

Chapter 5: Treatment Recommendations

5 Overview

Critical to the implementation of this Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan will be the identification of, and implementation of, an integrated schedule of treatments targeted at achieving an elimination of the lives lost, and reduction in structures destroyed, infrastructure compromised, and unique ecosystems damaged that serve to sustain the way-of-life and economy of Elmore County and the region. Since there are many land management agencies and hundreds of private landowners in Elmore County, it is reasonable to expect that differing schedules of adoption will be made and varying degrees of compliance will be observed across all ownerships.

The Federal land management agencies in Elmore County, specifically the USDA Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, are participants in this planning process and have contributed to its development. Where available, their schedule of WUI treatments has been summarized in this chapter (Section 4.6) to better facilitate a correlation between their identified planning efforts and the efforts of Elmore County.

5.1 Possible Fire Mitigation Activities

As part of the implementation of fire mitigation activities in Elmore County, a variety of management tools may be used. Management tools include but are not limited to the following:

- Homeowner and landowner education
- Building code changes for structures and infrastructure in the WUI
- Home site defensible zone through fuels modification
- Community defensible zone fuels alteration
- Access improvements
- Access creation
- Emergency response enhancements (training, equipment, locating new fire stations, new fire districts)
- Regional land management recommendations for private, state, and federal landowners

Maintaining private property rights will continue to be one of the guiding principles of this plan's implementation. Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities. Risks and uncertainties relating to fire management activities must be understood, analyzed, communicated, and managed as they relate to the cost of either doing or not doing an activity. Net gains to the public benefit will be an important component of decisions.

5.2 WUI Safety & Policy

Wildfire mitigation efforts must be supported by a set of policies and regulations at the county level that maintain a solid foundation for safety and consistency. The recommendations enumerated here serve that purpose. Because these items are regulatory in nature, they will not necessarily be accompanied by cost estimates. These recommendations are policy related in nature and therefore are recommendations to the appropriate elected officials; debate and formulation of alternatives will serve to make these recommendations suitable and appropriate.

As part of the Policy of Elmore County in relation to this planning document, this entire **Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan** should be reviewed annually at a special meeting of the Elmore County Commissioners, open to the public, where action items, priorities, budgets, and modifications can be made or confirmed. A written review of the plan should be approved by the Chairman of the County Commissioners, detailing plans for the year's activities, and made available to the general public ahead of the meeting (in accord with the Idaho Open Public Meeting Laws). Amendments to the plan should be detailed at this meeting, documented, and attached to the formal plan as an amendment to the WUI Wildfire Mitigation Plan (signatures by the cooperators would be collected at the Chairman's discretion). Re-evaluation of this plan should be made on the 5th anniversary of its acceptance, and every 5-year period following.

Prioritization of activities recommended in this plan should be made by the Elmore County Commissioners consistent with the recommendations made in Chapter 1 of this document. During the annual review of this plan, reprioritization can be justified in response to changing conditions and funding opportunities.

5.2.1 Existing Practices That Should Continue

Elmore County currently is implementing many projects and activities that, in their absence, could lead to increased wildland fire loss potential. By enumerating some of them here, it is the desire of the authors to point out successful activities.

- Existing rural addressing efforts have aided emergency responses well.
- The Enhanced 911 service implemented across the county is an excellent service to tie in with fire protection districts.
- Rural signposting across the county is at an incredibly high standard with road names and USFS road numbers identified. This is a model for the rest of the state to follow.
- The development and implementation of the County's Comprehensive Growth Plan dove-tails with this planning effort well.

5.2.2 Proposed Activities

Table 5.1. WUI Action Items in Safety and Policy.

Action Item	Goals and Objectives	Responsible Organization	Action Items & Planning Horizon
<p>5.1.a: Consider amending existing building codes to apply equally to new single housing construction as it does to sub-divisions. Make sure existing policy is comprehensive to wildland fire risks.</p>	<p>Protection of people and structures by applying a standard of road widths, access, and building regulations suitable to insure new homes can be protected while minimizing risks to firefighters. (defensible space, roads and access management, water systems, building codes, signage, and maintenance of private forest and range lands)</p>	<p>County Commissioners in cooperation with Rural Fire Districts and Planning and Zoning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 1 debate and adoption of revised code (2004). Review adequacy of changes annually, make changes as needed.
<p>5.1.b: Develop County policy concerning building materials used in high-risk WUI areas on existing structures and new construction</p>	<p>Protection of people and structures by improving the ability of emergency response personnel to respond to threatened homes in high-risk areas.</p>	<p>County Commissioners Office in cooperation with Rural Fire Departments</p>	<p>Year 1 (2004) activity: Consider and develop policy to address construction materials for homes and businesses located in high wildfire risk areas. Specifically, a County policy concerning wooden roofing materials and flammable siding, especially where juxtaposed near heavy wildland fuels.</p>
<p>5.1.c: Develop a formal WUI Advisory Committee to advise County Commissioners on WUI Issues and Treatments</p>	<p>Protection of people and structures by improving the ability of decision makers to make informed decisions about wildfire issues.</p>	<p>County Commissioners Office, City of Mountain Home, City of Glenns Ferry</p>	<p>Year 1 (2004) activity: Formalize a committee, its membership and service decided on by the County Commissioners, to collaborate on WUI issues within Elmore County. Members potentially to include land management organizations and companies, private landowners, and fire protection personnel.</p>
<p>5.1.d: Develop a County Commissioner’s Office policy to support the applications for grant monies for projects resulting from recommendations in this plan.</p>	<p>Protection of people and structures by improving the ability of residents and organizations to implement sometimes costly projects.</p>	<p>County Commissioners Office</p>	<p>Ongoing activity: Support grant applications as requested in a manner consistent with applications from residents and organizations in Elmore County.</p>

