

**AGENDA**

**ITEM**

**NO. 13**



SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT DIVISION  
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Pocatello, Idaho 83205-4169  
(208) 234-6225  
www.pocatello.us/411/Science-Environment



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Hannah Sanger, Science & Environment Division Manager *HS*

**CC:** Jeff Mansfield, PWD; Kim Stouse and Andy Holmes, Pocatello Fire

**DATE:** April 29, 2020

**RE:** Wildfire Mitigation Grant Application

**Staff request that Council support a grant application from Idaho Department of Lands to the US Forest Service for a Fuels Reduction Project in the Highland Bench and Johnny Creek Areas, including authorizing the Mayor's signatures on documents related to the grant, subject to Legal Department review.**

The City will serve as a sub-contractor on the grant, receiving up to \$240,000.00 for project implementation. Although there is not a monetary match by the City, there will be in-kind services provided via City Staff time and administration.

Junipers will be thinned to less than 20 trees/acre. A similar \$240,000 grant has been received for additional work in the Highland Bench area. Juniper removal work on both projects is expected to commence in late fall 2020/winter 2021. The City has the option to contract out management of this project.

### BACKGROUND

These fuel removal projects will occur in City-owned gullies with dense juniper growth. The work will also occur on private property where there are willing landowners. City staff from the Fire and Environmental Departments have been meeting with the very active Johnny Creek Firewise Group to support their fuel mitigation efforts on private property using these funds, as well as other private and federal dollars.

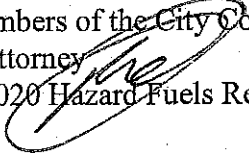
Wildfire risk in select areas of Pocatello is high and threatens homes, City infrastructure, and water quality. The US Forest Service has published an online map depicting wildfire risk which shows this risk. This map, is not intended to be used to compare neighborhoods – it compares communities. According to the USFS,

- Populated areas in Pocatello have, on average, greater risk than 73% of communities in Idaho: <https://wildfirerisk.org/explore/0/16/16005%7C16077/1600064090/>
- Populated areas in Idaho have, on average, greater risk than 94% of states: <https://wildfirerisk.org/explore/0/16/>

### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that Council support a grant application from Idaho Department of Lands to the US Forest Service for a Fuels Reduction Project in the Highland Bench and Johnny Creek Areas, including authorizing the Mayor's signatures on documents related to the grant, subject to Legal Department review.

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Brian C. Blad, Mayor; Members of the City Council  
FROM: Rich Diehl, Deputy City Attorney   
RE: IDL Grant Application – 2020 Hazard Fuels Reduction (Enviro)  
DATE: April 29, 2020

I have reviewed the above-referenced grant application and it is appropriate for the Council to authorize the application and acceptance of this grant application, if the Council so chooses.

The City has applied for, and received, similar grants in the past. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

# 2020 Hazard Fuels Reduction Grant Application

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY	
State Submitting Project:	
State Priority Number:	
Dollar Amount Requested:	\$300,000
Leveraged Share:	\$0

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Wildland/Urban Interface Grant Program provides funding for projects that reduce the effects of catastrophic fire on Intermountain communities. For the Hazard Fuels Reduction program, eligible projects are for fuels reduction on non-federal lands adjacent to federal lands with a planned fuels reduction project pending or in progress. Specifically, projects on non-federal land:

- > 1 - Must be adjacent to federal land (i.e. National Forests) where fuels reduction projects are occurring or are pending to be treated within a reasonable time period (18-24 months);
- > 2 - Must have a WUI component to protect communities at risk;
- > 3 - Must have treatments implemented on non-federal property prior to the federal project or within a reasonable time frame after the federal treatment is completed;
- > 4 - The federal treatment does not have to include a fire component; and
- > 5 - Cannot use Hazardous Fuels funding to pay for seeding treatments.

The primary objective of the Community Protection Program is to minimize damage to private property in the event a fire crosses onto private property from adjacent federal property. For this reason, funding is only available for on-the-ground fuels treatment of non-federal acreage. There is no match required by the applicant. However, because the focus is on treating as many acres as possible with available funding, any match that serves to lower the grant cost-per-acre is highly desirable and may make the proposal more competitive. Applicants are required to work with local Forest Service personnel in determining where federal treatments are planned for the wildland/urban interface and how to best coordinate a project on non-federal lands adjacent to the treatment area.

**PLEASE NOTE:** All information for the project must fit into the allotted character spaces provided on the form. Applications that have been altered in any way will be disqualified. Attachments will not be reviewed.

