



FEMA

Finding of No Significant Impact

Island Park Reduction of Hazardous Fuels on Private Lands Project Fremont County, Idaho Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, 4342-ID

The Island Park Sustainable Fire Community (IPSFC) applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Idaho Office of Emergency Management (IOEM) for a wildfire mitigation grant under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The HMGP is authorized under Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988 [Public Law 93-288, as amended, 42 U.S. Code [USC] § 5121-5027). The Proposed Action would reduce hazardous fuels in proximity to private residences to create a more fire-resistant landscape in Fremont County, Idaho, especially in dispersed residential areas.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to reduce wildfire hazards on selected privately owned parcels that have been classified as *Extreme* or *High* fire risk in an unincorporated portion of Fremont County, Idaho. The need for the Proposed Action is driven by recorded fire history in the region along with the increase in wildfire hazards that have resulted from long-term changes in environmental conditions (e.g., mountain bark beetle infestations) and increased residential development, which exacerbates the risk of fires in the wildland-urban interface. The Proposed Action would establish defensible space through hazardous fuels reduction activities on approximately 68 properties that have been classified as having *Extreme* or *High* fire risk to wildfire in target neighborhoods. The properties cover approximately 110 acres, distributed across 16 neighborhoods which total more than 2,300 acres. Hazardous fuels reduction activities would include the removal of crown, ladder, and surface fuels. Before any fuels reduction treatment actions occur on an individual property, a site-specific wildfire risk evaluation would be conducted to develop a written fuels reduction treatment prescription for the property. Work would be performed by IPSFC contractors.

The Proposed Action would include the following treatment methods, additional scope of work details are included in the Environmental Assessment (EA):

- **Tree Removal**
 - 8-inch-diameter at breast height (DBH) or less identified by IPSFC and the homeowner would be marked and removed
 - 8-inch-DBH or less, standing dead and solid down material would be marked and removed

- Felled large trees would be limbed, bucked, and cut into sections at least 10-feet in length and left on the property
 - All overstory trees would be carefully evaluated before felling so there is no damage to the home or other property improvements
- **Tree Limbing**
 - Unless marked with flagging, all conifer trees would be limbed up to 6 feet (ft) or no more than one third of the total height, whichever is less
 - Branches from the main body of the tree would be cut and removed
- **Brush Clearance**
 - All brush identified by IPSFC contractors and the homeowner within the project area would be cut and removed
- **Material Removal**
 - The IPSFC contractor would transport all slash and tree material resulting from fuels reduction activities to the Meadow Creek Slash Pit operated by Fremont County located at latitude N 44.59831 / longitude W -111.33035, McCrea Pit operated by the USFS located at latitude N 44.45953 / longitude W -111.39522, or left on-site for firewood at the property owners discretion
 - Material may be chipped and spread on-site or removed to an offsite disposal location per landowner preference
- **Work Timing**
 - Work is expected to be conducted between April 15th and November 30th while there is little to no snow cover on the ground and over a 5-year period
- **Heavy Equipment Use**
 - Skid steers or loaders may be used to access the work site on the property
 - No trees would be pushed over using heavy equipment and trees may be base cut
 - Trucks for transporting removed material or chippers for processing material would only be parked on existing roadways and a skid steer or loader would be used to transport material from the property to the truck or chipper
 - Upon property work completion, the IPSFC contractor would rehabilitate any skid trails to their condition before work started

- **Whitebark Pine**

- All whitebark pine would be identified within the defensible space by a qualified person and flagged as part of the wildfire risk assessment; no flagged whitebark pine would be cut, limbed, or otherwise modified

Burning would only be used for large concentrations of slash at Fremont County burn pits (i.e., Meadow Creek and McCrea locations) or in smaller concentrations on individual properties by property owners. The Meadow Creek slash pit is operated by the Fremont County Public Works department and is open to the public from mid-May to mid-October. Burn permits are required from the State of Idaho during the fire season (May 10th through October 20th) when activities would be conducted outside of city limits and would be conducted in compliance with Fremont County Ordinance. The McCrea slash pit is located on USFS-managed lands and IPSFC contractors have permission to deposit slash there in compliance with their contract and the USFS burns slash at a later date.

Under the Proposed Action, the IPSFC would execute 10-year maintenance agreements with the individual landowners who would each be responsible for the associated costs and provision of any needed maintenance activities. Annual maintenance conducted by the property owner would include removal of surface fuels such as pine needle accumulations, new understory trees and shrubs, and down woody material; as well as cleaning of gutters, keeping firewood piles away from homes, sweeping needles from structure rooftops, mowing grasses and forbs, and promotion of fire-resistant tree species (e.g., aspen). Under the Proposed Action, included properties would be inspected on a bi-annual basis by IPSFC Fuels Specialists to ensure fuels reductions are maintained.

Findings

FEMA prepared an EA pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 USC §§ 4321-4347, as amended, as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] §§ 1500-1508), and in accordance with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Instruction Manual 023-01-001-01, Implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act, FEMA Instruction 108-1-1, Instruction on Implementation of the Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Responsibilities and Program Requirements, and FEMA Directive 108-1, Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Responsibilities and Program Requirements.

The EA, which is incorporated by reference in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), identified and evaluated potential individual and cumulative environmental impacts from the Proposed Action and a No Action alternative. It also described other alternative treatment methods that were considered and dismissed. The analysis determined the Proposed Action will not affect Farmland Soils, Geology, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Coastal Resources, or Land Use and Zoning either because the resource or consideration does not exist in the project area or proposed activities will have no effect on them. During implementation of the Proposed Action, negligible or minor impacts on soils, visual quality and aesthetics, air quality and climate, surface waters and water quality, wetlands,

floodplains, sole source aquifers, vegetation, fish and wildlife, Endangered Species Act-listed plant and animal species and Designated Critical Habitat, cultural resources, environmental justice, hazardous materials, noise, transportation, utilities, and public health and safety are anticipated. With implementation of conditions to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts as listed in Attachment A, none of these potential impacts would be significant. FEMA consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, and federally recognized Indian tribes with interests in the area to identify potentially affected resources and appropriate measures to avoid and minimize potential impacts. In the long-term, the Proposed Action would have beneficial effects on several resources because of the resulting reduced risk of wildfire damage.

The Draft EA was made available to the public and interested parties for review and comment from December 29, 2022 to January 31, 2023. As described in the EA, FEMA and IPSFC used various public outreach methods to make the Draft EA available. A total of one public comment letter was received. The Final EA has been updated considering the comment received.

Conclusion

The Proposed Action is the selected alternative because the No Action alternative would not address the purpose and need stated in the EA and no other practical alternatives were identified. Based on the information contained in the grant application, the EA, and conditions in Attachment A of this FONSI; and in accordance DHS' Instruction Manual, FEMA's Instruction and Directive; and Executive Orders (EOs) addressing floodplains (EO 11988), wetlands (EO 11990), and environmental justice (EO 12898); FEMA has determined that the Proposed Action will not cause significant impacts on the quality of the natural and human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared and the project, as described in the grant application, the EA, and the conditions in Attachment A, may proceed.

APPROVAL

SCIENCE A
KILNER

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SCIENCE A KILNER
Date: 2023.03.17 14:46:13
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Science Kilner
Regional Environmental Officer
FEMA Region 10

Date

ENDORSEMENT

**HOLLY A
BERGMAN**

Digitally signed by HOLLY A
BERGMAN
Date: 2023.03.20 07:31:16
-07'00'

Holly Bergman
Hazard Mitigation Assistance Branch Chief
FEMA Region 10

Date

Attachment A – Project Conditions

The Island Park Sustainable Fire Community (IPSFC) (subrecipient) shall implement the Proposed Action, including all IPSFC-proposed best management practices (BMPs) intended to mitigate potential impacts. Additionally, the IPSFC shall comply with all conditions required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and document compliance as applicable to each parcel on the individual property treatment prescriptions. These combined mitigation actions and conditions are listed in Table 4-8 of the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and are summarized below:

- The following measure shall be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to soils:
 - Vehicles (aside from skid steer or loader) would be restricted to existing roads.
- The following measures shall be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to air quality and climate:
 - Vehicles and equipment running times would be kept to minimum extent possible.
 - Large concentrations of slash material would only be burned at the Meadow Creek and McCrea pits.
- The following measures shall be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to sole source aquifers, surface waters and water quality, and wetlands:
 - No work would occur within 30 feet of waterbodies or wetlands.
 - Some riparian vegetation would be retained according to the treatment specifications, to prevent erosion from vegetation removal to affect water quality.
 - Equipment maintenance and/or repair would be confined to one location. Runoff from this area would be controlled to prevent contamination of surface waters.
 - Fueling of land-based vehicles and equipment would take place at least 30 feet away from the water (and away from drains) over an impervious surface.
 - The contractor would ensure that no fuel, oil, or lubricants from treatment activities are allowed to be placed where they may be washed by rainfall or runoff into the any surface waters.
- The following measures shall be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to fish and wildlife:
 - Migratory bird nesting may occur within the proposed treatment areas ranging from February 1 to August 31. If treatment work cannot be avoided on a parcel during this timeframe, work is subject to the prohibition of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). An avian survey can be conducted to identify and avoid active nests during treatment activities. If no seasonal avoidance or avian survey can be conducted, IPSFC shall coordinate with the US Fish and Wildlife MBTA office for an incidental take permit before work (PermitsR1MB@fws.gov, Migratory Bird Program <https://www.fws.gov/program/migratory-bird-permit>).

- Bald and golden eagle nesting may occur within the proposed treatment areas ranging from January 1 to August 31; and avoiding active nests would occur as part of pre-clearing surveys. If an active eagle nest is found on/near the treatment site (within 660 feet), IPSFC shall follow up with the USFWS MBTA office (see above) for further specific guidance.
- The following measure shall be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to Endangered Species Act-listed plant species:
 - All whitebark pine would be identified within the treatment areas by a qualified person and flagged as part of the site-specific treatment prescription. All flagged whitebark pine would not be cut, limbed, or otherwise modified.
- The following measures shall be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to cultural resources:
 - If archaeological or cultural resources are uncovered during vegetation removal activities, work would cease, the area must be secured, and IPSFC and/or the landowner will notify FEMA (fema-R10-EHP-Section106@fema.dhs.gov) and contact the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office to coordinate appropriate evaluation of the resource.
- The following measures shall be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts from noise:
 - Noise-producing equipment use would occur during less-sensitive, waking hours (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.).



Final Environmental Assessment

Island Park Reduction of Hazardous Fuels on Private Lands

HMGP 4342-ID

Fremont County, Idaho

March 2023



FEMA

**Federal Emergency Management Agency
Region X**

Department of Homeland Security
130-228th Street SW
Bothell, WA 98021

Cover photo credit: Island Park Sustainable Fire Community

This document was prepared by:



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

°F	degrees Fahrenheit	MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
APE	Area of Potential Effect		
BGEPA	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
BLM	Bureau of Land Management	NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
BMP	best management practice	NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality	NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	Fisheries	Fisheries
CWA	Clean Water Act	NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
dB	decibel		
DBH	diameter at breast height	NPS	National Park Service
DHS	Department of Homeland Security	NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
DPS	Distinct Population Segment	POL	petroleum, oils, and lubricants
EA	Environmental Assessment	RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat	SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
EO	Executive Order		
ESA	Endangered Species Act	Stafford Act	Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency		
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map	TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
FMAG	Fire Mitigation Assistance Grant	USC	U.S. Code
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact	USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
FSim	Fire simulator model	USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ft	foot / feet	USFS	U.S. Forest Service
HMGP	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program	USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
IOEM	Idaho Office of Emergency Management	WUI	Wildland-Urban Interface
IPSFC	Island Park Sustainable Fire Community		

Glossary

Bucking: The process of cutting a felled and delimbed tree into logs.

Conifer Trees: Conifer trees are types of common softwood trees that are identified by pine-like needles and seed-producing cones.

Defensible Space: Area around a structure where fuels and vegetation are treated, cleared, or reduced to slow the spread of wildfire toward a structure. Defensible space also reduces the chance of a structure fire moving from a building to the surrounding forest.

Felling: The process of cutting down trees. Hand felling involves the use of axes, chainsaws, and other handheld tools. Mechanical felling involves the use of heavy logging equipment.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction: Includes thinning vegetation, removing ladder fuels, reducing flammable vegetative materials, and replacing flammable vegetation with fire-resistant vegetation for the protection of life and property. Vegetation may include excess fuels or flammable vegetation.

Ladder Fuels: Fuels including shrubs, small trees, down wood or brush, and low limbs that may provide a route for a fire to climb from ground fuels to the forest canopy.

Limbing: Removal of tree limbs to reduce fuel loads and ladder fuels.

Sedimentation: Sedimentation is when water velocity slows down to the point where fine sediments (e.g., clay, silt, and sand) can settle out of the water column, often resulting in these small particles filling in the spaces between larger substrates (e.g., gravels, cobbles, etc.).

Slash: Woody debris created by hazardous fuels reduction and other forest management activities.

Wildfire: Any uncontrolled fire that spreads through vegetative fuels such as forests, shrubs, or grasslands, exposing and possibly consuming structures.

Wildland-Urban Interface: The line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. The intent of a wildland-urban interface boundary is to define an area within or adjacent to private and public property where mitigation actions should occur to prevent damage or loss.

Section 1 Introduction

In January 2019, the Island Park Sustainable Fire Community (IPSFC) applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Idaho Office of Emergency Management (IOEM) for a wildfire mitigation grant under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). IOEM would be the direct recipient of the grant, and the IPSFC would be the subrecipient. IPSFC proposes to establish defensible spaces through fuels reduction work in 16 target neighborhoods.

The HMGP is authorized under Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act). Under the HMGP, federal funds pay 75 percent of the proposed cost, and the remaining 25 percent is obtained from nonfederal funding sources, in this case from the landowners. The HMGP funds were made available via a Fire Mitigation Assistance Grant (FMAG) declaration by FEMA in 2017; these funds are intended to be used for projects that reduce the risk of future wildfires.

The IPSFC is a local non-governmental organization that provides fuels mitigation in the vicinity of the City of Island Park, located in Fremont County, Idaho along the eastern boarder of Idaho (see **Figure 1-1**). In order to create a more fire-resistant landscape, the IPSFC conducts landowner education, home evaluations, slash pick-up, wildfire awareness days, fuels reduction on non-federally managed lands, and other actions. To accomplish these activities, the IPSFC has partnered with various federal, local, and other non-governmental agencies including U.S. Forest Service (USFS), IOEM, City of Island Park, The Nature Conservancy, and Farm Bureau Insurance.

The IPSFC jurisdiction includes approximately 4,500 residences spread over approximately 300 subdivisions as well as, businesses, historic structures, communication sites, powerlines, Island Park Dam, the City of Island Park, and Harriman State Park. Property ownership in Island Park includes private lands, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Idaho State Department of Fish and Game, and USFS. Within the wider Fremont County area, forested lands make up the largest land use, with extensive development within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) in **Table 1-1**.

