

MONTANA INTERAGENCY COORDINATION GUIDE:

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES
AND PRIVATE LANDOWNERS
BEFORE, DURING,
AND AFTER WILDFIRES



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JULY 2004

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Cover photo credit: center photo of the Robert Fire, Flathead National Forest, August 11, 2003 by Karen Nichols, *Daily Inter Lake*, Kalispell, MT.

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PURPOSE AND NEED

This guide is intended to help government agencies and non-governmental organizations better coordinate their efforts to assist communities and private landowners before, during, and after wildfires. We hope you will find the guide useful, and that it will serve as a catalyst to increase coordination between your agency or organization and the other agencies, organizations, and community partners you work with.

The increasing frequency, severity, and costs of wildfires have created an urgent need to reduce the vulnerability of communities and private landowners to wildfire. The number of people, structures, and businesses at risk continues to rise because of continuing development in the wildland-urban interface, raising the likelihood that more Montana communities will face the tremendous social, economic, and ecological costs of catastrophic wildfires. Many federal, state, and local agencies, governments, and organizations are working hard to reduce the vulnerability of communities to wildfire, but the magnitude of the problem, in terms of numbers of communities at risk and acres of unhealthy forests, far exceeds current efforts and resources.

Major federal wildfire policies recognize the need for collaboration and coordination as means to help achieve wildfire protection goals, and many state, local, and tribal governments are also seeking to increase cooperative efforts. The 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan of the National Fire Plan and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act both emphasize coordination as a means to achieve protection of communities and other priority watersheds. Increased coordination can help direct limited resources to where they are most needed, when they are needed, and systematically build community capacity while improving the combined efficiency and effectiveness of the agencies and organizations that provide assistance.

BENEFITS OF COORDINATION

- Helps solve problems that no one agency, organization, or individual can solve alone
- Promotes shared ownership of problems and solutions
- Enables action across land ownership and jurisdictional boundaries
- Builds mutual understanding and productive working relationships
- Generates better informed and more broadly supported decisions
- Encourages sharing of information and resources
- Avoids wasteful duplication of efforts

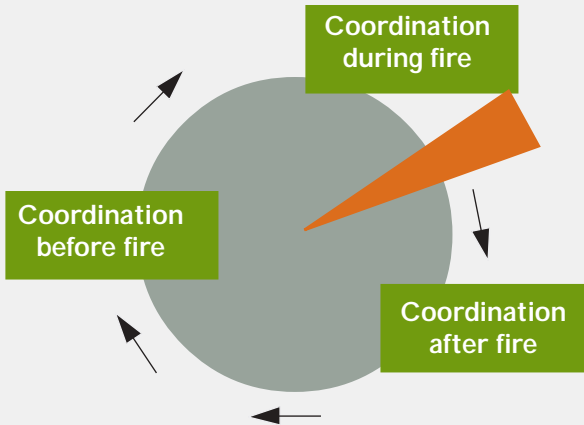


Coordination is particularly important as agencies and communities work across land ownership and jurisdictional boundaries to plan for wildfire protection, to reduce fuel hazards in the wildland-urban interface, and to implement recovery and restoration projects after a wildfire. Many of the agencies currently involved in assisting communities with wildfire protection have long coordinated efforts for wildfire suppression, but coordinated efforts for wildfire protection planning, hazard mitigation, and post-fire recovery and restoration are more recent and less well developed. This guide is intended to help support efforts to increase coordination.

One of the first steps in improving coordination is to increase awareness among agencies and their community partners of each other's roles, services, and programs, and of tools that can facilitate coordination. Sections III through V of this guide describe in brief the programs and services of relevant agencies and organizations. Section VI and the appendices on the accompanying CD describe tools for improved coordination. These tools include examples of formal agreements such as MOUs and mutual aid agreements; community wildfire protection plans and planning guidelines; guiding principles that can help agencies and their community partners establish and sustain a collaborative process; a listing and description of assistance programs by agency; and links to websites with a variety of additional informational resources. The appendices also include web addresses where contact information can be found for most agencies and organizations. This guide offers just a brief summary of the many tools and resources available; we encourage you to contact agencies and organizations and explore websites for more detailed information about programs and services.

Examples of successful coordination are highlighted throughout the guide. These include development of interagency MOUs, development of community wildfire protection plans, and coordination of restoration and recovery activities following major wildfires. While there are many examples of successful coordination, much more could be done. A few examples include increasing coordination of grants programs and developing "one-stop shopping" websites; developing common measures of success and progress; and collecting and disseminating information on success stories and best practices on a regular basis.

We hope you will share your success stories and any comments on this guide with us. You can send success stories and comments to the Bitter Root RC&D at bitterrootrcd@cybernet1.com or to USFS State and Private Forestry at r1_bitterroot_fireplan@fs.fed.us.

WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN...

Strong working relationships built during one phase of the cycle provide a foundation for continued coordination and cooperation during other phases of the cycle.



