



CITY OF RAPID CITY

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
515 WEST BOULEVARD
RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA 57701

Jerry W. Cole
Director
(605) 394-5225

To: Mayor Sam Kooiker and City Council Members

From: Jerry Cole, Parks and Recreation Director, and
Mike Maltaverne, Fire Chief

Alex DeSmidt
Landscape Designer
(605) 394-5225

Subject: Funding for Wild Land Fire Mitigation Program

Date: May 11, 2012

Jeri Taton
Administrative
Assistant
(605) 394-5225

The Mountain Pine Beetle Incident Command program is winding down. We anticipate having approximately \$100,000 remaining of the original \$350,000 allocated by the City Council for the Mountain Pine Beetle Eradication Program.

Lon Van Deusen,
Parks & Cemetery
Manager
(605) 394-4175

In the battle to fight the mountain pine beetle two different operations were used; the MBP Incident Command Team and the Wild Land Fire Mitigation program which is administered by Tim Weaver from the Fire Department.

Doug Lowe,
Recreation Manager
(605) 394-4168

The Incident Command Team met on Thursday, May 10th and decided to recommend that the remaining funds be used to continue efforts to fight the beetle through Wild Land Fire Mitigation. It is our recommendation that the funds be used to reimburse private property owners that are considering having their property thinned through the wild land mitigation program. Property owners could request a reimbursement grant of up to \$1,000 to assist with the costs incurred to thin trees. We believe continuing efforts to eradicate the mountain pine beetle and reducing fuel loads for wild land fires within the city limits is the best use of this funding.

We also anticipate that in late September or early October the Incident Command Team will ramp up again and survey properties throughout the city to see if our previous efforts have made a difference. A report will be forthcoming in the next 60-90 days on the Incident Command Team MPB Suppression Program.

If you have any questions, please contact me.



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Department of Fire and Emergency Services
Fire Prevention Division

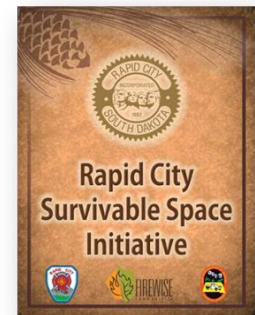
1930 Promise Rd
(605) 394-5233
Fax (605) 394-5235

To: Mayor Kooiker and City Council Members

The Rapid City Survivable Space Initiative Wildland Fire Fuel Reduction Funding

The sole purpose of a Wildland fuels mitigation plan is to create a setting within the Wildland Urban Interface where in the event of a fire, the fire spread and over all negative impact can be reduced for both the specific property and neighborhood community.

Mitigation plans have historically been utilized to create defensible properties, when they actually are intended to create *survivable* properties. Survivable, meaning they will better be able to withstand a wildfire without intervention and direct protection provided by firefighting forces. In reality during a wildfire event it is likely that there will not be adequate firefighting resources available, or conditions will not allow for protection of all properties.



The heavily populated WUI area in Rapid City is inundated with heavy ladder fuels under an overgrown forest canopy. *This area has over 200 million in home/property value in developments interspersed within the urban interface and are situated in a manner where slope, terrain, and fuel loading are all aligned for a catastrophic fire event.* Individual landowners live in close proximity to one another, and multiple structure ignitions at one time which will quickly over tax resources is likely in the present state. These interface communities join one another and pose a significant threat to the surrounding Rapid City community at large. A good portion of the current area of focus has a limited water supply which will make any efforts to suppress a significant event very difficult.

Many attribute the current state of heavy fuel loading with either ignorance or indifference by the property owners. While this may be true with a small minority, our assessments have revealed quite the opposite. Most homeowners understand the danger they and their communities are currently in and do wish to be part of the solution. Many times, unfortunately, high cost is the deciding factor in the degree of participation in fuel reduction projects. It is for this reason that the Rapid City Fire Department through the Survivable Space Initiative is asking that the remaining funds left over from the Mountain Pine Beetle Eradication Program be used to assist homeowners with the costs incurred in these efforts to reduce fuel loading for wildfire. These projects target all hazardous vegetation including Mountain Pine Beetle infested trees which will continue the effort to reduce the MPB threat in the city.

The hazard mitigation projects will produce a more fire safe environment within the neighborhoods and reduce the risk of fire spreading at an uncontrollable rate throughout the community. Positive impacts within the scope of the **Survivable Space Initiative** include safer neighborhoods for many years to come, a safer environment for fire fighters who currently face dangerous fire behavior in the project area, and a significant decrease in potential loss of high dollar amounts for the community.

Sincerely,

Tim Weaver

*Lieutenant
Survivable Space Initiative Coordinator
Rapid City Fire Department*