I. ARGONNE NATIONAL LABORATORY

Argonne National Laboratories, (ANL), is situated 2 miles North off Highway 20 in the Northwestern corner of Bingham County. It is part of the Idaho Nuclear Engineering and Environmental Laboratory, (INEEL), and is located near the Eastern border of the government preserve.

The terrain surrounding the ANL site is covered with a relatively thick growth of sagebrush, bitterbrush, and a variety of prairie grasses. The grasses include cheat grass, or June grass particularly in areas that have been disturbed. The vegetation has been mowed or eliminated away from the facility a distance ranging from 200 yards to a quarter mile, which has largely reduced the risk from range fires. However, there remains a definite hazard that could result from thick smoke and blowing embers should a fire burn up to the edge of the available fuel.

The INEEL fire department have prepared contingency plans to respond to wild land fires in this area and have the capability to effectively deal with them. However, in a worst-case scenario involving extremely high winds driving a prairie fire to the perimeter, this facility definitely could be at risk. The primary risk would likely involve thick, suffocating smoke cover and the possibility of fires starting inside the compound. Billowing embers could ignite anything that is flammable. An evacuation would be mandatory to prevent harm to personnel and save lives.

A. MITIGATION ACTIONS

1. Many mitigation actions have already been implemented by both ANL and the INEEL fire department. These actions have included the removal of fuel away from the perimeter of the facility, a concerted effort to identify and mitigate flammable materials, and an evacuation plan.
2. It is recommended that a study be conducted jointly with the pertinent Bingham County Fire District, the BLM District Fire Supervisor (?), the INEEL fire department, and ANL personnel. The desired solution would be to identify additional preventative measures that could be implemented to reduce wild land fire risks.
3. ANL will be encouraged to conduct fire safety training and evacuation drills.
4. ANL will be encouraged to conduct exhaustive examination of the facility to identify and mitigate flammable components, including the roofs of all buildings.
5. Site personnel will be encouraged to further remove and push back vegetation around the perimeter and to consider seeding low-growing grasses that are more fire resistant.

6. It will also be recommended that a secondary evacuation route be developed from the ANL site to Highway 20 in the event that the existing route becomes blocked by smoke or fire.