completing the application very carefully, before submitting your proposal.

Project proposals should be submitted to me no later than August 31, 2001. Projects conducted in conjunction with projects on federal lands adjacent to a community will receive priority for funding. If you have any questions please contact me at 1-800-275-4955, or 605-394-2395.

Sincerely,

Curtis J. Rasmussen
Wildland Urban Interface Specialist
SD Department of Agriculture

Criteria for 2002 Western Wildland Urban Interface Grant Program

For Federal Fiscal Year 2001, Congress provided increased funding assistance to states through USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry programs. The focus of much of the additional funding was mitigating risk in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas. In the West, \$17 million of State Fire Assistance (SFA) funding was available and awarded through a competitive process with emphasis on hazard fuel reduction, information and education, and community and homeowner action. This portion of the National Fire Plan was developed to assist Interface Communities manage the unique hazards they find around them. Long-term solutions to interface challenges require informing and educating people who live in these areas about what they and their local organizations can do to mitigate these hazards.

It is anticipated that Congress will continue its support in FFY 2002 for programs in the WUI, although the level of funding won't be known until late summer or early fall 2001.

The hazard reduction part of the National Fire Plan focuses on assisting people and communities in the WUI to moderate the threat of catastrophic fire through:

Hazardous Fuel Reduction: Fuel reduction projects and vegetation treatments have been identified as a means of mitigating wildfire hazards. These are projects that remove or modify fuels in and/or adjacent to WUI development. Effective fuels mitigation treatments can be implemented across jurisdictional boundaries, on adjoining private lands, or within the respective communities. The states can facilitate the required coordination, collaboration, and partnering of these projects. Projects of this type include fuel breaks, thinning, pruning, landscape modifications, etc. The overall purpose is to modify or break up the fuels in such a way as to lessen catastrophic fire and its threat to public and firefighter safety and damage to property. Project proposals should consider all elements required to implement treatments on the ground, which includes acquiring the necessary permits and consultations needed to complete plans and assessments.

Information and Education (I&E) In the Wildland Urban Interface: Homeowners and local government bear much of the responsibility for improving the defensibility of homes in the interface but may lack the knowledge and information regarding what needs to be done and how to do it. Additionally, they may lack the experience and expertise to deliver educational outreach programs to individuals and communities. States can provide the leadership needed to coordinate, develop and distribute educational materials and partnering between homeowners, communities, insurance companies and government agencies.

**Criteria for
2002 Western Wildland Urban Interface
Grant Program**

Homeowner and Community Action: Creating conditions in and around individual structures that will limit the transmission of fire from wildland to structures is basic to reducing the fire hazard in the Interface. This is a responsibility of homeowners and communities. The states can facilitate these actions through safety inspections; demonstration projects; training and education of homeowners, officials and service personnel; fostering fire safe groups; and coordination of projects, services, and supplies.

These project categories are complementary to one another. States are encouraged to identify local needs and submit proposals using one or a combination of the grant focus elements. Needs in any community depend on local fuels, topography, organization, public knowledge of the issues, and the will to address the issues.

Examples of Projects that Qualify (not all-inclusive)

Hazardous Fuels Reduction:

- Defensible space around homes and structures.
- Shaded fuel breaks.
- Fuels reduction beyond defensible space.
- Removal of slash including piling and burning; mulching; grinding; etc.
- Prescribed fire.

Information and Education (I&E) In the Wildland Urban Interface:

- FireWise or similar programs.
- Living with Fire newspaper inserts.
- Fire education components to Project Learning Tree.
- Fire prevention projects.
- Pamphlets, brochures, handouts.

Homeowner and Community Action:

- Homeowner-association sponsored fuels reduction projects.
- Municipal, fire district, county coordination of slash disposal.
- Multi-jurisdictional hazard reduction projects.

Examples of Projects that Do Not Qualify (not all inclusive)

- Purchase of fire department equipment (try VEA Grant Program).
- Installation of dry hydrants or water storage systems.
- Small business start-up funding.
- Research and development projects (try Economic Action Program).
- Preparedness and suppression capacity building (other SFA funds)