Applicant Information				
1	<b>Applicant:</b>	City of Pocatello		
	<b>Contact Person:</b>	Hannah Sanger		
	<b>Address:</b>	PO Box 4169		
	<b>City/Zip Code:</b>	Pocatello, ID 83205		
	<b>Phone (Work/Cell):</b>	208-705-6360		
	<b>Email:</b>	hsanger@pocatello.us		
	<b>Fax:</b>	n/a		
Community At Risk Information				
2	<b>Name of Project:</b>	Pocatello East and West Bench Fuels Treatment - Phase II		
	<b>Community Name:</b>	City of Pocatello		
	<b>County:</b>	Bannock	<b>Congressional District:</b>	2
	<b>Latitude (decimal degrees):</b>		<b>Longitude (decimal degrees):</b>	

Total Project Expense (Include leveraged funds if applicable)					
3	Budget Detail (Provide additional information in Block 7)	Grant Share (\$ Amount Requested)	Leveraged funds		TOTAL
			Dollars	In-Kind	
	Personnel / Labor:	\$30,000			
	Fringe Benefits:				
	Travel:	\$7,727			
	Equipment:				
	Supplies:				
	Contractual:	\$240,000			
	Construction:				
	Other:				
	Indirect Costs:	\$22,273			
	TOTAL:				

Project Summary (check all that apply and answer related questions)	
Name of the Forest Service Project adjacent to this treatment? Crystal Creek	
Forest Service Contact Person: Arik Jorgensen	Phone: 208-236-7540
What is the duration of this project? (check one)	<input type="checkbox"/> One Year <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two Years
4 Hazard Fuels Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Number of acres to be treated:	100 Estimated cost per acre:
Number of communities directly affected by this project:	2
State and Private Planning:	<input type="checkbox"/> Initiated and expected completion date: <input type="checkbox"/> Completed:
Number of residences affected:	1700
Project Timeline	
Provide a working timeline for project which includes milestones, timeframes, and critical steps for project completion.	
-Summer 2020 - write prescriptions, flag half of treatment units (50 acres), solicit (hand/mechanical) contract services -Fall/Winter 2020/21 - as site conditions allow implementation of work -Spring/Summer 2021 - Complete fall '20 contracted acreage. Write prescriptions, layout additional 50 acres, solicit (hand/mechanical) contract services, being work. -Fall 2021 - complete summer contracted acres, purchase seed for green strips, solicit planting contract services, plant seed on 100 acres of previously treated open space -Winter 2021 - finalize reporting, enter into monitoring maintenance phase	
Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)	
Does this community have a wildfire protection plan that follows the Healthy Forest Restoration Act CWPP guidelines? (check one) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> in development	
Is this project part of the plan? (check one) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	
Where would we obtain a copy of this plan? <a href="http://www.bannockcounty2040.com/">http://www.bannockcounty2040.com/</a>	

## Project Area Description

**Provide a brief overview of the project and the project area. (Identify vegetation types for proposed treatments.)**

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Pocatello is located in SE Idaho in the High Desert Sage Steppe transitioning into juniper forest where valley floor gives way to mountain slopes. WUI development began in the 1950s on the west side of the valley and over the last 10 years has moved out and up mountain slopes primarily on its northeastern side. Mountain gullies abound in this area that are not suitable for homes, because they are steep sloped, unstable soil types and filled with closed canopy juniper stands. In the newer developments developers donate this undeveloped land to the City of Pocatello who then designates the land as open space. With the ever increasing use of these open spaces, fire ignitions have steadily risen and it is only a matter of time before another wildfire like the Charlotte wildfire of 2012 (destroyed 66 homes) occurs. Private landowners have recently grouped together (e.g. Johnny Creek Firewise Group) and have solicited support from neighbors for a gully-wide treatment on private lands. The City of Pocatello will work with these private landowners, as well as others to develop and implement fuels mitigation actions on 100 acres of private and City land to reduce or remove juniper and plant fire resistive grasses within high priority open space locations to increase the probability of survival of homes and neighborhoods, which will complement BLM project work (Pocatello WUI Fuel Maint.) and the proposed USFS Crystal Creek project that will address aspen decline through conifer removal, hazard fuels reduction and forest product removal.

