



FY 2018 / FY 2019 BUSINESS CASE

Agency: Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands – Department of Natural Resources

Request Title: Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy Implementation

Amount Requested: \$500,000 General Fund

Duration of Funding: FY 2018 one-time FY 2019 one-time FY 2019 ongoing
(check all that apply)

Performance Improvement Specialist: Wade Kloos

1. What system or program is the focus of this request?

The focus of this request is the State's wildland fire management program within the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands (FFSL or Division). By statute, "the state forester shall make certain that appropriate action is taken to control wildland fires on nonfederal forest, range, and watershed lands." FFSL's fire management program is responsible for meeting this overall goal. Historically, the major function of this program has been wildfire *suppression*; however, to have a truly successful fire management program, *pre-suppression actions*, such as wildfire prevention, preparedness and mitigation, must also be a priority function. FFSL recognizes this, and a comprehensive, proactive wildfire risk reduction initiative, incorporating a full suite of targeted prevention, preparedness and mitigation actions, is now a cornerstone function of our overall fire management strategy. The specific purpose of the fire management program's Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy (CatFire) is to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire across Utah, thereby reducing both suppression costs as well as the often unaccounted for and much higher *total* costs of wildfire. CatFire's objective is clearly to reduce wildfire risk for our citizens and communities, but it is driven by the long-term need of reducing the total costs of wildland fire for all Utahns.

2. Summarize the current budget for this system or program. If this is a new system or program, summarize the current budget for the line item and appropriation code(s) in which this new system or program will operate.

The first four years of CatFire funding have come from the Sovereign Lands Management Restricted Account. In its first year (FY15) CatFire was allocated \$1.98 million, in FY16 \$2.5 million, and \$1 million in FY17 and FY18.

This request is for General Fund dollars. We believe it should not be the industries of the Great Salt Lake, through royalties paid to the restricted account, that pay for the public benefit—and responsibility—of wildfire risk reduction. The State and taxpayers, one way or another, are going to pay for the management of wildland fire. Typically this is through the suppression costs and the far greater total costs of wildfire. All of us as taxpayers pay these ever-increasing suppression-related costs (primarily through the General Fund). This request is to reallocate a small portion of those inevitable costs in an attempt to be more proactive and get ahead of the problem. By doing so, in the long run, we can reduce

the costs of wildfire suppression as well as the total costs of wildfire, thereby reducing the impacts to the General Fund over time.

However, CatFire is not the only initiative in Utah for reducing wildfire risk and costs. FFSL works hand-in-hand with other federal and state agencies, city and county government, all fire departments across the state, and NGOs to proactively address the need. CatFire is not implemented in a vacuum and has been purposefully designed and is being implemented to complement other wildfire management and risk reduction initiatives both within the Division and externally with our numerous partners. CatFire is successful to date because we are working with the right partners, prioritizing where and how CatFire funds are spent, and leveraging other funds to more effectively use limited CatFire dollars.

3. What problem would be solved with additional funding? (Show historical data to support problem statement)

The need and demand for wildfire risk reduction services is expected to increase. We know for a fact that fire season across the west, including Utah, has become longer, and wildfires are becoming more frequent, larger, more dangerous and far more expensive. In Utah, we have documented that wildfire size and seasons have been steadily increasing over the last 40 years. In the 1980's, Utah had approximately 400 fires a year, over 600 fires in the 1990s and since 2000, on average about 900 wildfires a year. Also, in the early 1970's the fire season lasted about 5 months whereas we have seen it increase to average over 7 months for a season. This quantifiable trend will only continue unless a comprehensive, proactive (and, ultimately, lower-cost) pre-suppression and risk reduction effort, such as CatFire, is consistently implemented.

The bottom line is, due to wildfire trends across the west and in Utah, we are guaranteed to spend the "resources" one way or the other. We can spend, in ever-increasing amounts, on the symptom of wildfire suppression. Or we can make a choice to reallocate funding to deal with and begin to get ahead of the problem through wildfire risk reduction actions, including prevention, preparedness and mitigation, to meet the three objectives of improved 1) landscape resilience, 2) community preparedness, and 3) wildfire response & management. Only then might we begin to see in Utah, in the long-run, a reduction in suppression costs and the far more expensive total costs of wildfire.

