

Appendix L: Potential Sources of Funding

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000

Frequently Asked Questions



What is the SRS Act? When was it passed?

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (SRS Act), Public Law (P.L.) 106-393, was enacted to provide five years of transitional assistance to rural counties affected by the decline in revenue from timber harvests on federal lands. Since 1908, 25-percent of Forest Service revenues, such as those from timber sales, mineral resources and grazing fees, have been returned to states in which national forest lands are located. Set to expire in 2006, the SRS Act was reauthorized and amended several times with the latest changes occurring in October 2008 under P.L. 110-343. Funds have been used for schools and roads and to create employment opportunities, maintain current infrastructure, and improve the watershed and ecosystem health.

What does the SRS Act do?

Originally, the SRS Act altered the county payment program of the U.S. Forest Service from FY2001-FY2006 to allow states or counties to choose whether to receive the average of the three highest payments for FY1986-FY1999 or the regular 25-percent payment. The SRS Act also required that counties receiving at least \$100,000 had to spend 15 percent to 20 percent of those payments for specified county purposes, in accordance with Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) recommendations, or as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture for projects on federal lands. Counties must return unallocated portions to the U.S. Treasury.

Currently, the SRS Act requires counties choose to receive either: 1) a portion of their state's payment or 2) a rolling average of the total receipts for the past seven fiscal years. Counties choosing the first option are bound to that decision until 2011 (4 years); counties selecting the

rolling average may switch after two years. The total amount of available funding declines each fiscal year.

What does the SRS Act do for Colorado counties?

Counties that choose the rolling average may spend these funds on projects as they would 25-percent payments. Counties that instead choose a portion of the state’s payment use the funds as described below:

SRS Provision	County selects a portion of the state’s payment		
	<i>Less than \$100,000</i>	<i>Between \$100,000 and \$350,000</i>	<i>More than \$350,000</i>
<i>Title I: Roads and Schools</i>	May spend 100% on Title I projects or may opt to spend 15-20% on Title II and Title III projects.	80-85% spent on this title.	80-85% spent on this title.
<i>Title II: Special Projects / RAC</i>		No more than 15-20% for Title II and Title III projects. May return 15-20% to US Treasury instead.	No more than 15-20% for Title II and Title III projects. Title III projects are capped at 7% of total funds. May return 15-20% to US Treasury instead.
<i>Title III: County Funds</i>			

What are kinds of projects can be funded by the SRS Act?

The kinds of projects are limited by what is listed in the SRS Act.

Title I: Funds must be used in the same manner as 25-percent funds would normally be spent.

Title II: Funds may be used for projects as recommended by Resource Advisory Committees (RAC) and approved by the Secretary of Agriculture or his/her designee (i.e. a forest supervisor or district ranger). Title II funds may be used to make additional investments in, and create additional employment opportunities through, projects that improve the maintenance of existing infrastructure, implement stewardship objectives that enhance forest ecosystems, and restore and improve land health and water quality. Projects shall enjoy broad based support with objectives that may include, but are not limited to:

- Road, trail, and infrastructure maintenance or obliteration;
- Soil productivity improvement;
- Improvements in forest ecosystem health;
- Watershed restoration and maintenance;
- Restoration, maintenance and improvement of wildlife and fish habitat;
- Control of noxious and exotic weeds; and
- Re-establishment of native species.

At least 50 percent of all Title II funds must be used for projects that primarily are dedicated to:

- Road maintenance, decommissioning, or obliteration; or
- Restoration of streams and watersheds.

Title II projects must be recommended by a RAC and must be within the RAC's geographical boundary.

Additional information on Title II projects, RACs, and project planning and approval processes may be found at: https://wwwnotes.fs.fed.us/wo/secure_rural_schools.nsf.

Title III: Funds are used for projects developed and selected by the counties. Project proposals should describe the proposed use of the county funds and must be advertised for 45 days in any publication of local record to allow for public comment. Proposed projects also should be sent to the RAC if one exists in the county.

Funds may **only** be used to:

1. carry out activities under the Firewise Communities Program to provide homeowners in fire-sensitive ecosystems education and assistance with implementation, techniques in home-siting, home construction, and home landscaping that can help protect people and property from wildfires;

2. reimburse the participating county for search and rescue and other emergency services, including firefighting, that are performed on federal land after the date on which the use was approved and paid for by the participating county; and
3. develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) in coordination with the Secretary of Agriculture.

