

# Grant Creek Community Wildfire Protection Plan

## Missoula and Missoula County, Montana 2024

### Appendices

Copyright © 2024 Grant Creek Wildfire Risk Task Force. All Rights Reserved

## Appendix A – Action Plan

This Action Plan provides a list of **recommended** actions for agencies, residents and landowners to address the variety of issues and wildfire hazards identified in the Grant Creek CWPP. It should be used as a starting point and may be modified as needed as conditions change. Time frames and priorities for completion identify the importance of each action item. The expectation is that residents of Grant Creek and the identified agencies will collaborate to implements these actions. ***Actions recommended for homeowners and HOAs are highlighted.***

<b>INGRESS/EGRESS</b>					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Meets Intent of existing plans/recommendations</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Collect traffic study data <b>specific to wildfire &amp; tourist season</b>	City County	High	2024	FEMA/USFA Report	Extend Reserve St. study
Improve and pave the Snowbowl Rd west to base of the switchback	County	Low	2029	Road surface improvements for ingress/egress	
Resolve parking issues at the Ravine Trailhead	Lolo NF, County	High	Ongoing	Ingress/Egress Safety Issues	Traffic hazard
Identify/improve areas for traffic control, staging and turnarounds	MCFPA, Public Works	Med	2026	GCWRTF response to 2022 STEX	
Plan for new evacuation routes & ingress/egress when new development proposals are made	City and County Planning Depts.	High	Ongoing		major multi-housing & subdivision projects
Require traffic studies specific to wildfire & tourist season for all new development proposals.	City and County Planning Depts.	High	Ongoing		Addresses safety issues concerning traffic flow

<b>EVACUATION PLANNING</b>					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Meets Intent of existing plans/recommendations</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Pre-plan safety zones along evacuation routes for “last resort” use	OEM, MSO, MCFPA	High	2024	FEMA/USFA Report and 2022 Grant Creek STEX	FEMA report page 17
Track residents with disabilities/underserved populations	OEM	High	2025	FEMA/USFA Report	FEMA report pages 16-17
Enhanced community warning systems	OEM	Med	As developed and available	FEMA/USFA Report	FEMA report page 16
Include safety zones in warning systems	OEM	High	As both are available	FEMA/USFA Report	FEMA report page 16
Improve ingress/egress for evacuation/safety of residents/recreationists, commercial businesses	Agencies, City and County officials	High	Ongoing	FEMA/USFA Report	FEMA report page 18
Potential for Wilke Street exit under I-90 for ingress/egress	MPD, MSO, MCFPA	High	2024	2022 Grant Creek STEX	Examine feasibility
Develop a site-specific Grant Creek Evac Plan	OEM FOGC	High	Ongoing	Collaboration with all agencies and residents	Situational Awareness
Develop Snowbowl Evacuation Plan including road egress and time estimate study	Lolo NF MCFPA, MCSO, Owner	High	2024	2022 Grant Creek STEX	Projected increased use during wildfire season
Develop “last resort” wildfire entrapment best practices for Grant Creek and Snowbowl	OEM, DNRC	High	2026	2022 Grant Creek STEX. FEMA/USFA Report. Incorporate into a Grant Creek Evacuation Plan.	
Create Strategic Evacuation Sign Plan	OEM, City, County	Med	2026	2022 Grant Creek STEX	Pre-planning
Evacuation Time Estimate Study	OEM, Public Works	High	As funded		Ashland, Oregon example
Assess neighborhood “short” evac connector route potential. Identify with agreements.	OEM, FOGC, owners	Med	2025		Keegan, Dark Horse Estates, Prospect.

<b><i>EVACUATION PLANNING (continued)</i></b>					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Meets Intent of existing plans/recommendations</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Create Neighborhood Committees to disseminate evac info	HOAs, Home Owners	Med	2025	Refine information by neighborhood	Coordinate among neighbors
Implement new tech that identifies evacuated homes	OEM	High	As available	2022 Grant Creek STEX	Wildfire response support
Develop a plan for evacuating trails and trailheads	Lolo NF, MCSO	Med	2026		Recreation users
Establish guidance to ensure consistent terminology for evac	OEM with support of agencies	High	2024	For both verbal and written internal/public messaging – all agencies.	Improve existing issues
Assess viability of Dodd Ranch Road as evac route	OEM MCSO	High	2024	2022 Grant Creek STEX	Identify limitations on use
Identify households not signed up for Smart911	OEM	High	Annual	2022 Grant Creek STEX	
Road and trail closure staffing coordination	MSO	High	Annual	GCWRTF response to 2022 STEX	
Establish liaison with Grant Creek businesses	OEM	Med	Annual	GCWRTF response to 2022 STEX	Situational awareness
Identification of public meeting venues and shelters	OEM	Med	Annual	GCWRTF response to 2022 STEX	Pre-planning
Rescue of minor(s) left at a residence with no transportation (plan)	OEM MCSO MPD	High	2025		Safety issue – pre plan
Inform new residents of the Grant Creek CWPP and HOA fire covenants	HOAs, residents	High	Ongoing		New owners moving into Grant Creek
Pre-determine 24/7 staffing/messaging needs for closure locations	MCSO, Lolo NF	High	2024	GCWRTF response to 2022 STEX	Pre-planning
Consider installing web reconnaissance cameras at critical viewsheds to detect fire starts	OEM, Lolo NF, DNRC	Med	2027		Potential grant funded pilot project

<b>HAZARD REDUCTION</b>					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Meets Intent of existing plans/recommendations</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Implement National Forest hazardous fuels projects in Grant Creek	Lolo NF	High	2027	Wildfire Adapted Missoula/Montana Forest Action Plan	Fireshed Registry Priority area
Implement WUI power line best practices for inspections and maint.	OEM, NWE, BPA Lolo NF	High	Annual		Human caused fire potential
Tree limbing/thinning in HOAs' Common Area grasslands and forests	Individual HOAs	High	Ongoing		Reduce impacts of wildfire
Maintain existing weed mgmt. programs to reduce fuel buildup; Modify weed spraying methods to deter spread of cheatgrass	All owners and HOAs	High	Annual	County noxious weed regulations	Approved bio-control is available for some weed species
Consider grazing as a tool to reduce fuels	As applicable	Med	Annual		Cattle, sheep, goats
Coordinate with the Lolo NF on cross-boundary WUI projects	Lolo NF, All land owners	High	Ongoing	Wildfire Adapted Missoula/Montana Forest Action Plan	Upper Grant Creek residents
Obtain rights-of-way private land vegetation treatment agreements along Grant Creek and Snowbowl roads	DNRC, OEM, FOGC, HOAs	High	Ongoing	Wildfire Adapted Missoula	Fuel break construction along access roads for residents
Develop/maintain a cross-boundary database showing completed hazardous fuel reduction projects.	MCFPA, DNRC, Lolo NF, RC&D	High	Ongoing		Coordinate-standardize reports & mapping
Conduct After Action Reviews of hazardous fuels treatments with public participation	MCFPA, DNRC, Lolo NF, RC&D	Med	Ongoing		Increase residents' knowledge and support
Develop multi-ownership hazard reduction projects	All owners	High	Ongoing	Wildfire Adapted Missoula/Montana Forest Action Plan	Forested land holdings
Develop <b>TIMELY</b> plans for ladder fuels removal on previously treated lands	Lolo NF, DNRC w/ property owners	High	Ongoing		Re-entry of treated areas

<b>HAZARD REDUCTION (continued)</b>					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Meets Intent of existing plans/recommendations</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Coordinate projects with Bitter Root RC&D, other local grant agencies	FOGC, HOAs, All land owners	High	Annual		Reduce fuel treatment costs for residents
Large Landowner fuel breaks near housing developments	Owner & adjoining properties	High	Ongoing		Vegetation interface projects
Designate Snowbowl Parking Lot/Bluebird trailhead in Lower Grant Creek as a no campfire /charcoal zone w/signs	Snowbowl owner and City Parks & Rec	High	2024		Grasslands susceptible to wildfire for longer time periods
Install a fire danger rating sign and fire prevention signing at the Bluebird Trailhead.	OEM City Parks and Rec.	High	2024	Update on a regular basis to maintain accurate information and professional appearance.	Cured fuels w/ elevated fire danger issues.

<b>WILDFIRE RESPONSE</b>					
Confirm/update wildfire agencies' run cards	All fire agencies	High	Annual	2022 Grant Creek STEX	
Improve ingress/egress for fire suppression response and firefighter safety	Agencies, City and County officials	High	Ongoing	FEMA/USFA Report	FEMA Report Page 18
Identify HOA Common Area access points/map	HOAs MCFPA	Med	2024	Identify access points, vehicle limitations	Responder knowledge
Coordinate PODs analysis with Grant Creek residents.	Lolo NF	Med	Ongoing	GCWRTF response to 2022 STEX.	Involve GCWRTF
Develop a plan for fire suppression vendors working for insurance companies or residents	OEM MCFPA	Med	2027		Conditions of access for an ongoing wildfire
Develop a wildfire mitigation plan specific to the Republic landfill.	OEM, MCFPA, Public Health	High	2025		Surrounding area fire potential impacts

<b><i>FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITY</i></b>					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Meets Intent of existing plans/recommendations</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Identify active and organized HOAs	FOGC	High	2024		Identify officers and contacts
Determine ability of neighborhoods to accomplish work (organizational levels)	FOGC	High	2024		coordinate activities among neighbors
Update HOA covenants. Include home ignition zone and Common Area improvement measures.	Individual HOAs in Grant Creek	Med	2026		Coordinate with other HOAs in Grant Creek
Continue home ignition zone inspections. Plan for reinspection every 5 years	OEM, MCFPA, Residents	High	Annual		Free to individual residents in the WUI
Use S-215 training as an opportunity for large, annual HIZ inspections.	OEM, MCFPA, FOGC	Med	As available		
Complete FireWise USA community application	FOGC, DNRC, OEM	Med	2027		Resident involvement
Develop neighborhood cadres of certified HIZ inspectors.	OEM, MCFPA, FOGC	Med	2024	Neighborhood Ambassador Program	Resident involvement
Implement "Save My Fence" program in subdivisions	FOGC, HOAs, residents	Med	2024		grasslands & residential interface
Develop WUI specific zoning standards	DNRC, City County	High	Ongoing		
Participate in City and County WUI zoning standards revisions	Residents, MCFPA, OEM	High	Ongoing		Active Resident involvement
Participate in City and County planning for new developments	FOGC, Residents	High	Ongoing		Active resident involvement
Require a thorough Wildfire Hazard Analysis for all new development proposals	City and County Planning Depts.	High	Ongoing		Focuses attention on specific WUI issues
Coordinate seasonal messaging to residents in Grant Creek	FOGC	High	Ongoing	Grant Creek CWPP Communications Plan	