4. What has been done to solve this problem with existing resources? What were the results?

CatFire is by far the most comprehensive, systematic and rigorous wildfire risk reduction initiative FFSL has ever undertaken. The Division, for more than a decade, has operated a statewide Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Program, federally funded through the now-13-year-old National Fire Plan, which focuses almost exclusively on fuels reduction. Fuels reduction, however, is only a single action concentrating on mitigation and, therefore, only partially addresses the three objectives of improved 1) landscape resilience, 2) community preparedness, and 3) wildfire response & management. Over the past four years FFSL has increased the responsibility and effectiveness of the WUI program,

statewide WUI administrator, and six area WUI coordinators by, among other things, successfully accessing millions of dollars of other federal fuels reduction and mitigation funding sources that the Division has never before received or even sought (e.g., NRCS EQIP and RCPP funds, USFS NCS funds, etc.). These new funds completely complement CatFire and allow us to both “extend” our limited CatFire dollars and, more important, target these funds to undertake prevention, preparedness and mitigation actions that might not otherwise have allowable funding sources. This is a great benefit for CatFire and the geographic areas where CatFire funds are targeted.

FFSL also administers other funds—both state and federal monies—that are granted to local government and fire departments to assist with implementing prevention, preparedness and mitigation actions (e.g., Fire Dept Assistance Grants). And we offer training and technical assistance to local fire departments for wildland fire suppression response. The Division also works closely and complementary with other State and Federal programs, such as DNR’s Watershed Restoration Initiative (which primarily helps meet the objective of improved landscape resilience) and the interagency fuels committees across the state. FFSL is involved with numerous activities and programs that lead to the reduction of wildfire risk, but CatFire has clearly become the foundation for all of these related efforts.

Regarding results, FFSL has created the Utah Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (UWRAP), an on-line, publicly accessible and easy-to-use tool to determine wildfire threat and risk anywhere in the state. UWRAP is by far the most detailed wildfire risk assessment ever available for Utah and is arguably one of the most advanced risk assessments available in the country. Through UWRAP, the Division and any interested party is able to see their respective risk and, over time, as data layers are updated, see how their actions can influence threat and risk ratings. We are able to track data and, therefore, results (i.g., reduced risk) better and more accurately than ever before in Utah. UWRAP is a powerful tool that is changing the dialogue about and understanding of wildfire risk and risk reduction all across the state.

5. How will new funding be utilized? What operational changes will be made to maximize new resources? Also, please summarize any legislation needed in conjunction with this incremental budget change request. Note: Agencies must coordinate all legislation through the Governor’s general counsel.

The requested funding will be used to implement more and better wildfire risk-reduction prevention, preparedness and mitigation actions with our many partners across the state.

Administratively, FFSL has a well-organized and proven structure in place to ensure the successful implementation of CatFire and maximize existing Division capacity. Through the ongoing efforts of the standing Statewide Steering Committee and six regional work groups, along with the guidance found in the CatFire Strategy document itself, the potential funding will further the progress already being made towards wildfire risk reduction. For CatFire, the Division follows a continuous, adaptive approach of implement, monitor, assess, adjust and repeat. This operational strategy is being employed with previous and current CatFire funding, and multiple quantifiable performance measures are identified and being used. Monitoring includes both implementation (did we do what we said we’d

do) and effects (what were the outcomes or impacts of what we did) performance measures. These organizational tools all assist with meeting the growing demand for and increased quality of the fire risk reduction service CatFire and FFSL provides.

No legislation will be needed for use of the funding or to continue our CatFire efforts.

6. What are the anticipated results or outcomes of how the new funding will be utilized? What measure(s), including quality, throughput, and costs, will be used to track the change over time? Is data currently available to support these measures?

The quality measures are the three objectives of improved 1) landscape resilience, 2) community preparedness, and 3) wildfire response & management. We also track more traditional measures, such as number of human-caused fires (prevention related), acres burned and direct suppression costs (preparedness and response related), and we would very much like to have the resources to measure total—externalized and often unaccounted for—wildfire costs (real costs beyond simply suppression).