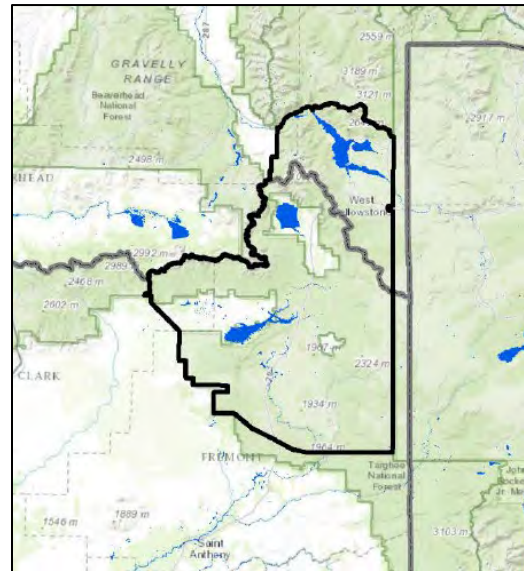


Figure 1-1 IPSFC Boundary

The IPSFC Boundary encompasses approximately 1,170 square miles in eastern Idaho (adjacent to the boarder with Wyoming) including with Hebgen Lake, Henry's Lake, and Island Park Reservoir. Source: USFS 2016

Table 1-1 Wildland-Urban Interface and Percent WUI Developed

Area	WUI Percent Developed
United States	16.3
State of Idaho	12.6
Fremont County	27.8

Source: Fremont County Emergency Management 2016

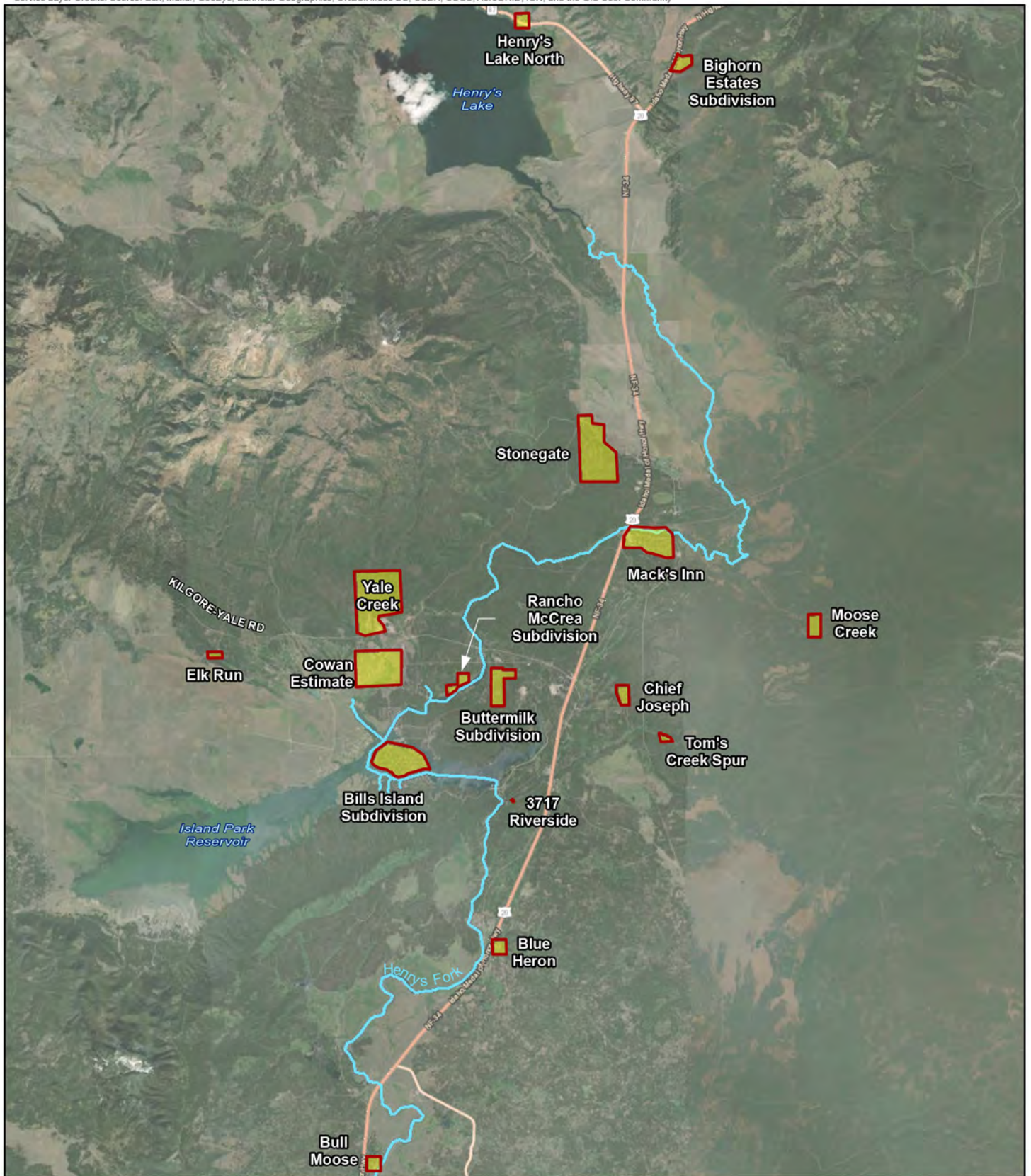
In support of the IPSFC's wildfire reduction goals, fire modeling experts were contracted to determine existing fire risk for developed and undeveloped areas across the project area based on the fire simulator (FSim) model, which indicated that fuels reduction work immediately adjacent to structures on both public and private lands is the most effective way to address the community's vulnerabilities and promote the community's safety, resilience, and vitality in the event of a wildfire (USFS 2016). Fuels reduction projects on federally managed lands – independent of the Proposed Action – are underway to reduce fuels on public lands.

In order to increase connectivity of vegetation management on federally managed lands with similar activities on private lands, the Proposed Action includes treatments on individual properties that would be based on wildfire risk evaluations and designed to improve defensible space around the home, reduce risk of wildfire spreading rapidly through their property, and improve ingress/egress. Wildfire fuels reduction prescriptions would include tree thinning to reduce canopy density, removal of dead and diseased trees, removal of tree branches and ladder fuels, removal of shrubs and downed trees/branches, and changes to the defensible space surrounding structures. While the Proposed Action does not include grant funding for any modifications to individual structures (e.g., replacing a shake roof with a metal roof, moving firewood away from the structure, or hardening the area within 30 feet of a structure with gravel), these recommendations may be included, as appropriate, in the risk assessment conducted for each property under the Proposed Action.

The proposed treatment areas are located in subdivisions that have been designated as Priority 1 and 2 communities in the *2016 Fremont County All Hazard Mitigation Plan*, including the *Fremont County Wildfire Mitigation Plan* (Fremont County Emergency Management 2016). Priority 1 and 2 communities are recommended for hazardous fuel reduction treatments including establishing defensible space and ingress/egress standards for road widths and turnaround radii.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the President’s Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations to implement NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508)¹, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Instruction 023-01-001, and FEMA Instruction 108-01-1, NEPA implementing procedures. FEMA is required to consider potential environmental impacts before funding or approving actions and projects. The purpose of this EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action. FEMA will use the findings of this EA to determine whether preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement or issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate.

¹ CEQ is responsible for developing procedures for the implementation of NEPA by federal agencies. These procedures were initially promulgated in 1971 as guidelines and were then issued as regulations in 1978. In July 2020, CEQ made wholesale revisions to these regulations for the first time in more than 40 years. CEQ is now engaged in a comprehensive review of the 2020 rules pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 13990, *Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis*. In its regulatory agenda, CEQ announced a phased approach to amending the regulations for implementing NEPA. For more information visit: <https://ceq.doe.gov/laws-regulations/regulations.html>.



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wood.

- Stream
- Treatment Area Subdivisions

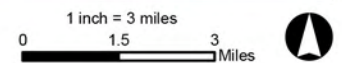


FIGURE 1

Treatment Area Subdivisions
FEMA-HMTAP Island Park
Island Park, ID

Section 2 Purpose and Need

FEMA's HMGP provides funds to eligible state and local governments, federally recognized tribal governments, and non-profit organizations to support implementation of long-term hazard mitigation measures after a presidential disaster declaration. The purpose of the HMGP is to reduce the loss of life and property resulting from natural disasters and to enable implementation of risk mitigation during the recovery from a declared major disaster. Specifically, the purpose of the Proposed Action is to reduce wildfire hazards on selected privately owned parcels that have been classified as *Extreme* or *High* fire risk. The need for the Proposed Action is driven by recorded fire history in the region along with the increase in wildfire hazards that have resulted from long-term changes in environmental conditions (e.g., mountain bark beetle infestations) and increased residential development, which exacerbates the risk of fires in the WUI.

The 2016 *Fremont County Wildfire Mitigation Plan* included in the 2016 *Fremont County All Hazard Mitigation Plan* divides the County into four Fuel Zones based on the fuel types:

- Fuel Zone 1, Lower Valley (cultivated farmlands);
- Fuel Zone 2, Desert (sagebrush-grass fuels);
- Fuel Zone 3, Caldera/Island Park (lodgepole pine [*Pinus contorta*] and Douglas fir [*Pseudotsuga menziesii*]); and
- Fuel Zone 4, High Elevation (quaking aspen [*Populus tremuloides*], Douglas fir, and lodgepole pine).

The Island Park area is located within Fuel Zone 3, Caldera/Island Park, identified as the most challenging area of Fremont County for fire and emergency services personnel based on the significant WUI component, with 211 platted subdivisions, scattered residences, businesses, private and USFS campgrounds, communication facilities, and public infrastructure. In addition to extensive development within the WUI of the Caldera/Island Park zone, barriers to fire suppression and firefighting include varying levels of access to properties, ranging from well-planned streets with turn-arounds that can accommodate firefighting apparatuses to primitive, substandard access routes that limit or hinder access by firefighting personnel and equipment. An additional hinderance to fire suppression in the area is the widespread lack of fire hydrants. Fremont County Planning and Zoning has adopted the current International Fire Code for new structures. This code has not been tested by wildfire to date but has proven successful in other places when a structure that follows this code has been involved in a wildfire. The County and relevant homeowners' associations do not have specific ignition-resistant materials and/or defensible space requirements that apply to treatment properties. Further complicating these issues is the consistent presence of tourists who may be unfamiliar with safe ingress/egress routes as well as the large percentage of residences that are secondary homes belonging to absentee owners with limited seasonal occupancy, which exacerbates issues regarding homeowner education and emergency response (Fremont County Emergency Management 2016).

The recent wildfire history for the Island Park area includes the 1988 North Fork Fire (part of the larger Yellowstone area fires of that year) (Rothermel, Harford and Chase 1994; National Parks Service 2022) and a range of smaller, more recent fires. Recent fires in the region have burned more than 50,000 acres (see **Table 2-1**).

Table 2-1 Recent Fire History in IPSFC Vicinity

Incident Name	Year	Area Burned (acres)	Location
2 Lazy 2	2010	86	Northwest of Henry's Lake
Mt. Two Top	2013	148	East of Henry's Lake Flat near Canyon Creek headwaters
Partridge	2015	582	Near Pineview
Maple	2016	51,556	Northeast of West Yellowstone
Lyle Springs	2018	70	Near Harriman State Park
Sawtell Peak	2022	37	Northwest of Mack's Inn

Source: Idaho Department of Fish and Game Online Fire Map Viewer (IDFG 2022)

The IPSFC vision includes developing a landscape resilient to fire that allows for firefighter safety during suppression of a wildfire, ensuring safe ingress and egress to populated areas during a wildfire event, and creating awareness in the community such that its residents and visitors understand and accept wildfire as a natural, non-threatening component of the environment. Achievement of this vision will take time, dedication, and resources to educate homeowners and land managers of the benefits of fire and fuels reduction around at-risk properties such as homes and businesses. Resources are necessary to create conditions where wildfire risk is reduced; where residents and visitors can safely evacuate to allow emergency officials to do their jobs; and where fire can play its natural role without threatening livelihoods or homes.

Currently, the community is still highly vulnerable and unprepared to deal with short- and long-term effects, both socially and economically, that a large wildfire event would create. It is crucial to the community's vitality that efforts continue to address the serious threat that wildfire poses by continuing and expanding the IPSFC's work, including the Proposed Action.



Figure 2-1 Archival Photo of 1988 Yellowstone Fire

Section 3 Alternatives

This section describes the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action, and an alternative that was considered but dismissed.

3.1 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative is included to describe potential future conditions if FEMA would not fund the proposed establishment of defensible space and hazardous fuels reduction in Island Park. The IPSFC may continue to pursue other federal and state funding sources to assist with fuels reduction and landowner education and would continue to conduct homeowner education and outreach activities. Additionally, individual landowners may decide whether or not to conduct fuels reduction to mitigate their risks on their own property with their resources. There would be no guarantee of consistent or measurable fuels reduction work under this alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, existing trends (e.g., overgrowth of wildfire fuels vegetation) would largely remain unchanged with increasing vegetation density along with aggravating other environmental factors (e.g., ongoing bark beetle infestation in the area). Wildfire risks to private properties would remain high in the 16 target neighborhoods.

3.2 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would be implemented by IPSFC and its contractors through a fuel mitigation cost share program to facilitate hazardous fuels reduction activities on approximately 68 private properties that have been classified as having *Extreme* or *High* fire risk to wildfire in target neighborhoods. These properties cover approximately 110 acres, as distributed across 16 neighborhoods which total over 2,300 acres (see **Table 3-1**). The IPSFC, and its contractors, developed the list of properties for inclusion in the Proposed Action based on properties found to have exhibited extreme or high wildfire risk based on wildfire modeling (i.e., analysis of the existing vegetation and ingress and egress to that specific area). Fuel reduction activities would include the removal of crown, ladder, and surface fuels.

3.2.1 Treatment Methods

Under the Proposed Action, before any fuels reduction treatment actions occur on individual properties, site-specific wildfire risk evaluations would be conducted by IPSFC contractors to develop property-specific written fuels reduction prescriptions for mitigation measures, including thinning trees to reduce canopy density, removal of dead and diseased trees, removal of tree branches and ladder fuels, removal of shrubs, downed trees and branches, and improvements to defensible space surrounding assessed structures.

Table 3-1 Treatment Areas Included in the Proposed Action

Treatment Area Subdivision	Number of Properties	Mitigation Plan Prioritization	Total Subdivision or Property Acreage	Treatment Acreage
Bighorn Hills Estates	3	2	78	5.9
Bill's Island (Woodlands)	11	1	218	2.8
Buttermilk & Rancho McCrea	8	1	196	1.9
Chief Joseph	2	1	78.9	3.5
Cowan	2	1	63	4.98
Elk Run	2	1	120	7.13
Mack's Inn	4	1	404	1.51
Moose Creek	4	1	120	5.6
Riverside (19 Ponds Lodge)	1	Not Prioritized	-	2.6
Stonegate	21	1	451.53	53.05
Yale Creek	3	1	584	1.93
Tom's Creek Spur (Buffalo River)	4	1	35.5	16.62
Blue Heron Lane	1	-	4.04	1.2
Bull Moose Lane	1	2	0.023	0.15
Highway 87 (North Henry's Lake)	1	1	0.610	0.32
Total	68	-	2,353.603	109.19

Specific prescriptions include:

- **Tree Removal**
 - 8-inch-diameter at breast height (DBH) or less identified by IPSFC and the homeowner would be marked and removed
 - 8-inch-DBH or less, standing dead and solid down material would be marked and removed
 - Felled large trees would be limbed, bucked, and cut into sections at least 10-feet in length and left on the property
 - All overstory trees would be carefully evaluated before felling so there is no damage to the home or other property improvements
- **Tree Limbing**
 - Unless marked with flagging, all conifer trees would be limbed up to 6 feet (ft) or no more than one third of the total height, whichever is less
 - Branches from the main body of the tree would be cut and removed

- **Brush Clearance**
 - All brush identified by IPSFC and the homeowner within the project area would be cut and removed
- **Material Removal**
 - The IPSFC contractor would transport all slash and tree material resulting from fuels reduction activities to the Meadow Creek Slash Pit operated by Fremont County located at latitude N 44.59831 / longitude W -111.33035, McCrea Pit operated by the USFS located at latitude N 44.45953 / longitude W -111.39522, or left on-site for firewood at the property owners discretion
 - Material may be chipped and spread on-site or removed to an off-site disposal location per landowner preference
- **Work Timing**
 - Work is expected to be conducted between April 15th and November 30th while there is little to no snow cover on the ground (some of this work may occur during the migratory bird nesting seasons, generally February through August for this region)
- **Heavy Equipment**
 - Skid steers or loaders may be used to access the work site on the property
 - No trees would be pushed over using heavy equipment and trees may be base cut
 - No use of heavy equipment for removal of small vegetation
 - Trucks for transporting removed material or chippers for processing material would only be parked on existing roadways and a skid steer or loader would be used to transport material from the property to the truck or chipper
 - Upon the completion of work on a property, the contractor would rehabilitate any skid trails to their condition before work started
- **Proximity to Wetlands**
 - No work including cutting or operation of mechanized equipment would occur within 30 feet of surface water or wetlands
- **Herbicide**
 - No herbicides would be used
- **Contractor Responsibility**
 - The IPSFC contractors would be responsible for any damages to the home or other property improvements resulting from the implementation of the contract
- **Whitebark Pine**
 - All whitebark pine would be identified within the defensible space by a qualified person and flagged as part of the wildfire risk assessment
 - No whitebark pine would be cut, limbed, trimmed, or otherwise modified

3.2.2 Burning and Smoke Management

Burning would only be used for large concentrations of slash at Fremont County burn pits (i.e., Meadow Creek and McCrea locations) or in smaller concentrations on individual properties by property owners. The Meadow Creek slash pit is operated by the Fremont County Public Works Department and is open to the public from mid-May to mid-October. Burn permits are required

from the State of Idaho during the fire season May 10 through October 20 when activities would be conducted outside of city limits and would be conducted in compliance with Fremont County Ordinance. The McCrea slash pit is located on USFS-managed lands, and IPSFC contractors have permission to deposit slash there in compliance with their contract. USFS later burns slash after an area receives significant moisture or snow is present (USFS 2022).

3.2.3 Project Duration

Implementation of the Proposed Action would occur over a 6- to 10-month period each year over a maximum of 5 years, until all of the target properties are treated. This would be followed by 10 years of required landowner maintenance of treatment work, which is not part of the grant.

3.2.4 Maintenance Activities

Under the Proposed Action, the IPSFC would execute 10-year maintenance agreements with the individual landowners who would each be responsible for the associated costs and provision of any needed maintenance activities. Annual maintenance conducted by the property owner would include removal of surface fuels such as pine needle accumulations, new understory trees and shrubs, and down woody material; as well as cleaning of gutters, keeping firewood stockpiles away from homes, sweeping needles from structure rooftops, mowing grasses and forbs, and promotion of fire-resistant tree species (e.g., aspen). Under the Proposed Action, included properties would be inspected on a bi-annual basis by IPSFC Fuels Specialists to ensure fuels reductions are maintained.

3.3 Additional Action Alternatives Considered and Dismissed

Aside from the Proposed Action and No-Action Alternative presented above, additional alternatives have been considered and dismissed because they would be infeasible or not meet the Purpose and Need of the Proposed Action. For instance, utilizing prescribed burns is infeasible in close proximity to private property and structures, as it would be too hazardous. Therefore, this method will not be evaluated further in this EA. Another alternative would be ignition-resistant structural retrofits installed alongside proposed defensible space vegetation clearance. This potential alternative has been dismissed from further consideration because the County and relevant Homeowner Associations do not have statutory requirements (i.e., building codes, ordinances, or covenants) requiring these updates.