<b>WUI EDUCATION</b>					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Meets Intent of existing plans/recommendations</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Develop wildfire hazard guidelines for WUI apartment living	OEM MCFPA	High	2026		Situational Awareness for tenants
Develop WUI wildfire prevention interpretive signing for trailhead installation	OEM, City Parks/Rec	Med	2028		Educate users about the WUI designation
Continue to provide wildfire risk and hazard information to new homeowners and current residents.	FOGC, OEM	High	Annual	Distribute to new residents and at annual meetings.	Resident situational awareness
Develop a Grant Creek newsletter to inform residents of fire-related issues/hazards/projects	FOGC	Med	2026		Resident situational awareness
Coordinate with other Missoula WUI HOAs	FOGC		Ongoing		Situational awareness
Pre-plan neighborhood wildfire bulletin boards	OEM, Residents	Low	2028		
Develop a plan for STEX videos use/ distribution	OEM, MCFPA, FOGC	High	Ongoing		Resident situational awareness
Provide residents w/ GC CWPP information	FOGC, residents	High	Ongoing		Situational awareness
Maintain up-to-date fire prevention signing during periods of increased fire danger	OEM, DNRC, Lolo NF	High	Ongoing		Additional signing at key locations
Train local realtors and property inspectors about the HIZ	OEM	High	Ongoing		Purchaser situational awareness
Provide information on battery backup systems for communications during emergencies	FOGC	High	Ongoing		Resident Situational Awareness



# Appendix B - page 1

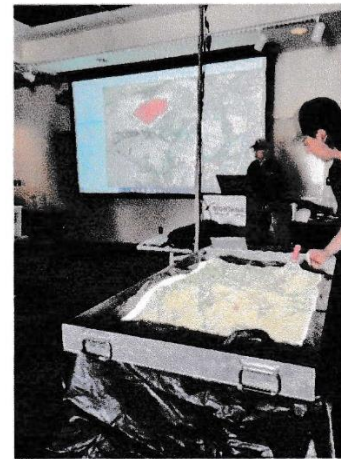
## 2022 Grant Cr.-MCFPA STEX Lessons Learned

### Summary

The Missoula County Fire Protection Association's Community Preparedness Team (CPT) partnered with the Grant Creek Wildfire Risk Task Force (GCWRTF) to host a wildfire simulation and sand table exercise (STEX) on May 3, 2022. Attendees included representatives from all agencies and some stakeholders that could play a role in the management of the wildfire and its repercussions.

The STEX was facilitated by Chris Johnson, USFS Regional Office and CPT member, with technical support provided by Rich Lasko, retired USFS and member of the GCWRTF. The sand table was provided by the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Southwestern Land Office's Missoula Unit.

The simulation involved a wildfire start on private property (Grant Creek Ranch) under DNRC protection with Missoula Rural Fire Department as closest response and initial incident command. The fire's successive growth over a 6-hour period involved initiation of unified command and a multi-agency response that included structure protection and evacuations in the one-way-in-one-way-out drainage dotted with homes and neighborhoods. The fire start also occurred under powerlines and was growing towards a resort and area of high dispersed and concentrated recreational activity. Cause was unknown.



Strengths	Areas of Concern
Gates not a barrier	9-1-1 inundated with calls
Bridge limits are not a barrier	Need to communicate issues with Grant Creek Ranch to establish Safety Zone(s)
Grant Creek Ranch has a Type 6 engine that is equipped to take initial action should a wildfire start on the Ranch	Grant Creek Ranch has a Type 6 engine that is not staffed with NWCG-certified staff and is not under agreement with a wildfire agency and cannot, therefore, be directed by agency ICs.
Good coordination between MRFD/DNRC/MRD re: resources and communications. All wildfire response agencies' duty officers receive the same page to alert them of a wildfire origin.	MRFD resources could be stretched thin by this type of incident and require backfill from neighboring agencies via mutual aid (but those resources would likely be available).
9-1-1 and MDC have pre-identified dip sites and agreements in place in Grant Cr.	Need for signage marking possible evacuation routes (e.g., access to Butler Cr.)?
MCSO would establish checkpoints at multiple locations to control traffic (allow flow where needed and possible); ask City PD to help if needed.	City police should have been invited.



## Appendix B - page 2

Smart911 in place to alert residents and can broadcast to land lines and cell phones within the chosen tower(s) reach, providing citizens with timely notifications of hazardous incidents.	Traffic control would be difficult due to lack of shoulder...individuals pulling off could block needed traffic flow
MCSO getting new software/app that will identify homes that have been evacuated (no cell service needed).	Snowbowl lacking an evacuation plan which could be an issue with increasing recreational use during fire season. Snowbowl was invited but did not attend STEX.
Hundreds of structure assessments have been completed within the Grant Creek area.	One-way in, one-way out for Grant Creek, north of Snowbowl Road.
The Friends of Grant Creek have established a Wildfire Risk Task Force (GCWRTF) and are actively organizing.	Grant Creek landscape is outside of historical fire regime interval; only one fire of effective size in over 100 years.
GCWRTF has identified water sources in Grant Creek and has created a hydrant system at the base of Colorado Gulch.	Grant Creek topography is favorable for looky-loos along I-90 to congregate during incidents.
Grant Creek seeks to write an area specific CWPP; individual projects should be identified within their CWPP to align their efforts with future availability of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Community Wildfire Defense Grants (CWDG). See Grants.gov in June for calls for projects.	Many other fuel reduction projects have occurred within Grant Cr but are not reflected on the map presented.
Bitterroot RC&D and DNRC service foresters have completed many fuels reduction projects.	Smart 911 requires cell service or Wi-Fi to send a message. If an individual is not connected to Wi-Fi and does not have cell service or a landline, they will not receive the Smart911 notification.
Missoula County OEM, MCSO, and local FDs working to develop evacuation zones and bolstering messaging/capability around evacuation ("Know Your Zones" campaign)	Identification of households that are not signed up for Smart911.

### Items to Address:

1. Confirm/update all wildfire agencies' run cards **(MDC)**
2. Identify pre-planned safety zones in the area for first responders, citizens, and livestock **(All jurisdictions)**
3. Confirm/establish agreements with landowners for pond/dip site use. Agreements aren't necessary for pilots to use dip sites, but it is good incident business management to ensure land-use agreements are in place for extended attack management. DNRC can establish pre-season land use agreements; the USFS can only establish land use agreements during an incident. **(DNRC-MSO)**
  - a. Engage aviation officers on dip site identification **(DNRC-Aviation)**
4. Create adequate turn around sites for potential road closures and traffic control points. **(MDT + County/City Public Works?)**
5. Identify households that are not signed up for Smart911 and encourage them to do so. **(Missoula County OEM)**
6. Assess viability and access permission for evacuation via Dodd Ranch Rd.
  - a. Request Missoula County OEM/MCSO to determine evacuation status of Dodd Ranch Rd and Point 6 Rd **(Missoula County OEM/MCSO)**

## Appendix B - page 3

7. Snowbowl's lack of fire season evacuation plan (no summer patrol, no accounting for recreational use) **(USFS-LNF & Snowbowl Resort)**
  - a. Look at potential for shelter-in-place
  - b. Consider a Snowbowl transportation plan that accounts for the location of wildfire and the integrity of ingress-egress in specific scenarios
8. Only one quality air monitor in Missoula area (MCCPH)
9. Bonneville is additional powerline owner that was not pre-identified.
10. Need to strengthen message that Grant Cr. Rd. is currently best way out of Grant Cr. That could change depending on fire's behavior, but we would not advise use of Dodd Ranch Rd. or Point 6 Rd. (Missoula County OEM & MCSO)
  - a. This will also be confirmed with MCSO.

### *Participants:*

- Chris Johnson, USFS Regional Office
- Shawn Zenner, Lolo National Forest
- Colt Mortenson, Lolo National Forest
- Jesse Kurpius, Lolo National Forest
- Andrew Bidwell, Lolo National Forest
- Greg Jacobson, Lolo National Forest
- Greg Orr, Missoula Rural Fire Department
- Chris Newman, Missoula Rural Fire Department
- Dave Wolter, Missoula Fire Department
- Philip Keating, Missoula Fire Department
- Carrie Moore, Missoula Interagency Dispatch Center
- Lisa Maciag, Missoula County 911 Dispatch Center
- Ashleigh Burwick, DNRC Southwestern Land Office
- Shawn Bradshaw, DNRC Southwestern Land Office
- Kristin Mortenson, DNRC Southwestern Land Office
- Amy Helena, DNRC Southwestern Land Office
- Ken Parks, Missoula County Office of Emergency Management
- Nick Holloway, Missoula County Office of Emergency Management
- Max Rebholz, Missoula County Office of Emergency Management
- Ryan Prather, Missoula County Sheriff's Office
- Jeannette Smith, Missoula County Sheriff's Office
- Gary Palm, Northwestern Energy
- Marty Whitmore, National Weather Service
- Joe Messina, National Weather Service
- Sarah Coefield, Missoula City-County Health Department
- Rich Lasko, Grant Cr Wildfire Risk Task Force
- Tim Hunt, Grant Cr Wildfire Risk Task Force
- John Langstaff, Grant Cr Wildfire Risk Task Force
- Mike Cole, Grant Cr Wildfire Risk Task Force
- RT Cox, Grant Cr Wildfire Risk Task Force

Snowbowl and Grant Creek Ranch representatives were invited but did not attend.

## Appendix C



### FOGC Wildfire Risk Task Force



May 24, 2022

**To:** Missoula County Fire Protection Association

**From:** Grant Creek Wildfire Risk Task Force

**Reference:** STEX Scenario Lessons Learned – Our Thoughts

The members of the Grant Creek Wildfire Risk Task Force (GCWRTF) were involved in the development of, and participated in, the recent Grant Creek STEX wildfire scenario. We have approached this from two different aspects. The first was to gather knowledge of information available to, and response by, our local agencies in the event of a wildfire. The second was to determine what information could be used from the STEX in our continuing development of a site-specific draft Grant Creek Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

Based on wildfire and evacuation issues raised by local residents, one of our primary goals during the initial development of the recent MCFPA STEX of Grant Creek was to address the following three items:

- When, where and how will evacuation warnings and orders be implemented and the process and timing for safe and orderly evacuation of residents.
- How traffic will be safely managed (ingress/egress) throughout the Grant Creek corridor and especially congestion along the main road and at the I-90 junction.
- How reliable and timely information specific to Grant Creek residents will be coordinated to keep them well-informed (separate from general public information).

Following are items that we have identified to help meet our goals as well as other areas which we would consider as “Items to Address” as a result of the recent STEX scenario.

#### Requested Edit

We believe the statement “One-way in, one-way out for Grant Creek...” identified as “...north of Snowbowl Road” was specific to the STEX scenario only, as that description currently applies to all of Grant Creek Road north of I-90 in respect to evacuations. This is supported by Item #10 under the section of the Lesson Learned document “Items to Address.”