Other quality measures that FFSL tracks through CatFire and our fire management program include quantifiable performance measures such as:

- acres treated that significantly reduce the risk of a potential wildfire based on wildfire risk analysis (are we treating the “right” acres?);
- reduction in the number of acres at high and medium risk according to wildfire risk assessment;
- number of “large” fires (measured in duration, size and/or cost);

Other measurable outcomes we track, which could also suggest program success, though may not be clear indicators of actual reduced risk, include:

- total acres treated (e.g., fuels reduction);
- community wildfire preparedness plans completed;
- “Fire-Adapted Community” recognitions;
- homeowner engagements;
- prevention actions taken;
- firefighters trained and “red-carded”;
- project support leveraged (cash or “in kind”).

All of these performance measures are quantifiable. The first list most directly correlates to the desired outcome of reduced risk in any given location (we call this “effects monitoring”). The second list directly measures success in getting prevention, preparedness and mitigation actions actually implemented (referred to as “implementation monitoring”). Effects monitoring is more meaningful in measuring our success in meeting the CatFire goals and objectives detailed above.

7. What are potential negative effects if the funding is not received?

Without this funding, both the quality and throughput of FFSL's wildfire risk reduction efforts and actions on the ground would greatly diminish from the previous four years of CatFire funding. As a result, the overall operational expense of our wildfire management responsibility will only continue to increase over time as fire suppression costs continue to increase.

FY2019 Budget Increase Summary

Financing	FY 2019	Expenditures	FY 2019
General Fund	\$500,000	Personal Services	
School Funds		In-State Travel	
Transportation Fund		Out-of-State Travel	
Federal Funds		Current Expense	\$500,000
Dedicated Credits		DP Current Expense	
Restricted Funds		DP Capital	
Transfers (specify)		Capital Outlay	
Other (specify)		Pass Thru/Other	
Beginning Balance		Total Expenditures	\$500,000
Total Financing	\$500,000	FTE's:	



Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy: Approved Actions 2018

<u>Regional Workgroup</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	<u>Funds Allocated</u>
Central	Wayne	Teasdale Bench	Fuel Reduction/Break	20 acres	\$37,500
Central	Sevier	Fishlake Defensible Space	Defensible space work day	40 homes	\$6,600
Central	Sanpete	Ephraim Canyon	Fuel Reduction/Break	87 acres	\$27,500
Wasatch Front	Morgan, Davis, Salt Lake, Utah, Tooele	Wasatch Front Mitigation and Education	Chipper Day CWPP Project Assistance Community Education CWPP Development and Updates	10 chipping events 10 educational events 6 CWPP's	\$26,500
Wasatch Front	Davis	Ferwood/Snoqualmie Firebreak	Fuel Reduction/Break	5 acres	\$51,400
Wasatch Front	Morgan, Davis, Salt Lake, Utah, Tooele	Area fire communications Improvement	Acquisition and distribution of mobile communication equipment.	30 radios	\$40,000
Wasatch Front	Davis & Salt Lake	Improve wildfire response with additional water sources	Acquisition and distribution of portable water source equipment for the east bench.	2 portable water tanks	\$20,000
Northeast	Utah	Deep Creek Mini Ranches	Fuel Reduction/Break	10 acres	\$21,000
Southeast	Grand, San Juan	West Slope La Sal	CWPP Planning and Fuel Reduction	3 CWPP's 20 homes 60 acres	\$36,100
Southeast	Emery	Joe's Valley Fuels Reduction Phase 3	CWPP Planning and production, community education, and Firewise program assistance	130 acres 15 homes	\$57,500
Bear River	Box Elder, Cache, Rich, Weber	Area fire communications Improvement	Acquisition and distribution of mobile communication equipment.	10 radios	\$15,200
Bear River	Box Elder, Cache, Rich, Weber	Area Community Wildfire Preparation Plans (CWPP)	CWPP Planning and production	32 CWPP's	\$91,000
Bear River	Weber	Causey Estates Fuel Reduction	Fuel Reduction/Break	27 acres	\$24,700
Southwest	Kane	Christensen's Phase 2	Fuel Reduction	15 acres	\$45,000
Total		354 acres, 41 CWPP's, 75 homes, 10 community events, 40 radios, 2 portable water tanks			\$500,000