Section 4 Affected Environment, Potential Impacts, and Mitigation

This section describes the environment potentially affected by the alternatives, evaluates potential environmental impacts, and recommends measures to avoid and reduce those impacts. When possible, quantitative information is provided to describe potential impacts. Potential impacts are evaluated qualitatively based on the criteria listed in **Table 4-1**. The study areas generally include the project areas as well as the access and staging areas for the Proposed Action. If the study area for a particular resource category is different from the project area, differences will be described in the appropriate subsection.

Table 4-1 Evaluation Criteria for Potential Impacts

Impact Scale	Criteria
None/Negligible (No Impacts or No Change is often used in the discussion to indicate None/Negligible)	The resource area would not be affected, or changes or benefits would be either nondetectable or, if detected, would have effects that would be slight and local. Impacts would be well below regulatory thresholds, as applicable.
Minor	Changes to the resource would be measurable, although the changes would be small and localized. Impacts or benefits would be within or below regulatory thresholds, as applicable. Mitigation measures would reduce any potential adverse effects.
Moderate	Changes to the resource would be measurable and have either localized or regional-scale impacts/benefits. Impacts would be within or below regulatory thresholds, but historical conditions would be altered on a short-term basis. Mitigation measures would be necessary, and the measures and/or best management practices (BMPs) would reduce any potential adverse effects.
Major	Changes would be readily measurable and would have substantial consequences on a local or regional level. Impacts would exceed regulatory thresholds. Mitigation measures to offset the adverse effects would be required to reduce impacts, though long-term changes to the resource would be expected.

4.1 Resources Not Affected and Not Considered Further

The resource categories identified in **Table 4-2** would not be affected by the No-Action Alternative or the Proposed Action and its alternatives because they do not occur in the project/treatment areas, or the alternatives would have no effect on the resource. These resources have been eliminated from further consideration in this EA.

Table 4-2 Resources Eliminated from Further Consideration

Resource Topic	Reason for Elimination
Farmland Soils	According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, there are no designated Prime or Unique Farmlands within any of the treatment areas (Natural Resources Conservation Service 2022). Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Action or any alternative would have no effect on farmland soils.
Geology	The proposed vegetation clearance and establishment of defensible space are surface-level activities that would not affect the underlying geology (e.g., bedrock) within any of the proposed treatment areas. Issues related to surface soils are discussed in Section 4.2, Soils .
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	According to the National and Wild and Scenic Rivers System (National Parks Service 2022), there are no Wild and Scenic Rivers within the Island Park area. Therefore, the proposed vegetation clearance and establishment of defensible space would have no effect on wild and scenic rivers.
Coastal Resources	The proposed treatment areas are not located in the Coastal Zone. Therefore, the proposed vegetation clearance and establishment of defensible space would have no effect on coastal resources.
Land Use and Zoning	The proposed vegetation clearance and establishment of defensible space would not change existing land uses and would be consistent with current zoning in the unincorporated portion of Fremont County. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Action or any alternative would have no effect on land use and zoning.

4.2 Soils

Fremont County, especially the Island Park area, is defined by volcanic calderas associated with the nearby Yellowstone Hotspot underlying the National Park. The caldera bottoms are generally flat with rolling hills surrounded by steep-side mountains that compose the caldera walls.

There are more than 20 soil map units² in the treatment areas (Natural Resources Conservation Service 2022). These units are generally loams with varying degrees of clay, sand, and gravel depending on the local slope and proximity to watercourses.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, private landowners, may still implement wildfire mitigation activities within the treatment areas without cost sharing support from the IPSFC, including long-term vegetation maintenance. These activities would have a *negligible adverse impact on soils* as a result of ground disturbance. However, in the event of a major wildfire, there would be substantial loss of vegetation, which may result in higher soils temperatures, increased evaporation, and reduced soil moisture due to loss of shading. Additionally, the loss of vegetation

² A soil map unit is a collection of areas defined and named the same in terms of their soil components (e.g., series) or miscellaneous areas or both.

cover would expose soils directly to rainfall and surface water flows which would result in accelerated erosion. Accelerated soil erosion during intense rainstorms may reach such levels that they become mass wasting events where soil and water mixtures flow downhill.

Extreme heat generated from wildfires can cause soils, to form hydrophobic layers that repel water, resulting in decreased stormwater infiltration. Hydrophobic conditions occur when plants burn in wildfires, releasing a gas into the soil that cools and solidifies into a waxy, water-repelling substance that coats soil particles. Large-pored soils, such as sandy or coarse-textured soils, are more vulnerable to becoming hydrophobic because they transmit heat more easily than heavily textured soils such as clays (USFS 2005). Removal of vegetation and alteration of soil structure following wildfires increases soil susceptibility to accelerated erosion and mass wasting events on steep slopes. In the event of a wildfire, there could be *short-term, minor to moderate adverse impacts on soils*, depending on the intensity of the wildfire and steepness of the slope where the wildfire occurred.

Proposed Action

Heavy equipment would not be used as a part of the proposed treatment activities. Rather, ground crews with hand-operated power tools would conduct treatments, which would minimize the risk of soil erosion from vegetation removal. Additionally, trees would not be dragged on the ground but lifted to the staging point, to reduce soil disturbance relative to other ground-based yarding systems. Soil compaction could occur if the equipment were driven over any given area many times; however, this would generally not occur due to the short duration of activities in a treatment area. Some shrubs and trees would be retained to limit the disruption of the soil and land surface. Thus, the risk of erosion and soil compaction from the Proposed Action would be *short-term and minor adverse impacts on soils*.

Material on private property left for firewood would be left in place or removed from the property at the property owners discretion. Any slash transported to and burned at the existing Meadow Creek or McCrea slash pits would not result in adverse impacts at those facilities since burning debris is part of their ongoing operation. Previous studies have shown that small pile burning does not result in extreme soils heating, substantial soil erosion, or detrimental changes in soil fertility in the area around the burn pile on individual properties (Hubbert 2013). Therefore, slash pile burning would also have *negligible adverse impact on soils*.

Overall, the Proposed Action would reduce the potential for wildfires to occur and subsequently remove vegetation cover and alter the soil characteristics that would increase the potential loss of soils through accelerated erosion and mass wasting events. Therefore, the Proposed Action would likely have *long-term, minor beneficial impacts on soils* by reducing the risk of soil damage and subsequent mass wasting events following wildfires.

4.3 Visual Quality and Aesthetics

The assessment of visual quality is a qualitative analysis that considers the visual context of the treatment area, potential for changes in visual character and contrast, the number of people who can view the site and activities from public viewing locations, and the extent to which treatment activities would alter the aesthetic qualities of the treatment area.

The 68 properties that would receive defensible space treatments are dispersed throughout the Island Park area and are generally forested. A number of the treatment areas are located along the Henry's Fork (Rancho McCrea and Mack's Inn) and Buffalo River (Tom's Creek Spur) and Island Park Reservoir (Bill's Island). The 1997 Targhee Forest Plan lists Henry's Fork and the Buffalo River as eligible scenic rivers, but these stretches of river have never been fully designated as such since that plan was prepared (USFS 1997; National Parks Service 2022). All of the properties included in the proposed treatment activities are privately held. The only designated scenic highway in the Island Park area is the state-designated Fort Henry Historic Byway (A-2 Clark-Fremont County Road). However, it is unlikely that any of the treatment properties are visible from the Fort Henry Historic Byway.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, private landowners, may still implement wildfire mitigation activities within the treatment areas without cost sharing support from the IPSFC, including longer-term vegetation maintenance. Properties treated with wildfire mitigation measures by individual property owners on their own initiative would undergo a visual change, from a relatively dense understory to a more open understory, which outside observers may perceive as less cluttered and safer on a localized scale which could be similar to that described for the Proposed Action, resulting in a *negligible adverse impact on visual quality*. However, if the No Action Alternative were selected, a major wildfire would be more likely to spread through the Island Park area, which could have minor to moderate adverse impacts on the visual quality of the community, depending on the extent of the fire damage.

Proposed Action

Properties that receive hazardous fuels reduction treatments would undergo a visual change as a result of vegetation management activities, from a relatively dense understory to a more open understory, which outside observers may perceive as less cluttered and safer on a localized scale. Users of nearby USFS-managed lands or waterbodies (i.e., Island Park Reservoir and Henry's Fork) or drivers on the Fort Henry Historic Byway may find this to be visually beneficial. Hazardous fuels reduction activities conducted along ridgelines and roadways would increase the number of viewers to whom visual changes would be visible. Depending on how residents and visitors perceive the visual effects of treatment, the Proposed Action could have *negligible adverse impacts on visual quality and aesthetics* in all treatment areas.

Over the long-term, the risk of wildfire spread in the proposed treatment areas would be reduced, which would have a minor long-term beneficial effect on visual quality and aesthetics by reducing the chance that a damaging high-intensity wildfire would rapidly spread through the area. which could have *minor to moderate adverse impacts on the visual quality* of the community, depending on the extent of the fire damage.

4.4 Air Quality and Climate

The Clean Air Act, amended in 1990, requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six criteria pollutants harmful to human and environmental health, including ozone, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and lead (USEPA 2022). According to the USEPA’s Green Book (USEPA 2022), Fremont County, including the Island Park area, is currently in attainment³ status for all criterial pollutants.

Air quality is adversely affected by everyday activities such as vehicle use and major events such as wildfires. Wildfire smoke is composed of carbon dioxide, water vapor, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, organic chemicals (e.g., hydrocarbons and trace minerals) which affect air quality (USEPA 2019). Air quality also can be affected by fugitive dust which is considered a component of particulate matter and is released into the air by wind or human activities and can have human and environmental health impacts (California Air Resources Board 2007).

The Island Park area includes portions of the Snake River Plain and Middle Rockies Ecoregions (McGrath, et al. 2002) and relevant sub-ecoregions, each with varying climate characteristics (see **Table 4-3**).

Table 4-3 Climate by Island Park Area Subdivision

Ecoregion	Subdivisions Included	Climate Characteristics
Snake River Plain		
Eastern Snake River Basalt Plain	Cowan	6-12 inches annually 75-140 frost-free days annually January min/max: 11/30 (degrees Fahrenheit [°F]) July min/max: 51/87 °F
Middle Rockies		
Barren Mountains	Bighorn Hills Estates Elk Run Yale Creek	18-30 inches annually 25-70 frost-free days annually Long cold winters, moist springs
West Yellowstone Plateau	Bill’s Island Buttermilk Rancho McCre Chief Joseph Mack’s Inn Moose Creek Riverside Stonegate Tom’s Creek Spur Blue Heron Lane Bull Moose Lane Highway 87	15-40 inches annually 50-95 frost-free days annually January min/max: 2/26 °F July min/max: 43/79 °F

³ Areas where air pollution levels consistently stay below these standards are designated “attainment.” Areas where air pollution levels persistently exceed these standards are designated “nonattainment.” If any areas were in nonattainment, but now attains the standard and has an USEPA approved plan to maintain the standard, it is designated a “maintenance” area.

“Climate change” refers to changes in the Earth’s climate caused by a general warming of the atmosphere whose primary cause is emissions of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide and methane. Climate change can affect species distribution, temperature fluctuations, and overall weather patterns. Climate change is ongoing and projected to continue in Idaho and projected to include increasing temperatures, alteration of precipitation patterns, reduced snowpack, and increased extreme weather events (University of Idaho 2022). Projected increases in annual temperatures across Idaho are 6-11°F by 2100. With regard to wildfires, forests in the Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountains are likely to experience a doubling or tripling increase in burned areas by 2050 (University of Idaho 2022).

No Action Alternative

Limited on-going hazardous fuels reduction activities may still occur in the treatment areas under the No Action Alternative. This could potentially result in *negligible short-term adverse impacts on air quality* from vehicle and equipment emissions (e.g., gas-powered chainsaws). However, under this alternative, the risk of wildfire spread would remain high. Wildfire smoke can deteriorate air quality and expose vulnerable populations, such as the young and elderly, to harmful pollutants (USEPA 2019). Particulate matter, specifically, can have many harmful effects, including eye and respiratory tract irritation, reduced lung function, asthma, and heart failure (USEPA 2019). In addition to particulate matter in smoke, a fire in developed residential areas produces a variety of other toxins when buildings and their contents burn.

Smoke from major wildfires can affect air quality over large areas, impacting people far from the fire, even several states away. Additionally, major wildfires can emit high levels of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change and exacerbating the risk of wildfires. In the event of a wildfire, the No Action Alternative could have a *short-term, minor to major adverse impact on air quality and regional climate conditions*, depending on the intensity and scale of the wildfire.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would have minor, localized, and short-term impacts on air quality from equipment and vehicle use. Vehicle use on dirt roadways, such as those in some of the treatment areas, can contribute to fugitive dust while gas-powered equipment can produce particulate matter. Vehicles would also be used to transport crews to and from treatment areas. Vehicle use in all treatment areas would be short-term, localized, and involve a small number of vehicles. Vehicles and equipment would be gas-powered and would be kept running to the minimum extent possible. Ground disturbance would be minimal, as explained in **Section 4.2, Soils**, limiting the release of fugitive dust. The short duration and limited extent of this activity would minimize potential impacts on air quality. Thus, ground disturbance would be negligible, limiting the release of fugitive dust.

Pile burning of large slash piles would be conducted at established burning locations including the Meadow Creek slash pit operated by Fremont County while small amounts of vegetation could be burned on private property by the property owner. All of these activities would be conducted in compliance with state and local regulations including abiding by relevant permit requirements, as described in **Section 3.2.2, Burning and Smoke Management**. Given that vegetation clearing activities and slash burning would occur at locations dispersed across Fremont County and would not occur simultaneously over the duration of the program, it is

anticipated that the Proposed Action would not result in air quality or climate effects such that Fremont County would no longer be in attainment for air quality standards. Since the Proposed Action does not include any new permanent air emissions and pile burning will be geographically and temporally scattered, no detailed analysis of effects on climate change is warranted. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have *minor, short-term adverse air quality impacts* from vehicle and equipment use, slash burning, and activities contributing to the release of fugitive dust. By reducing the risk of wildfire spread, hazardous fuels reduction activities would have *long-term, minor, beneficial effects on air quality and climate*.

4.5 Surface Waters and Water Quality

The Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1977, as amended, establishes requirements for states and tribes to identify and prioritize waterbodies that do not meet defined water quality standards. The USEPA and individual states coordinate monitoring and reporting of water quality issues via determinations of impairment specified on the State's CWA Section 303(d) list based on various types of contamination (i.e., sediment, water temperature, chemical contaminants). For waters included on the 303(d) list, states must develop a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for pollutants set at a level to achieve water quality standards compliant with the CWA.

The project area is located within the Upper Henry's Fork subbasin located in Idaho and Wyoming dominated by the Henry's Fork. Henry's Fork runs from north to south starting at Henry's Lake through Island Park Reservoir eventually joining the larger Snake River north of Idaho Falls. Henry's Fork, also known as the North Fork of the Snake River, drains approximately 3,212 square miles. Within the project area, the Buffalo River is the largest tributary of Henry's Fork that it joins just south of Island Park Dam. Smaller creeks and tributaries run through or adjacent to a number of the treatment areas. Of the various waters in proximity to treatment areas, only Moose Creek that passes through the Moose Creek subdivision is the only 303(d) listed water. However, pursuant to the State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's 2021 Sediment and Bacterial TMDLs for the Upper and Lower Henrys Fork Subbasins recommends delisting Moose Creek (Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2021) (see **Table 4-4**).

Table 4-4 Surface Waters in Proximity to Treatment Areas

Subdivision	Adjacent Waterbody	303(d) Impairment (Category 5)
Bighorn Hills Estates	Nearby Howard Creek	No
Bill's Island	Surrounded by Island Park Reservoir	No
Buttermilk & Rancho McCrea	Henry's Fork	No
Chief Joseph	Unnamed stream	No
Cowan	Hotel Creek	No
Elk Run	Sheep Creek	No
Mack's Inn	Henry's Fork	No
Moose Creek	Moose Creek	Yes, but proposed for delisting

Subdivision	Adjacent Waterbody	303(d) Impairment (Category 5)
Riverside	Buffalo River	No
Stonegate	None	No
Yale Creek	Yale and Hotel Creeks	No
Tom's Creek Spur	Tom's Creek	No
Blue Heron	Blue Spring Creek	No
Bull Moose	Henry's Fork	No
Highway 87	Henry's Lake	No

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, limited ongoing wildfire hazard reduction activities would be conducted by the IPSFC and property owners on their own initiative. Under the No Action Alternative, the risk of wildfire spread would not be substantially reduced. If a wildfire occurs and spreads, the loss of vegetation would impact surface water quality through increased soil erosion and sedimentation. There may be increased temperatures from the loss of shade along riparian zones outside of the treatment areas. Additionally, intense lasting heat from major wildfires can cause soils to form hydrophobic layers, as described in **Section 4.2, Soils**, which would decrease infiltration of stormwater and aquifer recharge while increasing runoff, erosion, sedimentation, and stream discharges. The No Action Alternative could have a *minor to major adverse impacts on surface waters and water quality*, depending on the scale and intensity of a wildfire.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would not require in-water work. Hazardous fuels reduction activities could affect water quality because the removal of vegetation may expose or disrupt soils which in turn would potentially accelerate runoff and sediment into adjacent waterbodies. However, some vegetation would be retained according to the treatment specifications see **Section 3.2.1, Treatment Methods**, helping to prevent substantial erosion from vegetation removal. Further, herbicides would not be used to manage vegetation thus there would be no herbicide runoff that would adversely impact adjacent waterbodies.

