

Steps for Landowners –Bridger/Bangtails: Forest Health and Wildfire Safety - Technical Guidance and Financial Assistance Program

1. Application

By the application deadline, an application must be submitted to notify us of your interest and property information. You may request one by calling (406) 388-3213.

Submit completed application to: MSU Extension Office, 201 W. Madison, Ste. 300, Belgrade, MT 59714.

2. Property Visit

Once your application has been received our field tech will contact you to set up a property visit. At this initial visit we will walk your property to get an idea of what types of fuels reduction can be done around your home. We will also visit with you about the program and get your ideas of what you would like to see happen on your property.

3. Project Screening

Project applications will be reviewed and ranked based on neighborhood partnership, presence of a forest management plan, and/or intended implementation method.

4. Project Plan

After the field tech has visited, you and the field tech will develop your property's project plan. The Plan will include the recommended treatment that can be done to create a survivable space around your home. At this time we will also be letting you know whether you are eligible for grant funding.

Set your own goals and connect with your property. You can create your own forest plan too: www.msuextension.org/forestry/stewardship.htm or www.mylandplan.org

5. Hiring a Contractor or Doing the Work Yourself

a. Hiring a Contractor

After you have been notified that funding is available, you should start by calling contractors from the list provided and setting up times for them to give you a bid for the work that needs to be done. When you have chosen a contractor and received their bid for your property please mail, email, or fax it to the Gallatin County Extension Office.

b. Doing the Work Yourself

If you are doing the work yourself you will receive an agreement from the field tech notifying you how much grant money is available for your project. Also enclosed will be information on how to record your hours and expenses.

6. Agreement, W9, and AD-1048

After the field tech has received your bid from the contractor or confirmation that you plan on doing the work yourself, they will put together an agreement between the Gallatin County MSU Extension (Extension) and you. Thoroughly read through all the information you receive to ensure you understand all aspects of the program. If you have any questions at this time please feel free to contact your field tech to go over any information with you.

You will be asked to submit a W9 – please consult with your accountant regarding the tax implications of the cost share funds.

You will be asked to submit an AD-1048. The AD-1048 is from the grants funders (USDA) which confirms you have not been debarred or suspended from receiving Government assistance.

7. Landowner/Contractor Agreement

It is now up to you to work with your contractor and set up an agreement and date for the work to be done. It is recommended that you have an agreement with your contractor that spells out the payment procedures and any specifications you want to include in your contract/agreement with them.

Please wait until we have completed all the previous steps before starting the project.

8. Work Begins

At this time your field tech will do periodic inspections throughout the life of the project to ensure the work is getting accomplished and meeting the grant specifications.

9. Remember that the purpose of this program is to:

- a. Leave the best trees on your property.
- b. To reduce the chances of a ground fire becoming a crown fire by reducing the ladder fuels leading up into the tree crowns.
- c. To improve the health and vigor of your forest to be able to withstand insect and disease infestation.
- d. It is also important for you to know that this program is **NOT designed to “fireproof” your property**, but only to reduce the fire risk. If fires occur in and around your property and the burning conditions are extreme, there is a possibility that you could still have a devastating fire because of those extreme burning conditions. This program will reduce the chance of this but cannot guarantee the risk of this type of fire will be totally eliminated.

10. Final Inspection

Once the work is completed, let the field tech know so they can visit to check off the work that has been done. Not until after the work is checked off should you pay your contractor.

11. Submit All Invoices

If the work passes final inspection, you will need to submit your paid invoice from the contractor or the in-kind documentation paperwork to the Extension Office.

12. Payment

We will send you a check for the agreed upon amount outlined in the agreement. If your expenses for accomplishing the work are over the maximum amount in the agreement with Extension, we will pay you up to, but not over, the maximum amount on the agreement (expect up to 8 weeks for check to come in the mail).