#### Items to Address (applicable agencies in bold)

**#1 - #10** - There is no timeline identified for completion of any of the items listed under this section. We

would encourage the agencies to come up with a schedule for each item so this effort maintains momentum while it is fresh in everyone's mind. We could also use a lot of this information for completion of the draft Grant Creek CWPP. **(All Agencies)**

**#2** - Pre-planned safety zones. We would like to participate in this planning as we have some proposals, but they need to be agreeable with the agencies. This information could be included in the draft Grant Creek CWPP. **(Missoula County Sheriff's Office/Missoula County OEM)**

**#4** – In addition to the items listed related to closures and traffic control points, we believe there is also a need to identify potential equipment staging areas and equipment and vehicle turn around locations throughout Grant Creek. We can provide help in identifying some of these potential sites. **(Missoula Rural Fire Department and County/City Public Works)**

**#4** - During the exercise, it was not clear to us about how road and trail closures would be managed among multiple agencies. Would there be coordinated 24/7 on-site staffing for all road and trail closures between Butler Creek, Grant Creek and the Rattlesnake among the different agencies and would there be consistent information/messaging for people staffing those closures? **(All Agencies)**

**#6 and #10** - We would like to work with the Missoula County Sheriff's Office and Missoula County OEM, preferably directly on-site, when they conduct their review of the three routes identified in the STEX Lessons Learned: Grant Creek Road, Dodd Ranch Road and Point 6 Road. In addition, we would like to see the Wheeler Tunnel under I-90 included in their review. Our objective, once this review is completed, would be that both the Sheriff's Office and OEM would be official sources of record that have specifically identified the only viable routes (at this time) for evacuation subject to specific wildfire circumstances. That information could then be included in the draft Grant Creek CWPP. This would meet the goals of Item #10 to "...strengthen message..." concerning viable evacuation route(s). **(MCSO/Missoula County OEM)**

**#7** - We agree that an evacuation/transportation plan is necessary for Snowbowl as part of a summer operating plan to assure safety of their employees and guests in the event of a wildfire, especially since Grant Creek Road is their primary ingress/egress and their evacuation could affect Grant Creek traffic. This is especially important considering their ongoing development and projected increases in summer visitor use identified in the Ski Area Expansion plan. **(Lolo National Forest)**

**#7a** - Related to Snowbowl, there is a reference to "Shelter-in-place." During the home inspections in Grant Creek on April 8<sup>th</sup>, at least one homeowner asked about what to do if she couldn't get out. She was told her safest location would be inside her car, inside her garage until the fire front passed. We are not familiar with current recommended practices for shelter-in-place and would urge caution in moving forward without a plan. If shelter-in-place is going to become a potential response to an incident in Snowbowl, Grant Creek or elsewhere in Missoula County, we feel there would need to be a significant effort and learning curve involved to sell this concept to the public, followed by ongoing community training to introduce this practice to local residents. This might be a concept to address, but not in detail, in the draft Grant Creek CWPP. At the very least this subject is now being discussed among residents in the Grant Creek neighborhood. **(All Agencies)**

**#10** - Under “Areas of Concern” in the STEX Lessons Learned, there is a discussion of signage for evacuation routes (i.e., Butler Creek). Under this item is a discussion of viable routes for evacuation. There have been many public and resident comments made over the past few years about old roads that would be viable evacuation routes from Grant Creek out to Butler Creek, Rattlesnake, etc. Unfortunately, this has become a misleading discussion that we would like to end and believe that our objective discussed under #6 above would do that. Our members have either walked or driven all of these “suggested” routes and have determined that none of them are currently viable for a number of reasons. We can provide that information to you. **(MCSO/Missoula County OEM)**

**STEX Video** – We are not sure what the format or discussion in the video will include, but it would be important if the video of the STEX being prepared for public use could address the three bullet items listed on page 1 of this letter as well as the next item listed below. These same questions will probably be similar in all WUI neighborhoods around Missoula. It would be valuable to not only identify the strengths, but the areas of concern applicable to each bullet. The issue of safety and evacuation zone locations and what to do if a resident cannot get out would also be valuable information for the public. **(MCFPA)**

**STEX Video** - Residents have asked the GCWRTF for information on protocols for the following evacuation topics that were not addressed in the STEX:

- 1) Rescue of minor(s) left at a residence. For instance, both parents are working but one child is old enough to care for the others, but not licensed to drive or no vehicle is available.
- 2) Rescue of residents that are not physically mobile or a person with a disability.
- 3) Coordinating with private vendors working for home insurance companies to protect individual properties during a wildfire. (Letters from insurance companies have started circulating in Grant Creek)
- 4) An IWI during an active wildfire and/or evacuation. Most notably among residents’ questions, a vehicle accident blocking Grant Creek Road during an evacuation.
- 5) Individuals who refuse to evacuate.

**(MCSO and Missoula County OEM – all 5 items)**

## **New Items for Consideration**

**PODS** - Recently the Forest Service has identified 2 large, landscape-level Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) for Grant Creek. Members of the GCWRTF would like to collaborate with the USFS in the process of developing and refining the Grant Creek PODs to identify a network of best available control features, and to help quantify and summarize risk into strategic response zones that will provide the starting point for strategic planning of incident response. PODs would seem to be a useful tool for determining when evacuation orders/warnings might be recommended to the Missoula County Sheriff. **(Lolo National Forest)**

**Fuels Data** - We would like to obtain access to the fuels treatment data/locations from the Missoula Rural Fire District and any recent treatment grants data/locations from the Office of Emergency Services. These would be helpful in completing the draft Grant Creek CWPP. **(Missoula Rural Fire Department/Missoula County OEM)**

**Affected Businesses** - Who would be the liaison with Grant Creek businesses who may be financially impacted by a wildfire in Grant Creek, particularly businesses north of I-90 along Grant Creek Road? **(Missoula County OEM)**

**Public Information** - Due to the visibility of Grant Creek close to Missoula and I-90, we believe it would be beneficial to have a specific agency Public Information Officer assigned at the beginning of a wildfire, regardless of where that fire is located anywhere in the Missoula WUI, in order to coordinate information among agencies. They could be immediately assigned to the 911 center or the Interagency Dispatch Center to begin gathering intel and planning information releases. Not only are there significant print, internet and broadcast media sources in Missoula, with relatively easy access to WUI fire areas, but from the STEX scenario, the influx of calls to the 911 center appears to have a significant impact on their operations, either from people reporting the fire or wanting information about it. The sooner public information can be provided, the sooner that activity will slow down. **(All Agencies)**

**Pre-Planning Public Information** - In addition to the current pre-planning effort involved in developing evacuation zones, there would appear to be a need to pre-identify the following specific to Grant Creek:

1) Fire information neighborhood bulletin board locations in each neighborhood to cut down on traffic (looking for fire information) on Grant Creek Road.

2) Potential location(s) in the immediate area with parking available for public meetings during an ongoing wildfire in Grant Creek to keep local residents well-informed. Examples - Hilton Garden Inn Convention Center, Hellgate Elementary Gymnasium, etc.

3) Identification of potential evacuation shelter(s)  
**(Missoula County OEM - all 3 items)**

We would be happy to discuss any of these items with you.

Sincerely,

/s/ *Michael Cole*  
Michael Cole, Team Leader

/s/ *Richard Lasko*  
Richard Lasko

/s/ *John Langstaff*  
John Langstaff

/s/ *Tim Hunt*  
Tim Hunt

/s/ *RT Cox*  
RT Cox



## Appendix D

### Grant Creek Road Reported Traffic Accidents

Call Type	2019 Pre - Road Improvement at I-90 Junction	2020 Road Improvement at I-90 Junction (Fall Completion)	2021 Road Improvement at I-90 Junction First Full Year	2022 Road Improvement at I-90 Junction Second Year	Grand Total
Accident – No Injury	10	7	10	3	30
Accident - Injury	1	1	5	3	10
Accident – Hit & Run	0	4	2	2	8
Accident – Slide-in	0	1	0	1	2
Total Accidents	11	13	17	9	50

Source: Missoula County Office of Emergency Services.

August 3, 2021 – Starbucks Exit.  
Two-vehicle collision blocking north bound lanes.  
Source: Kevin Davis

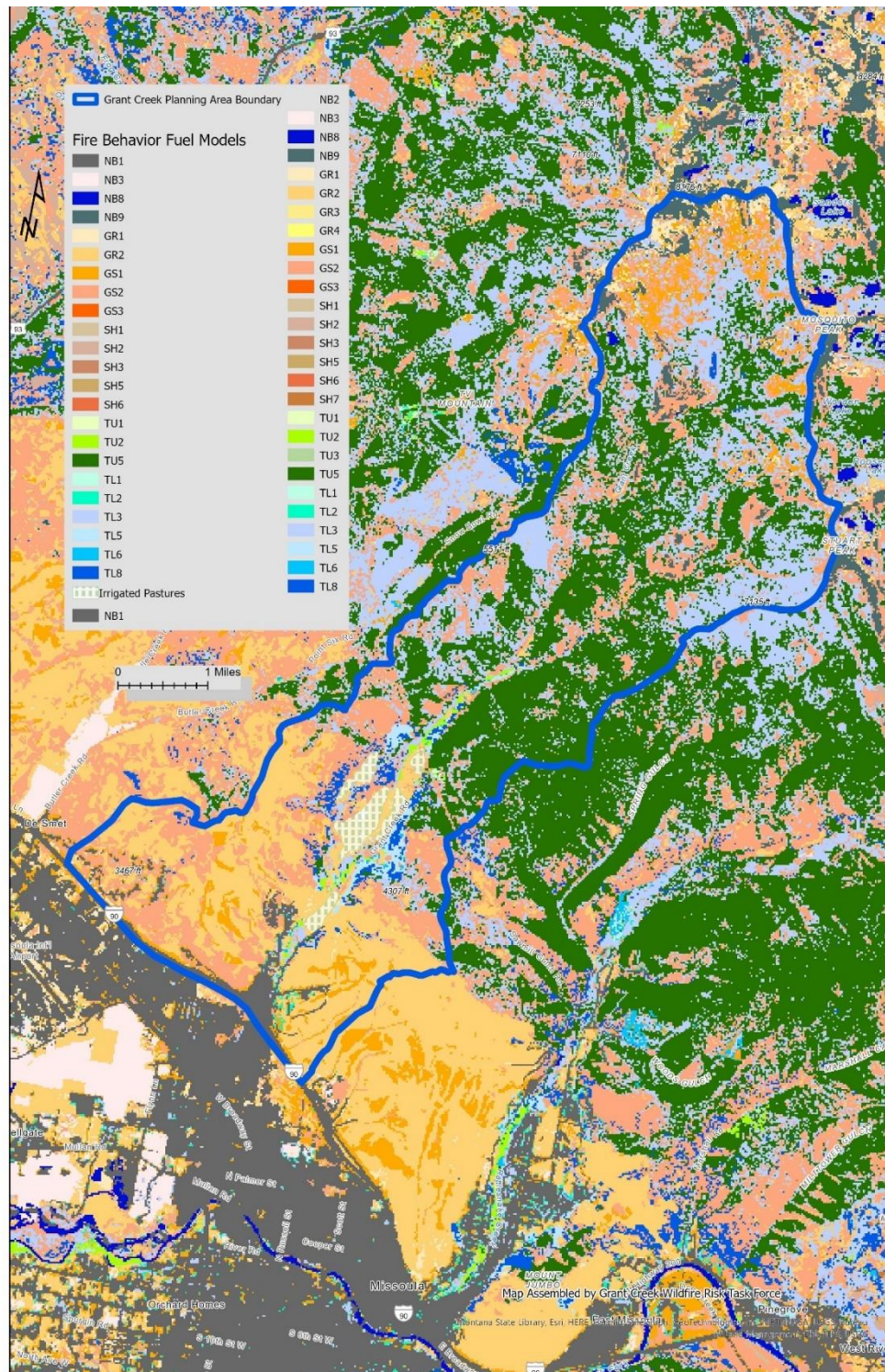


August 7, 2021 – I-90 west bound off-ramp. Collision with ambulance responding to another vehicle accident.  
Source: Kevin Davis





## Fire Behavior Fuel Models



## Wind Rose

Wind roses are graphical charts that characterize the speed and direction of winds at a location.