In FY 2008, Colorado was paid \$14,728,659 for Title I projects and \$1,159,653 for Title III projects. The U.S. Forest Service was holding \$1,316,980 for approved Title II projects.

Are these funds the same as the Payments-In-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) program?

No. The PILT program is administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior. These federal payments are made to local governments that help offset losses in property taxes due to nontaxable federal lands within their boundaries. Payments help local governments carry out such vital services as firefighting and police protection, construction of public schools and roads, and search-and-rescue operations. The payments are made annually for tax-exempt federal lands administered by the BLM, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (all agencies of the U.S. Department of the Interior), U.S. Forest Service (part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture), and for federal water projects and some military installations. For more information on PILT, please visit: <http://www.doi.gov/pilt>

Where can I go for more information?

If you have questions or need more information on specific projects, contact your US Forest Service district ranger. Contacts for RACs may be found by visiting the following website: https://wwwnotes.fs.fed.us/wo/secure_rural_schools.nsf/RAC_by_County?OpenView&Start=1&Count=1000&Expand=5#5

For additional information on the Secure Rural Schools Act, please consult the following references:

Public Law 106-393. 2000. The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. Available online at <http://www.blm.gov/or/files/PL106-393.pdf>; last accessed 16 July 2009.

Public Law 110-343. 2008. Reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. Available online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/srs/docs/srs-bill-sec-601.pdf>; last accessed 16 July 2009.

USDA. Forest Service. 2009. The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. Reauthorization for Fiscal Years 2008—2011. Available online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/srs>; last accessed 16 July 2009.

----. 2008. Reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. Available online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/srs/docs/srs-bill-sec-601.pdf>; last accessed 16 July 2009.

US Office of Management and Budget. 2009. Cost principles for state, local, and Indian tribal governments. 2 CFR 225. Available online at <http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=f3e960da5d4f95af53523ae88cb38ab5&rqn=div5&view=text&node=2:1.1.2.3.6&idno=2>; last accessed 17 July 2009. [Note: This document contains a glossary and instructions that might be useful for local governments that have been awarded federal grant monies.]

Womach, J. 2005. Agriculture: A glossary of terms, programs, and laws. Congressional Research Service. Available online at <http://ncseonline.org/nle/crsreports/05jun/97-905.pdf>; last accessed 16 July 2009.

Criteria and Instructions to States

2011 Colorado Wildland Urban Interface Grant Program

Congress has provided increased funding assistance to states through the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry programs since 2001. The focus of much of this additional funding was mitigating risk in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas. In the West, the State Fire Assistance (SFA) funding is available and awarded through a competitive process with emphasis on hazard fuel reduction, information and education, and community and homeowner action. This portion of the National Fire Plan was developed to assist interface communities manage the unique hazards they find around them. Long-term solutions to interface challenges require informing and educating people who live in these areas about what they and their local organizations can do to mitigate these hazards.

The 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy focuses on assisting people and communities in the WUI to moderate the threat of catastrophic fire through the four National Fire Plan goals of improving prevention and suppression, reducing hazardous fuels, restoring fire-adapted ecosystems, and promoting community assistance.

Grant Criteria:

1) Reduce Hazardous Fuels / Restore Fire-adapted Ecosystems:

Recipients may facilitate and implement mitigating fuel treatments in or adjacent to identified fire prone communities to reduce the threat of wildfire to communities. Fuel reduction projects and vegetation treatments have been identified as a means of mitigating wildfire hazards. These are projects that remove or modify fuels in and/or adjacent to WUI development. Effective fuels mitigation treatments can be implemented across jurisdictional boundaries, on adjoining private lands, or within the respective communities. Projects of this type include fuel breaks, thinning, pruning, landscape modifications, etc. The overall purpose is to modify or break up the fuels in such a way as to lessen catastrophic fire and its threat to public and firefighter safety and damage to property. Another way to prevent future large, catastrophic wildfires from threatening communities is by carrying out appropriate treatments (such as prescribed burning or thinning) to restore and rehabilitate forest and grassland health in and adjacent to the WUI. Such treatments have reduced the severity of wildfires, and may have additional desirable outcomes, such as providing sustainable environmental, social and economic benefits. Project proposals should consider all elements required to implement treatments on the ground, which includes acquiring the necessary permits and consultations needed to complete plans and assessments.

