

Notice of Availability for Public Review of a Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Wildfire Mitigation Projects in the State of Montana

Public notification is hereby given by the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that a draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) is available for public review. The PEA evaluates wildfire hazard mitigation projects throughout the State of Montana. This notification is provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Executive Order (EO) 11988 - Floodplain Management, EO 11990 - *Wetland Protection*, and agency implementation procedures, including 44 CFR Part 9 and FEMA Directive 108-1. The PEA has been prepared to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed project on the human and natural environment in accordance with NEPA.

The purpose of this action is to fund activities that reduce the wildfire hazard in urban interface communities and reduce hazards that may occur in areas that have experienced a wildfire. Pre-fire hazard mitigation activities typically include the creation of defensible space and hazardous fuels reduction and are typically located within 2 miles of at-risk structures. Post-fire hazard mitigation activities typically occur within, or adjacent to, a burn scar. Post-fire hazard mitigation includes a variety of activities that may generally be categorized as soil stabilization, flood reduction, erosion control, or reforestation/reseeding projects. Wildfire hazard mitigation activities are funded under FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) and other programs, as authorized by the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (Stafford Act).

FEMA has determined that the hazard mitigation activities could result in short-term impacts on soils and topography, air quality, visual quality and aesthetics, water quality and water resources, floodplains, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, vegetation, fish and wildlife, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, public health and safety, noise, traffic and transportation, public services and utilities, and hazardous materials. Appropriate mitigation measures for the impacts have been described in the PEA and will be implemented in accordance with federal and state law. In the long-term, the hazard mitigation activities would provide benefits to the identified resources by reducing the risk of wildfires and post-fire impacts such as flash flooding, mudslides, and erosion.

The draft PEA will be available electronically at the following web site:

<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/179210>

A public comment period related to the Proposed Action will remain open for 30 days following publication of this notice. Interested parties may submit comments or request additional information by contacting:

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