Close coordination among local, state, and federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations was essential to emergency response efforts during the Bitterroot wildfires of 2000, as well as to recovery work after the wildfires. The Bitterroot Interagency/Community Recovery Team (BIRT) was formed in August of 2000, while the fires still burned, funded by U.S. Forest Service State and Private Forestry and administered by the Bitter Root RC&D. The original goal of BIRT was to conduct need assessments on private lands and facilitate a rapid response from agencies to affected landowners. More than 30 agencies and organizations coordinated to guide BIRT's work, and became known as the BIRT Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) team. Frequent meetings of BIRT-MAC enabled participants to coordinate closely in developing and implementing recovery projects. The BIRT-MAC team also coordinated to conduct an assessment of post-fire accomplishments and unmet needs. Many of the same agencies and organizations that participated in BIRT-MAC later worked together to develop the Bitterroot Community-Based Wildland Fire Risk Mitigation Plan. The plan identifies strategic actions in areas including hazardous fuels, public awareness and engagement, volunteer fire departments, emergency response, access, and policy and planning. Many of the strategic actions have already been implemented, and others are underway. Both the recovery and planning efforts benefited from early and sustained coordination of diverse stakeholders.

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO SERVICES

AGENCY	PAGE	BEFORE FIRE	DURING FIRE	AFTER FIRE
Bureau of Indian Affairs	7	1,2,5	7	8
Bureau of Land Management	8	1,2,4,5	7	
Farm Service Agency	9			8
Federal Emergency Management Agency	10	1,4,5,6	4,6	4,6,8
National Park Service	12	4,5	7	4
National Weather Service	13	9	9	9
Natural Resources Conservation Service	14			8
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	15	1,2,4,5	4,7	4,8
U.S. Forest Service	16	1,2,3,4,5,6	4,6,7	1,3,4,6,8
U.S. Small Business Administration	18	9		8
MT DLI Workforce Services Div.	20		9	9
MT DMA Disaster and Emergency Services Division	21	1,2,4,5,6	4,6,7	4,6,8
MT DNRC Forestry Division	22	1,2,4,5,6	4,7	4,8
American Red Cross	24	4,6,9	6,9	8
Conservation Districts	25	2		8
County Disaster and Emergency Services	26	1,2,4	4,6	4,8
County Weed Districts	27	4,9		4,8
MSU Extension Service	28	1,2,4,9	9	4,8
Resource Conservation and Development Areas	29	1,2,3,4,6	6	4,6,8

Within the following categories, an agency or organization may provide technical assistance, financial assistance, or other services:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1 - Hazard assessment/mitigation planning | 6 - Coordination |
| 2 - Fuels treatment and defensible space work | 7 - Suppression |
| 3 - Wildfire-related business development | 8 - Recovery and restoration |
| 4 - Public education | |
| 5 - Firefighting capacity building | 9 - Other |

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is responsible for the administration and management of 55 million acres of land held in trust by the United States for American Indians, Indian tribes, and Alaska Natives.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire ✓	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Financial and technical assistance		
Who Can We Help?	Tribal governments and their members		

The BIA is one of five federal land management agencies with wildland firefighting responsibilities, and receives funding under the National Fire Plan (NFP) for projects in support of the NFP on tribal reservations. The BIA has completed a hazard assessment/mitigation plan for every tribal reservation in Montana. BIA also uses NFP funding to assist tribes with hazardous fuels treatment work. The BIA secures funding for and fields Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) teams following wildfires.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

Forestry on Indian Lands—financial and technical assistance for forest management activities

Indian Community Fire Protection—financial assistance for fire protection services

BIA is also a participating agency in the **Rural Fire Assistance Program** (see page 19).



TOOLS ON CD: Description of assistance programs

CONTACT INFORMATION for Montana BIA Offices can be found at the website below. BIA’s Regional Fire and Aviation Management Office is located in Billings (406-247-7949).



WEBSITES

BIA Fire and Aviation Management: www.bianifc.org
 Montana BIA Offices:
www.kstrom.net/isk/maps/mt/montmap.html

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The Bureau of Land Management administers 261 million acres of America's public lands; its mission is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of these lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire ✓	After fire
How Can We Help?	Financial and technical assistance		
Who Can We Help?	State, local, and tribal governments, non-profits, rural fire departments		

The BLM is one of five federal land-management agencies with wildland firefighting responsibilities.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

National Fire Plan Community Assistance Program—provides financial and technical assistance for risk assessment and mitigation planning, defensible space projects, and prevention and education programs, with a priority on activities that complement efforts on nearby BLM lands. BLM's staff includes four Mitigation and Education Specialists who administer the program. BLM currently requires that an approved county-wide wildfire protection plan be in place before funds are awarded for defensible space or prevention and education projects, and has developed mitigation planning guidelines that follow FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) planning guidelines so that wildfire mitigation plans can be incorporated in county PDM plans (see success story on page 11). BLM is also a participating agency in the **Rural Fire Assistance Program** (see page 19).



TOOLS ON CD: Description of assistance programs; NFPWUI Fire Assessments and Mitigation Planning Guide

CONTACT INFORMATION for BLM's Montana offices can be found at the Montana BLM website. Contact information for BLM's Mitigation and Education Specialists, and the counties they cover, is in Appendix D.



WEBSITES

BLM: www.blm.gov/nhp/index.htm

Montana BLM: www.mt.blm.gov

BLM Fire and Aviation: www.fire.blm.gov

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

The Farm Service Agency’s mission includes stabilizing farm income, helping farmers conserve land and water resources, providing credit to new or disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and helping farm operations recover from the effects of disaster.

