

FY 2025 State Fire Assistance WUI Grant

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY	
State Submitting Project:	Idaho
State Priority Number:	
Dollar Amount Requested:	\$ 300,000
Matching Share:	\$ 24,000.00

This document is for proposal development only.

Hover over each active field for additional guidance and instructions.

Proposal Cooperator	
1	Cooperator Organization: Bannock County
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Applicant Information	
1	Applicant: Idaho Department of Lands
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Project Information		
2	Name of Project: FY25 WSFM Cottonwood Valley Restoration Project Phase 3	
	Community Name(s): Downey, Swan Lake	
	County(ies): Bannock	
	Congressional District: 02	
	GIS Coordinates (pick one: reference point OR area)	
	Reference Point Name: Cottonwood Valley	
	Lat/Long: 42.384922, -111.916618	
	Description: Approximate project area center	
	Area Name: Cottonwood Valley	
	Boundary Lat/Longs: 42.384922, -111.916618;	
	Description:	

Applicant Budget				
	Grant Funds Requested	Match		Total Project Cost
		Applicant	Non-Federal Contributors	
3	Personnel/Labor:	\$ 30,000		\$ 44,000
	Fringe Benefits:			
	Travel:	\$ 7,727		\$ 7,727
	Equipment:			
	Supplies:		\$ 10,000	
	Contractual:	\$ 240,000		\$ 240,000
	Other:			
	Indirect Costs:	\$ 22,273		\$ 22,273
	TOTAL:	\$ 300,000	\$ 0	\$ 324,000

Budget Narrative (1700 characters including spaces)	
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personnel/Labor - \$30k for Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) staff to manage and administer sub-grant with Bannock County to include: fiscal oversight, project support, project inspection and grant reporting. - Travel - \$7,727 for IDL staff to travel to and from project(s) for project monitoring and inspections at established State Fleet Motor Pool rates. - Contractual - \$240k is sub-granted to Bannock County who will expend grant dollars to meet fuels reduction project objectives by reducing hazardous fuels in high desert sage steppe type on private lands for the protection of the watershed and upwind communities. County staff will execute project activities through contracted grant administration, project management and treatment activities including but not limited to landowner interaction, project design/layout, inspection, reimbursements, reporting and contracted fuel removal activities on 100 acres. Cost break down: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$204,500 to General Contractor performing the HFR treatments \$15,000 to Contracted Project manager creating treatment prescription, map and flag the area, and verifying the General Contractors work \$15,000 to Contracted Administrator to assist with general contractor procurement, reporting and project administration \$5,500 to Bannock County for contractor procurement, management and reimbursements - Indirect - \$22,273 is for the negotiated rate between the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and IDL.

	Project Area Description and Challenges (1700 characters including spaces)	
5	<p>Cottonwood Valley is located in South East Idaho (Bannock County), and rolling hills, streams and High Desert Sage Steppe transitioning into Juniper forests where valley floor gives way to mountain slopes. There are 15K plus acres of privately owned grazing lands intermingled with IDL, BLM, an USFS land. The project area runs along South Stockton Road, a heavily traveled road which leads to recreational areas bordering this area. Swan Lake is located to 2 miles South West (pop: 93), and Lava Hot Springs (pop:377) to the North East. The landscape is made up of Sage Brush and Juniper forests, making it prone to hazardous fuel buildup. Wildfire is the most concerning hazard in addition to the encroachment of invasive plants. Prevailing winds blow towards the communities of Lava Hot Springs, McCammon, Inkom and rural Pocatello, creating more potential for catastrophic wildfires. Fires in this fuel type and geography regularly grow quickly to 1K+ acres as documented by the 2012 Stockton Fire (1,945 acres), and the 2020 Swan Lake Fire (219 acres). When addressing a wildfire, the assigned Emergency Response Agency for Swan Lake and Cottonwood Valley is 30 min away, leaving the communities to initiate evacuations or emergency response. It is crucial to have as much fuel mitigation possible to prevent the spread of wildfires and increase community resilience.</p> <p>The project aims to expand on previous work (Phases 1 & 2), by developing 100+ new acres of fuel breaks through thinning and mastication of hazardous fuel loads on two continuous plots of private land along South Stockton Road.</p> <p>Challenges will include adapting prescriptions on winding ingress/egress roads and steep slopes. Hazardous Fuel Reduction (HFR) contractor procurement has been an issue that will be addressed with including a contracted administrator.</p>	