Vegetation removal activities would not occur within 30 feet of waterbodies, which would minimize erosion and sedimentation into surface waters. To prevent potential impacts from fuel or lubricant leaks, all equipment proposed for use would be kept in good repair without leaks of fluids. If such leaks or drips occur, they would be cleaned up immediately. Equipment maintenance and/or repair would be confined to one location to restrict potential locations of leaks or drips. Fueling of vehicles and equipment would take place at least 30 feet away from the water (and away from drains) over an impervious surface. The contractor would ensure that no fuel, oil, or lubricants from treatment activities are allowed to be placed where they may be washed by rainfall or runoff into any adjacent waterbody.

The Proposed Action would reduce the risk of wildfire spread in the vicinity of treatment areas and would thereby reduce the risk of impacts associated with wildfires on water resources

described for the No Action Alternative. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have comparatively *minor, long-term beneficial effects on waterbodies* in and near treatment areas.

4.6 Wetlands

Executive Order (EO) 11990, *Protection of Wetlands* requires federal agencies to consider alternatives to work in wetlands and develop/implement measures to limit potential impacts on wetlands if there are no practicable alternatives. FEMA regulation 44 CFR Part 9, *Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands* sets forth the policy, procedures, and responsibilities to implement and enforce EO 11990 and prohibits FEMA from funding activities in a wetland unless no practicable alternatives are available. Wetlands are defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the USEPA as, “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions” (33 CFR §328.3[b]). The USACE has the authority to regulate jurisdictional wetlands as Waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the CWA; however, EO 11990 provides guidance concerning how to mitigate or minimize any net loss of both jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional wetlands.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetland Inventory maps, there are several small wetlands that occur within or adjacent to the proposed treatment areas (USFWS 2022a). These include riverine and lacustrine wetlands surrounding Henry’s Lake, Henry’s Fork, Island Park Reservoir, the Buffalo River, and other minor streams (see **Table 4-5**).

Table 4-5 National Wetlands Inventory Proximity to Treatment Areas

Subdivision	Wetland Type	Proximity to Treatment Area	Structures within 100 Feet of a Mapped Wetland
Bighorn Hills Estates	R4SBA – Riverine Intermittent Streambed Temporary Flooded R4SBC – Riverine Intermittent Streambed Seasonally Flooded	Adjacent to northern and eastern side of the subdivision	No
Bill’s Island	Island Park Reservoir L1UBHh – Lacustrine, Limnetic Unconsolidated Bottom, Permanently Flooded, Diked/Impoundment	Island Park Reservoir surrounds subdivision and some treatment areas are located on the lakeside	4 parcels on shoreline of Island Park Reservoir
Buttermilk & Rancho McCrea	Buttermilk: None Rancho McCrea: Henry’s Fork R3UBH – Riverine, upper Perennial, Unconsolidated Bottom, Permanently Flooded	Buttermilk: None Rancho McCrea: Adjacent to Henry’s Fork	Buttermilk: 3 parcels adjacent to Henry’s Fork Rancho McCrea: No
Chief Joseph	R3SBC – Riverine Intermittent Streambed Seasonally Flooded	Eastern edge of subdivision is adjacent to intermittent streambed	No

Subdivision	Wetland Type	Proximity to Treatment Area	Structures within 100 Feet of a Mapped Wetland
Cowan	R5UBH – Riverine, unknown Perennial, Unconsolidated Bottom, Permanently Flooded PEM1C – Palustrine emergent Persistent Seasonally Flooded	Treatment areas are located adjacent to wetland	No
Elk Run	R4SBC – Riverine Intermittent Streambed Seasonally Flooded	Treatment areas are located north of mapped wetlands	No
Mack’s Inn	R3UBH – Riverine Upper Perennial Unconsolidated Bottom Permanently Flooded	Treatment areas located near Henry’s Fork	1 parcel adjacent to Henry’s Fork
Moose Creek	Moose Creek R2UBH – Riverine Lower Perennial Unconsolidated Bottom Permanently Flooded	Moose Creek runs through subdivision	1 parcel adjacent to Moose Creek
Riverside	Buffalo River R3UBH – Riverine, Upper Perennial, Unconsolidated Bottom, Permanently Flooded	Treatment area is adjacent to Buffalo River	No
Stonegate	None	No mapped wetlands in proximity to treatment areas	No
Yale Creek	PSS1C – Palustrine Scrub-Shrub Broad-Leaved Deciduous Seasonally Flooded	Southernmost treatment areas in subdivision in proximity to Hotel Creek	No
Tom’s Creek Spur (Buffalo River)	Buffalo River R3UBH – Riverine Upper Perennial Unconsolidated Bottom Permanently Flooded	Treatment area adjacent to Buffalo River	1 parcel adjacent to Buffalo River
3788 Blue Heron Lane	Blue Spring Creek PEM1C – Palustrine Emergent Persistent Seasonally Flooded	Treatment area surrounded by Blue Spring Creek	1 parcel adjacent to Blue Spring Creek
3520 Bull Moose Lane (Pine Haven)	R45BC – Riverine Intermittent Streambed Seasonally Flooded	Nearby Henry’s Fork	1 parcel adjacent to Henry’s Fork
3885 Highway 87 (Henry’s Lake)	L1UBH – Lacustrine Limnetic Unconsolidated Bottom Permanently Flooded Diked/Impounded	Adjacent to Henry’s Lake	No

No Action Alternative

In the absence of a major wildfire, the No Action Alternative would have *negligible adverse effects on wetlands*. Any limited wildfire mitigation activities implemented by the IPSFC, or individual property owners would be unlikely to be regulated by the state. Small-scale hazardous fuels treatment activities could affect wetlands if clearing of vegetation occurs around or within a wetland. Additionally, this alternative would not substantially reduce the risk of wildfire spread through the treatment areas, which could destroy or deteriorate vegetation in wetlands near the treatment areas. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would have a *minor to moderate adverse impact on wetlands*, depending on the scale and intensity of a wildfire.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, treatment actions may occur in proximity to but not directly within mapped wetland areas for 12 treatment properties with structures 100 feet or less from mapped wetland boundaries (see **Table 4-5**). Hazardous fuel reduction treatment activities would not include fill, removal, or other permanent modifications to any adjacent wetland. Prior to fuel reduction treatments on individual properties, IPSFC specialists would develop individual treatment plans for properties to delineate specifically where treatment activities would occur. As part of the treatment plan, IPSFC would confirm the presence or absence of wetlands within treatment areas. The IPSFC would ensure applicable permits from the USACE under Section 404 of the CWA are obtained for all work within wetlands, if necessary. The IPSFC contractor would implement, monitor, and maintain BMPs to control soil erosion and sedimentation, minimize spills and pollution from heavy equipment and activities (see **Section 4.5, Surface Waters and Water Quality**), and provide protection for any protected species habitat (see **Section 4.11, Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat**).

The Proposed Action has a *short-term, negligible adverse impact on wetlands*, and would reduce the risk that a major wildfire would spread through the treatment areas and damage nearby wetland vegetation along with burning of upland areas destabilizing soils that would runoff to wetlands.

4.7 Floodplains

EO 11988, *Floodplain Management* requires federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, short- and long-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and to avoid direct and indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative. FEMA regulations (44 CFR Part 9.7) use the 1-percent (e.g., 100-year floodplain) annual chance flood as the minimal area for floodplain impact evaluation.

Floodplains are environmentally sensitive, ecologically diverse, and hydrologically important areas within a watershed. Naturally functioning floodplains help moderate flood events through storage and infiltration of runoff, as well as filtering some of potential nutrients and pollutants therein before reaching surface waters. Similarly, floodplains also help reduce sedimentation of surface waters. Figures showing georeferenced Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) can be found in Appendix C.

Based on FEMA FIRM Panel Nos. 1600610075B, 1600610100B, 1600610125B, and 1600610225B, all effective March 18, 1991, all treatment areas are located in Zone X, outside of the 100- and 500-year floodplains (1 and 0.2 percent annual chance for flooding) except for Blue Heron, which is located within Zone A, 100-year floodplain of Big Spring Creek. However, Zone X properties in a number of subdivisions are located adjacent to Zone A, 100-year floodplains:

- The Rancho McCrea and Mack's Inn subdivisions are located adjacent to Henry's Fork;
- The Cowan properties where low points and wetlands occur; and
- Tom's Creek Spur along Buffalo River.

No Action Alternative

In the absence of a major wildfire, the No Action Alternative would have *a minor effect on floodplains* given that IPSFC would continue to pursue funding and encourage ongoing limited hazardous fuel reduction activities in the proposed treatment areas. However, this alternative does not meaningfully reduce the risk of wildfire spread, which could damage or eliminate existing vegetation beyond the treatment areas, depending on the scale and intensity of a wildfire. If a wildfire were to occur, vegetation could be destroyed over large areas, which could lead to increased stormwater runoff following precipitation events. Loss of vegetation would adversely affect natural floodplain functions outside of the treatment areas by contributing to increased stormwater runoff and sedimentation. The additional sedimentation in the long term could lead to an increase in the base flood elevation and thus greater flood hazard risks to improved property in the affected floodplain. Therefore, the No Action Alternative could have *minor to moderate adverse impacts on floodplains* in surrounding areas, depending on the intensity and scale of a wildfire.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, some vegetation removal would occur in the mapped 100-year floodplain of Big Spring Creek at the Blue Heron property. The Proposed Action would not cause an increase in base flood elevations or modify existing floodplains. There would be *negligible adverse impacts on floodplains* with implementation of these treatments and the small area of floodplain affected by the treatment activities further limits the potential for adverse impacts.

The Proposed Action would help reduce the risk of wildfire spread and associated erosion, surface runoff, and flooding that could adversely affect floodplains. Therefore, there would be *minor, long-term, beneficial effects on floodplains* in and around the proposed treatment areas.

4.8 Sole Source Aquifers

Pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (42 U.S. Code [USC] §300 *et seq.*), the USEPA designates sole source aquifers using these criteria: 1) supply at least 50 percent of the drinking water for its service area; and 2) there are no reasonably available alternative drinking water sources should the aquifer become contaminated. Fremont County, and all of the treatment areas, is located over the Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer Source Area (USEPA 2022). Sources of aquifer contamination include spills or leaks of petroleum, oils, and lubricants (POLs) from machinery that may be absorbed at the land surface and then seep into groundwater contained within the sole source aquifer.

No Action Alternative

In the absence of a major wildfire, the No Action Alternative would *have negligible adverse effects on sole source aquifers*. Vegetation clearing actions may be independently implemented by IPSFC or individual property owners but would not be subject to requirements to control POLs to prevent spilled or leaked material seeping into and potentially contaminating the sole source aquifer underlying the treatment areas aside from compliance with relevant federal, state, and local regulations. The No Action Alternative could have a *minor to major adverse impacts on the Eastern Snake River Plain sole source aquifer*, depending on the scale and intensity of a spill.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, vegetation clearance would not disrupt the surface such that soils would be exposed allowing for increased percolation of surface water or spilled POLs to groundwater in the Eastern Snake River Plain Source Aquifer. Additionally fueling of land-based vehicles and equipment would take place over impervious surfaces which would ensure that no POLs spilled during treatment activities would be allowed to be absorbed into the local groundwater including the local sole source aquifer to the extent practicable.

The Proposed Action would help reduce the risk of wildfire spread and associated potential damage to hazardous materials containment vessels (e.g., fuel tanks at residences) that could result in contamination of the sole source aquifer. Therefore, there would be *minor, long-term, beneficial effects on the Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer Source Area* underlying all of the treatment areas.

4.9 Vegetation

The proposed treatment areas are located across the portions of the Snake River Plain (Upper Snake River Plain Subregion) and Middle Rockies (Barren Mountains and West Yellowstone Plateau Subregions) Ecoregions of Idaho (McGrath, et al. 2002) (see **Table 4-6**). Most of the tree cover in the treatment areas include lodgepole pine and Douglas fir. For discussion of the presence of whitebark pine see **Section 4.11, Endangered Species Act-Listed Species and Critical Habitat**.

Table 4-6 Vegetation Communities by Subdivision

Ecoregion	Subdivisions Included	Vegetation
Snake River Plain		
Eastern Snake River Basalt Plain	Cowan	Sagebrush steppe / Bluebunch wheatgrass, basin and Wyoming big sagebrush, Thurber needlegrass, Indian ricegrass, bitterbrush, bluegrass, cheatgrass. Saline areas: fourwing saltbush, shadscale, winterfat
Middle Rockies		
Barren Mountains	Bighorn Hills Estates Elk Run Yale Creek	Western spruce-fir forest, Douglas fir forest North-facing slopes: open-canopied Douglas fir-lodgepole pine-subalpine fir stands, aspen

		<p>groves, sparse shrubs and grasses</p> <p>South-facing slopes: mountain big sagebrush, mountain brush, sparse grasses</p> <p>Over limestone: curleaf mountain mahogany</p>
West Yellowstone Plateau	<p>Bill's Island</p> <p>Buttermilk</p> <p>Rancho McCre</p> <p>Chief Joseph</p> <p>Mack's Inn</p> <p>Moose Creek</p> <p>Riverside</p> <p>Stonegate</p> <p>Tom's Creek Spur</p> <p>Blue Heron</p> <p>Bull Moose</p> <p>Highway 87</p>	<p>Douglas fir forest, sagebrush steppe</p> <p>North-facing slopes or uplands: Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, aspen, mountain mahogany</p> <p>South-facing slopes: mountain big sagebrush, mountain brush, Idaho fescue</p>

Invasive Species

EO 13112 *Invasive Species*, requires federal agencies to prevent the introduction of invasive species and provide for their control to minimize the economic, ecological, and human health impacts that invasive species cause. Noxious weeds in Fremont County that pose the greatest threat of spread to or from individual properties via equipment transport include (Fremont County Weed Control 2022):

- Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)
- Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*)
- Dalmation toadflax (*Linara dalmatica*)
- Yellow toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*)
- Hounds tongue (*Cynoglossom offinale*)
- Mayweed chamomile (*Anthemis cotula*)

Douglas fir beetles (*Dendroctonus pseudotsugae*) and mountain pine beetles (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) are present within Fremont County as mapped by the Caribou-Targhee National Forest (USFS 2004). These bark beetles have resulted in tree mortality events which result in dried and highly combustible fuels.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, some hazardous fuels reduction work may still occur over time resulting in *negligible to minor adverse impacts on vegetation*. However, the risk of wildfire spread would likely remain high. While wildfire is a natural component of the ecosystems in and near the treatment areas, years of fire suppression and historic timber management practices have increased fuel densities, which could exacerbate the extent and intensity of future wildfires in the area. Depending on the intensity and scale of wildfire, there could be partial or complete loss of

vegetation in and around the treatment areas. In addition, a major wildfire could result in changes to the soil characteristics (see **Section 4.2, Soils**) that would prevent regrowth of forest vegetation for many years following the fire. In the event of a major wildfire, non-native and/or invasive species could become established over large areas. Invasive species are often fire-tolerant grass species that spread and contribute to greater fire risk than areas dominated by native vegetation (U.S. Department of the Interior 2020). Depending on the intensity and scale of a wildfire, there could be *minor to major adverse impacts on vegetation* under the No Action Alternative.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would primarily remove hazardous fuels including lodgepole pine and Douglas fir as well as brush material at the ground surface. Reducing shrub density would reduce the ability of fire to ladder, or climb, into the crown of the remaining lodgepole pines, Douglas firs, and other trees. By removing hazardous fuels vegetation, more space would be made for preferred native vegetation communities with improved fire resilience, thereby reducing the intensity of wildfires that may occur in the treatment areas. Thus, the Proposed Action would have *minor beneficial effects on existing vegetation communities*.

Trees would be lifted rather than dragged to the extent possible to prevent damage to understory grasses and shrubs to the extent practicable. Removed hazardous fuels would be transported to the local Meadow Creek or McCreas Slash Pits to be burned. Disposing of the material in local pits would ensure that any invasive species present would not be transported to new areas, either to or from individual properties, by attaching to equipment such that the invasive species would be spread. Thus, there would be a *negligible to minor adverse impact to existing vegetation and limited risk of invasive species spread* into or out of the local area.

The implementation of the Proposed Action would result in a *short-term, negligible adverse impact on vegetation* resulting from the removal of individual trees and shrubs and limbing. However, the Proposed Action would have a minor to moderate beneficial effect on existing vegetation communities as the proposed treatments would reduce overcrowded dense thickets of vegetation creating a more open and multi-layer stand conditions conducive to the development of larger, more fire resilient trees. Over the long-term, the Proposed Action would have a *minor to major beneficial effect* because the risk of wildfire spread and associated vegetation damage, vegetation loss, and spread of invasive species would be reduced.

4.10 Fish and Wildlife

Fremont County, and neighboring Yellowstone National Park, are known for their biodiversity. However, each of the treatment areas are located within subdivisions defined by rural, single-family home development that interrupt natural habitat. Within treatment properties, vegetation is typically installed landscape vegetation and native species. There is a wide variety of wildlife with potential to be present within any of the treatment areas, dependent on localized habitat suitability, including, but not limited to, osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), fisher (*Martes pennanti*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*), snowy egret (*Egretta thula*), and common raven (*Corvus corax*) (Idaho Department of Fish and Game [IDFG] 2022).