When Can We Help?	Before fire	During fire	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Financial and technical assistance		
Who Can We Help?	Agricultural producers		

Farm Service Agency offices are located in most counties in Montana in USDA Service Centers.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

Emergency Conservation Program—provides emergency financial and technical assistance to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters

Emergency Loan Program—provides emergency loans to help agricultural producers recover from production and physical losses due to natural disasters

Livestock Indemnity Program—provides partial reimbursement for livestock losses resulting from a natural disaster



TOOLS ON CD: Description of assistance programs

CONTACT INFORMATION for FSA offices may be found at the website for USDA Service Centers.



WEBSITES

FSA: www.fsa.usda.gov

Montana FSA: www.fsa.usda.gov/mt/

USDA Service Centers:

http://oip.usda.gov/scripts/ndCGI.exe/oip_public/state?state=MT

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s mission is to lead America to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from disasters.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire ✓	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Financial and technical assistance, training		
Who Can We Help?	State, local, and tribal governments, certain non-profits, fire departments		

FEMA leads the effort to prepare the U.S. for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration. FEMA often works in partnership with other agencies and organizations that are part of the nation’s emergency management system, including state and local emergency management agencies, other federal agencies, and the American Red Cross. FEMA’s programs provide assistance in areas including multi-hazard mitigation planning, implementation of hazard mitigation projects, and training and capacity building for state and rural firefighting programs.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

Assistance to Firefighters Grants—provide assistance to states and fire departments to enhance firefighting capacity, including fire prevention



TOOLS ON CD: Description of assistance programs

CONTACT INFORMATION for FEMA personnel can be obtained from the FEMA website.



WEBSITES

FEMA: www.fema.gov

FEMA Region 8: www.fema.gov/regions/viii/index.shtm

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Fire Management Assistance Grants—provide assistance to state, local and tribal governments for fighting fires on non-federal property that threaten destruction that would constitute a major disaster

Hazard Mitigation Grants—provide assistance to state and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration

Individual Assistance—FEMA provides several forms of assistance that can help individuals and households following a presidentially-declared disaster

National Fire Academy Educational Programs—provide training to fire department members and others with firefighting responsibilities

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Competitive Grants—provide assistance for mitigation planning and implementation of hazard mitigation activities

Public Assistance—provides aid to repair, replace, or supplement parts of a community's infrastructure following a presidentially-declared disaster

Reimbursement for Firefighting on Federal Property—reimburse fire departments for fighting fire on federal property

State Fire Training Systems Grants—provide assistance for delivery of National Fire Academy courses and programs

OTHER RESOURCES: FEMA's website contains a wealth of informational resources and links to additional resources on disaster preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery, including fact sheets on hazards, best practices and case studies, hazard mitigation success stories, interagency activities, and educational and training opportunities. FEMA recently published *At Home in the Woods: Lessons Learned in the Wildland Urban Interface*, available at the national FEMA website.



Several pieces of federal legislation require or encourage state and/or local governments to prepare hazard mitigation plans. The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires state, local, and tribal governments to prepare pre-disaster mitigation (PDM) plans to be eligible for certain forms of disaster funding. The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 requires communities to prepare wildfire protection plans to take full advantage of collaborative opportunities with federal agencies. Wildfire mitigation plans are key to achieving the goals of the National Fire Plan (NFP). To facilitate the inclusion of NFP documents in PDM plans, the federal agencies involved in delivery of the NFP in Montana have developed planning guidelines that are consistent with FEMA's PDM planning guidelines, and are working with communities to develop wildfire hazard mitigation plans at the county level.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire ✓	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Financial assistance, education		
Who Can We Help?	Communities adjacent to lands managed by the National Park Service		

The NPS is one of five federal land management agencies with wildland firefighting responsibilities, and cooperates with the other federal agencies and the Montana DNRC in wildfire protection and suppression.

The NPS can provide financial assistance to neighboring communities through the **Rural Fire Assistance Program** (see page 19) for building the capacity of rural and volunteer fire departments. The NPS has coordinated with other land-management agencies and neighboring communities on county fire plans, and is coordinating on fuels treatment projects in some areas. Parks also play an important role in education about wildfire, through their interpretive programs, special programs for students, working with communities on Firewise programs, and post-fire educational tours.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Glacier National Park Prescribed Fire Specialist: (406) 888-7811

Yellowstone National Park Prescribed Fire Specialist: (307) 344-2193



WEBSITES

National Park Service: www.nps.gov

NPS Fire Management: data2.itc.nps.gov/fire/index.cfm

Glacier National Park: www.nps.gov/glac/index.htm

Yellowstone National Park: www.nps.gov/yell/index.htm

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

The National Weather Service provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire ✓	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts		
Who Can We Help?	All entities involved in wildfire protection, suppression, and recovery		

The NWS's forecasts, warnings, and watches provide weather information before, during, and after wildfires. During fires, NWS Incident Meteorologists travel to fire sites when requested by the fire-management team and provide weather information essential to the firefighting effort. The NWS coordinates closely with other agencies such as the USFS and USGS during recovery efforts to help forecast flash flood and debris flow events, and with local law enforcement offices to help provide emergency notification to landowners in areas threatened by flash flooding or debris flows.



The USFS and NWS are collaborating with the Missoula Office of Emergency Services to encourage landowners who are susceptible to flash floods and debris flow because of damage done by the Black Mountain Fires of 2003 to take advantage of NOAA weather radios as a warning system for notification in the event of impending hazardous conditions.