5.3 People and Structures

The protection of people and structures will be tied together closely as the loss of life in the event of a wildland fire is generally linked to a person who could not, or did not, flee a structure threatened by a wildfire. The other incident is a fire fighter who suffers the loss of life during the combating of a fire. Many of the recommendations in this section will define a set of criteria for implementation while others will be rather specific in extent and application.

Many of the recommendations in this section involve education and increasing awareness of the residents of Elmore County. These recommendations stem from a variety of factors including items that became obvious during the analysis of the public surveys, discussions during public meetings, and observations about choices made by residents living in the Wildland-Urban Interface. Over and over, the a common theme was present that pointed to a situation of landowners not recognizing risk factors:

- Homeowners in the public mail survey ranked their home site wildfire risk factors significantly lower than a random sample of home rankings completed by fire mitigation specialists.
- Fire District personnel pointed to numerous examples of inadequate access to homes of people who believe they have adequate ingress.
- Discussions with the general public indicated an awareness of wildland fire risk, but they could not specifically identify risk factors.
- Over half of the respondents to the public mail survey indicated (62%) that they want to participate in educational opportunities focused on the WUI and what they can do to increase their home's chances of surviving a wildfire.

In addition to those items enumerated in Table 5.2, residents and policy makers of Elmore County should recognize certain factors that exist today, that in their absence would lead to an increase in the risk factors associated with wildland fires in the WUI of Elmore County. These items listed below should be encouraged, acknowledged, and recognized for their contributions to the reduction of wildland fire risks:

- **Livestock Grazing** in and around the communities of Elmore County can reduce fine fuels to various levels and have done so in recent times. Domestic livestock graze on grasses, forbs, and certain shrubs in the area. During grazing related activities, some trampling effects may occur at various levels on certain fine fuels in the area. Ranchers tending their herds, or other resource professional in the field may observe ignition or potentially risk-related activities in and around the communities of the county. Livestock grazing in this region should be considered into the future as a low-cost, positive tool of wildfire mitigation for the wildland-urban interface in this area.
- **Forest Management** in Elmore County has been affected greatly by the reduction of operating sawmills in the region. However, the active forest management program of the Idaho Department of Lands, and many of the private and industrial forestland owners in the region has led to a significant reduction of wildland fuels where they are closest to homes and infrastructure. An excellent example of this has already been highlighted in this document involving the Idaho Department of Lands management of forestlands around the community of Prairie. In addition, forest resource professionals managing these lands, and the lands of the private owners and federal agencies are generally trained in wildfire protection and recognize risk factors when they occur. One of the

reasons that wildland fires, to a greater degree, have not impacted Elmore County forestlands historically is the presence of activities related to active forest management.

- **Agriculture** is a significant component of Elmore County's economy. Much of the southern portion of the county is intermixed with agricultural crops. The original conversion of these lands to agriculture from rangeland was targeted at the most productive soils and juxtaposition to infrastructure. Many of these productive ecosystems were consequently also at some of the highest risk to wildland fires because biomass accumulations increased in these productive landscapes. The result today, is that much of the rangeland historically prone to frequent fires has been converted to agriculture, which is at a much lower risk than prior to its conversion. The preservation of a viable agricultural economy in Elmore County is integral to the continued management of wildfire risk in this region.

Table 5.2. WUI Action Items for People and Structures.

