State of Washington
Decision Package

Agency: 490 Department of Natural Resources
Decision Package Code/Title: FP Improving Forest Fire Prevention
Budget Period: 2009-11
Budget Level: PL - Performance Level

Recommendation Summary Text:

The increasing size, severity and cost of suppressing wildfires makes preventing human caused fires critical as a public and firefighter safety issue, and as a cost savings measure. This proposal provides partial maintenance of funding for fire prevention specialists to deliver fire prevention programs in collaboration with public and private organizations, implement a minimal program of public education and awareness of wildfire risks, and promote personal and community responsibility for actions to reduce the number of human caused fires.

This proposal will partially restore this important ongoing program by reinvigorating the Firewise Communities program, continue implementation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans and provide focused regional fire prevention efforts. Initial federal National Fire Plan seed money to begin these programs has provided strong benefits to the people of Washington by starting to create fire adapted communities. Carrying on the work accomplished so far will provide even greater benefits. Federal grant funding remains available for community projects identified in Community Wildfire Protection Plans but the initial seed money to support state prevention specialists to provide leadership and coordination for these projects is no longer available.

Fiscal Detail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Expenditures</th>
<th>FY 2010</th>
<th>FY 2011</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>001-1 General Fund - Basic Account-State</td>
<td>148,100</td>
<td>148,100</td>
<td>296,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190-6 Forest Fire Protection Assessment-Non-Appropriate</td>
<td>148,000</td>
<td>148,000</td>
<td>296,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Cost</td>
<td>296,100</td>
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<td>592,200</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staffing</th>
<th>FY 2010</th>
<th>FY 2011</th>
<th>Annual Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FTEs</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Package Description:

What problems will the proposal address?

Wildfires are increasing in size, severity and suppression cost. People cause eighty five percent of wildfires. An aggressive fire prevention program can reduce the number of wildfires, saving lives, natural resources and money. Additionally, more people are choosing to live in areas where fire has historically been a part of the natural environment. These home and property owners need to understand their personal responsibilities to prevent fires and to reduce the risk that fires will damage their homes and property.

What will the proposal actually buy?

This proposal will increase public awareness of wildfire risks and the actions property owners need to take to protect their homes and
natural resources. We will implement a minimal program of public education and awareness of wildfire risks and Community Wildfire Protection Plans to reduce the number of human caused wildfires. We will collaborate with public and private organizations to deliver a fire prevention program that places a strong emphasis on personal and community responsibility for fire prevention and preparedness for emergencies in areas at high risk for wildfires.

What outcomes do we expect as a result?

In the highest wildfire risk areas of the State we will:
Work with communities at risk for wildfire with a goal of enrolling eighteen new communities each year in the Firewise Communities program (36 for the biennium).

Endeavor to maintain participation in the Firewise Communities program by encouraging continued enrollment of existing communities at a rate that meets or exceed the national retention rate of 90%.

We will encourage each community with a Community Wildfire Protection Plan to complete at least one action identified in their plan each year (there are currently 37 Community Wildfire Protection Plans, some covering multiple communities).

We will implement one fire prevention campaign in each DNR Region focused on the most important fire cause identified in each high fire risk area of the state.

**Narrative Justification and Impact Statement**

**What specific performance outcomes does the agency expect?**

Performance Outcome:
Increased participation in the Firewise Communities program

Result (Target):
18 new communities per year (36 total)

Performance Outcome:
Continued participation of existing Firewise Communities

Result (Target):
90% retention of Firewise Communities in the program

Performance Outcome:
Community Wildfire Protection Plans are implemented

Result (Target):
1 action plan item is implemented in each plan each year (74 items)

Performance Outcome:
Regional fire prevention campaigns are implemented

Result (Target):
6 fire prevention campaigns completed (1 in each Region's highest risk area each year)

The Fire Regulation and Prevention Program, in the 2007-09 biennium, has the performance measure "Number of Community Wildfire Protection Plans with action items implemented by local communities with technical or financial assistance from DNR". Approval of this request will maintain this performance measure. If not approved the program will no longer have the resources to continue this work.

**Performance Measure Detail**

September 5, 2008
Activity: A012  Fire Regulation and Prevention

No measures submitted for package

Is this decision package essential to implement a strategy identified in the agency's strategic plan?