CONTACT INFORMATION: The National Weather Service operates four forecast offices in Montana, in Billing (www.wrh.noaa.gov/Billings, 406-652-0851), Glasgow (www.wrh.noaa.gov/Glasgow, 406-228-4042), Great Falls (www.wrh.noaa.gov/Greatfalls, 406-453-5469) and Missoula (www.wrh.noaa.gov/Missoula, 406-329-4840).



WEBSITES

NWS: www.nws.noaa.gov

NWS Western Regional HQ: www.wrh.noaa.gov/index.html

NWS National Fire Weather: fire.boi.noaa.gov

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

When Can We Help?	Before fire	During fire	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Financial and technical assistance		
Who Can We Help?	Communities, private landowners, agricultural producers		

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

Emergency Watershed Program—provides financial and technical assistance to implement emergency measures to relieve imminent hazards to life and property created by a natural disaster

Environmental Quality Incentives Program—provides assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns; in Montana, a special share of EQIP funding can be used for post-fire restoration work.



The NRCS is coordinating with the USFS Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team, which assesses and prescribes treatments for risks immediately after a wildfire, with the goal of protecting life, property, water quality, and ecosystems from further damage. The NRCS and USFS have signed a MOU allowing the USFS to pay the NRCS to help with BAER assessments on private lands adjacent to national forests. Coordination maximizes the efficiency of both agencies, and speeds implementation of emergency mitigation measures.



TOOLS ON CD: Description of assistance programs; MOU between USFS and NRCS for Burned Area Emergency Response program

CONTACT INFORMATION for NRCS offices can be found at the website for USDA Service Centers.



WEBSITES

NRCS: www.nrcs.usda.gov

Montana NRCS : www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Service Centers:

http://oip.usda.gov/scripts/ndCGI.exe/oip_public/state?state=MT

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s mission is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire ✓	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Financial and technical assistance		
Who Can We Help?	Private landowners		

The FWS is one of five federal land management agencies with wildland firefighting responsibilities, and cooperates with the other federal agencies and the Montana DNRC in wildfire protection and suppression.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

Limited prescribed burning assistance for private landowners may be available when the private lands are adjacent to a National Wildlife Refuge and burning those lands is beneficial to the refuge. The FWS can also provide technical and financial assistance for restoration and rehabilitation work following a wildfire. The FWS is a participating agency in the **Rural Fire Assistance Program** (see page 19).

CONTACT INFORMATION: A list and map of locations of National Wildlife Refuges in Montana and an office directory can be found at the Montana FWS website, as well as links to websites for many of the refuges.



WEBSITES

FWS: www.fws.gov

FWS Fire Management: fire.fws.gov

Montana FWS: mountain-prairie.fws.gov

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

The U.S. Forest Service's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire ✓	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Financial and technical assistance, equipment		
Who Can We Help?	State, local, and tribal governments, non-profits, rural and local fire departments		

The USFS is one of five federal agencies with wildland firefighting responsibilities, and assists with establishing Fire Recovery Teams and Fire Recovery Assistance Centers. The USFS's State and Private Forestry Program offers a variety of assistance programs in areas including community planning for fire protection, hazardous fuels treatments, assistance to state and volunteer firefighting organizations, public education, economic action programs, forest health management, noxious weed treatment, and multi-resource stewardship.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

Community Planning for Fire Protection—provides funding for development and revision of communities' strategic, action, and fire risk management plans

Cooperative Forestry Assistance—assists state forestry agencies in stewardship programs on non-federal lands



TOOLS ON CD: Description of assistance programs; MOU between USFS and NRCS for BAER program

CONTACT INFORMATION for personnel in the USFS's Northern Region can be found at the Northern Region website.



WEBSITES

USFS Northern Region: www.fs.fed.us/r1/
USFS Northern Region Fire: www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire_r1/
USFS Northern Region National Fire Plan: www.fs.fed.us/r1/nfp
USFS Northern Region State and Private Forestry: www.fs.fed.us/r1-r4/spf

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Cooperative Lands Forest Health Management—provides funding to state forestry agencies to assist in identifying and treating forest health problems

Economic Action Program—provides technical and financial assistance for long-term economic and social health of rural areas; interests include helping communities develop and expand markets for wood products resulting from hazardous fuel removal

Federal Excess Personal Property Program—assists state and local governments by providing loans of equipment, vehicles, and supplies

Forest Stewardship Program—assists state forestry agencies by providing funding for preparation of forest management plans on state, private, and tribal lands

Hazardous Fuels Reduction—assists state forestry agencies by providing funding for fuels treatments in the wildland-urban interface

Noxious Weed Treatment—provides funds through the state Department of Agriculture to treat noxious weeds on private, state, and tribal lands affected by wildfire

Rural Community Assistance—assists communities that have been affected economically due to the loss of jobs or income derived from forestry, forest-related industry, or dependence on National Forest or Grasslands resources

State Fire Assistance—assists state forestry agencies by providing funding for preparedness, high-priority prevention, and mitigation education programs; funds the Western Wildland Urban Interface Grants Program

Volunteer Fire Assistance—assists state forestry agencies by providing financial and technical assistance, training, and equipment to help build rural fire department capacity

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The U.S. Small Business Administration's mission is to maintain and strengthen the nation's economy by aiding, counseling, assisting and protecting the interests of small businesses and by helping families and businesses recover from national disasters.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Financial assistance		
Who Can We Help?	Small businesses, homeowners, renters		

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Loan Program—offers loans to eligible small businesses to implement mitigation measures to protect business property from damage that may be caused by future disasters

Several of the SBA's assistance programs offer loans to eligible applicants following a declared disaster:

Physical Disaster Business Loans

Economic Injury Disaster Loans

Home and Personal Property Disaster Loans

CONTACT INFORMATION for the SBA can be found at the SBA website.