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918, as amended (16 USC §§703-711), provides protection for migratory birds and their nests, eggs, and body parts from harm, sale, or other injurious actions, except under the terms of a valid permit issued pursuant to federal regulations. All native migratory birds are protected by the MBTA and existing habitat in the treatment areas have the potential to support a variety of native bird species. The proposed treatment areas are generally within the easternmost boundary of the Pacific Flyway (Waller, et al. 2018). There are numerous migratory birds (USFWS 2022b) that can be found in Fremont County at different times of year:

- Black Rosy-finch (*Leucosticte atrata*)
- Black tern (*Chlidonias niger*)
- Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)
- Cassin's finch (*Carpodacus cassinii*)
- Clark's grebe (*Aechmophorus clarkii*)
- Evening grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*)
- Franklin's gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*)
- Lewis's woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*)
- Long-eared owl (*Asio otus*)
- Marbled godwit (*Limosa fedoa*)
- Olive-sided flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*)
- Rufous hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)
- Sage thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*)
- Western grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)
- Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*)

The nesting season for migratory birds is generally February through August. Wetland/shoreline nesting birds, including black tern, Clark's grebe, Franklin's gull, western grebe, and willet, are not expected to build nests within the individual treatment areas which are upland terrestrial environments that would be buffered from being located in aquatic habitats and associated nesting grounds. Therefore, these wetland/shoreline nesting birds can be excluded from further consideration. Additionally, lesser yellowlegs and marbled godwit do not breed in Fremont County and can also be excluded from further consideration. Lewis's woodpecker typically nests in larger dead or dying trees (greater than 11 inches dbh), thus excluding them from further consideration (Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change - Ecosystems Branch 2018).

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) of 1940 prohibits the take, possession, sale, or other harmful action of any bald or golden eagle, alive or dead, including any part, nest, or egg (16 USC §668[a]). Eagle nesting typically ranges from January 1 to August 31 depending on local conditions. While large trees and rocky cliffs located away from human activity are preferred by eagles for nest sites, they have been known to nest along freeways and roadways with minimal human foot traffic. Given the lack of preferred nesting sites within the individual treatment sites, bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) are not expected to nest in or near the proposed treatment areas; however, it is not impossible that a nest may be established or occupied. Additionally, eagles may occasionally pass above treatment areas while foraging.

Pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act as implemented by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries division (NOAA Fisheries), Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) is designated for certain commercially managed marine and anadromous fish species that is intended to protect the habitat of these species from being lost due disturbance and/or degradation. Pacific coast salmon are not present in the fish-bearing streams within or adjacent to any of the treatment areas and no designated EFH is present in

Fremont County (NOAA Fisheries 2022).

No Action Alternative

In the absence of a major wildfire, the No Action Alternative would have a *negligible adverse effect on common fish and wildlife species* in the proposed treatment areas. Limited ongoing defensible space and hazardous fuels reduction conducted in the treatment areas would remove some vegetation and habitat. However, impacts on fish and wildlife would be negligible due to the limited and dispersed extent and nature of the defensible space created. Similarly, adverse impacts on migratory birds would be negligible even if work were performed during the nesting season. However, a major wildfire would be more likely to spread under the No Action Alternative and could result in the destruction of terrestrial and aquatic habitat, depending on the scale and intensity of the fire. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would result in *minor to moderate adverse impacts on fish and wildlife* and their habitats.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action has the potential to impact common wildlife species and associated habitats occurring within the treatment areas because of the removal of understory vegetation and individual trees. Additionally, noise impacts related to vegetation removal activities could disturb wildlife and cause individuals to move from their preferred areas or temporarily change their behavior. Given that the treatment areas are generally heavily forested areas, and the Proposed Action would not remove all vegetation in each treatment area, wildlife species would be able to relocate to suitable habitat relatively easily.

There would be no in-water work or herbicide use as part of the Proposed Action. Vegetation removal activities would not occur within a 30-foot buffer from waterbodies and wetlands in compliance with the Fremont County Development Code (Fremont County 2022) which would minimize erosion and sedimentation into neighboring surface waters or aquatic habitats. The Proposed Action could affect migratory birds if work were to occur during the nesting season. The vegetation removal in the proposed treatment areas could result in inadvertent active nest destruction, birds abandoning nesting activities, and their displacement from preferred foraging areas. Ground-nesting and shrub-nesting birds would be impacted to a greater extent than birds that nest in the upper canopy of trees. Under these circumstances, the Proposed Action would be subject to the prohibitions of the MBTA (no take of active nests). IPSFC, and its contractors, would be required to check treatment areas for active bird nests (and avoid active nests if present) prior to conducting treatment during nesting periods. If searching individual work areas prior to conducting treatment operations during nesting season is not achievable, IPSFC must obtain and comply with any necessary permits from USFWS before work and document this on the associated project parcel assessment/treatment plan. Therefore, the Proposed Action could have a *short-term, minor adverse impact on migratory birds*.

The Proposed Action would likely have a *negligible adverse effect on bald and golden eagles* and their habitat because defensible space and hazardous fuels reduction treatments would primarily take place near residences and roadway infrastructure, where eagles are unlikely to exist. Before work, IPSFC contractors will confirm that defensible space treatment and a 660-ft buffer does not contain active eagle nests. If an active nest is discovered prior to or incidentally while conducting treatment actions, work would stop at that location and IPSFC contractors would need to coordinate avoidance or minimization measures with the local USFWS office,

which would likely require waiting until those juveniles are fully fledged or seek a take permit.

Based on avoidance and minimization measures, the Proposed Action would result in overall *short-term minor adverse impacts to fish and wildlife* within the treatment areas. However, over the long term, there would be minor beneficial effects on fish, wildlife, migratory birds, and eagles due to the reduction of risk in wildfire intensity and spread and the associated widespread vegetation loss (including ecologically sensitive vegetation).

4.11 Endangered Species Act-Listed Species and Critical Habitat

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 gives USFWS and NOAA Fisheries authority for the protection of threatened and endangered species. This protection includes a prohibition on direct take (e.g., killing, harassing) and indirect take (e.g., destruction of habitat).

The ESA defines the action area as “all areas to be affected directly or indirectly by the federal action and not merely the immediate area involved in the action” (50 CFR §402.02). Therefore, the action area where effects on listed species must be evaluated may be larger than the project area where project activities would occur. The potential physical and biological disturbance effects of this project would be limited to areas within 0.25 mile of project activities. Noise impacts have the potential to extend the farthest based on the maximum noise generation of a chainsaw (85 decibels [dB]). This distance is derived from existing impact analysis documents that indicate no impacts on ESA-listed birds are expected when habitat occurs more than 0.25 miles away from heavy equipment operation (including chainsaws) (Washington State Department of Transportation 2014).

The USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation database was used to identify proposed, threatened, and endangered species in Fremont County (see **Table 4-7**).

Table 4-7 Threatened and Endangered Species in Fremont County, Idaho

Species Name (Scientific Name)	Species, Subspecies, or Distinct Population Segment (DPS)	Listing
Plants		
Whitebark pine <i>Pinus albicaulis</i>	Wherever found	Threatened
Ute ladies' tresses <i>Spiranthes diluvialis</i>	Wherever found	Threatened
Birds		
Yellow-billed cuckoo <i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Western US DPS	Threatened
Mammals		
Grizzly bear <i>Ursus arctos horribilis</i>	Lower 48 states	Threatened
Gray wolf <i>Canis lupus</i>	Northern Rocky Mountain DPS	Under Review
Canada lynx	Wherever found in lower 48 states	Threatened

<i>Lynx canadensis</i>		
North American wolverine	Wherever found	Proposed Threatened
<i>Gulo gulo luscus</i>		

Note: Shaded species are those species expected to occur in the Action Area.

The USFWS ECOS entry for Ute ladies' tresses (USFWS 2022c) states, "[w]hen Ute ladies-tresses was listed in 1992 it was known primarily from moist meadows associated with perennial stream terraces, floodplains, and oxbows at elevations between 4300-6850 feet (1310-2090 meters). Surveys since 1992 have expanded the number of vegetation and hydrology types occupied by Ute ladies-tresses to include seasonally flooded river terraces, sub-irrigated or spring-fed abandoned stream channels and valleys, and lakeshores. In addition, 26 populations have been discovered along irrigation canals, berms, levees, irrigated meadows, excavated gravel pits, roadside barrow pits, reservoirs, and other human-modified wetlands." Additionally, the USFWS has mapped the range of Ute ladies' tresses in Fremont County (only located in the southern portion of the county) and none of the proposed treatment areas overlap with this range. Therefore, between lack of documented presence and suitable habitat, no Ute ladies' tresses are expected to occur within any of the treatment areas.

Wolverines are a proposed threatened species; however, the USFWS has initiated but not completed the proposed withdrawal procedure to de-list the species (85 Federal Register [FR] 64618). Additionally, wolverine are alpine or sub alpine species and unlikely to be present in the proposed treatment areas during project implementation and is not included in further analysis below.

Whitebark pine was recently listed as threatened (87 FR 76882), and are typically found in higher elevation areas of the Rockies and other mountain ranges of the American west which includes the proposed project area (USFWS 2022d).

Gray wolves are currently listed as threatened in the state of Minnesota and endangered in all states except Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and eastern portions of Washington and Oregon where the Northern Rocky Mountains distinct population segment (DPS) was de-listed on November 3, 2020 and now fall under state management. Therefore, gray wolves in the vicinity of Island Park are not currently subject to the ESA. However, the USFWS has issued the intent to re-list this and other gray wolf DPS (86 FR 69778), and the status is currently "Under Review."

The remaining species are quite mobile and have some (if limited) potential to occur within the action area and will be included in the impact analysis. Yellow-billed cuckoo are documented by IDFG to occur in southwestern Fremont County (which is modeled as part of their summer range) and there is a small chance that the rare individual may travel across the treatment areas (IDFG 2022). Grizzly bears whose range in the lower 48 states includes the vicinity of Island Park. The Island Park area, including all proposed treatment areas, is located within the Greater Yellowstone recovery zone, one of the USFWS-designated recovery zones for the grizzly. Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) whose range includes the mountainous portions of the state of

Idaho, including the Island Park area. While Canada lynx are typically a higher elevation species, they are known to occasionally venture down into lower elevations.

Of these ESA-listed wildlife species, federally designated critical habitat for the yellow-billed cuckoo is designated at the southern border of Fremont County but not near any of the treatment areas included in the Proposed Action (USFWS 2022e). No designated critical habitat for other listed animal species (i.e., grizzly bear, gray wolf, and Canada lynx) is present within Fremont County.

No Action Alternative

In the absence of a major wildfire, the No Action Alternative would have a *negligible adverse impact on ESA-listed species and their habitats*. Limited ongoing defensible space and hazardous fuels reduction conducted in the treatment areas would remove some vegetation in disparate locations. These treatments may not be as prescriptive as the Proposed Action nor include conservation measures to avoid or minimize impacts on federally listed species that may be present. A major wildfire would be more likely to spread under the No Action Alternative, which could have *minor to major adverse impacts on ESA-listed species and their habitats*, depending on the scale and intensity of a fire.

Proposed Action

ESA-listed Plant Species

The implementation of the Proposed Action would include hazardous fuels reduction to create defensible space that would potentially affect ESA-listed plant species whitebark pine by either physical removal of individual plants or disruption of habitat if they are present. The range of whitebark pine in Fremont County is mapped in the upland portions of northern Fremont County and overlap with the following treatment area subdivisions: Henry's Lake North property, Bighorn Estates, and Yale Creek. Prior to implementation, each of the treatment areas would be inspected for whitebark pines as part of the development of vegetation management plans for individual properties. Based on these inspections, whitebark pines would be flagged for avoidance and no whitebark pine would be cut, limbed, trimmed, or otherwise modified during vegetation removal. Thus, considering current ESA listed plant species, the Proposed Action would result in *no adverse impacts to listed plant species* (i.e., whitebark pine).

ESA-listed Animal Species

The implementation of the Proposed Action would include hazardous fuels reduction to create defensible space (only affecting previously modified habitat) that has limited potential to affect ESA-listed terrestrial species by changing habitat or generating noise that would result in additional disturbance. Treatment activities would occur in rural development including established neighborhoods and roadways. The Proposed Action would be unlikely to adversely affect any of the ESA-listed mammal species potentially present in the proposed treatment areas because individual members of these species in the area would have either self-selected away from disturbances from the existing noise and activity conditions or have become acclimated to human activities within the rural developed environment of the treatment areas. These activities would include vegetation clearing activities (100 ft from homes) that already typically occur in the action area. Additionally, each of these species are not constrained to single locations and

utilize large individual home ranges. These large individual home ranges and relatively close proximity of treatment areas to less developed areas (i.e., Yellowstone National Park or National Forest lands) would allow individuals to avoid vegetation clearing activities as they occur. The Proposed Action would be unlikely to adversely affect the yellow-billed cuckoo because they are not documented to nest in the treatment areas (residential yards) and any rare individual that could be in the area would be transitory and enroute to the expected activity range (as per IDFG) in the southwest portion of Fremont County. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have *no or negligible adverse impacts on ESA-listed animal species*. Based on these findings, no ESA consultation with the USFWS is warranted.

Federally designated critical habitat for yellow-billed cuckoo is present within Fremont County, but it is not present in any treatment sites subdivisions. No federally designated habitat for grizzly bear, or lynx is mapped within Fremont County including the treatment site subdivisions. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have a *no impact on federally designated critical habitat for ESA-listed animal species*.

4.12 Cultural Resources

This section provides an overview of potential environmental effects on cultural resources, including historic properties. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended (16 USC §470f), requires that activities using federal funds undergo a review process to consider potential effects on historic properties that are listed in or may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Cultural resources include prehistoric or historic archaeology sites; historic standing structures; historic districts; objects; artifacts; cultural properties of historic or traditional significance, referred to as Traditional Cultural Properties that may have religious or cultural significance to federally recognized Indian tribes; or other physical evidence of human activity considered to be important to culture, subculture, or community for scientific, traditional, religious, or other reasons.

Pursuant to 36 CFR §800.4(a)(1), an Area of Potential Effects (APE) was defined to include the areas within which the undertaking may directly or indirectly affect cultural resources. Within the APE, impacts on cultural resources were evaluated for both historic structures and archaeologic resources by the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Indigenous Cultural Setting

The Cooper's Ferry site in western Idaho is one of the oldest pre-contact sites in North America, dating up to 15,000 years before present and pre-dating the earliest appearance of the Clovis Paleoindian tradition (Davis, et al. 2019). Closer to what is now Yellowstone National Park, and including the Island Park area, humans likely occupied the area following the recession of glaciers 13,000 to 14,000 years ago, evidence of which includes a Clovis point from Obsidian Cliff (at least 11,000 years ago) and Folsom projectile points (at last 10,900 years ago) (National Parks Service 2022). Some historic peoples of the area, including the Crow and Sioux, arrived in the area between the 1500s and 1700s while the presence of "Intermountain Ware" vessels link the Shoshone people to the area as early as 700 years before present (National Parks Service 2022).

FEMA sent consultation letters to the Eastern Shoshone and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes dated July 21, 2022, seeking comment on the Proposed Action, with a focus on Section 106 of the

NHPA (see Appendix B). The tribal consultation letters included the statement that FEMA has, thus far, determined that the Proposed Action would have no adverse effect to historic properties. No response or comments were received from the Tribes.

Historic Setting

The Idaho Heritage Trust lists 13 historic resources in Fremont County, none of which are located within any of the treatment areas (Idaho Heritage Trust 2022). To support the assessment of historic resources, IPSFC sent a consultation letter to the Idaho SHPO, dated February 14, 2019. The requested review by the Idaho SHPO included review of proximity to Johnny Sack Cabin at Big Springs as well as the Crabtree Cabin, the only potentially historic resources within a quarter mile of any of the treatment areas. In a response letter, dated February 20, 2019, the Idaho SHPO determined that the proposed treatment activities would have No Adverse Effect on historic properties. FEMA reinitiated consultation with the Idaho SHPO on July 12, 2022, to account for the addition of four properties to the proposed Program. Idaho SHPO concurred on August 1, 2022, with the updated request for consultation that even with the inclusion of the four additional properties, the SHPO's original No Adverse Effect determination is appropriate (see Appendix B).

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, private landowners may continue to implement wildfire mitigation activities, which could disturb the ground or alter the appearance of structures, potentially affecting cultural resources that may be present in the treatment areas. The risk of wildfire spread would remain high, despite the potential for some scattered wildfire mitigation activities to occur. A wildfire could have *minor to moderate adverse impacts on unidentified archaeological resources or historic structures* in the project area depending on the scale and intensity of the fire.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would avoid and minimize potential impacts to cultural resources by implementing the following measures:

- Hazardous fuels work would be conducted with ground crews using hand tools.
- Pickup trucks, skid steers, or loaders would be used.
- Debris would not be dragged across the land surface but rather moved by hand or with small, wheeled vehicles.