Action Item	Goals and Objectives	Responsible Organization	Action Items, Planning Horizon and Estimated Costs
5.2.a: Youth and Adult Wildfire Educational Programs	Protect people and structures by increasing awareness of WUI risks, how to recognize risk factors, and how to modify those factors to reduce risk	Cooperative effort including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Idaho Cooperative Extension Idaho Department of Lands USFS Boise National Forest, Sawtooth National Forest, and State and Private Forestry Office Bureau of Land Management Local School Districts 	To start immediately using existing educational program materials and staffing. Formal needs assessment should be responsibility of University of Idaho Cooperative Extension faculty and include the development of an integrated WUI educational series by year 3 (2006). Costs initially to be funded through existing budgets for these activities to be followed with grant monies to continue the programs as identified in the formal needs assessment.
5.2.b: Wildfire risk assessments of homes in identified communities	Protect people and structures by increasing awareness of specific risk factors of individual home sites in the at-risk landscapes. Only after these are completed can home site treatments follow.	To be implemented by County Commissioners Office in cooperation with the Rural Fire Departments, and City of Mountain Home, City of Glenns Ferry . Actual work may be completed by Wildfire Mitigation Consultants or trained volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost: Approximately \$100 per home site for inspection, written report, and discussions with the homeowners. There are approximately 10,500 housing units in Elmore County, roughly 1,200 (11%) of these structures would benefit from a home site inspection and budget determination for a total cost estimate of \$120,000. Action Item: Secure funding and contract to complete the inspections during years 1 & 2 (2004-05) Home site inspection reports and estimated budget for each home site's treatments will be a requirement to receive funding for treatments through grants.
5.2.c: Home Site WUI Treatments	Protect people, structures, and increase fire fighter safety by reducing the risk factors surrounding homes in the WUI of Elmore County	<p>County Commissioners in cooperation with Fire Mitigation Consulting company and Rural Fire Districts, City of Mountain Home, City of Glenns Ferry</p> <p><i>Complete concurrently with 5.2.b.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual funding level will be based on the outcomes of the home site assessments and cost estimates Estimate that treatments will cost approximately \$1,000 per home site for a defensible space of roughly 150'. Approximately 4,000 homes in this category for an estimated cost of \$4,000,000. Total home and business (non-governmental) assessed value in County is roughly \$449 million (average \$48,411): B/C Ratio of this treatment is approximately 112:1, when considered across the entire county. Actual B/C ration will vary by community. Home site treatments can begin after the securing of funding for the treatments and immediate implementation in 2004 and will continue from year 1 through 5 (2008).

Table 5.2. WUI Action Items for People and Structures.

Action Item	Goals and Objectives	Responsible Organization	Action Items, Planning Horizon and Estimated Costs
<p>5.2.d: Community Defensible Zone WUI Treatments</p>	<p>Protect people, structures, and increase fire fighter safety by reducing the risk factors surrounding high risk communities in the WUI of Elmore County</p>	<p>County Commissioners in cooperation with Fire Mitigation Consultants and Rural Fire Districts, City of Mountain Home, City of Glenns Ferry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual funding level will be based on the outcomes of the home site assessments and cost estimates. • Years 2-5 (2004-08): Treat high risk wildland fuels from home site defensible space treatments (4.4.c) to an area extending 400 feet to 750 feet beyond home defensible spaces, where steep slopes and high accumulations of risky fuels exist. Should link together home treatment areas. Treatments target high risk concentrations of fuels and not 100% of the area identified. To be completed only after or during the creation of home defensible spaces have been implemented. • Communities and areas to target: Atlanta, Prairie, Pine, Featherville, Anderson Dam Road area, Oasis, King Hill, and Tipanuk. • Approximate average cost on a per structure basis is \$750-\$1,500 depending on extent of home defensibility site treatments, for a cost estimate of \$1.2 million. Couple this cost with the home defensibility space costs of \$4.0 million. The number of structures to benefit from these treatments include the 1,200 structures receiving home site treatments plus an estimated 3,250 more structures. The average B/C Ratio for these treatments combined in Elmore County is 41:1. Actual B/C ration by community will be variable.
<p>5.2.e: Maintenance of Home Site WUI Treatments</p>	<p>Protect people, structures, and increase fire fighter safety by reducing the risk factors surrounding homes in the WUI of Elmore County</p>	<p>County Commissioners Office in cooperation with Rural Fire Departments and local home owners, City of Mountain Home, City of Glenns Ferry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home site defensibility treatments must be maintained periodically to sustain benefits of the initial treatments. • Each site should be assessed 5 years following initial treatment • Estimated re-inspection cost will be \$50 per home site on all sites initially treated or recommended for future inspections (\$60,000) • Follow-up inspection reports with treatments as recommended years 5 through 10.
<p>5.2.f: Re-entry of Home Site WUI Treatments</p>	<p>Protect people, structures, and increase fire fighter safety by reducing the risk factors surrounding homes in the WUI of Elmore County</p>	<p>County Commissioners Office in cooperation with Rural Fire Departments and local home owners, City of Mountain Home, City of Glenns Ferry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-entry treatments will be needed periodically to maintain the benefits of the initial WUI home treatments. Each re-entry schedule should be based on the initial inspection report recommendations, observations, and changes in local conditions. Generally occurs every 5-10 years.

Table 5.2. WUI Action Items for People and Structures.