WEBSITES
www.sba.gov

MULTIAGENCY AND INTERAGENCY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Firewise: Firewise offers a variety of educational resources to communities, landowners, firefighters, and educators. Firewise’s goal is to help communities and landowners become “Firewise”—aware of the role that fire plays in ecosystems, and able to coexist with wildfire because of investment in wildfire protection measures such as creation of defensible space and treatment of hazardous fuels.

Rural Fire Assistance Program: Provides funding to enhance the fire protection capabilities of rural and volunteer fire departments through training, equipment purchases, and fire prevention work; offered by Department of the Interior land management agencies (BIA, BLM, NPS, and USFWS) and also administered by the State Forester.

Wildland Fire Prevention and Education Teams: Wildland Fire Prevention and Education Teams provide assistance upon request before or during periods of high fire danger or activity. Teams reinforce local resources and bring special prevention/education, planning, logistics, and operations expertise to bear in larger, complex severity situations that exceed the capabilities of local organizations.



The **Montana Multi-Agency Fire Hazard Mitigation Committee** was formed recently to provide leadership and collaboration for fire hazard mitigation throughout Montana.

Members include BIA, BLM, NPS, USFWS, USFS, Montana DES Division, Montana DNRC, Montana Association of Counties, and Montana Firewardens. Areas of emphasis for the committee include fuels mitigation, community assistance, state and county-level risk assessment, and mapping and analysis utilizing GIS.



TOOLS ON CD: Description of Rural Fire Assistance Program



WEBSITES

Firewise: www.firewise.org

Wildland Fire Prevention and Education Teams:
www.firepreventionteams.us

MONTANA DLI WORKFORCE SERVICES DIVISION

The primary purpose of the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's (DLI) Workforce Services Division is to develop and maintain a high quality workforce system for the state of Montana.

When Can We Help?	Before fire	During fire ✓	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Employment and referral services, job training programs		
Who Can We Help?	Employers and job seekers		

Much of the assistance offered by the Workforce Services Division is provided through Job Service Centers located in 23 communities throughout Montana. The DLI website also lists job openings and provides extensive links to additional resources for employers and job seekers. Services include labor market information, employment counseling, proficiency and aptitude testing, and adult job training programs. Job Service Centers can help individuals whose livelihoods have been affected by wildfire seek assistance from programs such as Unemployment Assistance, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, and the Dislocated Workers Program. Job Service Centers have assisted their communities during wildfires by providing a variety of employment services, such as advising job seekers of training and credentialing needs and providing lists of job seekers to employers. After wildfires, Job Service Centers have helped identify, screen, train temporary employees needed for restoration and rehabilitation work.

CONTACT INFORMATION for Job Service Centers can be found at the website below.



WEBSITES

<http://jsd.dli.state.mt.us/>

**MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS
DISASTER AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DIVISION**

The Montana Disaster and Emergency Services Division takes the lead in coordinating comprehensive emergency management in Montana.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire ✓	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Financial and technical assistance, training, coordination among agencies and organizations		
Who Can We Help?	State, local, and tribal governments, individuals		

The DES Division is responsible for ensuring that a comprehensive emergency management program exists in Montana. The DES Division offers assistance to improve planning and training for all hazard emergencies, assists local governments with response to emergencies and disasters and aids communities in recovery from disasters by coordinating volunteer, state and federal resources, encourages implementation of appropriate mitigation measures at the local level to prevent or reduce the impacts of future disasters, and interfaces with the federal government to provide technical and financial assistance to the state, local, and tribal governments. The DES Division plays a key role in coordination among the many agencies and non-governmental organizations—local, tribal, state, and federal—involved before, during, and after disasters and emergencies, facilitating comprehensive planning, mitigation, response, and recovery, and helping to ensure that communities and individuals impacted by emergencies and disasters have access to all available assistance.

CONTACT INFORMATION for Montana DES Division personnel can be found at the Division’s website.



WEBSITES

Montana Disaster and Emergency Services Division:
www.discoveringmontana.com/dma/DES

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION FORESTRY DIVISION

The Montana DNRC's Forestry Division is responsible for planning and implementing forestry programs through a network of field offices located across the state. The forestry program has two major functions: fire and aviation management, and service forestry.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire ✓	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Financial and technical assistance, seedlings for conservation projects and revegetation		
Who Can We Help?	Communities, rural and volunteer fire departments, landowners		

DNRC's Forestry Division is responsible for direct fire protection of over 5 million acres in Montana, and helps protect an additional 45 million acres in cooperation with all Montana counties, National Park Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Service Forestry offers programs and services in a number of areas including urban and community forestry, forestry best management practices, insect and disease management, and hazardous fuels treatments.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

Community Planning for Fire Protection*—provides funding for development and revision of communities' strategic, action, and fire risk management plans

Cooperative Forestry Assistance*—assists in stewardship programs on non-federal lands



TOOLS ON CD: Description of assistance programs

CONTACT INFORMATION for DNRC Forestry personnel can be found at the Division's website.