Therefore, it is unlikely that cultural resources would be disturbed by vegetation removal activities within the treatment areas. The Proposed Action would not alter any existing structures within the treatment areas. Therefore, as supported by the No Adverse Effect on Historic Properties determination from the Idaho SHPO and consultation with Tribes, the Proposed Action would have *no adverse effects on historic properties*. In the event that any archaeological resources are discovered during project implementation, work would immediately cease, the area would be secured, and IPSFC would notify the SHPO and FEMA for further evaluation.

4.13 Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is defined by EO 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* (59 FR 7629) and CEQ guidance

(1997). Under EO 12898, demographic information is used to determine whether minority populations or low-income populations are present in the areas potentially affected by the range of project alternatives. If so, a determination must be made whether implementation of the program alternatives may cause disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts on those populations.

This environmental justice analysis is focused at the local level. The local area included in this analysis is where project-related impacts would occur, potentially causing an adverse and disproportionately high effect on neighboring minority and low-income populations. Minority or low-income census tracts are defined as meeting either or both of the following criteria:

- Area contains 50 percent or more minority persons or 25 percent or more low-income persons.
- Percentage of minority or low-income persons in any census tract is more than 10 percent greater than the average of the surrounding county.
- U.S. Census tracts are map units that generally contain 1,200 to 8,000 people with an optimum coverage of 4,000 people. The similarity of population contained in each Census tract allows for comparisons across wide geographies. Because the population density of the Fremont County is low, Census Tract 9701 includes all of Fremont County, and the proposed treatment areas.

Minority Populations

CEQ (1997) defines the term “minority” as persons from any of the following groups: Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Hispanic. According to USEPA’s Environmental Justice Screening tool (USEPA 2022), the minority population in the project area encompassing the treatment areas is less than 50 percent with Census Tract 9701 reporting 2 percent minority population. Therefore, Census Tract 9701 does not meet the criteria listed above for environmental justice communities related to minority populations.

Low-Income Populations

Residents of areas with a high percentage of people living below the federal poverty level may be considered low-income populations. According to USEPA’s Environmental Justice Screening Tool, the low-income population in the area is approximately 20 percent (USEPA 2022). Therefore, Census Tract 9701 does not meet the criteria listed above for environmental justice communities related to low-income populations.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, some scattered hazardous fuels reduction activities work may be independently implemented by the property owners over time; however, the risk of wildfire spread would remain high. In the event of a wildfire, the populations within Census Tract 9701 described above, including minority and low-income residents, may experience adverse health impacts due to wildfire smoke or damage or loss of property and assets (see **Section 4.18, Public Health and Safety**). However, because there are no minority or low-income populations in the

project area, based on the threshold levels defined above, the No Action Alternative would not result in *disproportionately high and adverse impacts on environmental justice populations*.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would implement defensible space and hazardous fuels treatment to reduce the risk of wildfire spread in the proposed treatment areas. Temporary and localized impacts from the Proposed Action, such as noise, would impact those proximate to the work location, including minority and low-income residents. The benefits of reduced risk of wildfire spread would be benefit all residents across the IPSFC, including minority and low-income residents. Because there are no minority or low-income populations present in the project area, based on the above thresholds, the Proposed Action would result in *no disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations*.

4.14 Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials are those substances defined by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act, and the Toxic Substances Control Act. The Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), which was further amended by the Hazardous and Solid Waste amendments, defines hazardous wastes. In general, both hazardous materials and waste include substances that, because of their quantity, concentration, physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics, may present substantial danger to public health or to the environment when released or otherwise improperly managed.

Hazardous materials may be encountered in the course of a project, or they may be generated by project activities. To determine whether any hazardous waste facilities exist in the vicinity or upgradient of the proposed treatment areas or whether there is a known and documented environmental issue or concern that could affect the proposed treatment areas, a search for Superfund sites, toxic release inventory sites, industrial water dischargers, hazardous facilities or sites, and multiactivity sites was conducted using USEPA's NEPAAssist website (USEPA 2022).

According to the USEPA NEPAAssist database, the Caribou-Targhee National Forest Island Park Ranger Station is the single RCRA waste generator is located in Fremont County. However, the Ranger Station is not located close to of any of the treatment properties.

Aside from the RCRA waste generator, the NEPAAssist database does not record any toxic releases, Superfund sites, or Toxic Substances Control Act sites in Fremont County.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, existing conditions would not substantially change. Individual private property owners may independently implement some hazardous fuels reduction work, which would pose a negligible threat of release of hazardous materials from equipment and potentially localized and negligible site contamination from leaks or spills. The risk of wildfire spread would not be effectively reduced under this alternative. Wildfire damage in residential areas also directly releases hazardous materials into the air, soil, and water as plastics burn and materials that are otherwise safely stored are damaged and released (CalRecycle 2022). Because of the lack of hazardous waste generators and low residential density in this area, the potential for the release of hazardous materials from burning homes, even in the event of a large-scale fire,

would be expected to be minor.

Proposed Action

No hazardous materials sites are present within or immediately adjacent to the proposed treatment areas so there would be no impact on hazardous material generator sites from implementation of the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would include the use of mechanical equipment such as chainsaws, chippers, and vehicles, which would pose the threat of leaks and spills. The short-term duration of the use of equipment at any individual treatment area and the use of equipment in good condition would reduce any potential effect to an insignificant level. All equipment and hazardous fuels reduction activities would adhere to local regulations to reduce the risk of hazardous leaks and spills. Any spills during implementation would be immediately contained and cleaned. Thus, there would be a *negligible threat of hazardous materials releases from vehicle and equipment use*.

4.15 Noise

Sounds that disrupt normal activities or otherwise diminish the quality of the environment are considered noise. Noise events that occur during the night (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.) are more annoying than those that occur during normal waking hours (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.). The Fremont County Development Code sets forth noise limits for waking hours (60 dB) and nighttime (50 dB but allows for exceedances by temporary construction and maintenance activities (Fremont County 2022). Assessment of noise impacts includes the proximity of the Proposed Action to sensitive receptors. A sensitive receptor is defined as an area of frequent human use that would benefit from a lowered noise level (i.e., residences, schools, or hospitals). Sensitive receptors near the proposed treatment areas consists of residences, including those which would receive treatment. Any noise-generating activities in proximity to residences could have the potential to adversely affect these receptors.

Sensitive receptors near the proposed treatment area consists of residences, including those which would receive treatment, as well as nearby residences. Schools, churches, hospitals, and libraries are located at a much greater distance (e.g., generally 0.25 miles or more) from the proposed treatment areas and are unlikely to experience noise from the implementation of the Proposed Action. Typical noise events in the vicinity of the proposed treatment areas vary from quiet (e.g., bird calls) to loud commercial and industrial noises. For example, existing noise is likely associated with light traffic noise from nearby roadways, and other intermittent residential conditions such as lawnmowers and leaf blowers.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, hazardous fuels reduction work may be conducted independently by private landowners over time without FEMA-funded support. The tools and equipment used for these activities would be similar to those already in use for general landscape maintenance around these rural residences, including chainsaws, small chippers, etc. Therefore, there would be negligible change in existing noise levels that could affect sensitive receptors in the proposed treatment areas and *negligible adverse impacts on existing noise levels*.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, noise would be generated by the operation of equipment, such as chainsaws and chippers. The loudest equipment likely to be used would be chainsaws, which can produce noise levels up to 85 dB when perceived from approximately 50 feet away (Federal Highway Administration 2017).

The implementation of the Proposed Action would increase noise levels within the immediate vicinity of residences and other infrastructure. However, increases in noise levels would be minor and of short duration at any one location, and all work would occur during normal waking hours. Vehicle and equipment runtimes would be kept to a minimum. *Negligible to minor short-term adverse noise impacts would occur* and following the completion of the proposed treatment activities, there would be no long-term change to the ambient noise environment.

4.16 Transportation

Regional access within the Island Park area, and Fremont County, is centered on U.S. Route 20 which runs north to south through the area passing directly through the Mack's Inn area and Island Park itself. The Bighorn Estates, Stonegate, Mack's Inn, and Riverside treatment area subdivisions are all located in close proximity to U.S. Route 20 with either direct access to the highway or short surface street connections. The Yale Creek, Cowan, Elk Run, and Rancho McCrea subdivisions are all located west of U.S. Route 20 with primary access connection to the highway via Kilgore-Yale Road. The Bill's Island area, surrounded by Island Park Reservoir, and Buttermilk subdivision are accessed from U.S. Route 20 via Kilgore Yale Road, Buttermilk Loop Road (Forest Road 126), and Bills Loop North Road (Forest Road 336).

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, some hazardous fuels and defensible space work may be implemented by the IPSFC or individual property owners over time. The increase in traffic resulting from these activities would result in a short-term, *negligible adverse impact on area transportation* given that the timing of the activities would not be coordinated and would be dispersed throughout the project area. However, the potential for a major wildfire to spread would remain high. Wildfire may encroach upon roadways and wildfire smoke may inhibit the ability to see roadways clearly. Further, with limited emergency vehicle and escape route access, the spread of wildfire could inhibit the ability for evacuation or increase the risk for firefighters.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, crews would access scattered treatment areas at different times from existing roads and driveways. Work on each of the proposed treatment areas would require a small number of vehicles for a short duration. There may be a *short-term, negligible adverse impact on local traffic* from vehicle staging on roadsides. The work may require several crews to be working at any given time and would require vehicle staging at several points along roadsides in the road network. However, no road closures or detours would be expected. Over the long-term, the reduction of hazardous fuels would help to reduce the risk of wildfire spread in the treatment areas. This would create a safer environment for residents and firefighters and help avoid damage to transportation infrastructure or creation of traffic problems. Therefore, there would be a *long-term beneficial impact on transportation and traffic*.

4.17 Utilities

The treatment areas are within the service areas for public utilities within Fremont County. Fall River Electric Cooperative supplies electrical service throughout Fremont County including the Chester and Island Park dams that generate hydroelectric power for the Cooperative. The Intermountain Gas Company provides natural gas service to Fremont County. Rural properties in the unincorporated portion of Fremont County generally receive domestic water supply from private wells. Most subdivisions within the unincorporated portion of Fremont County use septic systems on individual properties for wastewater disposal. Of the subdivisions included in the Proposed Action, only the Mack's Inn and Stonegate subdivisions are tied to sewer systems.

No Action Alternative

Although some scattered defensible space or hazardous fuels reduction work may be implemented by the IPSFC and property owners under the No Action Alternative, the risk of wildfire spread would remain high. Electrical services provided via overhead power lines would continue to be at risk of damage from wildfires. Water wells could be physically damaged by wildfires or experience microbial contamination due to loss of pressure during a fire (Montana Department of Environmental Quality 2012). Ash, sediment, and debris from wildfires may contaminate uncovered wells or storage tanks. Intense heat from wildfires could adversely impact water system components on the surface and underground. If intense heat modifies the chemical properties of water system components, chemicals might leach into the water, causing contamination. Thus, *adverse impacts on area public utilities could be minor to major*, depending on the intensity and scale of a wildfire.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would not directly affect utilities. Although tree trimming to protect power lines is not the purpose of the Proposed Action, some of the proposed defensible space and hazardous fuels treatments could incidentally provide protection to overhead power lines and reduce the potential for powerlines to spark a fire. In the long term, the Proposed Action would reduce the risk of damage to public and private utilities from wildfire spread. Therefore, the Proposed Action could have *minor, long-term beneficial effects on utilities*.

4.18 Public Health and Safety

As described in **Section 2, Purpose and Need**, the Island Park area has a history of wildfires. Wildfire smoke can exacerbate respiratory health issues, such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Wildfire smoke may contribute to respiratory infections and cardiovascular concerns (see **Section 4.4, Air Quality and Climate**).

Emergency medical services are provided by Fremont County Emergency Services. Fremont County Emergency Services also provides fire response to the unincorporated portions of Fremont County including the treatment areas. The Fremont County Sheriff's Office provides patrols and search and rescue services including the treatment areas.

No Action Alternative

Although some fuels reduction work may be independently implemented by the individual property owners over time, current conditions would not substantively change, and the risk of

wildfire spread would remain high. In the event of a wildfire, there is an increased risk to public health and safety and to services provided to protect public safety, such as firefighters. Wildfires can generate substantial amounts of particulate matter, which can affect the health of people breathing smoke-laden air. This is a particular concern for vulnerable populations, such as the youth and elderly, as described in **Section 4.4, Air Quality and Climate**. Wildfires can generate substantial amounts of carbon monoxide, which can pose a health concern for frontline firefighters. In addition, fires that are burning residences can release toxic materials into the air, soils, and water, posing health risks to populations both during the fire and later during cleanup and recovery (CalRecycle 2022).

Heavy rain conditions following wildfires can contribute to sediment and debris in nearby waterways, which can affect downstream water quality and damage structures, roads, and utilities critical to the safety and well-being of citizens. Under the No Action Alternative, there could be *minor to major adverse impacts on public health and safety* depending on the scale and intensity of the fire.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the reduction of hazardous fuels would help to reduce the spread of wildfire in the treatment areas. This would create a safer environment for firefighters and allow them to more easily control the spread of a wildfire. These activities would not prevent wildfires but could contribute to containment, reducing the intensity and frequency of wildfires, which would ultimately reduce the risks for people living in and near the treatment areas. In addition, when wildfires are controlled more quickly, a smaller area may be burned, and less sediment and debris may be transported downstream during future precipitation events that could potentially cause damages to infrastructure. The Proposed Action could reduce the probability that emergency services would be focused on firefighting and would allow emergency responders to remain available to respond to other emergencies throughout the IPSFC. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have a *moderate long-term beneficial impact on public health and safety*.

4.19 Summary of Effects and Mitigation

Table 4-8 provides a summary of the potential environmental effects from implementation of the Proposed Action, any required agency coordination efforts or permits, and any applicable proposed mitigation or BMPs. Written parcel or site-specific treatment prescriptions, prepared by IPSFC and its contractors, would be used to document the presence or absence of resources along with identifying any required avoidance, minimization, or best management practices to be implemented during treatment work conducted by IPSFC contractors.

Table 4-8 Summary of Impacts and Mitigation

Affected Resource Area	Impacts	Agency Coordination or Permits	Mitigation / Avoidance / BMPs
Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negligible adverse impacts due to limited subsurface effects, lack of farmland soils. 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicles (aside from skid steer or loader) would be restricted to existing roads.

Affected Resource Area	Impacts	Agency Coordination or Permits	Mitigation / Avoidance / BMPs
Visual Quality and Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negligible adverse impacts or benefits depending on how changes are perceived. • Minor long-term beneficial effects as a result of reduced damage from wildfire. 	N/A	N/A
Air Quality and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor short-term impacts from vehicle and equipment use. • Minor long-term beneficial effects by reducing the risk of wildfire spread. 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles and equipment running times would be kept to the minimum extent possible. • Large concentrations of slash material would only be burned at the Meadow Creek and McCrea pits.
Surface Waters and Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negligible short-term adverse impacts. • Minor long-term beneficial effect by reducing the risk of wildfire spread and associated vegetation loss and sedimentation effects. 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No work would occur within 30 feet of waterbodies. • Some riparian vegetation would be retained according to the treatment specifications, to prevent erosion from vegetation removal to affect water quality. • Equipment maintenance and/or repair would be confined to one location. Runoff from this area would be controlled to prevent contamination of water. • Fueling of land-based vehicles and equipment would take place at least 30 feet away from the water (and away from drains) over an impervious surface. • The contractor would ensure that no fuel, oil, or lubricants from treatment activities are allowed to be placed where they may be washed by rainfall or runoff into the any surface waters.
Wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negligible short-term adverse impacts. • Minor long-term beneficial effect by reducing the risk of wildfire spread and associated vegetation loss. 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No work would occur within 30 feet of wetlands.
Floodplains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negligible short-term adverse impacts. • Minor, long-term beneficial effects on floodplains in surrounding areas from the reduced risk of wildfire spread. 	N/A	N/A
Sole Source Aquifers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negligible short-term 	N/A	See Surface Waters and Wetlands.

Affected Resource Area	Impacts	Agency Coordination or Permits	Mitigation / Avoidance / BMPs
	adverse impacts. • Minor long-term beneficial effect by reducing the risk of wildfire spread.		
Vegetation	• Minor short-term impacts on removed vegetation. • Minor long-term beneficial effects by reducing the risk of wildfire spread and vegetation loss.	N/A	N/A
Fish and Wildlife	• Minor, short-term impacts on wildlife and migratory birds from vegetation-clearing activities. • Negligible short-term adverse impacts on eagles; negligible short-term adverse impacts on fish species. • Minor long-term beneficial effects by reducing the risk of wildfire spread and vegetation loss.	N/A	• No work would occur within 30 feet of waterbodies or wetlands. • Migratory bird nesting may occur within the proposed treatment areas ranging from February 1 to August 31; and avoiding active nests would occur as part of pre-clearing surveys conducted by IPSFC contractors. • Bald eagle and golden eagle nesting may occur within the proposed treatment areas ranging from January 1 to August 31; and avoiding active nests would occur as part of pre-clearing surveys conducted by IPSFC contractors. If an active eagle nest is found on/near the treatment site (within 660 feet), IPSFC shall follow up with the USFWS MBTA office for further specific guidance.
ESA-listed Species and DCH	• No impacts to ESA-listed plant species (whitebark pine). • Negligible short-term adverse impacts on ESA-listed animal species. • Minor long-term beneficial effects by reducing the risk of wildfire spread and habitat loss.	USFWS Informal Discussion	• All whitebark pine would be identified within the defensible space by a qualified person and flagged as part of the wildfire risk assessment. No whitebark pine would be cut, limbed, trimmed, or otherwise modified during vegetation removal activities.
Cultural Resources	No Historic Properties Affected.	N/A	• If archaeological or cultural resources are uncovered during vegetation removal activities, IPSFC and/or the landowner will contact the Idaho SHPO and FEMA to coordinate appropriate treatment of the resource.
Environmental Justice	No disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low-income populations.	N/A	N/A

Affected Resource Area	Impacts	Agency Coordination or Permits	Mitigation / Avoidance / BMPs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor, long-term beneficial effects associated with reduced risk of wildfire spread. 		
Hazardous Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negligible, short-term adverse contamination threat from equipment use. 	N/A	N/A
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negligible to minor adverse temporary impacts from increased noise levels within the project area and the immediate vicinity of the work. • No long-term adverse impacts. 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise-producing equipment use would occur during less-sensitive, waking hours (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.).
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor short-term adverse impacts. • Minor long-term beneficial effects by reducing the risk of wildfire spread. 	N/A	N/A
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No short-term adverse impacts. • minor long-term beneficial effects from reduced risk of wildfire spread. 	N/A	N/A
Public Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No short-term adverse impacts. • minor to moderate long-term beneficial effects by reducing the risk of wildfire spread. 	N/A	N/A

4.20 Permits

IPSFC, and participating landowners, would be responsible for obtaining any necessary local, state, or federal permits needed to conduct the proposed work.