Presented in a circular format, the length of each "spoke" around the circle indicates the amount of time that the wind blows from a particular direction. Colors along the spokes indicate categories of wind speed.

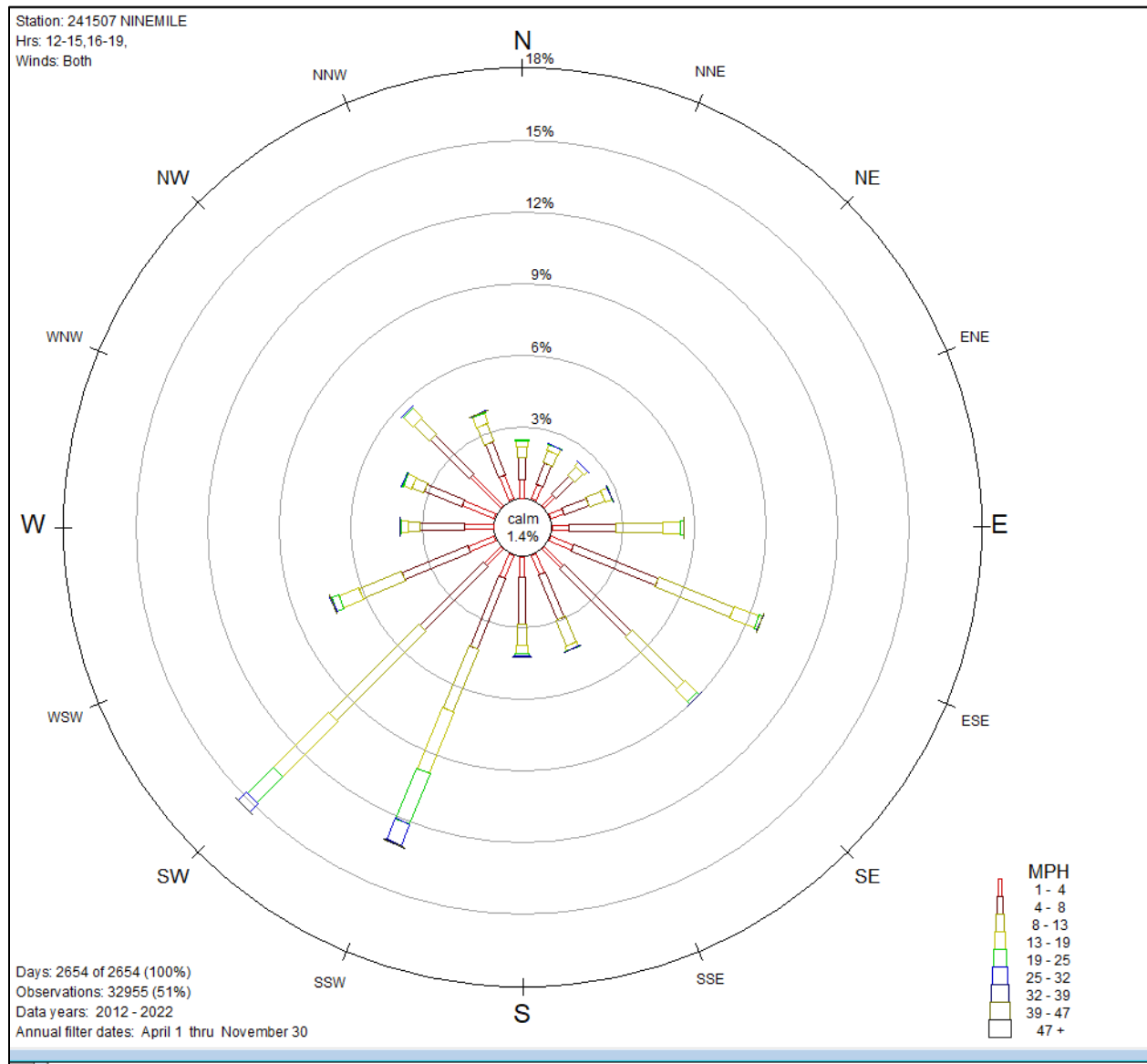
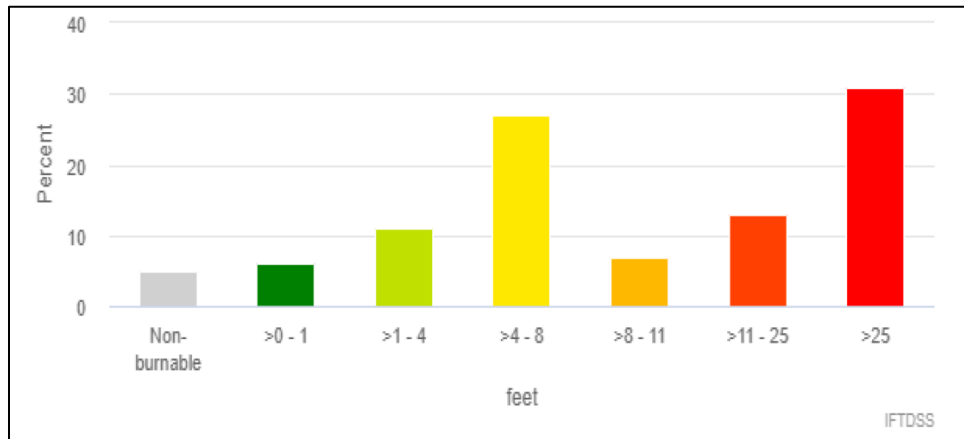


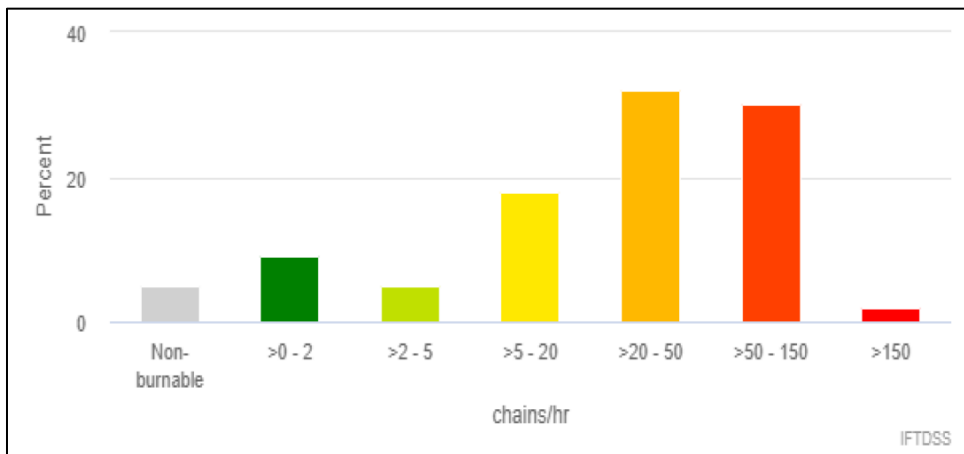
Chart 1- Wind Rose

## Flame Length



**Graph 1 – Percent of Grant Creek Planning Area and Potential Flame Length in Feet**

## Spread Rate



**Graph 2 – Percent of Grant Creek Planning Area and Potential Spread Rate**

## Appendix F - Hazardous Fuels Treatment:

### Large Project Recommendations

#### Recommendation #1 - Roadside Shaded Fuel Breaks

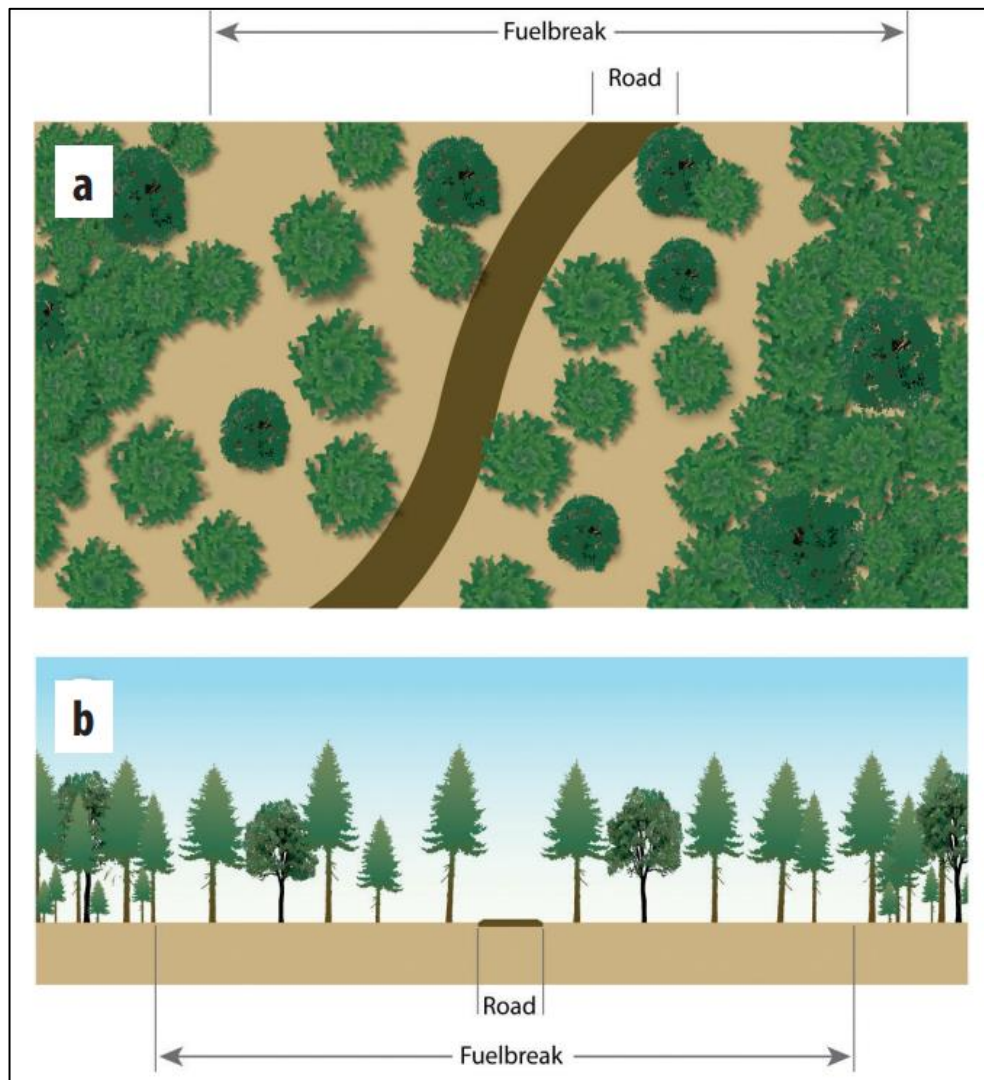


Figure 1 – A simplified graphic depiction of a completed roadside shaded fuel break where some vegetation has been removed to reduce the risk of crown fire: (a) aerial perspective, (b) ground perspective.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Max Bennett, et. al., *Reducing Fire Risk on Your Forest Property*, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR, Pacific Northwest Extension, PNW 618, October, 2010, Page 14, <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/sites/catalog/files/project/pdf/pnw618.pdf>



This proposed project would complement the Lolo National Forest's Wildfire Adapted Missoula (WAM) proposal for similar treatments proposed adjacent to the Snowbowl Road where it crosses National Forest system lands. On public rights-of-way and adjoining private land in Grant Creek, this type of project would require the following:

