



FROM DEFENSIBLE SPACE TO HAZARDOUS FUEL REDUCTION/TREATMENT

Boundary County FireSafe Program History

Boundary County Started prep for the WUI program in 2001. The first grants, from the BLM and the IDL in 2003.

Started as a “Defensible Space Program” – creating a 100 foot buffer around homes.

As of the “Stevens Grant”, received in 2005, the program shifted focus to “Hazardous Fuel Reduction/Vegetation Treatment” (HFT) work.

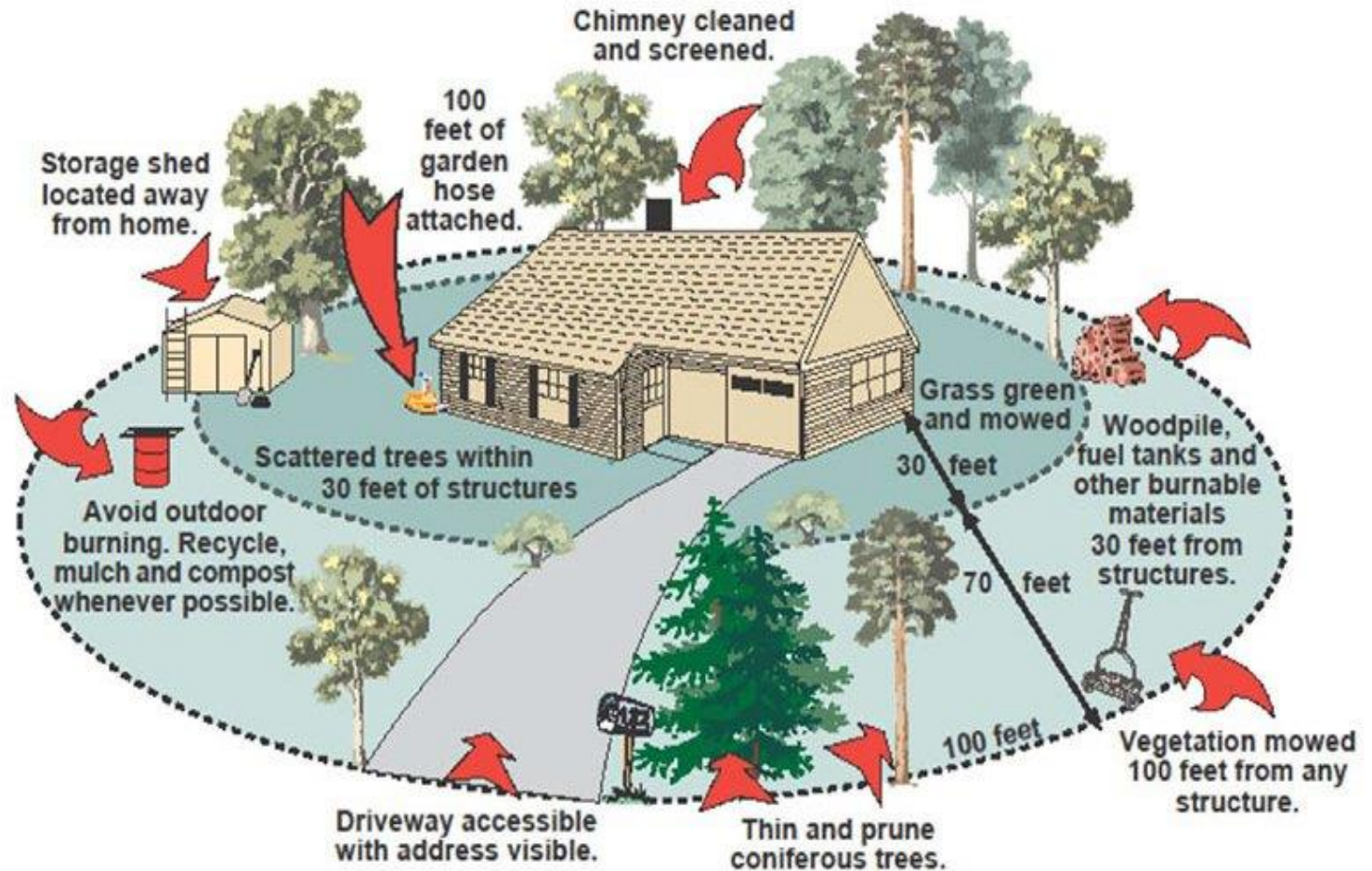
Now the program focuses on creating fuel breaks around communities within the county.

