

August 2, 2004

MONTANA FUEL REDUCTION PROJECTS IN FY04

PURPOSE OF THE BRIEFING DOCUMENT:

Montana plans to complete approximately 80 fuel reduction projects comprising 14,500 acres in mostly-forested areas in FY04. The purpose of the projects is to reduce fuels, improve forest health, and enhance public safety in the wildland-urban interface. Our FY04 fuels budget is just over \$5 million.

ISSUES:

The challenge to completing these projects is largely weather-related, both short-term and long-term drought. We can easily meet our target if we get enough spring and fall burn windows during which to conduct the treatments.

MAIN DECISION OR MESSAGE:

Montana is implementing four forestry and fuels stewardship contracts.

The fuels reduction projects are planned on a landscape level, taking into account other resource management objectives and requirements.

The projects will be completed using a combination of contracted and in-house labor and mechanical and prescribed burning methods.

BUREAU PERSPECTIVE:

Most, if not all, of the fuel reduction projects could also be considered projects under the Healthy Forests Initiative.

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