WEBSITES

Montana DNRC Forestry Division:
www.dnrc.state.mt.us/forestry/

MONTANA DNRC FORESTRY DIVISION

Cooperative Lands Forest Health Management*—provides funding to assist in identifying and treating forest health problems

Federal Excess Personal Property Program*—assists state and local governments by providing loans of equipment, vehicles, and supplies

Forest Stewardship Program*—provides funding for preparation of forest management plans on state, private, and tribal lands

Hazardous Fuels Reduction*—provides funding for fuels treatments in the wildland-urban interface

Private Forestry Assistance Program**—provides on-site forest management assistance to private forest landowners

State Fire Assistance*—provides funding for preparedness, high-priority prevention, and mitigation education programs; funds the Western Wildland Urban Interface Grants Program

Volunteer Fire Assistance*—provides financial and technical assistance, training, and equipment to help build rural fire department capacity

OTHER RESOURCES: The Montana State Conservation Nursery produces tree and shrub seedlings for use in various conservation projects, including restoration after wildfires.

* Funding provided by U.S. Forest Service State and Private Forestry

** Supported by both state and federal funding

AMERICAN RED CROSS

The American Red Cross provides relief to victims of disasters and helps people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire ✓	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Education and training, disaster relief services		
Who Can We Help?	Communities, families, and individuals		

The Red Cross provides training to help communities and individuals prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies, and provides disaster relief for many different types of disasters, including wildfires. Red Cross disaster relief focuses on meeting the emergency needs of individuals and families. The Red Cross provides shelter, food, and health and mental health services, and helps individuals and families resume their normal daily activities. The Red Cross also feeds emergency workers, provides blood and blood products, responds to welfare inquiries, and links disaster victims to other available resources. The American Red Cross works closely with government agencies such as FEMA during major disasters, and coordinates its disaster health services efforts with those of the local health authorities and the medical and nursing communities. The Red Cross provides training through health and safety courses and courses in disaster response and emergency services. The Montana Chapter of the Red Cross is headquartered in Great Falls; eleven district offices are located throughout the state.

CONTACT INFORMATION: For more information about disaster services provided by the Red Cross, contact the Disaster Emergency Services Director in your area. Contact information for the Red Cross district offices can be found at the website for the Montana Chapter of the Red Cross.



WEBSITES

American Red Cross: www.redcross.org

American Red Cross Montana Chapter:
www.montanaredcross.org

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Conservation Districts are units of local government which help citizens conserve soil, water, and other natural resources through locally-led and largely non-regulatory approaches.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Information, program sponsorship		
Who Can We Help?	Private landowners		

Although most Conservation Districts do not directly offer assistance related to wildfire protection or hazard mitigation, they do have important roles to play as cooperators in other agencies’ programs and are sources of knowledge and understanding of local resources because of their work with landowners on conservation projects. For example, Conservation Districts have provided the sponsorship needed for landowner groups to be eligible to participate in the NRCS’s Emergency Watershed Program, and have sponsored landowners’ participation in a grants program offered though the Montana DNRC Forestry Division for hazardous fuels treatments. This type of arrangement allows the Conservation District and funding agency to share the tasks involved in the assistance programs, with the funding agency providing financial and technical assistance, and the Conservation District acting as the local agent to coordinate with program participants and oversee certain administrative elements of the programs.

CONTACT INFORMATION for Montana Conservation Districts can be found at the website for the Montana association of Conservation Districts. Additional information about Conservation Districts can be found at the website for DNRC’s Conservation and Resource Development Division.



WEBSITES

Montana Association of Conservation Districts:

www.macdnet.org

DNRC Conservation and Resource Development Division:

www.dnrc.state.mt.us/conserves.html

COUNTY DISASTER AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

County Departments of Disaster and Emergency Services prepare and manage plans and programs directed at disaster preparedness and coordination of response and recovery.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire ✓	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery		
Who Can We Help?	Communities, landowners, individuals		

County Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) offices' activities include planning, training, coordination and public education. During wildfire incidents, county DES offices coordinate with and provide support to the firefighting and law enforcement services involved, and coordinate with Montana State DES and FEMA as needed. County DES offices have also been involved in coordination for emergency notification to landowners at risk from flash floods and debris flows after wildfires (see success story on page 13).

Many Montana DES offices are currently preparing comprehensive disaster mitigation plans. Because each county is different, how wildfire hazards are addressed in the plan, the extent to which any existing wildfire protection plans are incorporated, or whether wildfire is treated in a separate plan is likely to vary.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Links to websites for a number of county Disaster and Emergency Offices can be found at the website below.



WEBSITES

Montana State Disaster and Emergency Services links to county information:

www.discoveringmontana.com/dma/des/relatedlinks.asp

COUNTY WEED DISTRICTS

County Weed Districts identify and address noxious weed problems, prepare county noxious weed management plans, and provide education, outreach, technical assistance, and sometimes financial assistance to help public and private landowners combat noxious weeds.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Information and technical assistance, financial assistance in some counties		
Who Can We Help?	Landowners		

The specific services and programs of County Weed Districts vary from county to county, but all are dedicated to combating noxious weeds. Weed Districts can provide technical and planning assistance to landowners, and some Weed Districts provide financial assistance through their own grants programs. County Weed Districts may also provide assistance in preparing and sponsoring applications to the Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grants Program administered by the Montana Department of Agriculture. County Weed Districts have also worked with landowner groups after wildfires, providing technical assistance, helping to prepare weed management, revegetation, and monitoring plans, and helping to secure and administer funding needed to implement plans.