To date the County has been awarded over 20 grants totaling over \$3 million.



What is Defensible Space?

Using a defensible space around your home is essential to improving the chances of your home surviving a wildfire. It creates a 100 ft. buffer between a home and any wildland area that surrounds it. This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfires, and it will help protect homes from catching fire – either from direct flame contact or radiant heat.



Defensible Space Can Save Your Home!



Yakima Valley, Washington home that survived a 2,800 acre brush fire in 2017 thanks to Defensible Space



Boundary County Defensible Space Program Projects



Before

Boundary FireSafe Contractors and Homeowners completed Defensible Space Projects on 269 homes between 2003 and 2007.



After

DSP Projects continued...



Before



After

Even though the focus has changed, DSP is still a part of what we do. (Project Completed in 2019)



Before



After

Partnering with the US Forest Service

The US Forest Service has been managing wildland fire for more than 100 years. There is a need for the agency to work closely with other federal, tribal, state and local partners.

This collaboration is more important than ever because over the last few decades, the wildland fire management environment has profoundly changed. Longer fire seasons; bigger fires and more acres burned on average each year, more extreme fire behavior, and wildfire suppression operations in the Wildland Urban Interface have become the norm.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction/Treatment (HFT) projects have been proven as a means of mitigating wildfire hazards, to lessen catastrophic fires and the threat to public and firefighter safety, and damage to private property. The objective of HFT work is to remove surface fuels in a large area so that when a wildfire burns, it is less severe and can be more easily suppressed.

Partnerships for Hazardous Fuel Reduction/Treatment

- When surface fuels accumulate, they allow fires to burn hotter, faster and with higher flame lengths. “Ladder fuels” may quickly spread from a ground fire into a devastating crown fire.
- Hazardous fuel reduction/treatment generally requires the reduction of surface and ladder fuels, and thinning out dense tree stands, preserving the mature sized trees.
- Much of the effort in surface fuels reduction is focused in and around WUI.
- The majority of the recent Boundary FireSafe HFT work has been completed on properties that border US Forest Service HFT projects to create large scale fuel breaks.
- Since the implementation of the Hazardous Fuel Reduction/Treatment program focus, approximately 3,000 acres of private land has been treated in Boundary County.

FireSafe Hazardous Fuel Reduction/Treatment Projects

The following three HFT projects demonstrate the concept behind the HFT program. –Project completed in the fall of 2019 in the Naples Area. This 29 acre project will help protect numerous homes and properties.



Before



After

HFT Projects continued...

Project completed in 2019 off of Fitzpatrick road using WFM grant funding. The project area was 13.5 acres and provided nearly 2,300 feet of road frontage.



Before



After

HFT Projects continued...

Project completed in 2019 along Katka Road using WFM grant funding. This project was 16 acre in size and provided 1,200 feet of road frontage.

