

WEST REGION WILDFIRE COUNCIL
OURAY COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT &
2020 FUNDING PROPOSAL



To: Ouray County Board of County Commissioners

From: West Region Wildfire Council

Date: August 18, 2020

Re: Report on previous West Region Wildfire Council (WRWC) lead accomplishments and request for support of WRWC staff and programs through Ouray County budget allocations for the 2020 fiscal year

Dear Ouray Board of County Commissioners-

This year has once again seen high temperatures and continued drought. Wildfires, like the Pine Gulch and Grizzly Creek Fires, throughout Colorado and the west have brought in smoke and raised concerns. The recent “success story” of mitigation making the difference in the survival of a home on the Green Meadows Fire in Telluride Pines subdivision (Hasting Mesa in San Miguel County) in July 2020 makes a strong case for the effectiveness of mitigation. The West Region Wildfire Council remains committed to engaging homeowners in completing mitigation work to reduce their risk from wildfire in Ouray County.

The ongoing Pinyon Ips Beetle outbreak affecting pinyon pine in a major portion of Ouray County has caused WRWC and our CSFS partners to adjust program implementation throughout these areas. As a result, the majority of our hazardous fuels treatment projects through the Cost-Share Program and the Community Chipping Program will be delayed until after October 15 – which marks the end of the beetle’s flight period.

Since the revision to the Land Use Code was adopted, WRWC staff have assisted the Ouray County Land Use and Planning Department implement the updated Wildfire Mitigation– providing technical expertise and assistance to homeowners and builders while coordination and communication with Planning staff.

On behalf of the West Region Wildfire Council (WRWC) Staff, Steering Committee & Membership, we’d like to thank Ouray County for its continued support as well as its leadership and forward thinking in the arenas of wildfire mitigation, preparedness and adaptation. Council resources and programs have been available to Ouray County residents since 2010 and have had measurable, tangible and lasting impacts. Since that time, WRWC has worked with local fire protection districts, homeowners associations, community leaders and individual homeowners to identify wildfire risk and take proactive steps towards reducing those risks *ahead* of a future wildfire event. While there is lots more work to be accomplished, *thus far*, these collaborative efforts have resulted in:

WRWC COST-SHARE PROGRAM

- Continued availability since 2011 of the **WRWC Cost-Share Program**, which provides **up to 75%** cost-share funding for **defensible space** and **strategic landscape- scale fuels reduction** projects.
- Since 2011, **2,034 acres** of hazardous fuels reduction projects have been coordinated and funded by WRWC in Ouray County
- **\$637,649** WRWC Cost-Share Program funding has been awarded to Ouray County residents to incentivize hazardous fuels reduction work

- WRWC has applied for and administered several grants (e.g. Multiple DNR Wildfire Risk Reduction Grants & FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation, BLM Community Assistance) specific to funding programs in Ouray County
- Homeowners have contributed **\$315,922 in cash-match** as well as an additional **\$298,274 of in-kind match**.

COMMUNITY CHIPPING PROGRAM

- Continued availability of the WRWC Community Chipping Program, providing free curb-side service to participating communities and residents of fire-prone areas in Ouray County
- Between 2016 and 2019 Ouray County has directly supported the Community Chipping Program in Ouray County with \$15,000. WRWC has brought an additional \$35,953 from other grant funding sources to pay for \$50,953 of chipping services in the county
- Below is a year-by-year breakdown of Ouray County funding contributions, Council matching funds and accomplishments:

Year	Ouray County Contributions	WRWC Matching Grant Funds*	# of program participants	# of piles chipped	Volume of slash managed (cu. Ft)	Homeowner hours reported
2016	\$3,000	\$5,917	140	469	82,075	1,861
2017	\$3,000	\$6,076	140	470	82,250	1,797
2018	\$4,500	\$9,058	180	627	109,725	2,788
2019	\$4,500	\$14,902	182	559	96,950	2,659
2020*	TBD	TBD	23	11	1,925	453

*Through 8/17/2020. WRWC Matching Contributions do not account for all of the WRWC staff time associated with public outreach, contractor management and overall program coordination. This is an accounting of the “hard match” grant funds that WRWC utilized to pay for chipping contractual services.