- 1) A written, cooperative agreement between the City of Missoula, Missoula County and Grant Creek landowners whose property lies adjacent to the Grant Creek Road/Snowbowl Road rights-of-way. This agreement would allow entry by a qualified, licensed and bonded contractor(s) into areas adjacent to the Grant Creek Road to create a fuel break on both sides of the road (**only where needed**) with a specific prescription (work to be done) acceptable to all parties involved. Participation in the agreement by adjacent landowners would be on a voluntary basis, but overall effectiveness would rely on multiple adjoining landowner participation. This work could also be done as a single project or over time as multiple projects along different sections of roads.
- 2) Development of a prescription for a combination of thinning, limbing, and removal of some trees of different age classes to reduce ladder fuels, reduce density, reduce canopy cover, maintain an acceptable neighborhood landscape between roads and homes, and still create a viable fuel break.
- 3) Calculation of cost-share based on commercial timber value removed (if needed) and/or monetary contribution per landowner. The cooperative agreement would need to be explicit on how timber values would be determined among adjoining landowners where different values may exist on each ownership based on the value of merchantable trees removed on each property. In other words, how many logs can be sold to a lumber mill if some larger trees are removed and what is their value. Refer to Appendix G for information on cost-share.
- 4) Determine the distance away from the road edge where work would need to be accomplished to create a viable fuel break. Slope of the hillside may vary the distance from one landowner to the next.
- 5) A defined maintenance program as part of the agreement to make sure the fuel break remains viable over time. This would allow re-entry into the fuel break at periodic intervals of time to maintain its' viability. These intervals would be measured in a specific number of years (example: 5, 10, 15 years, etc.) rather than annually. Some minor maintenance work could be done by the homeowner on a more frequent basis at minimal time and cost. Re-entry costs would be substantially less than the initial expense.
- 6) This proposal could initially be pursued along a shorter section of road where adjoining landowners agree to participate in a demonstration project for the benefit of all Grant Creek residents to observe the pros, cons, end results and any modifications needed to improve a larger project.

- 7) Fire crews frequently build shaded fuel breaks adjacent to roads prior to the arrival of a fire front during an ongoing fire. However, this takes valuable time away from their primary role of fighting the fire. By accomplishing this work ahead of time, landowners will be preparing the right-of-way to meet their desired conditions rather than wait until an oncoming fire dictates the terms of how the fuel break is constructed or even if there is time to do the work.
- 8) Record and maintain mapping programs to show areas effectively treated and planned for treatment. Make available to fire protection agencies and Incident Management Teams.
- 9) A grant could reduce overall cost to participating landowners of varying incomes.

## **Objective**

- 1) Provide a continual fuel break across multiple ownerships along both sides of the roads throughout the Grant Creek valley.
- 2) Create a safer evacuation route for residents and access route for firefighters in the event of a wildfire.
- 3) Assist firefighters by creating more safe/effective operational areas in the event of a wildfire.
- 4) Reduce the potential for crown fire across roads
- 5) Significantly alter fire behavior in the treated area.

**The following road segments are identified for treatment in order of priority based on existing hazardous fuels.** Prescriptions may differ within the length of road segments and/or on either side of a road segment based on landowner agreements.

### *Upper Grant Creek*

- 1) Bench Road
- 2) Grant Creek Road from the junction with the Bench Road north to the end of the road including the East Fork of Grant Creek
- 3) Grant Creek Road from the junction of Bench Road south to Snowbowl Road junction
- 4) All private driveways entering segments 1, 2 and 3 above.

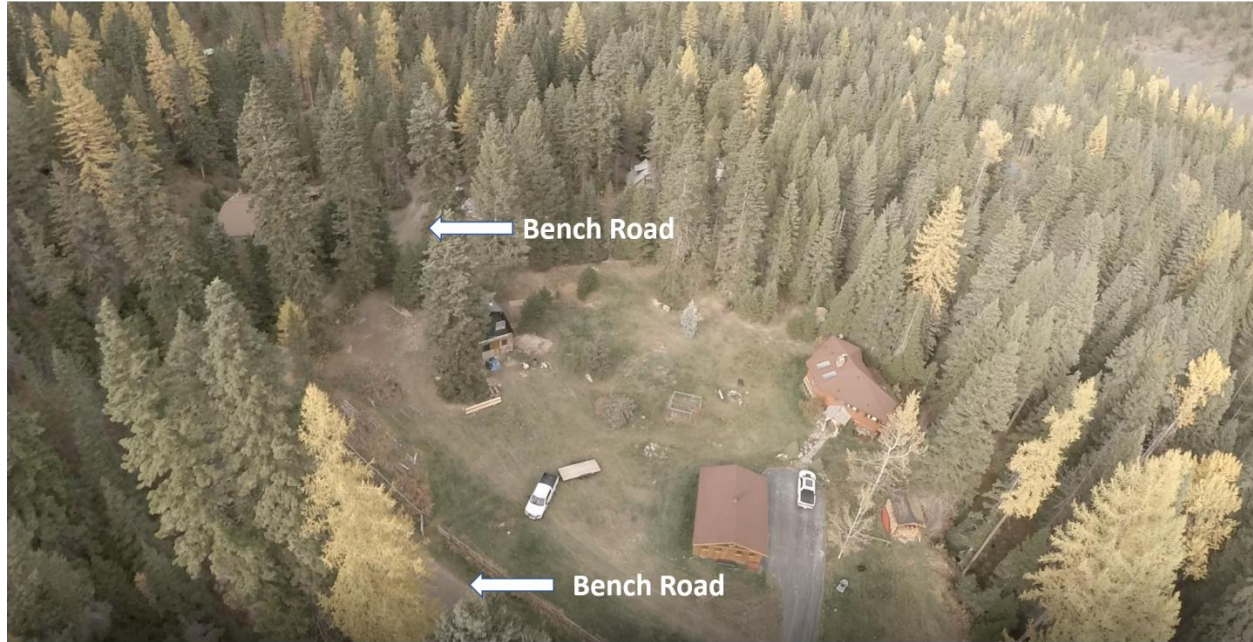
### *Middle Grant Creek*

- 1) Snowbowl Road from the National Forest Boundary to the Grant Creek Road Junction.
- 2) Grant Creek Road from the Snowbowl Road junction south to Gleneagle Way.
- 3) Dark Horse Lane from the Grant Creek Ranch boundary west to the locked gate.
- 4) All private driveways entering segments 1, 2 and 3 above.

## *Lower Grant Creek*

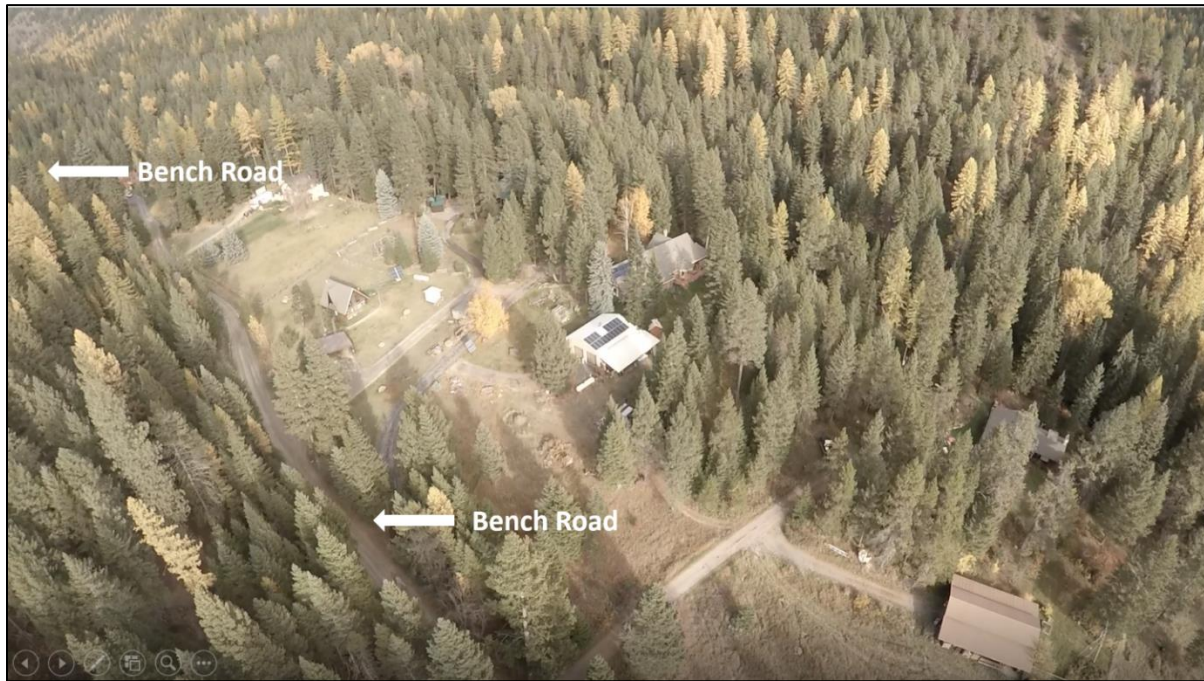
1) Grant Creek Road from Gleneagle Way south to I-90 including all private driveways in this segment. The majority of this work would be done on the east side of the road due to limitations in removing vegetation within the Grant Creek stream corridor.

**The following photos (1-7) are examples of areas in need of treatment to reduce wildfire risk.**

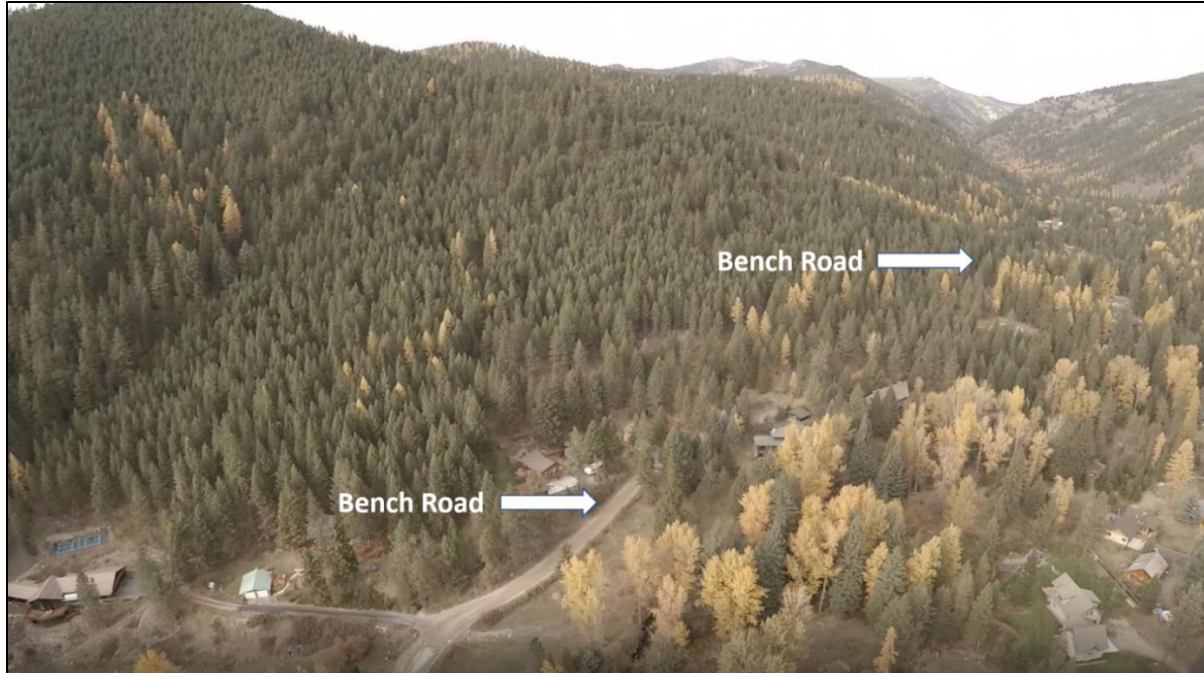


*Photo 1 – Around a curve on upper Bench Road with roofs of additional homes visible in the trees. October, 2021. Chris Cole.*