Action Item	Goals and Objectives	Responsible Organization	Action Items, Planning Horizon and Estimated Costs
<p>5.2.g: Access Improvements of bridges, cattle guards, and limiting road surfaces</p>	<p>Protection of people, structures, infrastructure, and economy by improving access for residents and fire fighting personnel in the event of a wildfire. Reduces the risk of a road failure that leads to the isolation of people or the limitation of emergency vehicle and personnel access during an emergency.</p>	<p>County Roads and Bridges Department in cooperation with US Forest Service, BLM, State of Idaho (Lands and Transportation), and forestland or rangeland owners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2004): Update existing assessment of travel surfaces, bridges, and cattle guards in Elmore County as to location. Secure funding for implementation of this project (grants) • Year 2 (2005): Conduct engineering assessment of limiting weight restrictions for all surfaces (e.g., bridge weight load maximums). Estimate cost of \$150,000 which might be shared between County, USFS, BLM, State, and private based on landownership associated with road locations. • Year 2 (2005): Post weight restriction signs on all crossings, copy information to rural fire districts and wildland fire protection agencies in affected areas. Estimate cost at roughly \$25-\$30,000 for signs and posting. • Year 3 (2006): Identify limiting road surfaces in need of improvements to support wildland fire fighting vehicles and other emergency equipment. Develop plan for improving limiting surfaces including budgets, timing, and resources to be protected for prioritization of projects (benefit/cost ratio analysis). Create budget based on full assessment.
<p>5.2.h: Access Improvements and Creation of Fuel Breaks within and surrounding Oasis Fire District.</p>	<p>Protection of people, structures, infrastructure, and economy by improving access and safety of residents and fire fighting personnel in the event of a wildfire. Allows for alternative escape route when the primary access is compromised.</p>	<p>County Roads and Bridges Department in cooperation with US Forest Service, BLM, State of Idaho (Lands and Transportation).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2004): Update assessments of Oasis area roads to facilitate better management in the wildland urban interface. Secure funding for implementation of this project. • Year 2 (2005): Secure funding and implement projects to improve limiting access along this road to facilitate broader range of vehicles using this route as an emergency route. No estimate of costs until priorities are set and options identified.
<p>5.2.i: Access Improvements for community of Atlanta: James Creek Road.</p>	<p>Protection of people, structures, infrastructure, and economy by improving access for residents and fire fighting personnel in the event of a wildfire. Allows for alternative escape route.</p>	<p>County Roads and Bridges Department in cooperation with US Forest Service, BLM, State of Idaho (Lands and Transportation).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2004): Update existing assessment of James Creek Roads as to limiting areas of road and bridges. Secure funding for implementation of this project. • Year 2 (2005): Secure funding and implement projects to improve limiting access along this road to facilitate broader range of vehicles using this route as an emergency route. No estimate of costs until priorities are set and options identified.

Table 5.2. WUI Action Items for People and Structures.

Action Item	Goals and Objectives	Responsible Organization	Action Items, Planning Horizon and Estimated Costs
<p>5.2.j: Access Improvements through road-side fuels management: Middle Fork of Boise River Road, James Creek Road, Anderson Dam Road area, Pine-Featherville Road, and Prairie area Roads.</p>	<p>Protection of people, structures, infrastructure, and economy by improving access for residents and fire fighting personnel in the event of a wildfire. Allows for a road based defensible area that can be linked to a terrain based defensible areas.</p>	<p>County Roads and Bridges Department in cooperation with US Forest Service, BLM, State of Idaho (Lands and Transportation), and forestland or rangeland owners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2004): Update existing assessment of roads in Elmore County as to location. Secure funding for implementation of this project (grants). • Year 2 (2005): Specifically address access issues listed in column one, plus recreation areas, and others identified in assessment. Target 100' on downhill side of roads and 75' on uphill side for estimated cost of \$15,000 per mile of road treated. If 150 miles of roadway are prioritized for treatment (est.) the cost would amount to \$2.25 million. B/C Ratio of 96:1 is achieved, but is highly variable. • Year 3 (2006): Secure funding and implement projects to treat road-side fuels.

5.4 Infrastructure

Significant infrastructure refers to the communications, transportation (road and rail networks), energy transport supply systems (gas and power lines), and water supply that service a region or a surrounding area. All of these components are important to Elmore County. These networks are by definition a part of the Wildland-Urban Interface in the protection of people, structures, **infrastructure**, and unique ecosystems. Without supporting infrastructure a community's structures may be protected, but the economy and way of life lost. As such, a variety of components will be considered here in terms of management philosophy, potential policy recommendations, and on-the-ground activities.

Communication Infrastructure: This component of the WUI seems to be diversified across the county with multiple source and destination points, and a spread-out support network. Although site specific treatments will impact directly local networks, little needs done to insure the system's viability.

Transportation Infrastructure (road and rail networks): This component of the WUI has some potential limitations in Elmore County. The hub of Elmore County's transportation network is located in Mountain Home (as is the County Seat), and the remainder of the areas near the Snake River. Specific infrastructure components have been discussed in this plan.

Potential treatments in reference to the rail lines crossing Elmore County will be discussed in a subsequent section.

Ignitions along Interstate 84 are significant and should be addressed as part of the implementation of this plan. Various alternatives from herbicides to intensive livestock grazing coupled with mechanical treatments, have been suggested. As part of the multi-agency team WUI team proposed in the previous section, this entire corridor should be further evaluated with alternatives implemented. A variety of approaches will be appropriate depending on the landowner, fuels present, and other factors. These ignitions are substantial and the potential risk of lives to residents in the area is significant.

Many roads in the county have limiting characteristics, such as steep grades, narrow travel surfaces, sharp turning radii, low load limit bridges and cattle guards, and heavy accumulations of fuels adjacent to, and overtopping some roads. Some of these road surfaces access remote forestland and rangeland areas. While their improvements will facilitate access in the case of a wildfire, they are not necessarily the priority for treatments in the county.

Roads that have these inferior characteristics and access homes and businesses are the priority for improvements in the county. Specific recommendations for these roads are enumerated in Table 5.3.