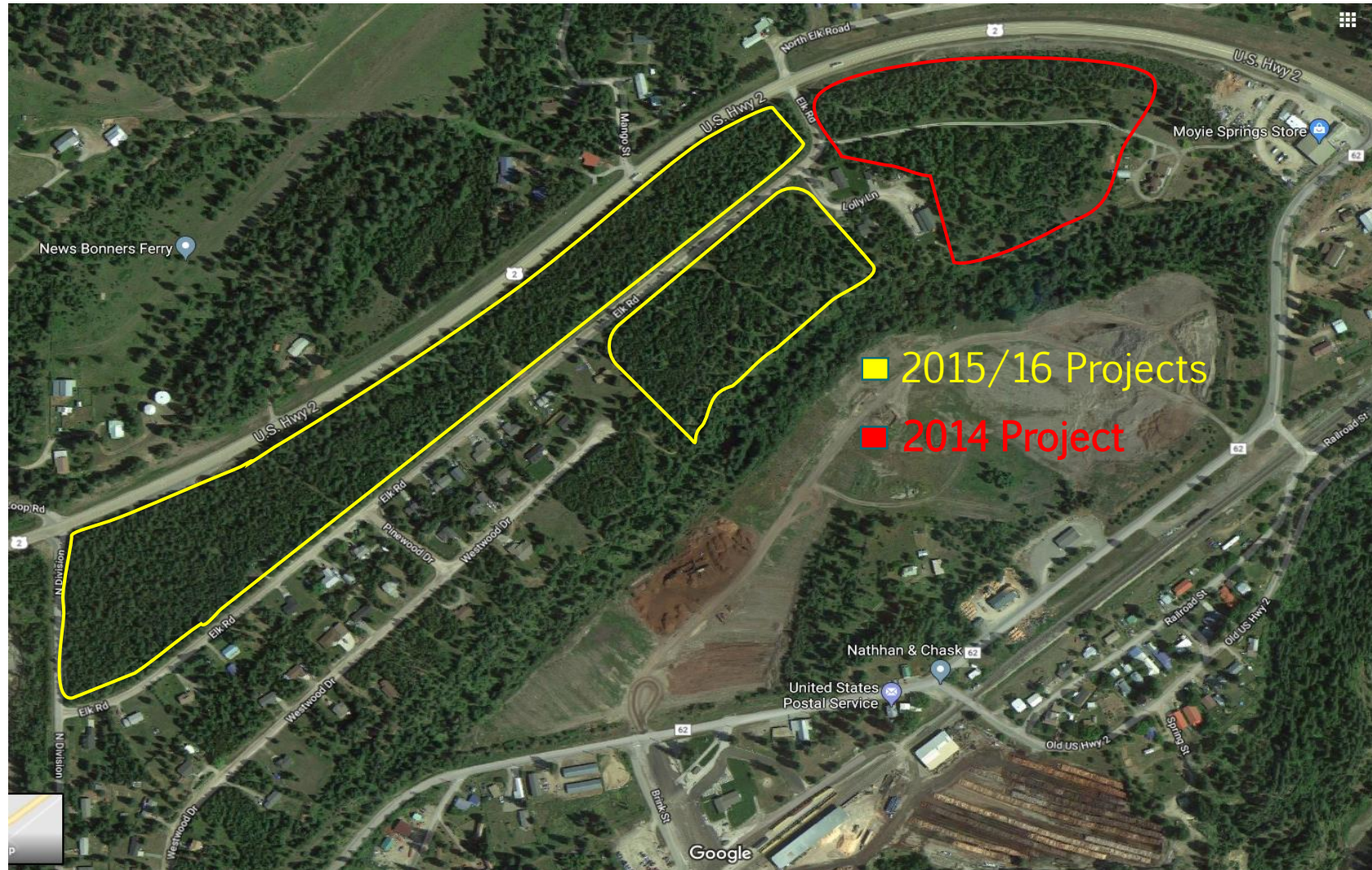


Before



After

HFT Work in Moyie Springs



The emphasis of the HFT program is to tie current projects with other ongoing projects or projects from prior grants.

This 35.9 acre fuel break along Highway 2 and Elk Road was completed using two different grant cycles.

Type of Equipment used:

Typical ground based
mastication equipment.



How Project Areas are Selected

WUI Committee

- USFS
- IDL
- Local Rural Fire Districts
- Boundary County Commissioners
- Other community members(KVRI)

Once project areas are defined and grant funding is available-

- The project manager works with individual landowners, educating them on the process, and prioritizes projects to maximize the use of the funding.
- The Project Manager also compiles the projects, putting them out for bid, and works with the awarded contractor to make sure the specs are met.

10 Year maintenance agreement



Funding for the Fire Safe Program

Grant #16HFR1-Boundary Just finished and focused on Non-Federal lands adjacent to US Forest Service HFT projects located in the Deer Creek, Templeman, and East Fork Meadow areas. A majority of the work occurred along the Smith Lake Road, extending to the USFS Campground. We were able to treat 65 acres with this grant.

Grant #16WFM-South Boundary-Boundary is nearing completion and has focused on the South Boundary County area including Katka, Glacier, Paradise, Valley Lookout View, Frontier Village, plus additional areas located in and around Naples. So far we have treated 173 acres with this grant.

Grant #17HFR1 Westside-Boundary – is in progress. Projects are to be located on Non-Federal lands adjacent to US Forest Service HFT projects located along the Westside area. All county assisted projects must be located within 1.5 miles of USFS Westside project that is in its early stages.

Grant #18HFR1- North of Bonners Ferry, east to the Montana Line. Several projects planned around the old HWY 2 area.

The County has applied for additional grant funding to enhance and continue work throughout the county.

As you can see the program very active in the community.

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