*Photo 2 – Upper Bench Road with private driveways to residences. Many areas along Bench Road are heavily forested on both sides of the road. October, 2021. Chris Cole.*

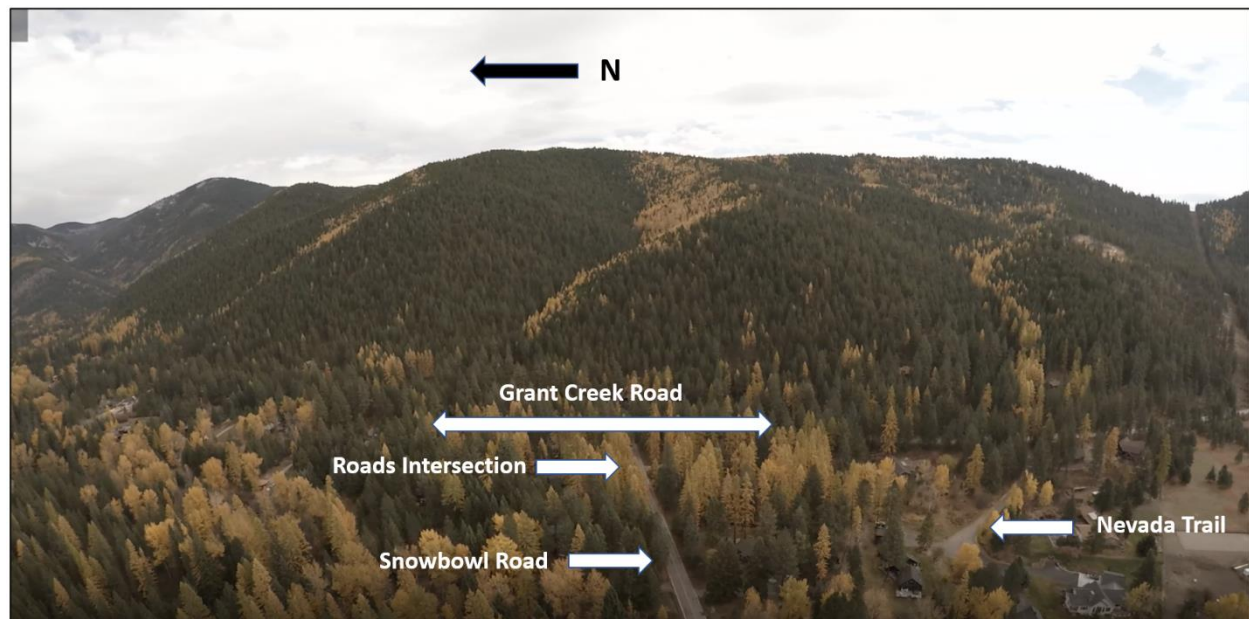


*Photo 3 – Bench Road. The junction with Grant Creek Road is just out of the picture in the lower middle of the photo. Note forest density on surrounding slopes even though the slope in the foreground above Bench Road has had previous timber harvest (circa 1970s-1980s), identified by the distinct change in tree height along the linear property boundary on the middle-left side of the photo. This road provides access to the most remote residential areas on the west side of Grant Creek and is the only evacuation route for these residents. October, 2021. Chris Cole.*





*Photo 4 – View of dense forest vegetation adjoining the Grant Creek Road near the middle of the residential area upstream from the Grant Creek/Bench Creek Roads junction. It provides access to the most remote residential areas on the east side of Grant Creek and is the only evacuation route for these residents. October, 2021. Chris Cole*

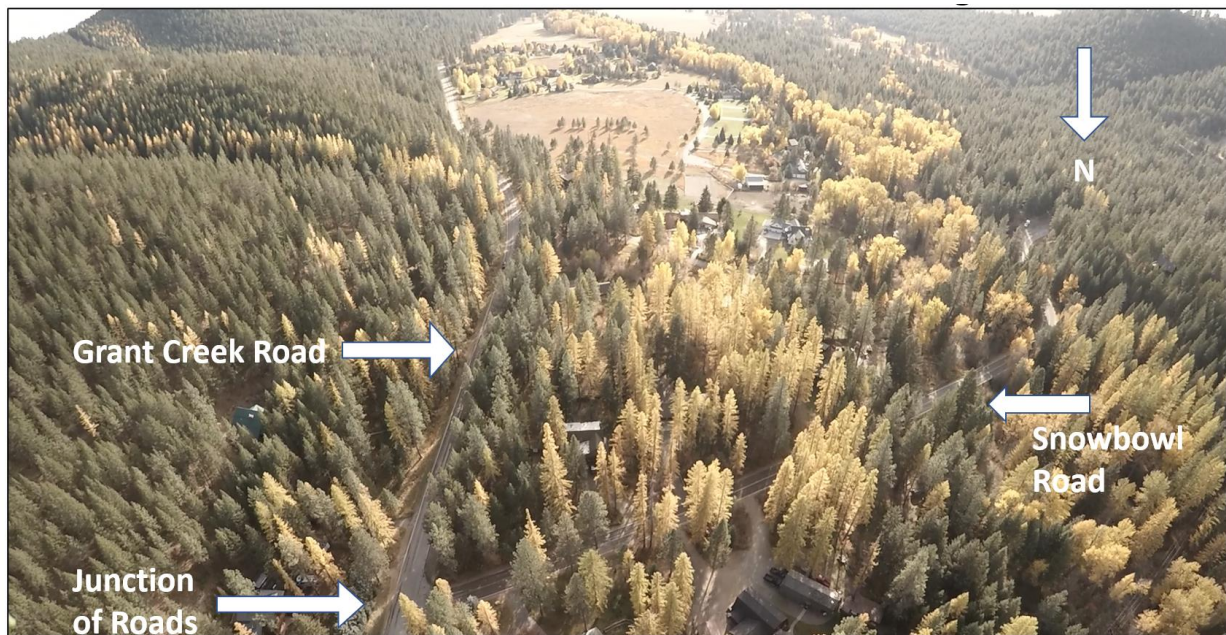


*Photo 5 – Looking east down the Snowbowl Road towards its' intersection with Grant Creek Road. Both road corridors are lined with trees that can carry a crown fire across the roads. Nevada Trail homes are visible in the lower right-hand corner. October, 2021. Chris Cole.*





*Photo 6 – Looking south along Grant Creek Road towards the Snowbowl Road junction. The road corridor enters a “tunnel” of trees that can carry a crown fire across the road, blocking evacuation. October, 2021. Chris Cole.*



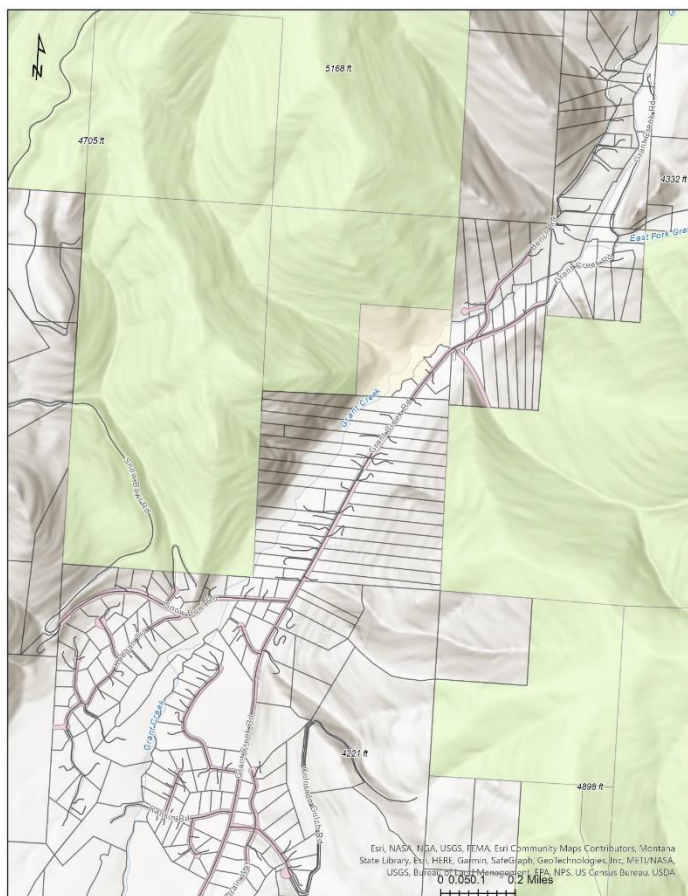
*Photo 7 – Looking south from the Grant Creek Road/Snowbowl Road junction. Both road corridors are lined with trees that can carry a crown fire across the roads. October, 2021. Chris Cole.*

## Recommendation #2 – Creation of Fuel Breaks Behind Homes and Around Subdivisions

Most structures on properties in Upper Grant Creek and part of Middle Grant Creek adjoin steep forested slopes, primarily on privately owned land and usually in the ownership of each resident. Most, but not all, of the structures are built on level ground near roads. The majority of this land has no road access because of steep terrain. Most of the properties in Upper Grant Creek are long, narrow lots, with the majority of the property on steep slopes. It is not viable to use prescribed fire to remove fuels because there are no locations to contain fire from escaping on these steep slopes. In many cases it would also be cost-prohibitive per acre to remove hazardous fuels by cutting, hand-piling and burning on steep slopes, especially over great distances such as those between private homes in the bottom of the valley and the boundaries of larger blocks of private land and National Forest administered lands further up slope.

This map displays the long, narrow, privately owned parcels in Upper Grant Creek and Middle Grant Creek. Grant Creek Road runs from the lower left corner to upper right corner of the map. Snowbowl Road goes west in the middle left of the map. Adjoining landowner cooperation is key to hazard mitigation.

During active wildfires, firefighters often build fuel breaks or fire lines behind homes in



situations similar to the Grant Creek valley as wildfire approaches downslope toward homes. However, this only works if they have the right terrain, time and resources to do the work. This might not be possible in Grant Creek due to the dense forest upslope from the properties.