WILDFIRE ADAPTATION EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND SPECIAL EVENTS

- Several FPD Open Houses
- HOA Meetings and Community Events/ Forums
- Log Hill Evacuation Exercise
- Wildfire Mitigation Land Use Codes- Review and recommendations to Planning Department Staff & Land Use Planning Commission
- Wildfire Research Team (WiRe) Focus Area- Localized knowledge and several published journal articles
- Colorado Association of Realtors Statewide Event
- Hosted Congressman Tipton- Field Tour and Overview of Mitigation Programs
- Annual Chipping Events

HOME SITE VISITS AND WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS

- 2011 Wildfire Risk Assessment- Log Hill (608 homes)
- 2014 Ouray FPD Wildfire Risk Assessment
- 2017 RE-Assessment of Log Hill (650 homes)
- 2017 RE-Survey (social science)
- ~300 one-on-one homeowner site visits to date (including 4 Building Permit site visits)

TARGETED OUTREACH AND PLANNING EFFORTS

- 2011 CWPP continues to serve as a guiding document for the implementation of hazardous fuels reduction projects and wildfire related education and outreach in the County.
- Development of the Log Hill Mesa FPD CWPP
- Development of the Log Hill Mesa FPD Initial Attack Plan
- Targeted direct mailing to residents at risk to wildfire in partnership with Ouray and Log Hill FPD's
- Parcel level individualized Rapid Wildfire Risk Assessment webpages currently available at: www.COwildfire.org/myhome

OURAY COUNTY SUPPORT REQUEST

Since 2011, Ouray County has provided an annual contribution towards West Region Wildfire Council Programs. This funding has historically been used to provide a small portion of salary funding for WRWC Staff's efforts and work in Ouray County as well as to provide partial funding for the Community Chipping program. For 2020, WRWC is requesting \$12,500 in funding support from Ouray County to recover costs associated with making all of our programs and services available in Ouray County. Giving WRWC the discretion to determine where best to allocate the funding will allow us to continue to provide the high level of service and resources available in Ouray County, including scheduling wildfire mitigation focused educational Site Visits with homeowners as well as will building permit application holders. These technical services, coordinated with foresters from the Colorado State Forest Service, provide actionable information for homeowners as well as Planning Department staff and are the stepping off point for residents who are interested in moving forward with a cost-share project. Additionally, the Council intends to maintain availability of its Cost-Share and Community Chipping Program's throughout the county. The Community Chipping Program has undergone some programmatic changes to eligibility and we are anticipating additional programmatic changes for 2021. These changes have been necessary to ensure that we are investing in effective wildfire mitigation efforts in the most strategic manner as possible. This amount will be consistent with Ouray County's 2019 support and well aligned with other regional county support.

2020 PLANNED WRWC EVENTS

- Rapid Wildfire Risk Assessment Reminders to Ouray FPD (Nudge Mailing)
- Wildfire Preparedness (virtual) Community Meeting following the mailings
- Community Chipping Program Events in the greater Ouray Area (Nov 9th), Pleasant Valley and Log Hill Mesa (November 22nd)

CURRENT 2020 Ouray County Budget Request Summary: \$12,500

Total Other Leveraged Funding:

2019 Ouray County overall program Cash-Match ~\$163,878

2019 Ouray County overall homeowner Cash-Match ~\$80,080

2019 Ouray County overall homeowner in-kind Match ~\$169,680

Estimated 2020 Ouray County overall program Cash-Match ~\$150,000

Estimated 2020 Ouray County overall homeowner Cash- Match ~\$75,000

Estimated 2020 Ouray County overall homeowner in-kind Match ~\$150,000

We hope that WRWC's strong commitment to reducing wildfire risk and our desire to continue our partnership and programs in Ouray County is valued. We are thankful for the support and collaboration that Ouray County has provided in the past and present, and we look forward to working collectively and efficiently together to address wildfire issues in future years.

Thank you for your consideration,



Jamie Gomez
Executive Director
West Region Wildfire Council



Lilia Falk
Director of Finance, Agreements and HR
West Region Wildfire Council