**WF - 5**

# FEMA Mitigation Funding Opportunity

# Hazardous Fuel 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 Projects

* **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

## Overall Complexity

| Application | Environmental | Legal |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Medium | High | High |

## Including Private Property:

| Application | Environmental | Legal |
| --- | --- | --- |
| High | High | Medium |

## Application Requirements:

* Must be a local government, Tribe, or PNP
* Must have a FEMA approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
* Must fulfill appropriate state emergency management agency application requirements including, scope of work, budget, schedule, etc.
* Long-term benefits must outweigh costs (BCR > 1)
* 25% local match required
* Applications must specifically identify project location (e.g., “publicly owned land within the county” is not an acceptable project location) and include documentation that 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
* 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 the state emergency management agency
* **No construction is allowed prior to FEMA/Cal OES approval**

## 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. FEMA EHP has streamlined consultation tools in place with partner agencies, such as the State Historic Preservation Office and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, that may aid in a faster EHP compliance review and project clearance.

Basic EHP requirements for this project type:

* Project location boundaries and any staging areas (coordinates)
* Photographs and description of the vegetation in the project area
* Proposed methods for vegetation reduction and equipment to be used (What is the depth of ground disturbance? Will any of the vehicles be tracked?)
* For trees, provide the maximum trunk circumference and description of removal method (Will the root ball be removed? Will the tree be chain dragged?)
* Planned disposal methods for the cut vegetation (Will materials be chipped and broadcast? Hauled to a licensed landfill?)
* Proposed methods to avoid impacts to threatened and endangered plants or animals
* Location and proximity to any rivers, creeks, streams, or wetland areas