CONTACT INFORMATION for County Weed District Offices can be found at the Montana Weed Control Association website.



WEBSITES

Montana Weed Control Association: www.mtweed.org
 Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grants:
agr.state.mt.us/programs/asd/weedgrnt.shtml

MSU EXTENSION SERVICE

Montana State University Extension Service is dedicated to improving the quality of people's lives by providing research-based knowledge to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of families, communities and agricultural enterprises.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire ✓	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Education, technical assistance		
Who Can We Help?	Landowners, homeowners, agricultural producers		

The MSU Extension Service offers educational resources and technical assistance for wildfire-affected communities via county extension offices and university faculty in areas including forestry, range, horticulture and financial planning. Located on the University of Montana campus in Missoula, the forestry faculty and staff provide services including workshops and literature on forest planning, harvesting, pest management, wildfire hazard mitigation, burned area recovery assessment, and land restoration practices. Range and wildlife faculty are located on the Montana State University Campus in Bozeman and provide services and publications on wildlife management, range restoration, species preferences and alternative livestock feeds following wildfires. County extension offices also provide educational resources and technical assistance, and some are responsible for managing county fairgrounds, which may be used for emergency purposes during wildfires. MSU Extension also sponsors the Montana Extension Disaster Education Network, which maintains a website with informational links.

CONTACT INFORMATION: A personnel directory for state and county office field staff is available at MSU Extension's website. Extension Forestry, Range, and Wildlife personnel are listed in the state staff section.



WEBSITES

<http://extn.msu.montana.edu/>

Montana Extension Disaster Education Network:

<http://montanahelp.org>

RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AREAS

RC&Ds are non-profit organizations governed by councils of local volunteers, and improve the ability of state and local units of government and local non-profits in rural areas to plan, develop, and carry out programs for resource conservation and development.

When Can We Help?	Before fire ✓	During fire ✓	After fire ✓
How Can We Help?	Interagency coordination, program administration, securing funding		
Who Can We Help?	Communities, agencies, non-profit organizations		

While each of Montana’s 8 RC&Ds carries out projects specific to its service area, all provide a framework within which local individuals, groups, businesses, and units of government work cooperatively. Montana’s RC&Ds have taken on many projects related to wildfire protection, including coordinating development of community wildfire protection plans, hazardous fuels treatments, and pilot projects for biomass heating systems and small-diameter material utilization, and have helped communities to secure and administer the funding needed to carry out these projects. RC&Ds have also played critical roles in providing information to private landowners and coordinating restoration and recovery efforts on private lands after wildfires. The RC&Ds’ experience in resource conservation and development, together with the productive working relationships they have developed with many agencies and organizations enables them to provide the coordination critical to the success of many wildfire-related projects. More information about the projects of each RC&D can be found at their websites (web addresses are listed in the appendices).



TOOLS ON CD: Link to Bitterroot Community Fire Plan

CONTACT INFORMATION for RC&Ds can be found at the website below.



WEBSITES

www.westernrcd.org/montana.html

OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, OFFICES, AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Many local agencies and organizations offer assistance to communities and private landowners before, during, or after wildfires. The following list is not meant to be all inclusive, but rather to serve as a starting point for identifying additional agencies and organizations that have important roles to play and services to offer. Because each community's and county's situation is unique, the specific entities involved and the roles they play will vary from place to place—users of this guide should contact their local officials, organizations, and agencies for information specific to their area.

City and County Elected Officials: In some counties, commissioners have developed stricter regulations for defensible space in new subdivisions in the wildland-urban interface and have worked with fire departments on requirements for access in new subdivisions. During a wildfire, a local elected official such as a mayor can play a key role in communicating information from Incident Management Teams and other emergency personnel to the community. Following a wildfire, county governments can help secure emergency grants and other funding for restoration and recovery work, and are responsible for enacting the emergency mill levies required by Montana state law for eligibility for FEMA and DNRC funding.

Community Civic Groups: Community civic groups can play important roles in meeting emergency needs during a wildfire and in recovery efforts following wildfire. Community civic groups have coordinated with the local, state, and government agencies involved in wildfire response to help identify and meet needs not addressed by agency programs, and in some cases have formed new groups to help meet specific emergency needs. Local groups have the benefit of local knowledge and can often mobilize quickly to meet victims' needs, and have carried out tasks as diverse as moving livestock to safe areas, supplying household goods and clothing, and helping to rebuild victims' homes. Including local civic groups early in the coordination process will allow them to make the greatest contribution possible to meeting emergency needs. Community civic groups can also participate in wildfire protection planning and in some cases have provided volunteers needed for restoration work following wildfires.

Hospitals: Hospitals' disaster plans may be an integral part of county disaster plans, and hospitals respond to County Disaster and Emergency Services needs as requested during a disaster, including wildfires. Given the duration

of some wildfire events and the associated dense smoke that settles in valleys for days or weeks at a time, local medical facilities may be quite active in responding to respiratory problems as well as the emotional and mental struggles that can be triggered by stress.