Examples of projects that qualify (not all inclusive):

- Defensible space around homes and structures
- Shaded fuel breaks
- Fuels reduction beyond defensible space
- Removal of slash including piling and burning; mulching; grinding; etc.
- Prescribed fire
- Thinning
- Maintenance of **non-federally funded** fuels projects (explain in application narrative)

2) Improve Prevention/Education in the Interface:

Recipients can provide leadership to coordinate, develop, and distribute wildland urban interface education programs in association with insurance companies, communities, local government agencies, and other partners. Informational and educational projects must target mitigation of risk and prevention of loss. Projects should lead to the use or establishment of one or more fire program elements such as fire safety codes, implementation of Firewise safety practices, establishing local fire safe councils, fuels treatments

within fire prone communities, or community planning to define fire safe actions suited to the local ecosystem.

3) Planning: Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP"s) are created by local communities and may address issues such as wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, structure protection, or a combination of the above. The process of developing these plans can help a community clarify and refine its priorities for the protection of life, property, and critical infrastructure in the wildland-urban interface. The Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) minimum requirements for a CWPP are: 1) Collaboration (must be developed with community members, local and state government representatives in collaboration with federal agencies and other interested stakeholders), 2) Prioritized Fuel Reduction (plan must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment), and 3) Treatment of Structural Ignitability (must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed in the plan). A copy of the CWPP Handbook can be found at: <http://csfs.colostate.edu/pages/community-wf-protection-planning.html>

Examples of projects that qualify (not all inclusive):

- Creation of CWPP/or equivalent document
- Priority projects listed in existing CWPPs covering the above criteria

4) Examples of Projects that DO NOT Qualify (not all inclusive):

- **Maintenance on previous federally funded fuels projects**
- Preparedness and suppression capacity building; such as purchase of fire department equipment (try VFA,

RFA, DHS and FEMA grant programs)

- Small business start-up funding
- Research and development projects (try Economic Action Program)
- GIS and database systems
- Construction/Infrastructure (building remodel, bridges, road construction, water development)

Grant Considerations: (See score sheet attached which will be used by a panel of nine CSFS employees from across the state. Each application will be scored by three individuals and an average rating will be used in the ranking process. Please be mindful and follow "**Application Instructions**"). Additional helpful information on how applications are scored is as follows:

- Meets the "Grant Criteria"- If it does not, the application will be considered ineligible
- Meets the 50/50 match requirement*-if not, the application will be considered ineligible
- Each grant request will be limited to a maximum of \$300,000.
- No state will receive more than 15% of the funds available in the west.
- All grants will be scored based on the following (highest possible score is 18)

Box 3: Does application show **clear contributions/matching share** (1 pt. max)

Is this project achievable? Time, goals, accurate budget, etc. (2 pt. max)

Yes, clearly = 2 pts Yes, but needs additional info / budget = 1 No = 0

Is this project measurable? (Clearly states # of acres, # of educational/outreach

programs etc.) (2 pt. max)

Box 6: **Is this project clearly described, so the reviewer has a clear understanding?**

(2 pt. max)

- Box 7: **Does the scope provide specific details?** (2 pt. max)
- Box 8: (2 pt. max)
- CWPP, drop down boxes: CWPP in place and part of plan = 2 pt.
- CWPP in process and project part of plan = 1 pt.
- CWPP not in place = 0
- Box 9: (1 pt. max)
- Box 10: (2pt. max)
- District Priority #1 = 2pt. #2 Priority = 1 pt. Other Priority = No points

*A 50/50 match. The allocated grant amount must be matched in full by the recipient using a **non-federal source**. Exception: Title III funds under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, PL 106-393 are not considered federal dollars and may be used as match. **The matching share can be soft match (which includes training hours valued at an accepted rate, donated labor/equipment, etc) and/or hard match (which is actual dollars spent other than federal grant funds within the specified scope of work.) If the project is part of the consolidated payment grant, matching funds can be combined or met from any one or all program areas.**

Application Instructions:

The application is in adobe pdf format. It is fill in enabled in any form of Adobe Reader 5.0 or higher. If you do not have Adobe Reader, go to <http://get.adobe.com/reader/> and download Reader 9.1.

