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NEWS

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Colorado State Forest Service Accepting Applications for 2011 Wildland-Urban Interface Program Grants

FORT COLLINS, Colo. — The Colorado State Forest Service is now accepting applications for 2011 Wildland-Urban Interface Program grants. This competitive grant program makes funds available to homeowners associations, subdivisions, fire departments, fire protection districts, counties and other groups to implement projects that mitigate wildfire hazards in the wildland-urban interface. Applications are due in early August; specific deadlines vary by CSFS district.

WUI grant funds can be used for hazardous fuels reduction, fire education and planning. Funds can be used to address either projects already underway or those that have not yet begun; projects affiliated with approved Community Wildfire Protection Plans will receive priority. All grants require a one-to-one match from recipients.

The State and Private Forestry Program of the U.S. Forest Service receives funding for the grants through federal appropriations. In Colorado, the CSFS, a service and outreach agency of the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University, administers the grants.

“Colorado competes with 17 other Western states and territories for limited funding, so it’s essential that applications are complete, concise and clearly convey what will be accomplished,” said Jane Lopez, fuels mitigation program manager for the CSFS.

Applications must be submitted directly to the appropriate CSFS district office; a map of the CSFS districts is available on the agency’s Web site. District staff will review, prioritize and forward applications to the CSFS State Office in mid-August.

The state office will consider several factors when reviewing applications, including the existence of an established Community Wildfire Protection Plan; whether a project addresses wildfire hazard mitigation across landscapes and watersheds; whether it complements projects on adjacent federal, state, tribal or private lands; the relative benefits of the project compared with cost; the probability of success based on clarity of project description and revenue/expenses; and local organization or local government sponsorship of the project.

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“Applicants really need to plan ahead. Groups that successfully compete for the 2011 grants will receive funding to help pay for projects next summer,” Lopez said.

Lopez emphasized that projects impacting a landscape larger than the area being treated have a better chance of receiving funding. For example, projects that tie a proposed fuelbreak into an existing fuelbreak on adjacent land are more likely to receive funding because their benefits extend beyond the area being treated. For the first time, the application form includes a section that asks applicants to address the “landscape scale” impacts of their projects.

The CSFS recently distributed a total of \$1.2 million to 14 projects throughout the state that successfully competed for 2010 WUI grants.

Additional information about the 2011 Wildland-Urban Interface Competitive Grant Program, including program criteria, instructions, application forms and reference documents, is available online at www.csfs.colostate.edu under the “Funding Opportunities” link. Contact a local CSFS district office for specific deadlines and assistance with the grant application process.

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