## Scope of Work

**Provide a brief scope of work which clearly describes how grant funds will be spent. This should be more specific than the project description. Include any additional information regarding budget details in this section. Also explain how this project aligns with the active or proposed Forest Service Project named above.**

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The proposed work is being done within the Highland Bench and Johnny Creek neighborhoods to reduce damage in the event of a wildfire to approximately 1,700 homes and community infrastructure. Treatments will occur within gullies that act as wicks from bench areas to mountain sides (and vis-versa). It is these untreated locations that create connectivity between the private and adjoining federal lands that have been treated (BLM Portneuf West Bench Project) and are now being re-treated (Pocatello WUI Fuels Maintenance) to maintain a similar prescriptive treatment proposed by this application. Prescriptively, juniper will be reduced to approximately 20 trees or fewer per acre, through the use of contracted services that will follow site specific prescriptions that will dictate the appropriate methodologies to be used which includes; hand thinning, piling, burning, chipping, or mechanical mastication. Additionally, fire resistive vegetation will be planted to create an additional resistance to spread component of the fuel reduction treatments, within the footprints of the implemented work. City of Pocatello staff will be administering the project to include, landowner engagement, reimbursement paperwork, reporting, project design/layout, and purchase of seed for the fuels reduction projects on 100 acres in city open space. They additionally will follow established procurement policy to obtain contracted services to implement mitigation activities to include; thinning juniper by mastication and hand treatment methodologies, and planting of green strips with seed purchased by City of Pocatello.

### Budget Narrative:

-Personnel/Labor - \$30K is for Idaho Dept of Lands (IDL) to administer sub-grant with City of Pocatello, to include, fiscal oversight, project support, project inspection and grant reporting.

-Travel - \$7,727 for IDL to travel to and from project site at established State Fleet Motor Pool rates.

-Contractual - \$240K will be sub-granted to City of Pocatello who will expend grant dollars to meet project objectives of reducing fuels on city open space and adjoining private property. They will do so through staff and contracted services, administration (grant, contracting, inspection, reimbursements and reporting) and management of mitigation activities (landowner interaction, project design and layout) on 100 acres.

-Indirect - \$22,273 is for negotiated rate between USFS and IDL.

### Interagency Collaboration

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**Specify the private, local, tribal, county, state, federal and/or non-governmental (501c3) organizations that will contribute to or participate in the completion of this project. Describe briefly their role and/or efforts that directly support/enhance the proposed project (i.e. Hazardous fuels projects, education/outreach activities, time, expertise, etc.).**

City of Pocatello - Staff time (Environmental, Fire, Street (stormwater management), and Parks departments) to coord. project activities, facilitate public meetings, engage/coord. with neighboring federal cooperators, provide public education, development of master mgmt plan, and long-term maintenance of grant funded project work on community open space.

BLM - technical expertise, adjacent project coordination, meeting participation, public education

Caribou-Targhee N.F. - technical expertise, adjacent project coord., meeting participation, public education

Landowners - completion of defensible space and landowner education event/meeting participation, ambassadors to other neighbors and neighborhoods within the project area and greater Pocatello WUI. One landowner group has begun outreach with their direct neighbors and are committed to continue this one-on-one outreach as well as hosting block parties.

Idaho Dept of Lands - Will provide technical asst., meeting facilitation/attendance and landowner education.

### Maintenance / Sustainability

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**Clearly demonstrate how this project will remain effective over time by clearly outlining commitments, monitoring measurables, future funding, environmental factors and outreach.**

In the sagebrush steppe/juniper plant communities that are found in the project area, annual maintenance (additional mowing and herbicide) will be initially required of non-native grasses and noxious weeds, until native/fire resistive grass species recruitment-from in soil and planted sources-is high enough to out compete the non-native grasses. Because these are dry sites it will take upwards of 10 years for infilling of the native grasses to occur thereafter maintenance will be minimal. Pocatello staff have engaged with BLM and USFS staff on various projects through the greater Pocatello area receiving training and gaining experience about project treatment management/maintenance that they will apply to this project. Additionally, Pocatello annually allocates over \$25,000 in staff salaries to manage and maintain its open space areas. Pocatello has committed to this fiscal obligation into the foreseeable future through the hiring of permanent and seasonal staff. Monitoring will be done at-least semi-annually by various Pocatello staff as part of the implementation of the master plan that is being developed in parallel with this project. IDL fire/fuels staff will also monitor compliance through a sampling of past and current endeavors specifically visiting the Pocatello sites at least twice during the 10 year monitoring period. When issues are noted IDL will work with Pocatello staff to craft a plan and implement the maintenance to original treatment prescriptions.