



FEMA

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**FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)
FINAL FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
FINAL PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
WILDFIRE MITIGATION PROJECTS IN THE STATE OF COLORADO**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has completed a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) on Wildfire Mitigation Projects in the State of Colorado in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and Tribal considerations, Endangered Species Act (ESA); Executive Orders (EO) addressing Floodplains (EO 11988), Wetlands (EO 11990), and Environmental Justice (EO 12898); and FEMA Directive 108-1.

BACKGROUND

The PEA is intended to address proposed FEMA-funded wildfire mitigation projects throughout the State of Colorado. Due to the increase in the quantity of vegetative ground and ladder fuels, surface fires today move easily into the tree canopy and fuel destructive crown fires. Fuel reduction in areas prone to wildfire reduces the severity of potential wildfires, increases the ability to control wildfires, and minimizes potential damage to property, public safety, and the natural environment. Much of the proposed project funding will be provided to projects under FEMA's Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs, along with other FEMA programs, as appropriate. Appropriate agency consultation and necessary documentation will be completed to ensure are in compliance with applicable Federal, Tribal, State and local laws, regulations, EOs, etc.

The PEA evaluated two alternatives: (1) No Action and (2) Vegetation Management. Specific items of work may include, but not be limited to:

- Creation of defensible space by removing the woody vegetation around a structure; and
- Hazardous fuels reduction including thinning vegetation, removing ladder fuels, and reducing flammable vegetative materials not more than 2 miles from homes and other structures.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The notice of availability of the draft PEA was published in the Denver Post on April 12, 2017, and in the Grand Junction Sentinel on April 14, 2017. The draft PEA was available for public review and comment between April, 12, 2017 and May 15, 2017. No substantive comments were received.

MITIGATION AND STIPULATIONS

Project impacts that are implemented at an individual or cumulative scale such as to produce significant impacts can generally be reduced below the level of significance through avoidance, minimization, or by mitigating for individual impacts using mitigation measures as described below. If impact avoidance cannot be achieved, agency consultation and implementation of specific mitigation measures would be required.

1. The project sponsor must obtain and comply with all applicable permit and approvals required by Federal, State, Tribal, and local regulatory agencies.
2. FEMA would consult with the State/Tribal Historic Preservation Office (SHPO/THPO) on project specific activities for any project that has the potential to affect previously undisturbed areas or historic properties. If during the course of any ground disturbance related to this project, cultural materials are inadvertently discovered, the project would be immediately stopped and the SHPO/THPO and FEMA notified.
3. FEMA would consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a project-specific basis for any actions that have the potential to affect biological resources, including threatened and endangered species.
4. All project activities must be conducted in accordance with the Colorado State Forest Service's *Forestry Best Management Practices to Protect Water Quality in Colorado*,¹ which include maintaining a 50-foot buffer around streams and wetlands.
5. For projects in which soil erosion potential is determined to be significant, a project erosion control plan, including the use of Best Management Practices, would be implemented to isolate the construction site and minimize impacts of soil loss and sedimentation on soil and water resources.
6. To avoid impacts to migratory birds and raptors, all tree removal would need to be completed outside nesting season and otherwise in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.
7. To avoid unnecessary ground disturbance, all project activities would be conducted during time periods when the ground is frozen or dry.
8. All disturbed areas including skid trails, landings, and staging areas, would be restored using native, weed-free seed, mulch, etc.
9. Standard Best Management Practices for equipment maintenance, noise and dust abatement, worker protection, fire safety, etc., must be implemented during project activities.
10. No open burning would occur. All vegetative debris associated with the project must be disposed of properly and not placed in identified floodway or wetland areas.

FINDINGS

Based on the information contained in the PEA, and in accordance with FEMA Directive 108-1 and EOs 11988 (Floodplain Management), 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), and 12898 (Environmental Justice), FEMA finds that the implementation of the proposed action will not have significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared. This FONSI is based upon proposed actions fitting one of the two project types (alternatives) described in the PEA and meeting all conditions prescribed for that particular project type.

APPROVAL



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05/17/2017
Date

¹ This document can be accessed at: <http://static.colostate.edu/client-files/csfs/pdfs/ForestryBMP-CO-2010.pdf>