

FEMA Mitigation Funding Opportunity Hazardous Fuels Reduction

Overview

- The execution of fuel reduction projects as a wildfire mitigation measure has been proven effective in lessening wildfire hazards and threat to human safety and damage to property. The objective is to remove enough vegetation (fuel) so that when a wildfire burns, it is less severe and can be more easily managed. These projects are implemented at the community level and extend beyond defensible space perimeters.
- FEMA will consider funding hazardous fuel reduction projects if they are within two miles of homes and other structures that meet or exceed applicable fire-related codes and standards and the risk reduction for the target community or buildings is demonstrated.

Eligible Activities

- Pruning - Removing the lower (live and dead) limbs of a tree, reduces ladder fuels. This is frequently done alongside roads, thus increasing the effectiveness of the road as an existing fuel- break.
- Utility Vegetation management – Using herbicides to kill unwanted vegetation, brush removal around powerlines and directional pruning. It takes both structural integrity and the health of the tree into consideration. This method guides tree branches away from powerlines and reduces internal decay.
- Removal of Understory – Removing shrubs and plants growing beneath the main canopy of a forest.
- Biomass Removal – Including clearing straw, removing dead or dry vegetation, thinning, and removal of blown-down timber from wind throw, ice or a combination.
- Biomass Burning – Including gathering vegetation into a pile for burning.
- Felling of Hazardous Trees – Including removal of standing burned trees
- Mechanical Treatments – Including disking, mulching, mowing, chopping and removal of such material; Material left onsite must meet appropriate depth practices in accordance with applicable codes and best practices.
- Other Industry Techniques – Must be approved by FEMA.



FEMA

Overall Complexity

Application	Environmental	Legal
Medium	High	Medium
Including Private Property...		
High	High	Medium

Application Requirements

- Must be a local government, Tribe, or Private Nonprofit (PNP*).
- Must have a FEMA approved Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP).
- Must fulfill appropriate FEMA and Recipient application requirements including, scope of work, budget, schedule, etc.
- Long-term benefits must outweigh costs (Benefit Cost Ratio greater than 1).
- 25 percent non-federal match required (Under the BRIC program, small and impoverished communities are eligible for a 10 percent non-federal match).
- Applications must specifically identify project location and include documentation that the project area takes place within two miles of eligible structures.
- Applications must include detail on what species will be removed and method of removal (chemical, mechanical, by hand, etc.).
- Applications involving private property must include property level detail for activities including address of property, and documentation of voluntary participation by property owner.
- Statement acknowledging that an Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Plan will be submitted to FEMA at closeout.
- Applicants must ensure that Duplication of Program (DOP) between Federal agencies will not occur, particularly if project is near federal land. Applicants should contact local USDA or DOI offices to determine potential DOP.
- Funding limits are set by FEMA and the Recipient.
- No construction is allowed prior to FEMA award approval.

* PNPs are eligible only under HMGP and are not required to have an HMP.

Environmental Requirements

Depending on the specific location and methods the applicable environmental and historic preservation (EHP) laws can differ. Given this, engagement with FEMA EHP is required on a project specific basis, such as compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Basic EHP requirements for this project type:

- Location of each structure (e.g. provide a Shapefile or Google Earth kmz file; coordinates in decimal degrees with latitude and longitude in separate columns).
- Photographs and description of the vegetation in the project area.
- Proposed methods for vegetation reduction and type of equipment, including pruning heights (e.g. What is the depth of ground disturbance? Will any of the vehicles be tracked? Will pruning be complete or partial?)
- For trees that will be cut or removed, provide the maximum trunk circumference at the diameter at breast height (DBH) and description of removal method (e.g. Will the root ball be removed? Will the tree be chain dragged?)
- Description of any ground disturbance and planned disposal methods for the cut vegetation (e.g. Will materials be chipped and broadcast? Hauled to a licensed landfill?).
- Proposed methods to avoid/mitigate impacts to threatened and endangered plants or animals (e.g., timing restrictions, habitat snags, habitat piles).
- Location and proximity to any rivers, creeks, streams, or wetland areas.