Energy Transport Supply Systems (gas and power lines): During the Hall Fire in nearby Adams County, the high tension power lines maintained by Idaho Power that cross the region from the Snake River to McCall and then to Riggins were threatened by heat, smoke and particulate matter in the smoke. The power lines were at risk to arcing and potentially failure. Fortunately, power was not lost to the communities of Adams and Valley counties as a result of the fire, but it did point to the need for an increased focus on fuels management under and immediately adjacent to the high tension power lines in this region (Elmore County - Appendix I).

A number of power lines crisscross Elmore County. Because of the location, Elmore County's land surfaces provide access to power supplies and population centers in Idaho and parts of Oregon. Fortunately, most of these power lines cross over rangeland ecosystems. When fires ignite in these vegetation types, the fires tend to be fast moving and burn at lower intensities.

However, when these sagebrush communities become very mature and thick, there is a potential for high temperatures and low humidity with high winds to produce enough heat and smoke to threaten power line stability. Observations across the county of these high tension power lines lead to the conclusion that current agricultural uses coupled with livestock grazing and urban developments have mitigated this potential substantially. It is the recommendation of this Wildfire Mitigation Plan that this situation be evaluated annually and monitored but that treatments not be specifically targeted at this time. The use of these areas as “fire breaks” should be evaluated further, especially in light of the treatments enumerated in this plan (eg., intensive livestock grazing, mechanical treatments, and herbicide treatments).

Water Supply: In many of Idaho’s communities, water is derived from surface flow that is treated and piped to homes and businesses. When wildfires burn a region, they threaten these watersheds by the removal of vegetation, creation of ash and sediment. As such, watersheds should be afforded the highest level of protection from catastrophic wildfire impacts. In Elmore County, water is supplied to the majority of homes from single home or multiple home wells.

There are approximately 67 municipal water supply points recorded in Elmore County by the Idaho Water Resources Board. Sixty-four of these supplies are wells supplying residents with groundwater, two of these systems are spring-groundwater systems (City of Glens Ferry and Trinity Springs LTD), and one of these systems is a surface water collection system supplying drinking water to the community of Atlanta. It is the latter system which would potentially suffer the greatest potential loss in the county, because if this watershed burned then the community of Atlanta would potentially suffer the loss of drinking water via this system. Because of this, pre-planning for this watershed is recommended in the form of a watershed management plan that specifically addresses potential mitigation efforts to limit the negative impacts of a wildfire in this region while maintaining clean, sufficient water supplies.

Agricultural water supply from the region’s rivers and lakes is an important component of the viability of the regional economy (agriculture and ranching). These resources are at-risk to wildland fires. Their protection comes from the limiting of the extent and frequency of wildfires in any given watershed. Based on the analysis of past fires in Elmore County and the current status of wildland fire protection in the region, this component of the economy seems to be stable and reasonably protected. Changes to the status quo are not recommended at this time, in light of the other recommendations in this plan.

5.5 Resource and Capability Enhancements

There are a number of resource and capability enhancements identified by the rural and wildland fire fighting districts in Elmore County. For specific details on these comments, refer to section 4.6. All of the needs identified by the districts are in line with increasing the ability to respond to emergencies in the WUI and are fully supported by the planning committee.

Specific reoccurring themes of needed resources and capabilities include:

- More water tenders for Rural Fire Districts
- Improved radio capabilities within each district and for mutual aid operations
- Retention and recruitment of volunteers
- Training and development of rural firefighters in structure and wildland fire
- Enhancement of the newly formed Oasis Volunteer Fire Department
- Incorporation of Tipanuk into the Oasis VFD, or the formation of a new district specifically for the residents of Tipanuk.

The implementation of each issue will rely on either the isolated efforts of the fire districts or a concerted effort by the county to achieve equitable enhancements across all of the districts. Given historic trends, individual departments competing against neighboring departments for grant monies and equipment will not necessarily achieve countywide equity. However, the Southwestern Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council may be an organization uniquely suited to work with all of the districts in Elmore County and adjacent counties to assist in the prioritization of needs across district and even county lines. Once prioritized, the RC&D is in a position to assist these districts with identifying, competing for, and obtaining grants and equipment to meet these needs.

Table 5.3. WUI Action Items in Fire Fighting Resources and Capabilities.

Action Item	Goals and Objectives	Responsible Organization	Action Items & Planning Horizon
5.3.a: Obtain four 5,000 gallon water tenders for rural fire districts.	Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability enhancements.	Rural fire districts, City of Mountain Home, City of Glenns Ferry, and the County Commissioners in cooperation with the Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2004): Verify stated need still exists, develop budget, and locate funding or equipment (surplus) sources. • Year 1 or 2 (2004-05): Acquire and deliver needed equipment to districts based on prioritization by need and funding awards.
5.3.b: Enhance radio availability in each district, link in to existing dispatch, and improve range within the region, update to new digital, narrow band frequency adopted by feds and state.	Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability enhancements.	Rural fire districts, City of Mountain Home, City of Glenns Ferry, and the County Commissioners in cooperation with the Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2004): Summarize existing two-way radio capabilities and limitations. Identify costs to upgrade existing equipment and locate funding opportunities. • Year 2 (2005): Acquire and install upgrades as needed. • Year 2-3 (2005-06): Identify opportunities for radio repeater towers located in the region for multi-county benefits.
5.3.c: Fire Station/Community Center for Oasis Volunteer Fire District and community of Oasis.	Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability enhancements.	Oasis VFD and the Elmore County Commission in cooperation with the Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimate of Costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$125,000 • 2 Year Planning Horizon

Table 5.3. WUI Action Items in Fire Fighting Resources and Capabilities.

