

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Deer Creek Wildfire Mitigation Project
(PDMC-PJ-08-CO-2011-005)
Deer Creek Subdivision, Park County, Colorado
February 16, 2012

BACKGROUND

The Platte Canyon Fire Protection District has requested Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM) funding to implement mitigation measures to reduce the wildfire hazard within the Deer Creek Subdivision. (39.2911, -105.4833). The Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program provides funds to states, territories, Indian tribal governments, and communities, for hazard mitigation planning and the implementation of mitigation projects prior to a disaster event. Funding these plans and projects reduces overall risks to the population and structures, while also reducing reliance on funding from actual disaster declarations. The Deer Creek Valley Ranchos (Deer Creek) Subdivision is located in a wildland-urban interface area in northeast Park County, near Bailey, Colorado. The subdivision has 314 property owners and approximately 800 residents.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Executive Order 11988, Executive Order 11990, and the implementing regulations of FEMA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared to assess the potential impacts on the human and natural environment, and is incorporated by reference. The proposed project was coordinated with appropriate Federal, Tribal, State and local agencies. The public has been duly notified of the proposed project and no substantive comments were received.

Alternatives considered include taking no action and one action alternative which was evaluated in the referenced EA. This alternative would include the implementation of established vegetation management procedures that would reduce the potential of ignition and/or spread of a wildfire within the subdivision. Proposed activities include creation of 30 feet of defensible space around each of the residential structures. In addition, the forested area beyond the created defensible space would be thinned so there is space between the crowns of the remaining trees. Removed trees that are useable will be cut into firewood (in-place) and left for the property owner. Unusable wood and slash will be chipped in place and spread. Both treatments include only hand clearing and chipping. No burning would occur with this alternative. All treatments would be implemented using Colorado State Forest Service's Best Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure minimum risk of adverse impacts on physical, natural, socioeconomic, and cultural resources. The BMPs require a 50-foot buffer around wetlands and water bodies. Tree removal will be completed outside of the nesting season for all migratory birds. Overall, these two vegetation management treatments are expected to involve approximately 700 acres. Impacts associated with Alternative 1 would fall within the bounds of those impacts identified and discussed in the referenced EA.

MITIGATION AND STIPULATIONS

The resulting mitigation and stipulations upon which this finding is conditioned are:

1. Project activities involving tree removal would need to be completed outside of the nesting season for all migratory birds for compliance with the MBTA.
2. All treatments would be implemented using Colorado State Forest Service's Best Management Practices (BMPs).
3. Vegetation management BMPs require a 50-foot buffer around wetlands and water bodies.
4. Dust abatement procedures would be implemented if fugitive dust becomes an issue for local residents.
5. To assure noise levels remain at acceptable levels, all equipment would be equipped with proper mufflers, construction activities would be limited to daylight hours.
6. If cultural resources are encountered during project activities, work would be stopped until appropriate coordination has been completed with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office.

FINDINGS

Based upon the information contained in the attached Final EA completed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, FEMA's regulations (44 CFR Part 10) for environmental considerations, and Executive Orders (EO) addressing Floodplains (EO 11988), Wetlands (EO 11990), and Environmental Justice (EO 12898), it is found the Action Alternative, with the prescribed mitigation measures and stipulations, would have no significant adverse impact on the human environment. As a result of this **Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared, and Alternative 2 may proceed, with the associated mitigation measures and stipulations identified above and described in the referenced EA.

APPROVAL



Steven Hardegen
FEMA Region 8
Environmental Officer

02/16/2012

Date