Section 5 Cumulative Impacts

This section addresses the potential cumulative impacts associated with the implementation of the Proposed Action. Cumulative impacts can be defined as the impacts of a Proposed Action when combined with impacts of past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions undertaken by any agency or person. CEQ's regulations for implementing NEPA require an assessment of cumulative effects during the decision-making process for federal projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions.

IPSFC has completed 581 wildfire risk evaluations for individual properties as well as 51 fuels mitigation cost share projects including defensible space clearance activities spanning the 2015 to 2020 time period in proximity to the proposed treatment areas (see **Table 5-1**).

Table 5-1 IPSFC Defensible Space Treatments (2015-2020)

Treatment Area Subdivision	IPSFC Acreage Treated (2015-2020)
Bighorn Hills Estates	2.34
Bill's Island	114.5
Buttermilk & Rancho McCrea	60
Chief Joseph	0
Cowan	11
Elk Run	23.8
Mack's Inn	173.7
Moose Creek	36.8
Riverside (19 Ponds Lodge)	0
Stonegate	215.6
Yale Creek	109.4
Tom's Creek Spur (Buffalo River)	0
Blue Heron Lane	0
Bull Moose Lane	15.1
Highway 87 (North Henry's Lake)	32.6
Total	794.8

Beyond actions conducted by IPSFC and individual landowners above, various federal land management agencies (e.g., USFS and BLM) have conducted vegetation clearance and defensible space creation projects (see **Table 5-2**). These agencies would continue to conduct defensible space creation and vegetation clearance activities based on assessed need and availability of funding.

Table 5-2 Federal Vegetation Clearance Activities in the IPSFC Vicinity

Federal Agency	Location	Acreage (ac) Treated
USFS	Yale Creek Subdivision	3,161
	Meadow Creek Area	395
	Bighorn Estates Area	207
BLM	Yale/Kilgore Road	989

Source: IPSFC Application Materials

There is the potential for these various projects and wildfire mitigation efforts to combine potential effects with the Proposed Action with respect to effects on soils, visual quality and aesthetics, air quality and climate, surface waters and water quality, wetlands, vegetation, fish and wildlife, hazardous materials, noise, and transportation. However, it is unlikely that there would be significant cumulative impacts because, in most cases, there would be temporal and spatial separation between activities. Similar to the Proposed Action, these projects would have or would be required to implement some avoidance and minimization measures to prevent potential impacts to air quality, surface waters, sensitive habitats, ESA-listed species, and cultural resources. These activities have or would result in long-term cumulative beneficial effects and complement the Proposed Action by reducing the risk of wildfire spread in the treatment areas and vicinity.

Section 6 Agency Coordination and Public Involvement

This section provides a summary of the agency coordination efforts and public involvement process for the proposed IPSFC Hazardous Fuels Reduction on Private Lands Project. In addition, an overview of the permits that would be required under the Proposed Action is included.

6.1 Agency Coordination

Consultation with the Eastern Shoshone Tribe (also known as the Shoshone Indians of Wind River Reservation) and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe was initiated via the letter dated July 21, 2022. IPSFC conducted an informal coordination with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office regarding historic resources on February 14, 2019 and received a response on February 20, 2019. Appendix B provides a copy of all agency and tribal correspondences.

6.2 Public Participation

In accordance with NEPA, the Draft EA was released to the public, resource agencies and Tribes for a 30-day public review and comment period. The Draft EA was available on FEMA's website at: <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/nepa-repository>. Hard copies of the Draft EA were available at: City of Island Park Office located at 3753 N. Highway 20, just south of Pond's Lodge. Comments on the Draft EA could be submitted to fema-r10-ehp-comments@fema.dhs.gov or submitted via mail to:

FEMA Region 10
Attention: Regional Environmental Officer
130-228th Street SW
Bothell, WA 98021

The 30-day public comment period for the Draft EA, was initiated by a public notice of availability published in the *Island Park News* (see Appendix A). The notice was emailed to the following federal and state agencies:

- U.S. Forest Service Caribou-Targhee National Forest – Ashton/Island Park Ranger District
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management Idaho Falls Field Office
- U.S. Department of the Interior Region 9
- National Interagency Fire Center
- National Parks Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Northwest Division & Walla Walla District
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Pacific Region
- Idaho State Department of Agriculture
- Idaho Department of Lands
- Idaho Department of Water Resources
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

- Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

The notice was also sent to the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and Shoshone-Bannock Tribe, and area residents. The notice invited the public and agencies to submit their comments about the proposed action, potential impacts, and proposed mitigation measures so that they may be considered and evaluated. The comment period began on December 29, 2022 and ended January 31, 2023.

During the public review period, FEMA received one comment letter from an IPSFC landowner. The comment was supportive of the Proposed Action and advocated quick approval of the EA.

Section 7 List of Preparers

The following is a list of preparers who contributed to the development of the Island Park Reduction of Hazardous Fuels on Private Lands EA for FEMA. The individuals listed below had principal roles in the preparation of this document (see **Table 7-1** and **Table 7-2**). Many others, including senior managers, administrative support personnel, and technical staff, contributed and their efforts were no less important to the development of this EA.

Table 7-1 Third-Party Consultant Preparers

Preparers	Experience and Expertise	Role in Preparation
Doug McFarling	Task Order Manager	NEPA Documentation
Matt Sauter	Project Manager	NEPA Documentation
Nick Meisinger	Senior Reviewer	NEPA Documentation
Lana Cary	Graphics and Section 508	Section 508 Compliance

Table 7-2 FEMA Reviewers

Reviewers	Experience and Expertise	Role in Preparation
Science Kilner	Regional Environmental Officer	NEPA Review
Owen Coskey	Environmental Protection Specialist	NEPA Review
Jeff Parr	Biologist	NEPA and ESA Review
Phillip Fisher	Archaeologist	NHPA Review

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List of Appendices

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has worked to ensure that this Environmental Assessment (EA) is accessible to persons with disabilities, in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Regarding the appendices, this EA has reported what was done and how those results affect the decision that will be made based on the totality of the findings provided in the EA. In case any of these appendices poses a challenge to be read electronically by persons with disabilities, each appendix is briefly described and summarized below, rather than being simply listed.

Appendix A. Public Notice and Agency Correspondence. This appendix includes a public notice of availability published as a legal advertisement in the Island Park News. The notice announces that the Draft EA was available for public review in electronic format on FEMA's website and in hardcopy at the City of Island Park Office. The notice of availability describes that comments on the Draft EA should be either mailed to Science Kilner, Regional Environmental Officer, Region X, 130 228th Street SW, Bothell, WA 98021 or submitted via email to fema-r10-ehp-comments@fema.dhs.gov.

Appendix B. Tribal Coordination and Section 106 Consultation. This appendix includes an example email request for comment from the Eastern Shoshone tribe relative to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This appendix also includes an email response from the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office regarding the potential effect of the proposed action on historic properties including the determination that no adverse effects to historic properties would occur.

Appendix C. Flood Insurance Rate Maps. This appendix includes four flood insurance rate maps (FIRMs) covering the properties included for vegetation removal activities. These maps include 100- and 500-year floodplains as mapped by FEMA (all effective March 18, 1991):

- 1600610075B;
- 1600610100B;
- 1600610125B; and,
- 1600610225B.

Appendix A
Public Notice and Agency Correspondence

Obituary Wayne S Ward



Wayne S Ward, of Teton City, Idaho, passed away peacefully from this earth with the love of his life and his family by his side on Friday, December 23, 2022, at the age of 84.

Wayne was born in the family home in Salem, Idaho on September 19, 1938, to Charles and Gertrude (Stallings) Ward. He was the 6th of 8 children. He graduated from South Fremont High School in 1957 and went straight into the job that he already knew and loved - farming. Besides his wife, farming was the love of his life. He married his sweetheart, Sandra Lynne Borresen, on June 2, 1960, and they raised three sons and a daughter in Teton City. His greatest joys in life were his family, camping and fishing

trips, snowmachining, and watching and supporting his children and grandchildren as they grew up. He was a loving and loyal husband, brother, father, grandfather, and friend. His absence from this earth will be felt by any and all who knew and loved him.

Wayne is survived by his wife of 62 years, Sandy, his sisters Yvonne Taggert and Beth (Wade) Shirley, his sons Wade (Mary) Ward, Todd (Tammy) Ward, and daughter Lori (Robert) Davis, 13 grandchildren, and 7 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, his siblings, Lila Covington, Byron Ward, LuDene Loudy, Glenn Ward, and Veda Leavitt, his second son, Rick Ward, and his great-grandson, Gunner Wayne Davis.

Funeral services will be held on Friday, December 30, 2022, at Bert Flamm Mortuary at 581 E 1st N in St. Anthony, Idaho. The family will receive friends before services from 10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m., with the funeral starting at 11:00 a.m. Family graveside services will occur at a later date at the Teton-Newdale Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations to be made to Special Olympics Idaho in memory of Wayne Ward.

Public Notice of Availability Federal Emergency Management Agency Draft Environmental Assessment Island Park Reduction of Hazardous Fuels on Private Lands Project

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is proposing to fund the Island Park Sustainable Fire Community (IPSFC) – through the Idaho Office of Emergency Management (IOEM) – for implementation of the proposed Island Park Reduction of Hazardous Fuels on Private Lands Project (Project). Funding would be provided by the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) as authorized by Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. FEMA has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and FEMA's implementing instruction. The Draft EA evaluates alternatives for compliance with applicable environmental laws, including Executive Orders 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), 11988 (Floodplain Management), and 12898 (Environmental Justice). The Draft EA evaluates the Proposed Action, which includes establishment of defensible space and hazardous fuels reduction on 68 properties, including up to 110 acres. Consistent with Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National

Environmental Policy Act (40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500-1508), the Draft EA also evaluates the No Action Alternative, which describes future conditions if FEMA would not fund the proposed establishment of defensible space and hazardous fuels reduction in the Island Park area.

The Draft EA is available to the public for review either on FEMA's or IPSFC's website at: <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/region/10>. A hardcopy of this EA is available for review during business hours at the City of Island Park Office located at 3753 N. Highway 20, just south of Pond's Lodge.

If no significant issues are identified during the comment period on the Draft EA, FEMA will finalize the Draft EA, issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and fund the proposed Project. The FONSI will be posted to FEMA's website. Unless substantive comments on the Draft EA are received, FEMA will not publish another public notice for this project. The deadline for submitting written comments on the Draft EA is January 31, 2023. Comments should be either mailed to FEMA Region 10, Attention: Regional Environmental Officer, 130 228th Street SW, Bothell, WA 98021 or submitted via email to fema-r10-ehp-comments@fema.dhs.gov. Please include "Island Park" in the subject line of any correspondence.



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Happy Holidays!

Thank you to the West Yellowstone
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of the Yellowstone, making the
museum a summer must-see.

Despite the hardships of the floods in
Yellowstone National Park, the
Museum still greeted over 18,000
people, and through a generous
donation, offered the Junior
Historians program at the West
Yellowstone School District's After
School Program.

Thank you to our members, donors,
and communities for allowing us
to do what we love.

Warm wishes,



Appendix B
Tribal and Section 106 Consultation



FEMA

July 21, 2022

John St. Clair, Chairman
Eastern Shoshone Tribe
PO Box 217
Fort Washakie, Wyoming 82514
Sent via email

Re: FEMA HMGP 4342, Island Park Fuels Reduction, Fremont County, Idaho

Dear Chairman St. Clair:

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) proposes to fund Island Park Sustainable Fire Community (Applicant) for a wildfire fuels reduction project (Undertaking). This funding is available from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and administered by the Idaho Office of Emergency Management (OEM). The proposed Undertaking is being reviewed pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended. FEMA is also preparing an Environmental Assessment for this project per the National Environmental Policy Act.

Proposed Undertaking

The proposed Undertaking will create defensible space and reduce hazardous fuels mostly around structures, roads, and driveways from 68 properties in 15 communities located around Island Park, in Fremont County Idaho, as shown on Figure 1. Target communities are Bighorn Hills Estates, Bill's Island (Woodlands), Buttermilk & Rancho McCrea, Chief Joseph, Cowan, Elk Run, Mack's Inn, Moose Creek, Riverside (19 Ponds Lodge), Stonegate, Yale Creek, Tom's Creek Spur (Buffalo River), Blue Heron Lane, Bull Moose Lane, and Highway 87 (North Henry's Lake). Properties to be treated include homes with landscaped yards to small mobile homes with no landscaping, and a few properties with no structures or driveways. All work will be done on the proposed properties and no work or modifications will be done with this grant to the structures themselves. Work entails creating defensible space within 100 feet of homes and fuels reduction past this by removing flammable materials and vegetation and removing ladder fuels, such as shrubs, small trees, brush, or low limbs, that may provide a route for a fire to climb up from ground fuels to the forest canopy. In addition, this Undertaking involves hazardous fuels reduction through strategic thinning of overcrowded forest stands all to promote healthy and resilient forest conditions. Properties for treatment range in size from 0.15 acres to 58 acres.

Work will include defensible space up to 100 feet around residences, roads, and driveways and prescriptive landscape hazardous fuels treatments beyond 100 feet through the following:

- Reduce the density and continuity of the tree and shrub canopy by thinning around individuals or clumps to create space between crowns.
- Reduce shrub cover.
- Reduce potential ladder fuels that could carry fire into the crowns.
- Prune trees up to 6 feet from the ground or no more than one third of the total height, whichever is less.
- Remove dead material, including snags, limbs, and surface fuels.
- Removal of trees \leq 8-inches in diameter at breast height (DBH).
 - Felled large trees for removal would be limbed and bucked into sections while those left on the property will be limbed and bucked in 10-foot log lengths.
- Remove hazard trees that are dead and or dying.

Work will be completed entirely by hand with ground crews using chainsaws, pruning saws, and other hand tools to cut limbs and trees. Vegetation root balls would not be disturbed in the process of thinning and clearing. Materials may be chipped or removed to an offsite disposal location per landowner preference. Removal would involve the transport all slash and tree material resulting from fuels reduction activities to the Meadow Creek Slash Pit operated by Fremont County located at Latitude 44.59831, Longitude -111.33035 or the McCrea Pit located at Latitude 44.45953, Longitude 111.39522. Alternatively, material can be left on-site for the property owners for firewood if they should choose.

A rubber tired mechanized vehicle such as a truck or skid steer may be used on some properties off improved roads to facilitate the removal of cut materials to a nearby truck or chipper. Trucks for transporting removed material or chippers for processing material will only be parked on existing roadways. Any mechanized vehicle would be a rubber-tire unit to access the work site on the property. Vehicles will not be used to push over trees or the leveling and removal of shrubs and other small vegetation. There will be minimal ground disturbance from the removal of material off improved road surfaces from a property and loading it into trucks to be hauled away.

Area of Potential Effects

FEMA has determined that the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the proposed Undertaking is composed of the 68 properties for defensible space and fuels reduction as delineated on Figures 1 and 2. The APE totals approximately 118 acres. As the final acreage for defensible space and fuels reduction will be determined during work and the condition of each property, the acreage for treatment will likely be less than the 118-acre APE.

Historic Property Identification and Evaluation

None of the properties proposed for treatment in this Undertaking have dwellings or properties that are historic in age. Prior to becoming a FEMA Undertaking, the Island Park Sustainable Fire Community consulted with the Idaho SHPO on this proposed project in a letter dated February 14, 2019. The Idaho SHPO (SHPO# 2019-380) responded on February 20, 2019, with a No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties determination. Due to the low impact nature of the Undertaking focused almost entirely on properties with existing structures, driveways, and roads no additional identification or evaluation efforts are planned.