Action Item	Goals and Objectives	Responsible Organization	Action Items & Planning Horizon
5.3.d: Retention of Volunteer Fire Fighters	Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability enhancements.	Rural and Wildland Fire Districts, City of Mountain Home, City of Glens Ferry, and County , working with broad base of county citizenry to identify options, determine plan of action, and implement it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Year Planning Horizon, extended planning time frame • Target an increased recruitment (+10%) and retention (+20% longevity) of volunteers • Year 1 (2004): Develop incentives program and implement it.
5.3.e: Increased training and capabilities of fire fighters	Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability enhancements.	Rural and Wildland Fire Districts working with the BLM and USFS for wildland training opportunities and with the State Fire Marshall's Office for structural fire fighting training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2004): Develop a multi-county training schedule that extends 2 or 3 years in advance (continuously). • Identify funding and resources needed to carry out training opportunities and sources to acquire. • Year 1 (2004): Begin implementing training opportunities for volunteers.
5.3.f: Assistance to Atlanta Rural Fire Department	Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability enhancements.	Atlanta fire district and the County Commissioners in cooperation with the Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2004): Develop specific needs assessment with community for structural and wildland resources tied in with USFS resources projections • Identify funding and resources needed to carry out assistance. • Year 2 (2005): Begin implementing opportunities for district.
5.3.g: Extension of Facility for Glens Ferry Rural Fire District.	Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability enhancements.	Glens Ferry fire district and the County Commissioners in cooperation with the Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2004): develop cost estimates and secure funding. • 2 Year: Implement expansion to get equipment into cover facility.

Table 5.3. WUI Action Items in Fire Fighting Resources and Capabilities.

Action Item	Goals and Objectives	Responsible Organization	Action Items & Planning Horizon
<p>5.3.h: Creation of Pine-Featherville Rural Fire District. Due to demographics, most likely will need to be created as a paid staff station, not a volunteer based department.</p>	<p>Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability creation.</p>	<p>Local citizens, wildland fire districts and the County Commissioners in cooperation with the Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2004): Recruit volunteers in community and develop cost estimates then secure funding. • 2 Year: Implement creation of new district (this is a significant achievement in the protection of a large number of residents and visitors).
<p>5.3.i: Creation of Prairie Rural Fire District</p>	<p>Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability creation.</p>	<p>Local citizens, wildland fire districts and the County Commissioners in cooperation with the Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2004): Recruit volunteers in community and develop cost estimates then secure funding. • Year 2: Implement creation of new district (this is a significant achievement in the protection of a large number of residents and visitors).
<p>5.3.j: Install a repeater tower near Oasis.</p>	<p>Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability enhancements.</p>	<p>Rural fire districts and the County Commissioners in cooperation with the Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2006): Identify sites near Oasis for radio repeater towers that would have multi-county benefits. • Year 2 (2007): Acquire and install needed equipment.
<p>5.3.k: Obtain 1,000 gallon structural engine for Oasis Volunteer Fire Department.</p>	<p>Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability enhancements.</p>	<p>Oasis Volunteer Fire Department and Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2006): Verify stated need still exists, develop budget, and locate funding or equipment (surplus) sources. • Year 1 or 2 (2006-07): Acquire and deliver needed equipment to districts based on prioritization by need and funding awards.

Table 5.3. WUI Action Items in Fire Fighting Resources and Capabilities.

Action Item	Goals and Objectives	Responsible Organization	Action Items & Planning Horizon
5.3.l: Obtain wildland engine for Oasis Volunteer Fire Department.	Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability enhancements.	Oasis Volunteer Fire Department and Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2006): Verify stated need still exists, develop budget, and locate funding or equipment (surplus) sources. • Year 1 or 2 (2006-07): Acquire and deliver needed equipment to districts based on prioritization by need and funding awards.
5.3.m: Obtain a medical quick response unit for Oasis Volunteer Fire Department.	Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability enhancements.	Oasis Volunteer Fire Department and Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2006): Verify stated need still exists, develop budget, and locate funding or equipment (surplus) sources. • Year 1 or 2 (2006-07): Acquire and deliver needed equipment to districts based on prioritization by need and funding awards.
5.3.n: Creation of formal taxing district for the Oasis Volunteer Fire Department.	Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability enhancements and economic viability.	Oasis Volunteer Fire Department, County Commissioners, and community of Oasis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2006): Begin public education campaign within proposed taxing district. • Present formal petition to County Commissioners requesting the new taxing district.
5.3.o: Creation of Tipanuk Rural Fire District	Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability creation.	Local citizens, wildland fire districts and the County Commissioners in cooperation with the Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2004): Recruit volunteers in community and develop cost estimates then secure funding. • 2 Year: Implement creation of new district (this is a significant achievement in the protection of residents in a high risk area).