This proposal supports our goal to assure that losses to life from fire are prevented and property loss is minimized by implementing our strategies to:

Maintain a balance of prevention, detection, initial attack, sustained attack, and large incident management capacity.

Lead the state in wildland fire prevention and protection.

Increase protection it homes and communities in the urban/rural interface.

Does this decision package provide essential support to one of the Governor's priorities?

As an essential element of our Fire Prevention and Control program, this proposal supports the Priorities of Government Public Safety key results area by implementing an aggressive program of public education and awareness of wildfire risks and Community Wildfire Protection Plans to reduce the number of human caused wildfires.

Does this decision package make key contributions to statewide results? Would it rate as a high priority in the Priorities of Government process?

This proposal makes key contributions to the Improve the Safety of People and Property Statewide Result Area by:

1. Reducing the number of human caused wildfires (linked to the prevent accidents Statewide Results Strategy), and

2. Assisting communities and homeowners with taking personal responsibility for reducing the impacts of wildfires to their homes, families and communities (linked to the prepare for and respond to emergencies Statewide Results Strategy).

What are the other important connections or impacts related to this proposal?

Local communities have responded favorably to fire prevention education and implementation of action plans for self responsibility. Maintaining and enhancing these community ties are an important part of this proposal.

The proposal may result in some work within the Puget Sound Basin that will reduce the potential negative impacts of wildfires within Puget Sound watersheds.

What alternatives were explored by the agency, and why was this alternative chosen?

Alternatives explored were:

Alternative 1
Decrease fire prevention efforts

Expected outcome:
Two to four additional large wildfires per year, at a cost of $2 million per fire. Increased loss of homes due to wildfires, similar to the 2008 Spokane Valley Wildfire (thirteen homes destroyed).

Alternative 2
Seek state funds to implement Community Wildfire Protection Plan action items that were developed using federal funding.

Expected outcome:
Seeking state funds to reduce wildfire risks to communities is not financially practical. Reducing hazardous vegetation around urban interface homes costs approximately $1,000 per home. Reducing hazardous vegetation around 100 homes per year in each of 37

September 5, 2008
Community Wildfire Planning areas would cost $7.4 million.

Alternative 3
Increase collaborative fire prevention efforts (selected alternative)

Expected outcome:
Increased public awareness of wildfire risks and the actions home and property owners need to take to reduce their risks. Communities have increased capacity to seek federal grants and other funding sources to reduce wildfire risks.

We chose alternative 3 because of its modest cost compared to other alternatives, and its emphasis on personal and community responsibility for wildland fire prevention.

*What are the consequences of not funding this package?*

Not funding this package can be expected to result in an increase in the number of large and damaging wildfires and the continued loss of homes and structures to wildfires.

*What is the relationship, if any, to the state's capital budget?*

This proposal does not impact the state's capital budget.

*What changes would be required to existing statutes, rules, or contracts, in order to implement the change?*

No changes in statutes, rules, or contracts are needed to implement this proposal.

*Expenditure and revenue calculations and assumptions*

Three FTE at the Natural Resource Specialist 2 level to encourage communities to enroll and maintain participation in the Firewise Communities program, promote implementation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans, and implement two regional fire prevention campaigns each per year focused on the most important fire cause identified in the highest fire risk areas of the state.

Goods and services, travel and equipment costs are based on program averages.

Agency administrative cost is calculated at 27% and shown as object T. FTE associated with agency admin is estimated at .8 of a position.

There are no revenue changes due to this proposal.

*Which costs and functions are one-time? Which are ongoing? What are the budget impacts in future biennia?*

Costs related to this proposal are ongoing. The risks of wildfire are expected to continue and possible increase in the future as a result of climate change and continued forest health decline. Community action to mitigate fire risks will need to be sustained to have a long-term impact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object Detail</th>
<th>FY 2010</th>
<th>FY 2011</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Salaries And Wages</td>
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<td>B Employee Benefits</td>
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<td>E Goods And Services</td>
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<td>G Travel</td>
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<td>T Intra-Agency Reimbursements</td>
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<td><strong>Total Objects</strong></td>
<td><strong>296,100</strong></td>
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<td><strong>592,200</strong></td>
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September 5, 2008