Media: Local media can help educate their community about wildfire ecology, risks, and needs and opportunities for planning, hazard mitigation, and preparedness efforts before wildfire strikes. Local media play an important role in communicating about fire status, emergency measures, and suppression efforts during an incident, and about recovery efforts during and following an incident.

Public Health Department: City/county public health departments can provide a number of services of benefit to communities and individuals during and after wildfires. Public health nurses can help individuals with health concerns related to fires, provide referrals, and help individuals access other needed services, including mental health services. Public health departments may also have responsibilities such as monitoring air quality, and issue air quality alerts and offer advice on protective measures as needed during wildfires.

Public Works: County public works departments generally have a variety of responsibilities, which may include road and bridge construction and maintenance, engineering and surveying, and water and wastewater facilities. During wildfires, public works departments may be involved in tasks such as providing signage to indicate road closures and providing emergency road repair. After wildfires, public works departments carry out repair and reconstruction of public roads and bridges as needed; assessment and replacement of culverts and additions to water filtration systems may be required to handle added debris and water flows.

Schools: Schools have an obvious educational role; educational trunks containing information and materials for wildfire education have been developed and made available to teachers, and some teachers have integrated information about wildfires into their curriculum. During wildfires, schools can continue to play an educational role, and also may offer their facilities when needed for emergency shelters, fire crews, or other emergency-related use. Students have also helped gather resources needed by fire victims. After wildfires, some schools have taken part in restoration and recovery efforts, offering students an opportunity for hands-on learning and community service. A number of schools in Montana are participating in the Fuels for

Schools program, converting to heating systems that use biomass from hazardous fuels treatment projects as a more economical way to heat their campuses.

Sheriff's Office: Prior to wildfires, the Sheriff's Office can participate in planning for wildfire protection and hazard mitigation, and contribute to community preparedness through means such as assessing resources available for wildfire response and conducting training for wildfire response. During wildfires, the Sheriff's Office plays a key role in communicating information to the community, developing and implementing plans for evacuation areas and escape routes, establishing roadblocks as needed, and carrying out other measures as needed for public safety. Following a wildfire, the Sheriff's Office can continue its coordination with other agencies and organizations to help with restoration and recovery efforts, and continue to serve as a point of contact for the public to offer reassurance and information about resources available.

Social Service Organizations: Social service organizations include entities such as food banks, the Salvation Army, Senior Citizen Centers, and homeless shelters. During wildfires these organizations can help meet the emergency needs of wildfire victims, provide referral services, and coordinate with other agencies and organizations to help meet special needs that arise.

Volunteer Fire Departments: In addition to their obvious role in fire suppression, volunteer fire departments can play important roles before wildfire strikes. Local fire departments have participated in community risk assessment and wildfire protection planning, trained their firefighters to combat wildfires in the wildland-urban interface, helped assess existing access and access needs, and helped carry out hazardous fuels treatment programs.



TOOLS FOR IMPROVED COORDINATION

Many resources are available to agencies and organizations seeking to improve coordination. Some of these resources are specific to wildfire protection; others are more general guidelines that can be adapted by agencies and their community partners to improve coordination for wildfire protection. The CD that accompanies this guide contains the following resources (in two formats—as a Microsoft Word file and an Adobe PDF file):

- Examples of existing mechanisms for coordination in wildfire protection (MOUs, planning guidelines, community wildfire protection plans)
- Other resources to enhance coordination in wildfire protection (links to websites with examples of successful partnerships and projects, links to websites with additional informational resources on interagency coordination)
- General resources on coordination and collaboration (links to websites with guidance and tips, success stories, etc.)
- Information on each agency’s assistance programs
- Listing of websites where contact information for each agency can be found

By compiling information on tools and resources for coordination, the intent is to provide agencies and organizations with a palette of options from which they can choose methods and approaches appropriate to their unique situation and needs.

Agencies and personnel seeking to enhance coordination should recognize that while coordination provides many benefits, it can be time consuming, and that obstacles such as conflicting interests and limited resources are common. The additional time needed at the outset for coordination should be viewed as an investment that will help participants plan and work strategically, make efficient use of limited resources, and produce better results and outcomes in the long run. The existence of obstacles should not discourage efforts at increased coordination; instead, agencies should seek approaches that minimize and obstacles and be prepared to assist communities and landowners in overcoming barriers.

NOTES

NOTES

APPENDICES ON CD

A. EXAMPLES OF MECHANISMS FOR COORDINATION

1. MOUs
 - a. MOU between USFS and NRCS for Burned Area Emergency Response Program
 - b. Links to additional MOUs on National Fire Plan website
2. Community wildfire protection plans
 - a. Link to *“Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan: A Handbook for Wildland-Urban Interface Communities”*
 - b. NFP Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Assessment and Mitigation Planning Guide
 - c. Examples of community wildfire protection plans

B. OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ENHANCE COORDINATION

1. Links to examples of successful partnerships and collaborative efforts related to wildfire protection
2. Link to publications with recommendations for enhancing interagency coordination for wildfire protection
3. Links to websites with general guidance for enhancing collaborative efforts and partnerships
4. Links to additional guidance for preparing community hazard-mitigation plans
5. Links to state/regional websites with information on wildfire protection and/or funding opportunities
6. Link to catalog of disaster assistance programs

C. LISTING OF ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS BY AGENCY

Includes information such as eligibility requirements, funding levels, and websites with additional information.

D. LINKS TO WEBSITES FOR CONTACT INFORMATION FOR AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS