

The National Fire Plan: Managing Impacts of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment

FY2002 Request: \$5,638,000
Reference No: AMD34112

AP/AL: Appropriation

Project Type: Health and Safety

Category: Health/Safety

Location: Statewide

Contact: Jeff Jahnke

Election District: Statewide

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Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2001 - 06/30/2006

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

This CIP will enable the Division to receive federal funds anticipated to be appropriated as part of "National Fire Plan". These funds will be utilized to mitigate the existing wildland fire problems on all forested lands in Alaska and specific hazards created by the spruce bark beetle epidemic on the Kenai Peninsula and within the Municipality of Anchorage.

Funding:

	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	Total
Fed Rcpts	\$3,460,000	\$1,024,000	\$1,024,000	\$1,024,000	\$1,024,000		\$7,556,000
Stat Desig	\$2,178,000						\$2,178,000
Total:	\$5,638,000	\$1,024,000	\$1,024,000	\$1,024,000	\$1,024,000	\$0	\$9,734,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased Project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-Going Project
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Total Operating Impact:	0	0
One-Time Startup Costs:	0	
Additional Estimated Annual O&M:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:

This is a new CIP predicated on the federal grant funding potentially available through appropriations under the "National Fire Plan".

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Detailed Project Justification:

The catastrophic fire season that occurred in the summer of 2000 in the western states highlighted the need for better fire planning and management on all forested lands in the nation. The spruce bark beetle epidemic and subsequent buildup of dead timber in Alaska has increased the potential for a serious wildland fire on the Kenai Peninsula, within the Municipality of Anchorage, and in other populated areas of the state. Public education, fire department training, equipment needs, and hazardous fuels reduction projects need to be accomplished to mitigate the threat of catastrophic fires in Alaska.

Federal funding is being made available to the State of Alaska as part of the national response to the extreme fire season of 2000 in the western states. Alaska has funding available from several federal categories that this CIP request addresses. Federal grant funds will be expended to accomplish a wide variety of projects to reduce hazardous fuels buildup, educate the public on Firewise concepts, train and equip local government cooperators for wildland firefighting, purchase new technology equipment for use in the state's Fire and Aviation Program.

Specific Spending Detail:

\$5,638.0 Contractual Services – Based on the National Fire Plan's key points of rehabilitation and restoration, hazardous fuel reduction, and community assistance, the Division of Forestry anticipates funding will be made available for the following types of contractual services:

- Firewise Program Implementation
- Prevention Through Education Programs
- Rehabilitation
- Hazardous Fuel Reduction
- Restoration
- Collaborative Stewardship
- Monitoring
- Creating Jobs
- Applied Research and Technology Transfer
- Wildland Fire Training

Federal Grant Funds

The federal grant funding in this CIP includes both one-time and recurrent funding. The recurring funds assist the state in building its firefighting capacity. The one time funding is a direct result of the catastrophic fire season of 2000 in the western states. Existing general fund authorization expenditures on the state's fire program will meet the 50 – 50 federal match requirement for the projects below. No additional general funds are requested to match federal funds.

State Fire Assistance (SFA):

\$614.0 - The federal government will provide recurrent funding for DOF to use for travel to train, providing training opportunities for cooperators, prevention activities, and other related activities in support of the State's wildland fire management program. The intent of the funding is to increase the firefighting capacity of the states in the critical wildland urban interface areas to reduce losses from wildland fires.

\$288.0 – This new one-time funding will be utilized to purchase fire equipment, repair federal excess fire equipment, prevention activities and other program goals.

Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA):

\$110.0 – This recurrent federal funding is for grants and other support to local government and volunteer fire departments to assist them in building firefighting capacity in the critical wildland urban interface. DOF passes 100% of these funds on to the qualifying fire departments.

\$182.0 – This one-time funding will be utilized to fund repair of Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) equipment that is issued to qualifying fire departments, purchase of radios and other wildland fire equipment for volunteer fire departments.

Community and Private Land Fire Assistance:

\$1,246.0 – This one-time grant funding is to rehabilitate lands burned in the 2000 Fire Season, to reduce high hazard fuel accumulations adjacent to urban interface areas, to enhance multi-resource stewardship planning, to fund pilot projects for utilization of biomass removed during fuel treatment, and for community planning to develop and maintain protection capabilities in the high-risk urban interface areas of the state. This funding is for projects benefiting areas burned in 2000.

Cost Share Incentives – Firewise of Anchorage:

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\$720.0 – This is one-time funding for a grant submitted by the Firewise of Anchorage Committee. This funding will be passed on to the committee to accomplish the objectives of their grant.

Fire Workforce Development and Maintenance:

\$300.0 – This title II grant is to develop, train, and maintain an Inter-regional Hotshot Crew to be fully qualified and available to fight wildland fires by May 1, 2001. This is recurrent funding.

Statutorily Designated Program Receipts

The Kenai Peninsula Borough's Spruce Bark Beetle Task Force has developed a list of mitigation measures that will be implemented to deal with the effects of the beetle infestation. The Division of Forestry will accomplish several of these projects in cooperation with the Kenai Borough. The mitigation projects include hazard tree removal, technology assistance/technology transfer, public education/incident training, expanded seasons for wildland firefighters, and vegetation mapping/fuel modeling.

The Kenai Peninsula Spruce Bark Beetle Projects are:

Technical Assistance and Technology Transfer:

\$893.0 – Increase fire suppression personnel support in logistics, prevention, and fire suppression coordination. Provide for additional fire training to local government fire departments, aircraft resources, fire caches, and equipment. Develop a fire retardant site at Kenai Airport and a fire suppression facility at Homer.

Hazard Tree Removal:

\$300.0 – Contract removal of hazard trees near residences, public facilities, and power lines on state lands. Promote defensible space and Firewise community efforts.

Private Landowner Assistance:

\$690.0 – Provide private landowner assistance through the Division's Forest Stewardship Program. Provide grants to landowners to be utilized for reforestation projects.

Kenai Emergency Firefighter Crew Project:

\$225.0 – Fund the Kenai EFF Crew to accomplish hazard tree removal and slash disposal around public facilities and communities. This work will be accomplished over a five-year period.

Prescribe Fire Training:

\$70.0 – Enhance prescribed fire of Kenai Area personnel by providing training and experience opportunities. Conduct prescribed burns to monitor rates of spread, fire intensity and other fire behavior factors.

Project Benefits:

This project will benefit the public living in the urban interface areas of the state through an improved wildland fire program. Reduction of hazardous fuels on the Kenai Peninsula will reduce the possibility of a serious urban/interface fire in spruce bark beetle killed fuels that could threaten human life and public and private property. Prevention and education of the public in the Firewise Program, expanded prevention activities aimed at reducing the numbers of human caused fires, and better trained and equipped firefighters are some of the more important benefits from the CIP.

Projected Revenue to the State:

This project does not directly raise revenues for the state. It has the potential of reducing the state's overall fire suppression expenditures by improving the firefighting capacity of the Division of Forestry and its local government cooperators in the urban interface areas of the state.

Project Support:

This project should receive wide spread support at all levels. Local governments, Native organizations, the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association, and other cooperating state and federal agencies will be supportive of this CIP.

Project Opposition:

None known or anticipated.

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Does this project leverage other funding for the state?

This project will not leverage funds for the state. However, there are spin off benefits such as the employment of Native crews, local contractors, and other benefits to Alaska citizens.

Project History:

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Alternative Approaches/Financing Considered:

None

Annual Operating and Maintenance Costs:

None at this time.