	Relation to Forest Action Plan and CWPP (2500 characters including spaces)	
6	<p>Idaho Forest Action Plan (FAP): The project is located in the Caribou priority landscape area. The area is characterized as being Moderate to High for forests health risks and High to Very High for uncharacteristic wildfire. Goal 1 of the FAP states "Idaho's Forests are diverse and resilient to climatic changes and other threats (fire, insects, disease, noxious weeds, etc.)", with a treatment specific strategy of, "Designing and implementing stand treatments on a landscape to increase and maintain vegetation diversity and resiliency over time."</p> <p>Bannock County CWPP: The Bannock County CWPP identifies the project area as being high to very high risk for uncharacteristic wildfire due to an extensive WUI, fuels, topography and fire occurrence. The CWPP explicitly lists the project area with a priority/goal for the mitigation of wildfire impacts on the communities of Lava Hot Springs, McCammon, Inkom and the protection of natural resources.</p> <p>The completion of project work will address the identified FAP/CWPP goals/objectives through the reduction/removal of Juniper, dead/dying trees and creation of fuel breaks, which will protect developments and increase the resiliency of landscapes to wildfire disturbance.</p>	

Proposed Activities (3800 characters including spaces)

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Bannock County will work with the Cottonwood Grazing Association and three strategically located landowners to connect the land between phase 1 (2021) & phase 2 (2023) treatment to form a continuous green fuel break totaling 380+ acres. Landowners are cattle ranchers willing to manage their lands for wildfire resilience to protect their land, the transportation corridor, and the surrounding communities. The area was prioritized for fuel removal and strategic revegetation during Bannock County Wildfire Protection Planning, which includes a coordinated effort with BLM, USFS, IDL, and local Fire Chiefs to determine vulnerabilities and activities to mitigate risk and reduce fire spread.

The County staff (\$5.5k) will hire and manage contractors (\$30K) for the administration of this project, including design/layout, reimbursement paperwork, and reporting activities. The County will hire contractors (\$204.5K) for project treatment implementation. Treatment activities include lop/scatter, piling, burning, chipping, and/or mechanical mastication. Prescriptively, all Juniper, Sagebrush, and any other brushy understory will be reduced to no more than 10-30 trees per acre, and the remaining trees be limbed to at least 6 feet or 1/3 of their height.

Landowners will conduct post-treatment management with match activities, including purchasing IDL-approved native seed mix, implementing seeding for firewise revegetation, and maintaining project work through cattle grazing. The amount of seeding will depend on the amount of compromised native vegetation and is advised by the project design. This will reduce the probability of sites being overrun by fire-loving, non-native annual grasses (cheatgrass), while creating a green break, thus reducing fire propagation within the treatment unit.

Landscape Impacts (1700 characters including spaces)

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The Bannock County Wildfire Protection Planning Committee prioritized the Cottonwood Valley area for the implementation of fuel breaks. The Committee coordinates and prioritizes fuels reduction work across all types of land ownership, ensuring that efforts tie together across these lands and have the most comprehensive impact across the County. Specifically, this project will tie directly into the Cottonwood Valley Fuel Mitigation projects Phase 1 (150+ acres in 2021) and Phase 2 (130+ acres in 2023), both treatments on private lands. Further adjacent County completed projects include Station Creek (2022 - 164 acres) and Thunder Mountain (2022 - 60 acres).