The alternative is to prepare a fuel break ahead of time to increase survivability of multiple homes in Grant Creek. A shaded fuel break is a strip of land where trees have been thinned and pruned to reduce the availability of fuel in the event of a wildfire, and which can then be used by firefighters as a fireline. ***This type of fuel break does not remove all ground vegetation.***



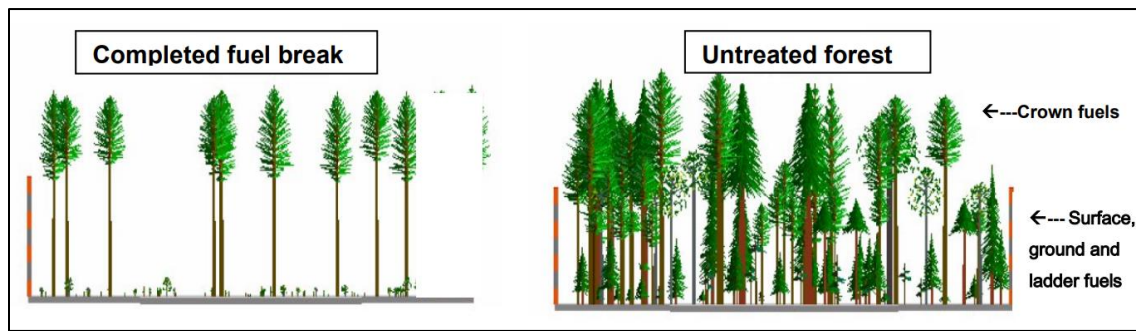


Figure 2 – Simplified graphic depiction of a shaded fuel break and why it reduces the risk of crown fire.<sup>2</sup>

Construction of the fuel break can incorporate level ground and reach up slope to a distance that is manageable by hand work or conventional, ground-based logging equipment. Riparian vegetation such as aspen and cottonwood can also act as a fire barrier dependent on fire severity. This type of vegetation along Grant Creek and its' tributaries could be incorporated to increase the width of the fuel break for homes adjacent to the creek. Due to cost considerations, this is the recommended method of shaded fuel break construction in Grant Creek. On private lands in Grant Creek, this type of project would require the following:

- 1) A written, cooperative agreement between adjoining Grant Creek landowners to create a continuous, shaded fuel break behind homes in specific areas of the valley where a wildfire originating outside of inhabited areas would have a greater potential to burn into residential areas. If possible, this fuel break should include lands around community water systems such as above ground storage tanks. This agreement would allow entry by a qualified, licensed and bonded contractor(s) into these designated areas to create a shaded fuel break with a specific prescription acceptable to all parties involved. Participation in the agreement by adjacent landowners would be on a voluntary basis, but overall effectiveness would rely on multiple adjoining landowner participation.
- 2) Development of a prescription for a combination of thinning, limbing, and removal of some trees of different ages to remove ladder fuels, reduce density, reduce canopy cover, maintain an acceptable neighborhood landscape behind homes, and still create a viable fuel break.
- 3) Determining the distance away from structures for each individual property where work would need to be accomplished to create a viable fuel break. It would be important to determine a minimum width for the fuel break. The availability of level ground versus slope of the hillside on each property would influence the width and location of the fuel break. A consideration in location of the fuel break would be the potential location of additional future buildings in order to avoid the need to relocate the fuel break once it was established. Each

<sup>2</sup> USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. NRCS-CA. Conservation Practice Specification, Fuel Break – ForestLand. 383-Spec-1, May, 2020, page 2, accessed May 11, 2023, [https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/20901/383\\_PS\\_CA\\_Fuel\\_Break-Forestland\\_05-2020](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/20901/383_PS_CA_Fuel_Break-Forestland_05-2020)

landowner would have the option to increase the width of the fuel break depending on their own individual interests in further reducing wildfire risk on their property.

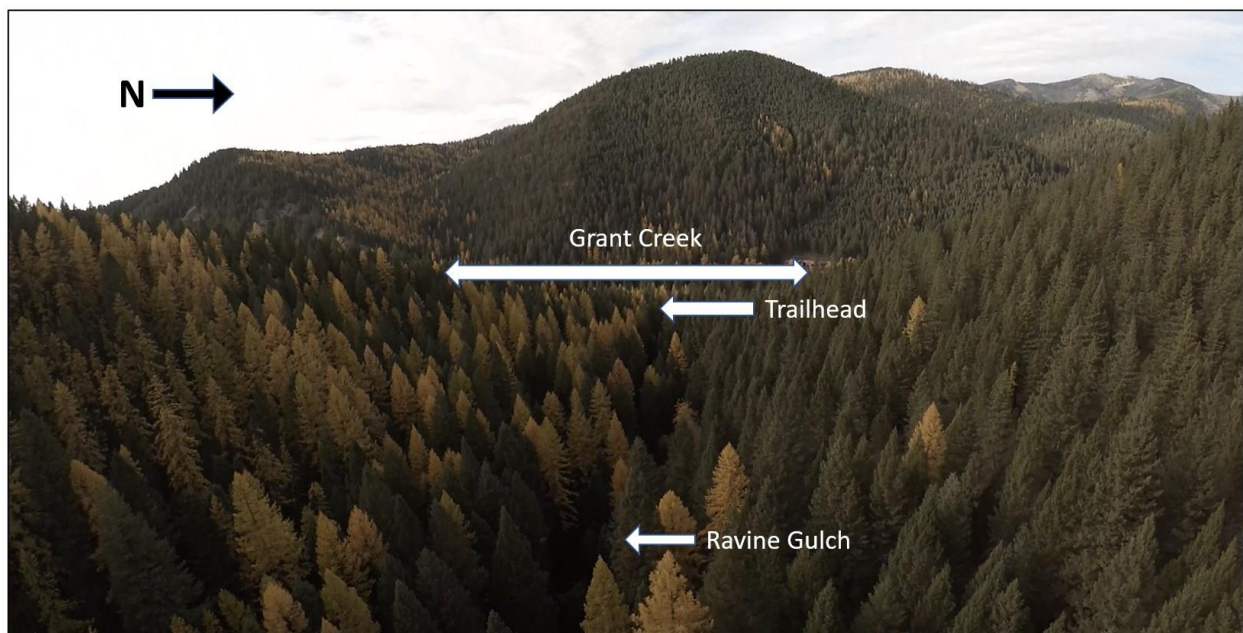
4) A defined maintenance program to make sure the fuel break remains viable over time. Grass, brush and trees continue to grow, including new trees from seedlings. This would allow re-entry into the fuel break at periodic intervals of time to maintain its' viability. These intervals would be measured in a specific number of years (example: 5, 10, 15 years, etc.) rather than annually. Some minor maintenance work could be done by the homeowner on a more frequent basis at minimal time and cost.

5) This proposal could initially be pursued by obtaining permission from a group of adjoining landowners who would agree to participate in a demonstration project for the benefit of all Grant Creek residents to observe the pros, cons and end results.

6) A grant could reduce overall cost to participating landowners of varying incomes.

## Objective

- 1) Reduce wildfire risk exposure in the immediate vicinity of structures adjoining steep, inaccessible terrain with heavily forested slopes.
- 2) Provide cost-effective hazardous fuel treatments for fuel breaks
- 3) Assist firefighters in defending homes
- 4) Create wider buffers behind residences
- 5) Significantly alter (modify) fire behavior in the treated area



*Photo 8 – Examples of dense forest surrounding the Grant Creek Road in Upper Grant Creek that could carry crown fire into residences. Ravine Gulch is approximately at the center of the Upper Grant Creek WUI area. October, 2021. Chris Cole.*





*Photo 9 – Forest vegetation and structures near the Ravine Trailhead (reference photo 8 above) on Grant Creek Road. October, 2021. Chris Cole.*



*Photo 10 – Aerial view looking southeast at the forested land on the east side of Grant Creek Road where Colorado Gulch subdivision (left slope) and Grant Creek Hills subdivision (right slope) are located in the trees closest to the road. National Wildlife Federation lands are located above both subdivisions to the ridgeline. For reference, Rankin Road is located in the lower middle of the photo and the Grant Creek Ranch hay meadow on the right. August, 2021. Fred Carlson, FDNY.*



The following areas are identified for this treatment in order of priority based on existing hazardous fuels. Prescriptions for minimum width of the fuel break may differ based on the amount of flat versus sloping land on each individual property.

### *Upper Grant Creek Residential Areas*

- 1) Bench Road
- 2) Grant Creek Road from the junction with the Bench Road north to the end of the road including the East Fork of Grant Creek
- 3) Grant Creek Road from the junction of Bench Road south to the junction with Snowbowl Road

### *Middle Grant Creek Residential Areas*

- 1) Colorado Gulch/Grant Creek Hills/National Wildlife Federation
- 2) Keegan Gulch
- 3) Keegan Trail/Dark Horse Estates
- 4) Residents on Dark Horse Lane adjoining forested land in other ownership.
- 5) Residents of Creekside subdivision adjoining Grant Creek Ranch.

### *Lower Grant Creek Including Goodan Lane/Keil Loop*

Residential and commercial areas in Lower Grant Creek and Goodan Lane/Keil Loop where fire originating outside of the WUI could burn towards homes and businesses are surrounded primarily by grass lands and riparian areas. The following is recommended for development of common fuel breaks in these areas.

- 1) Identify specific locations on defensible ground where continuous fuel breaks can be developed and easily maintained by mowing or trimming grass and limbing or thinning isolated pockets of trees.
- 2) Identify areas of forested land associated with stream corridors and develop a treatment prescription for those areas adjoining residential areas that can be treated outside of the riparian area to create a fuel break.
- 3) Because grasslands can create a flash fuel fire environment, develop an annual maintenance plan to maintain fuel breaks throughout fire season between grasslands, structures and adjoining properties.

The following areas are identified for this treatment in order of priority based on existing hazardous fuels. Prescriptions for minimum width of the fuel break may differ based on the amount of flat versus sloping land on each individual property

- 1) Gleneagle
- 2) Prospect/Prospect Meadows
- 3) Goodan Lane/Keil Loop
- 4) Grant Creek Village and other commercial properties with, or adjoining, grasslands





*Photo 11 – Example of a mowed fuel break between a Pinnacle Place residence and the HOA Common Area grasslands in the Prospect Meadows Subdivision. This fuel break also protects the wooden rail fence. March 27, 2022. GCWRTF.*



*Photo 12 – Example of a mowed and recently limbed fuel break in progress between a Bonanza Place residence and HOA Common Area grasslands in the Prospect Subdivision. October 10, 2021. GCWRTF.*



### *Homes Isolated from Multiple-Home Neighborhoods Throughout Grant Creek*

Fuel breaks that do not connect to other properties may not be feasible or effective. The best practice for isolated homeowners is to 1) make improvements to the HIZ immediately around structures; 2) increase defensible space between structures and surrounding forest land in other ownership and; 3) develop a plan for effective forest management on the property to reduce the potential for crown fire.

## **Recommendation #3 – Large Acreage Landowners Hazardous Fuels Reduction on Forested Lands**

In addition to treating forest lands to improve forest health, landowners with large acreages of forest land in Grant Creek should consider treatment of their property that is immediately adjacent to neighborhoods or isolated homes in the WUI. The minimum treatment considered should be shaded fuel breaks in order to afford some reduction in wildfire risk to Grant Creek residents from fires that may originate from the owners' property. Grants are also available for this type of work which can offset costs while creating a partnership with adjoining residents or subdivisions that are also treating their properties.