Determination of Effects

Barring additional information from the Tribe, based on the low impact nature of the activities, FEMA has determined that the Undertaking will result in No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties. Furthermore, the project will be conditioned to protect any unanticipated discoveries during fuels reduction work. We respectfully request your concurrence with these findings, or additional comments. To assist your review please find enclosed project maps. Should you have any questions, please contact Philip Fisher (425) 471-9018 or philip.fisher@fema.dhs.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Science Kilner
Regional Environmental Officer

cc. Joshua Mann, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (via email)

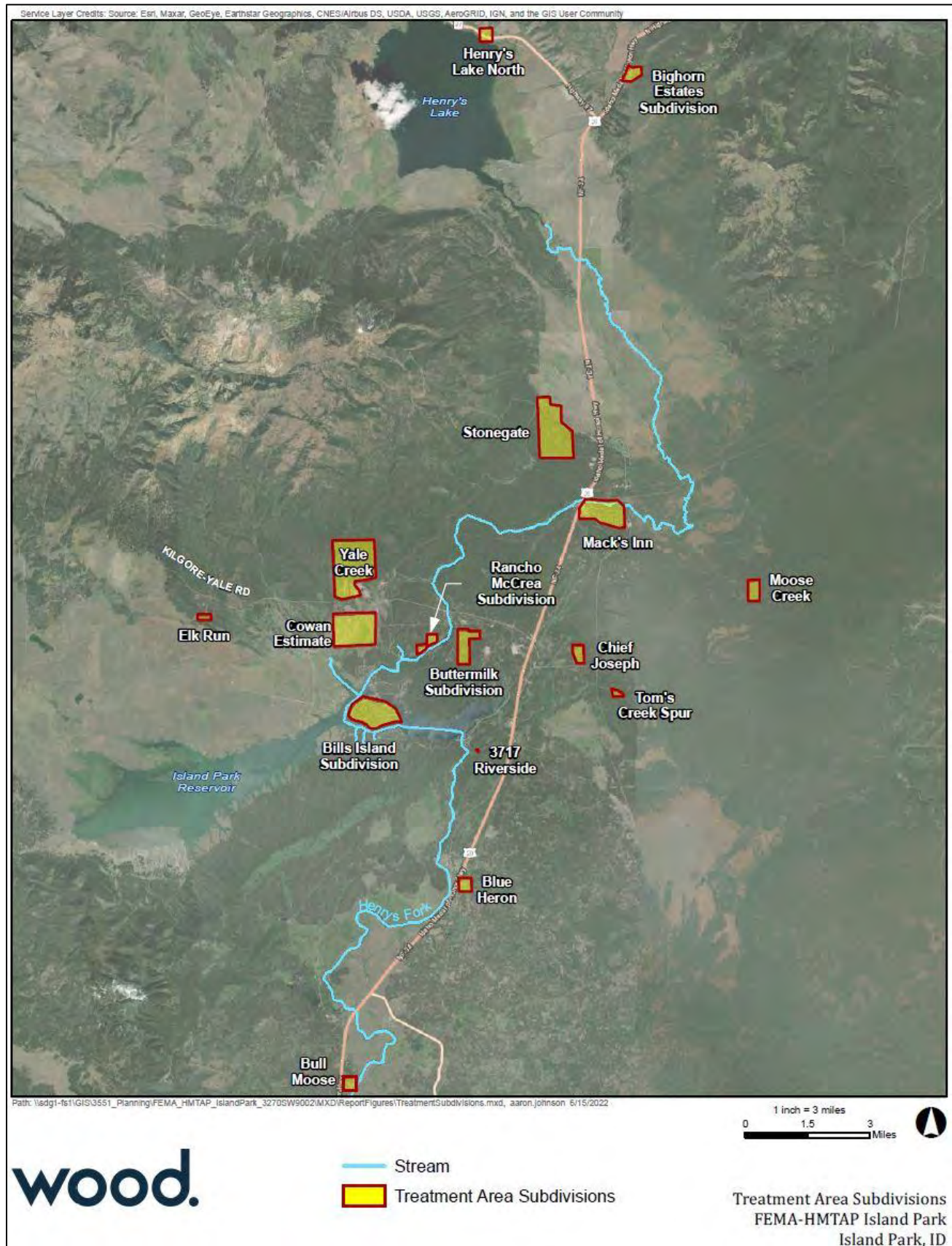


Figure 1. The Island Park Fuels Reduction APE Communities shown on a recent aerial image.



IDAHO STATE
**HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**



Brad Little
Governor of Idaho

Janet Gallimore
Executive Director
State Historic
Preservation Officer

Administration:
2205 Old Penitentiary Rd.
Boise, Idaho 83712
208.334.2682
Fax: 208.334.2774

Idaho State Museum:
610 Julia Davis Dr.
Boise, Idaho 83702
208.334.2120

**Idaho State Archives
and State Records
Center:**
2205 Old Penitentiary Rd.
Boise, Idaho 83712
208.334.2620

**State Historic
Preservation Office:**
210 Main St.
Boise, Idaho 83702
208.334.3861

**Old Idaho Penitentiary
and Historic Sites:**
2445 Old Penitentiary Rd.
Boise, Idaho 83712
208.334.2844

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20 February 2019

Tim Stonks
Executive Director
Island Park Sustainable Fire Community
PO Box 493
Island Park, Idaho 83429

**Re: FEMA Wildfire Fuels Reduction Grant, Island Park, Idaho /
SHPO# 2019-380**

Dear Mr. Stonks,

Thank you for consulting with our office on the above referenced project. We understand the scope of work includes an effort to evaluate individual properties and prescribing actions to make a property more resistant to wildfire. Depending on each individual property, the work will include: limbing up trees, removing ladder fuels such as bushes and small trees, removing dead and diseased trees, and removing trees for better spacing between trees to reduce crown fires.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 800, we have applied the criteria of effect to the proposed undertaking. Based on the information received 19 February 2019, we have determined the proposed project actions will have **no adverse effect** to historic properties.

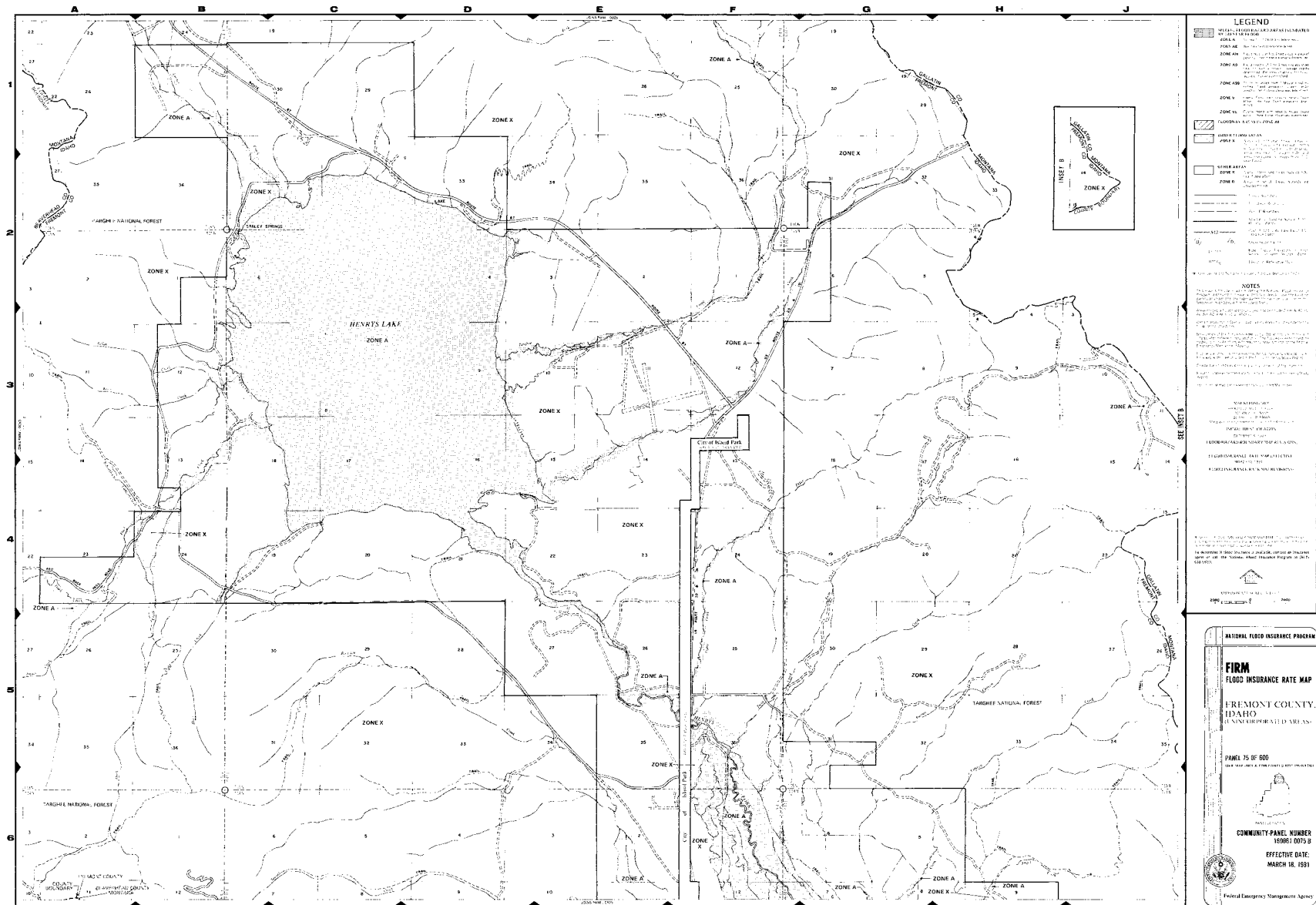
In the event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during implementation of this project, work shall be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by the appropriate consulting parties.

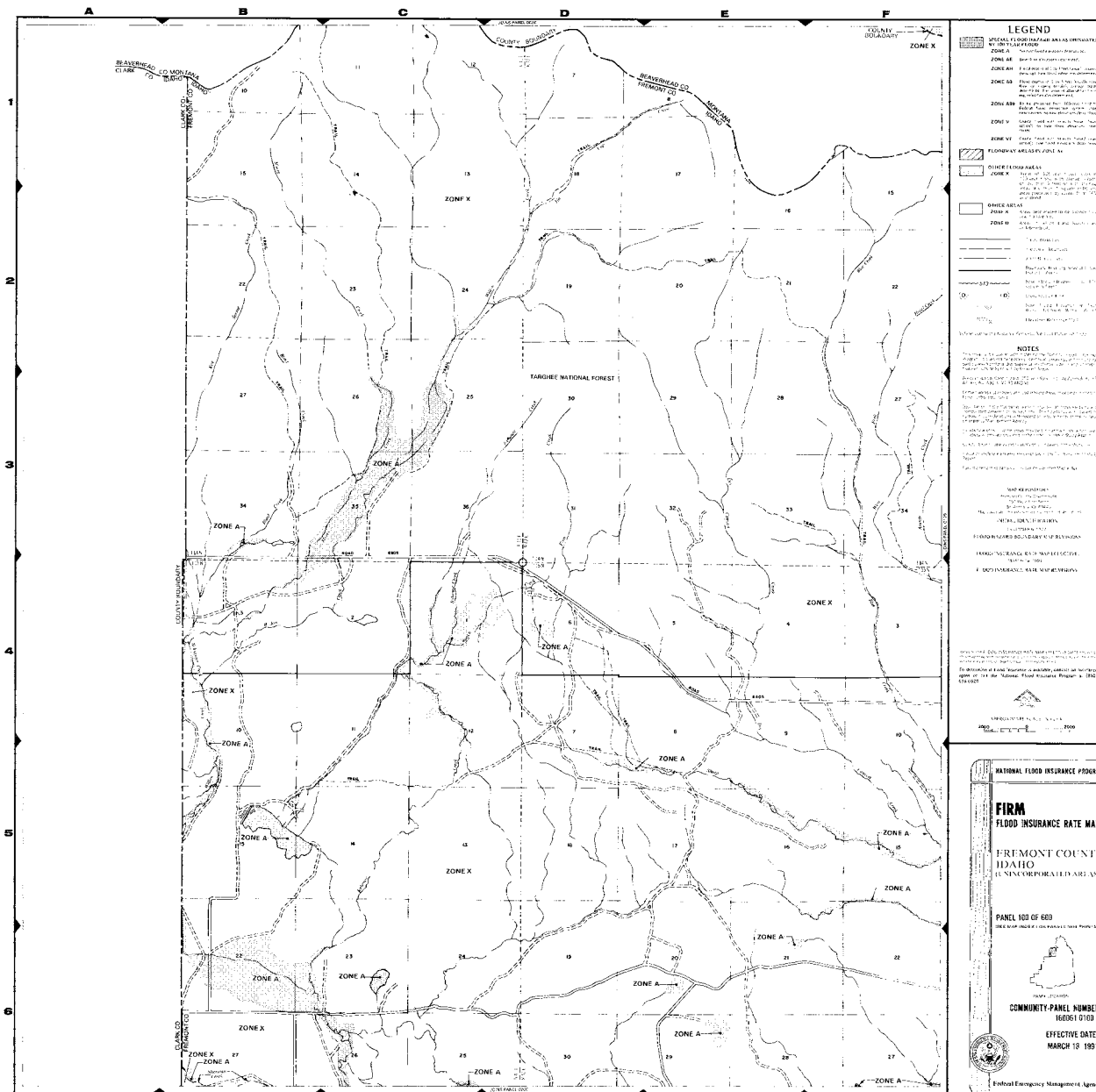
If you have any questions or the scope of work changes, please contact me via phone or email at 208.488.7463 or ashley.brown@ishs.idaho.gov.

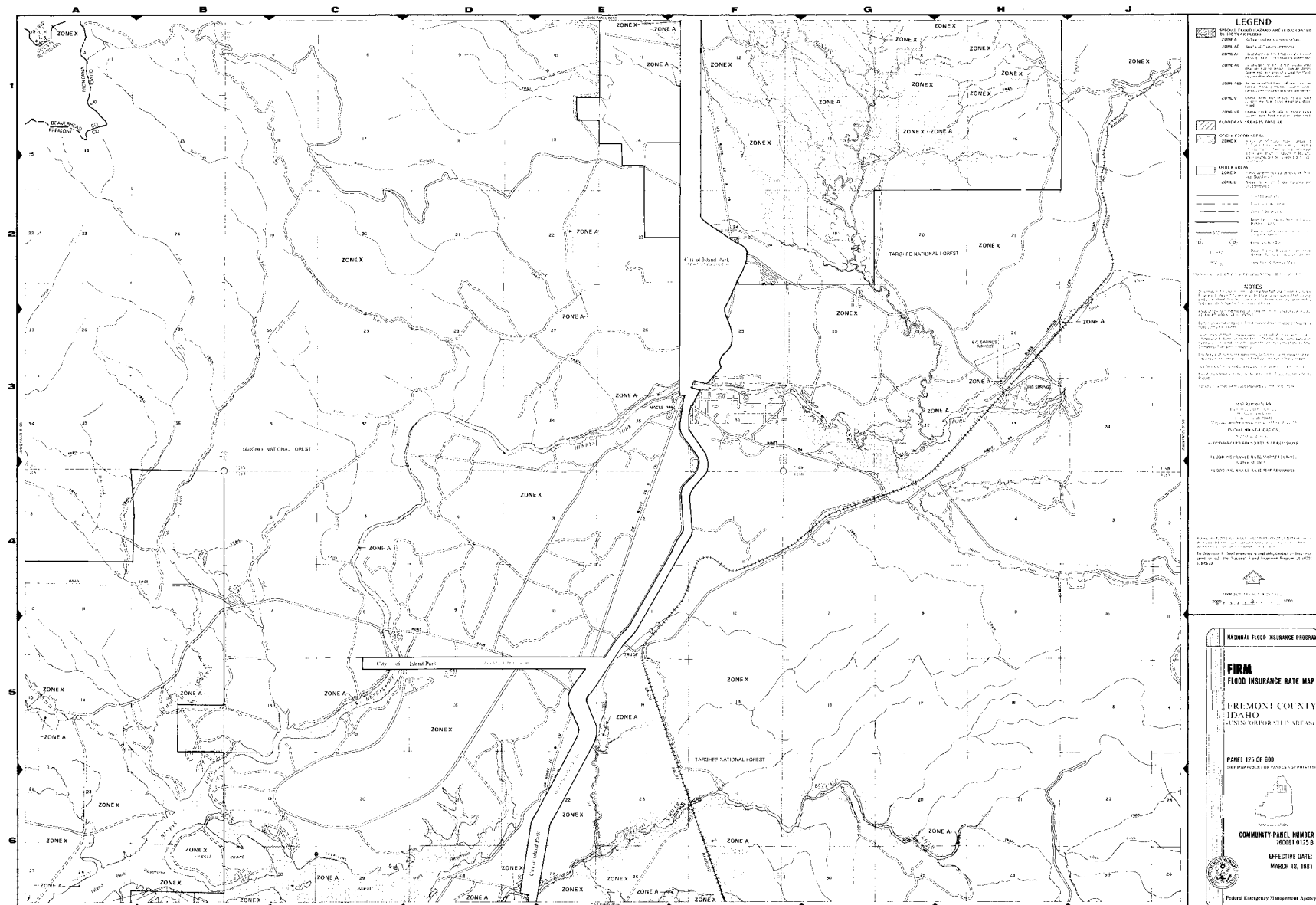
Sincerely,

Ashley Brown
Historical Review Officer
Idaho State Historic Preservation Office

Appendix C
Flood Insurance Rate Maps







Appendix C – Flood Insurance Rate Maps