Cottonwood Grazing Association is comprised of 23 landowners in Cottonwood valley, who are all committed to cohesive land management practices. The Grazing Association has completed >200 acres of fuel breaks adjacent to the project area and is committed to sharing wildfire risk mitigation treatment information with landowners on an annual basis using County developed education materials.

This project will tie into the future fuels reduction projects prioritized by the Committee and projects currently in the planning process. With cohesive implementation of strategic fuel breaks, thinning, and assessable evacuation routes, Cottonwood Valley and its surrounding communities will be comprehensively resilient to wildfires. Lastly, this project ties into county-wide efforts through the expansion of thinning efforts and green fuel breaks, adding to a cross-boundary fuels mitigation initiative in the Inkom/McCammon/Downey sage-steppe rangeland.

Project Collaboration (1700 characters including spaces)	
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Idaho Dept of Lands (\$276k match) - in the form of consolidated payments associated with Forestry and Fire Assistance in support of private landowners. IDL will also provide technical assistance for the development of treatment prescription and maintenance of the treatments. - Landowners (\$24K match) - complete additional acres of treatment, participate in meetings, neighbor-to-neighbor education, firewood collection, purchase seed, and implement revegetation. - Bannock County (leverage) - Project administration, treatment planning meeting facilitation, education of landowners on project treatments, distribute Firewise pamphlet mailers and maintenance. - Cottonwood Grazing Association (leverage) - Additional fuel removal work following similar prescriptions on adjacent land, education and outreach to landowner members using County provided materials. - Natural Resource Conservation Service (leverage) - technical assistance for education of landowners on land management. - Idaho Department of Fish and Game (leverage) - technical assistance for education of landowners on land management - BLM (leverage) - technical assistance for education of landowners on land management, meeting participation, collaboration on the development of treatment prescriptions, and collaboration/coordination on projects. - USFS (leverage) - technical assistance for education of landowners on land management, meeting participation, collaboration on the development of treatment prescriptions, and collaboration/coordination on projects.

Project Timeline (1700 characters including spaces)	
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fall/Winter 2026: County will sign IDL agreements, contracted project manager will notify the 3 interested landowners of available funding, complete 3 landowner agreements. - Springs 2027: Project manager will develop contractor solicitations, county will procure contractor for hazardous fuels treatments, and contractor will initiate/complete Juniper removal treatments (10 acres), based on landowner agreed prescriptions. - Summer 2027: Continue treatments on 60 additional acres, meet with Cottonwood Valley residents in June to provide fire education, and distribute Firewise pamphlets in person and by mail. - Fall 2027: Continue treatments on 30 additional acres for thinning only, final project inspection by IDL, complete reporting and enter monitoring phase. County will provide in-person landowner education at Grazing Association annual meeting to maintain the work.

Project Sustainability (1700 characters including spaces)	
11	<p>Environmental Factors: In the Sagebrush steppe/Juniper plant communities located in the project area, maintenance will be required the first year to remove any re-spout from previous year treatments. Thereafter, maintenance will be needed every 5-7 years to lop/scatter site recruitment to Juniper due to edge effect from remaining trees. Native seeding treatments (broadcast or drilled), will take place post-Juniper removal as a part of landowner match activities. This will reduce the probability of sites being overrun by non-native annual grasses (cheat-grass), while creating a green break, thus reducing fire propagation within the treatment unit.</p> <p>Commitment: To ensure ongoing maintenance, participating landowners will sign an agreement committing them to sustaining the work for a 10-year period or until the property changes hands.</p> <p>Education: Prior to enrollment and upon project completion, Bannock County representatives provide in-person education to landowners within and near the project area. Education will cover the maintenance and expansion of the undertaken work.</p> <p>Monitoring: The Idaho Department of Lands (fuels/fire) staff will conduct at least two compliance checks during the open grant period and subsequent checks based on a sampling of past efforts. Bannock County representatives will also monitor compliance during the 1st, 3rd and 5th years after the treatment completion. In case of issues, Bannock County will use written and verbal communication to remind landowners of their obligations.</p>