Table 5.3. WUI Action Items in Fire Fighting Resources and Capabilities.

Action Item	Goals and Objectives	Responsible Organization	Action Items & Planning Horizon
5.3.p: Obtain one multi-purpose roadable dozer for Oasis Volunteer Fire Department.	Protection of people and structures by direct fire fighting capability enhancements.	Oasis Volunteer Fire Department, BLM, and the County Commissioners in cooperation with the Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2004): Verify stated need still exists, develop budget, and locate funding or equipment (surplus) sources. • Year 1 or 2 (2004-05): Acquire and deliver needed equipment to district based on prioritization by need and funding awards.

5.6 Regional Land Management Recommendations

In section 5.3 of this plan, reference was given to the role that forestry, grazing and agriculture have in promoting wildfire mitigation services through active management. Elmore County is both a rural county and an urban center (Mountain Home). It is dominated by wide expanses of forest and rangelands intermixed with communities and rural houses.

Wildfires will continue to ignite and burn fuels and homes depending on the weather conditions and other factors enumerated earlier. However, active land management that modifies fuels, promotes healthy range and forestland conditions, and promotes the use of these natural resources (consumptive and non-consumptive) will insure that these lands have value to society and the local region. We encourage the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Idaho Department of Lands, Industrial landowners, private land owners, and all other landowners in the region to actively manage their Wildland-Urban Interface lands in a manner consistent with the management of reducing fuels and risks in this zone.

5.6.1 Fire Mitigation Opportunities and Elmore County/Lower Snake River District BLM

Rangeland in Elmore County, particularly the lower-elevation area between Boise and Hammett, has historically experienced significant wildfire activity. A high number of ignitions and subsequent large fire growth frequently occur in a zone roughly bounded by Boise to the northwest, Hammett to the southeast, Interstate 84 on the north, and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks on the south. Investigations have shown that vehicles or trains most often ignite these fires. Light, flashy fuels combined with normal winds, which lead to quick ignitions, rapid-fire spread, and large burns, dominate the area.

The fire hazards identified in this zone present the BLM and its partners a variety of opportunities to reduce the hazards and risk of wildfire. Some opportunities, either implemented or proposed, are discussed below.

5.6.1.1 Railroad Right-of-Way

There are a number of curves, grades, and sidings where trains may be prone to create sparks, eject hot stack carbon, or blow hot brake shoes, any one of which can easily ignite the light grassy fuels through the railroad corridor. In 2000, following several years of frequent railroad fires, the Lower Snake River District entered a partnership with Union Pacific Railroad to

address this hazard. UPRR contributed funding and the BLM contributed both funding and staff to conduct prescribed burning along approximately 50 miles of right-of-way, on both sides of the tracks, in spring and early summer..

Removing the fuels by burning in the right-of-way was sufficient to cause a significant drop in the number of ignitions from trains through this area. The first year, there were no train-caused fires through this corridor following the burn project. While a few ignitions occurred following the project the second year, these were rare and represented only a fraction of the number historically experienced.

Due to funding limitations and other considerations in each of the past two years, this project has not been accomplished in 2002 or 2003. Fire managers hope to resume this program in the future.

5.6.1.2 Interstate 84 Corridor

Similar to the issues faced in the railroad right-of-way, the Interstate 84 corridor from Boise to Mountain Home, and to a lesser degree from Mountain Home to Glenns Ferry, has historically experienced significant numbers of wildfire ignitions and rapid fire spread. This corridor also contains light, flashy fuels that become tinder dry during the summer months and it has a high volume of traffic.

Ignitions often occur from such vehicle-related causes as pulling off the road into the grass for mechanical or other reasons, overheating, tire blow-outs, overheated or lost bearings, axle or electrical problems, and more. The portion of this corridor near the community of Tipanuk, northwest of Mountain Home, was identified in mitigation planning during 2001 as needing some form of firebreak.

BLM fire and fuels managers, in cooperation with the Idaho Department of Transportation, are currently exploring methods and means to treat the right-of-way fuels and create a firebreak on both sides of, and in the median, of the Interstate from near Boise to Glenns Ferry. IDT currently contracts for mowing rights-of-way in a larger geographic area and the timing and frequency of mowing in the Boise-to-Glenns Ferry strip has not been sufficient to minimize fire hazards and ignitions.

Treatment options being explored range from the BLM, through the National Fire Plan, funding more frequent and time-focused mowing, to a complex, multi-year project involving mowing, herbicide applications, and seeding of more fire-resistant vegetation.

The completion of an area-wide environmental assessment, and field-testing and approval of an herbicide product focused on cheat grass control, both of which may be accomplished within the next year, may allow a comprehensive fuels management project to proceed through the I-84 corridor within the next few years. This treatment is also being considered for several other access and major roadways throughout the area.

In the short term, the BLM and IDT are exploring potential fuels treatments to reduce hazards in more localized projects focused on freeway interchanges and specific access roads.

Throughout the short- and long-term vision for fuels treatment in the I-84 corridor, consideration is being given for compliance with NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) requirements, protection of existing stands of big sage, and other valued resources through the right-of-way.