Large landowners in Grant Creek can also seek grants for cross-boundary work with other large landowners including the Lolo National Forest in order to reduce hazardous fuels across property lines. This can include professional forestry assistance to write prescriptions for forest health and maintenance

### **Priority Areas**

#### *Large landowners adjoining:*

- 1) National Forest System lands
- 2) Residential areas on Bench Road
- 3) Residential areas on Grant Creek Road upstream from the Bench Road junction
- 4) Residential areas from the Grant Creek Road/Bench Road junction south to the Grant Creek Road/Snowbowl Road junction
- 5) Residential areas in Keegan Gulch/Keegan Trail/Dark Horse Estates/Dark Horse Lane
- 6) Residential areas in Colorado Gulch/Grant Creek Hills/Creekside

XXX

# Appendix G – Cost Share Guidelines

## Bitter Root RC&D Fuel Treatment Grants

As of the date of this publication, all Bitter Root Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) grant programs have a landowner cost share of 75/25 with the landowner paying 25% of the cost of fuel treatment on their property, payable either in-kind (goods and services) or money.

The net revenue from merchantable timber removed from the property (in-kind goods) can be used to offset the out-of-pocket cost of fuel treatment. Merchantable timber in this context refers to timber sold to a mill for processing into a saleable wood product(s). RC&D requires mill summaries from the contractor to record the gross and net revenue of all timber delivered to the mill. The gross revenue minus the cost of hauling the logs to the mill determines the net revenue. The net revenue is then applied toward the cost of the contractor's **original bid price per acre** to accomplish the complete project (thinning, pruning, treating slash, etc.).

### Examples of Different Landowner Cost Share Scenarios

Example A – **full cost share**: The contractor bid is \$1,000 per acre to accomplish fuel treatment on 10 acres (\$10,000). There is no merchantable timber value to offset the cost. The landowner pays the contractor \$2,500 (25%) out-of-pocket. The grant pays \$7,500 (75%) to the landowner who uses these funds to pay the contractor in full for the work accomplished at the original bid price per acre. Total cost: \$10,000

Example B – **reduced out-of-pocket cost share**: The contractor bid is \$1,000 per acre to treat 10 acres. The net revenue of timber products from the 10 acres delivered to the mill is \$2,000 (20%) which is paid to the contractor. The landowner pays \$500 (5%) to the contractor and the grant pays \$7,500 (75%) to the landowner who uses these funds to pay the contractor in full for the work accomplished at the original bid price per acre. Total cost: \$10,000.

Example C – **no out-of-pocket cost share**: The contractor bid is \$1,000 per acre to treat 10 acres. The net revenue of timber products from the 10 acres delivered to the mill is \$3,000 (30%) which is paid to the contractor. There is no out-of-pocket expense to the landowner (0%). The grant is reduced by \$500 and pays \$7,000 (70%) to the landowner who uses these funds to pay the contractor in full for the work accomplished at the original bid price per acre. Total cost: \$10,000.

### Re-entry on Previously Treated Ground

**There are some grants that do not allow re-entry** on a landowner parcel if a grant was used originally to do the initial treatment. Once treated, Montana DNRC considers it the landowner's responsibility to maintain their initial investment themselves. **However, some grants do allow re-entry** dependent upon what grants RC&D receives each year. Many different kinds of grants are available such as, Western States WUI, Community Wildfire Defense, Hazardous Fuels, Forest Action Plan, Joint Chiefs, Pheasants Forever/Blue Forest, etc. Check with RC&D for available grant opportunities:

<https://www.bitterrootrcd.org/>

# Appendix H – Grant Creek CWPP Communication Plan

## Purpose

This Communication Plan identifies a process for informing specific audiences about the Grant Creek Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and wildfire issues specific to the Grant Creek Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). It describes issues and concerns, goals and objectives and key messages to communicate to target audiences. It also describes public distribution responsibility, current methods of communication among residents of the Grant Creek WUI and monitoring. The Communication Plan is meant to (1) inform in a timely, consistent and appropriate manner; (2) increase situational awareness and understanding; (3) gain support of local Grant Creek residents, landowners and businesses; (4) involve local, county, state, federal and tribal government agencies and other non-governmental stakeholders; (5) gain support of the general public in the Missoula area, especially other WUI locations with similar wildfire hazard and risk concerns and; (6) provide information support to incident management teams.

## Background

The Grant Creek watershed has had no significant large wildfires in over 100 years. However, the occurrence, size and complexity of large wildfires in the surrounding area of Missoula County, including areas close to Grant Creek, has increased significantly, especially since the year 2000 as a result of ongoing climate change. Grant Creek residents have become increasingly aware of their wildfire hazard risk due to local factors including a buildup of hazardous fuels, increasing residential and commercial development and limited ingress/egress for emergency response and evacuation. The Grant Creek CWPP provides a more site-specific supplement to the Missoula County CWPP in order to identify these hazards and potential actions for mitigation.

## Issues, Concerns

- There are a significant number of residents, large landowners and commercial businesses in the WUI that could be impacted by wildfire.
- New and current residents may have limited or no knowledge of wildfire preparedness.
- Methods of communicating within the Grant Creek WUI vary based on physical location, different information distribution methods already in place and availability of technology to residents at different locations within Grant Creek.
- Multiple city, county, state, tribal and federal jurisdictions have interests in Grant Creek.

- Major recreation developments are located within the WUI or are accessed through the WUI. Owners, managers and users need to be contacted.
- A significant number of conservation organizations have interests in the Grant Creek WUI as a result of direct ownership, conservation easements and environmental studies.<sup>3</sup>
- Residential and commercial development is expected to continue in Grant Creek and information in this plan may be useful for future planning.
- The adjacent areas of Butler Creek, Rattlesnake Creek and other WUI locations in Missoula County have similar issues/concerns. The Grant Creek CWPP may be of interest to them.

## Communication Goals & Objectives

- Assure understanding and awareness of the document's content.
- Keep residents, landowners, stakeholders and members of the general public informed through the use of personal contacts, social media, news updates and informational meetings.
- Provide accessible, accurate and timely information to target audiences.
- Coordinate information with the news media as appropriate.
- Foster positive relationships between the Grant Creek community and local agencies.

## Key Messages

### 1) Wildfire is inevitable.

Living in the Grant Creek WUI means each resident must learn to:

- Prepare for wildfire as a responsible member of a fire-environment community.
- Acknowledge and accept the greater risk environment where you choose to live.
- Create defensible space on your property and continually maintain it over time.
- Take the steps necessary to protect you and your neighbors **before** a fire starts.

**In Grant Creek, a “PACT” is an alliance of responsible neighbors.**

*Preparation **does not** guarantee, but **does** increase, the chance of life and property survival*

---

<sup>3</sup> National Wildlife Federation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Five Valleys Land Trust, Clark Fork Coalition, etc.

## **.2) Wildfire knows no boundaries.**

- Teamwork, partnerships and cooperation are essential in preparing for wildfires.
- Action items that improve wildfire hazard conditions improve safety for everyone.
- The plan was developed as a tool for residents to use in reducing their wildfire risk.

## **3) Public and firefighter safety are critical issues.**

- No structure, natural resource or cultural resource is worth the loss of human life.
- The CWPP was coordinated with city, county, state and federal fire and emergency response agencies.

## **4) Grant Creek's future depends on it being a viable WUI community.**

- The CWPP provides information for Grant Creek residents and landowners to increase their knowledge and situational awareness in pre-planning how to protect themselves, their property and their neighbors ahead of time in the event of a wildfire.

# **Target Audiences for the Grant Creek CWPP**

## **Internal Audience**

- Friends of Grant Creek Board of Directors
- Missoula County Office of Emergency Management (OEM)
- Missoula County Sheriff's Office
- Missoula County Rural Fire District
- Missoula County Fire Protection Association (MCFPA)
- City of Missoula – Fire Department
- City of Missoula – Police Department
- State of Montana – DNRC, Southwestern Land Office
- USDA, FS, Lolo National Forest, Missoula Ranger District
- Tribal and non-governmental stakeholders



### **Primary Focus Audience** – *those that would be most affected by a wildfire in Grant Creek*

- Current Grant Creek residents, large landowners and businesses
- New residents moving into the WUI (not notified by realtors)
- Proposed new developments (notified through city and county planning departments)

### **External Audience** – *other entities with an interest in Grant Creek*

- Missoula County Commissioners
- City of Missoula - Mayor's office
- City of Missoula – City Council members
- City of Missoula – Grant Creek/North Reserve Neighborhood Council
- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
- Snowbowl Ski and Summer Resort
- Other local elected officials
- Utility Companies
- Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce
- Grant Creek Trail Association
- Missoula Organization of Realtors
- Local Media
- Other interested public/organizations living outside of the Grant Creek watershed

## **Responsibility for Public Distribution**

The Grant Creek CWPP is a supplement to the Missoula County CWPP. As a result, the Missoula County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is the lead agency for distribution of the Grant Creek CWPP to all audiences using their existing protocols. The Friends of Grant Creek (FOGC) will assist OEM with distribution to current Grant Creek residents and landowners by providing access to existing information distribution methods used in the Grant Creek valley.

## **Information Distribution Methods in the Grant Creek Valley**

### **Friends of Grant Creek (FOGC)**

- FOGC Website: <https://www.friendsofgrantcreek.org/>
- FOGC Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofgrantcreek/>
- FOGC email list
- ZOOM meetings
- Annual or as-needed in-person meetings at Grant Creek hotel facilities or other locations
- Mailings to residents
- Grant Creek Wildfire Risk Task Force (GCWRTF) presentations

### **Individual Grant Creek Homeowner Associations (HOA)**

- HOA Facebook (use of this social media platform varies among HOAs)
- HOA email lists
- Mailings to residents
- Annual meetings or as needed; ZOOM or in-person

### **Individual Neighborhoods/Other**

- Phone trees
- Information flyers
- Nextdoor.com
- Sandwich boards
- News releases/Newsletters
- In-person or ZOOM meetings as needed

### **Grant Creek/North Reserve Neighborhood Council**

<https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/274/Grant-Creek>

**Grant Creek Trail Association** <https://www.facebook.com/gctrail/>

**Grant Creek Village residents** – rental office

## **Seasonal Wildfire Messaging for Grant Creek Residents**

City, county, state, tribal and federal agencies regularly distribute information about wildfire preparedness. Using approved agency information, the following messaging can be provided by FOGC within Grant Creek year-round using current Grant Creek distribution methods identified previously.

### **Pre-Wildfire Season**

- Situational Awareness for the upcoming wildfire season.
- Availability of free home inspections for wildfire preparedness.
- Identification of work needed in the home ignition zone annually.
- Importance of preseason wildfire hazard reduction.
- Matching grant opportunities to accomplish wildfire hazard reduction.
- Preplanning evacuation kits.
- Information on burn permits.

## **Main Wildfire Season**

- Situational Awareness during wildfire season.
- Monitoring the condition of the home ignition zone and doing maintenance where needed.
- Importance of having a plan in the event of an evacuation.
- Availability of free home inspections for wildfire preparedness.
- Who to call/what to do to report a wildfire.
- What to do in the event of a wildfire.
- Fire prevention messaging and signing.

## **Remainder of the Year**

- Situational Awareness that wildfire events may occur outside of normal time periods.
- Planning for the next wildfire season.
- Matching grant opportunities to accomplish wildfire hazard reduction.
- Importance of maintaining the condition of the home ignition zone year-round.

## **Monitoring Methods**

Monitoring the effectiveness of the Communication Plan identifies where improvements can be made to improve the quality of information.

- Information is timely and accurate; information deadlines are met.
- Talk to residents and other affected members of the public.
- Track phone calls, personal conversations, etc.
- Written and verbal comments from residents and agencies.
- Monitor media products (print and electronic) for accuracy – correct as necessary.
- Control rumors.

XXX