- 1) All blocks are fill-in enabled and character locked. Applicants must fit all information into the allotted box space. Hold your mouse arrow over each block for further instructions. **Applications that have been modified for any reason will be considered ineligible by the review committee. Any attachments or additional documents that are not removed at the district level will not be considered by the review committee.**
- 2) **Applications must be submitted through the appropriate State Forester. State agencies must fill in the provided summary sheet and submit with the applications for committee review.**
- 3) Application guidelines by box number: (All boxes must be filled in on the application. If a box does not apply to your project fill in that space with NA.)
 - **Box 1 & 2**-Basic applicant and community at risk information.
 - **Box 3 & 4**-The totals in these boxes will add automatically when all data is entered into the fields. It is recommended you check all numbers add up correctly. See description of hard vs. soft match.
 - **Box 5**-Answer the specific questions. Under the three Project Category fields fill in only if they apply to your project. If, for example, Planning is not a part of your project fill in NA.
 - **Box 6**-The project area description should give an **overview** of the project to point out the hazards and clearly show the need for work in this area. If applying for a fuels reduction project, describe the vegetation types.
 - **Box 7**-The scope of work should explain exactly how the grant dollars will be spent on this project. Unlike the overview, this will provide the specific details of the project using measurable units where applicable. Be concise, say exactly what will be done with grant funds not what you expect the reviewer wants to hear. Use this block to explain any additional budget detail.
 - **Box 8**-Describe the contributions each partner will make to the project by stating the collaborating partners name and what they will be contributing to the project such as manpower, equipment, matching funds, etc. The questions: „Does this community have a plan?“ and „Is this part of the

plan?" are drop boxes so click in the field, scroll up and down arrows will appear. Scroll up or down until you find the answer you are looking for.

- **Box 9**-Describe the landscape this project influences. Show how the project has or will have impact outside the immediate project area. For example, a project in a community may abut and compliment a Forest Service project on their land where they are creating a fuel break around your community defensible space project. Give specifics on how this project will tie into the larger picture of community protection. For information/education and or planning projects explain how your project compliments or enhances those by other agencies and/or ties into a greater goal. Explain the who, what, when, where, why, and how of its anticipated impacts.

- **Box 10**-The **Project Timeline** should include such things as: begin/end dates, milestones, quarterly accomplishments, etc.

Maintenance should clearly describe the who, what, when, where and why of how this project will remain effective and be sustained over time. The four main points to be included for fuels projects are:

- 1) Environmental Factors: describe the maintenance requirements unique to this project based on site characteristics i.e., present and future vegetation occupying the site, growth rates, returned natural fire intervals or any other environmental factor that affects the continued maintenance of this project.

- 2) Education: describe how key players have been trained and educated to maintain the project and explain their understanding of the needs and expectations of the project's maintenance.

- 3) Commitment: describe the commitment by the individual/community to maintain this project into the future, i.e. state laws, CWPP terms, signed landowner agreements or other documents or agreements that hold the sub-grantee accountable for project maintenance over time.

- 4) Monitoring: describe who will be responsible for monitoring the project, what qualifications they have if they are not obvious (i.e. State Forestry personnel, Fire Safe Council member, Fire Department personnel, etc.), and at what intervals they will be checking (i.e. yearly, quarterly, etc); clearly describe timelines, milestones, and measurable.

Sustainability should clearly describe how the project will be sustained over time.

Application Due Dates:

The standard *Colorado WUI Application* must be used. This form should be filled out and submitted **electronically** to the appropriate District Forester by their district deadline.

ATTENTION: District Foresters

All applications must be received by Jane Lopez by 4:00 p.m., MDT on Thursday August 19 2010. The email address to send the applications to is: Jane.Lopez@Colostate.edu This deadline applies to prioritized applications along with the completed summary sheet for each district. Individuals must submit the application to the appropriate District Office for prioritization, they may not submit directly to the address above. The applications will then be reviewed and sent on to the WFLC. When submitting prioritized applications to Jane, name the files by District and priority number (ex. GO01, GO02, etc...).

Each district will set its own internal deadlines for its cooperators, partners, and client's applications so they may be reviewed and prioritized at the district level before submission to Jane Lopez by the deadline above.