5.6.1.3 Fence-line Tumbleweed Burning

During each of the past 3 years, LSRD fuels and fire staff have conducted burn projects along more than 30 miles of fence lines, including some fence lines along road and highway rights-of-way. This project has been designed to remove accumulations of tumbleweeds which create and contribute to a fire hazard. This work has been done primarily in the Orchard and Simco Road areas southeast of Boise. This project may continue in 2004 on a much smaller scale than in recent years.

5.6.1.4 General Projects

- Since 2000, a cooperative effort has been made to educate homeowners on a broad scale and conduct individual home assessments throughout the County. Participants in this work have included the Lower Snake River District, the Student Conservation Corps, the American Red Cross, the Mountain Home Fire Department, and others.
- For several years following the 250,000-acre Foothills Fire, Firewise literature and other homeowner information was distributed by the county to applicants and recipients of building permits. This effort waned after a few years but could be resumed in collaboration between the County and the BLM.
- Along with supporting several fire departments in the County through the Rural Fire Assistance program, LSRD officials are encouraging the formation of new departments where they're needed.

5.6.2 U.S. Forest Service WUI treatments being considered in Elmore County

The Boise National Forest has provided the following planned projects in Elmore County.

5.6.2.1 US Forest Service Project Development and Implementation Timeframes

Project name	Planning Time Frame	Implementation Timeframe
Camp Creek Fuel-break	Decision memo signed in June 2003.	Implementation begun in July 2003. Completion expected in October 2004
Camp Creek Prescribed Burn	Decision Memo signed in June 2003	Implementation and completion expected in Spring 2005
Lime Creek Aspen Restoration Project	Decision Notice signed September 2001	Implementation begun in October 2002. Continue to treat 2000-3000 acres annually with prescribed fire until 2007.
White Flat Resource Management Project	Complete Environmental Assessment by September 2004	Planned implementation for 2005 and continue for 1 to 2 years.
Knox Resource Management Project	Project scoping currently in progress. Environmental Assessment to be completed in 2005.	Implementation planned to commence in 2007
Atlanta South Fuels Reduction Project	Decision Notice signed July 2003.	Implementation to begin in 2004 and continue for the next 5 years.

Table 5.5. US Forest Service Project Descriptions.

Project	Summary (Purpose and Need)	Benefits to the Community	Location	Description	Acres
Camp Creek Fuel-break	Reduce hazardous fuels through thinning and prescribed burning in order to achieve Condition Class I along Forest Boundary adjacent to Wildland- Urban Interface.	Decrease the risk of a wildland fire burning structures or forest resources.	National Forest System Lands adjacent to the Fall Creek Overlook Subdivision; approximately 3 miles north of Fall Creek Lodge.	Mechanically remove <8" DBH trees and prune larger trees along National Forest System and private lands boundary.	65
Camp Creek Prescribed Burn	Reduce hazardous fuels through prescribed burning in order to achieve Condition Class I along Forest Boundary adjacent to Wildland Urban Interface.	Decrease the risk of a wildland fire burning structures or forest resources.	National Forest System Lands adjacent to the Fall Creek Overlook Subdivision; approximately 3 miles north of Fall Creek Lodge.	Underburn to reduce hazard fuels on National Forest System lands adjacent private property.	635
Lime Creek Aspen Restoration Project	Reduce hazardous fuels, improve watershed function, and improve wildlife habitat. Restore the role of fire that was an integral part of aspen ecology.	Decrease the risk of large scale wildland fire event. Reduce potential for unhealthy air quality from smoke.	National Forest System Lands on Sawtooth and Boise National Forests. Approximately 6 miles east of Pine, ID.	Broadcast burn 2 to 3,000 acres Of aspen, shrub, and conifer stands to improve aspen health and vigor.	10,000
White Flat Resource Management Project	Reduce hazardous fuels through thinning and prescribed burning in order to achieve Condition Class I along Forest Boundary adjacent to Wildland Urban Interface.	Decrease the risk of a wildland fire burning structures or forest resources. Provide economic opportunities through timber sale/mechanical treatments.	National Forest System Lands adjacent to the Fall Creek Overlook Subdivision; approximately 3 miles north of Fall Creek Lodge.	Mechanically thin all size classes of trees and underburn National Forest System lands adjacent to private property boundaries.	1,100
Knox Creek Project	Reduce hazardous fuels through thinning and prescribed burning in order to achieve Condition Class I along Forest Boundary adjacent to Wildland-Urban Interface	Decrease the risk of a wildland fire burning structures or forest resources. Provide economic opportunities through timber sale/mechanical treatments.	National Forest System Lands adjacent to Private property and other federally owned land north of Fall Creek Lodge.	Mechanically thin all size classes of trees and under burn National Forest System lands adjacent to private property boundaries.	2,200
Atlanta South Fuels Reduction Project	Establish stand conditions that provide for long-term establishment of a more natural fire regime that will enable development of a fire resilient ecosystem.	Decrease the risk of a wild land fire burning structures or forest resources.	National Forest System Lands adjacent to private property south of the town of Atlanta.	Treat forest vegetation with mechanical thinning.	600