

## **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009**

### **Delaware Hazardous Fuels Reduction / Ecosystem Improvement Projects**

#### **Program Narrative**

#### **I. DESCRIPTION:**

The primary purpose of this American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) project is to create jobs by reducing the threat of wildfires to communities and resources on State lands and improving the health of ecosystems on State lands. This project will meet this purpose through the following tasks:

- Complete fire management plans in high-risk areas.
- Conduct hazard mitigation activities around at-risk communities by reducing fuel loads and installing fire breaks.
- Conduct ecosystem improvement projects on State lands to improve forest health and reduce wildfire hazard.

#### **II. METHODOLOGY/TIMETABLE:**

##### **A. COMMUNITY MITIGATION – PLANS/ASSESSMENTS and PREVENTION/EDUCATION:**

**Plans/Assessments:** The Delaware Forest Service (DFS) working with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), Division of Parks and Recreation will complete 12 fire management plans totaling 25,000 acres; this represents fire plans for all of DNREC, Division of Parks and Recreation, lands. Many of these lands are located in the WUI and contain significant amounts of hazardous fuels. The State of Delaware will contract with a consultant to write these plans. The plans will be completed by September 30, 2010 at a total cost of \$60,000. These lands border 1,700 different private property owners in a total of 11 different communities across the state. No wildfire response plans for the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation exist at this time.

**B. HAZARD FUELS:**

By September 30, 2010, the DFS and DNREC will treat 4.6 miles of WUI edge surrounding 5,000 acres of potentially hazardous fuels. These fuels are directly adjacent to private property and a few public facilities. These firebreaks and hazardous fuel reduction projects will protect millions of dollars of private property, reduce wildland fire danger, and establish a cooperative and supportive interface with our State land neighbors. This program will improve ecosystem health by establishing an ability to reduce fuel loading in the future through prescribed fire application or timber stand improvement where appropriate. This will be accomplished through 3 work crews each with 4 members (12 members total) working for one year. Total cost for these treatments is \$334,000.

**C. HAZARD FUELS – MECHANICAL ACRES & COMMUNITIES ASSISTED:**

During the grant period, the DFS plans to complete 5 projects totaling approximately 100 acres, including 10 miles of defensible space, around high-risk WUI communities. These projects will focus on coastal communities adjacent to large stands of *phragmites* which is Delaware's most dangerous fuel type as identified in our wildfire risk assessment. These areas will be treated through a combination of chemical and mechanical treatments at a total cost of \$55,000 and will include two treatments (initial treatment in 2009 with a subsequent treatment in 2010). We will contract with a consultant to administer the projects and he/she will work with contractors to complete the treatments.

**D. TOTAL JOBS CREATED – STATE JOBS MAINTAINED; STATE JOBS REINSTATED, JOBS CREATED WITHIN THE PRIVATE SECTOR:**

This ARRA will create 12 jobs for one year within Delaware. These positions will help sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of Delaware's State Forests and State Parks by reducing wildland fire danger through fuel reduction and installing fire breaks, and improving ecosystem health by thinning overstocked stands, eliminating invasive plants, and planting native trees where invasive plants were removed.

Additionally, two consultant positions will retain work and an estimated 4 jobs will be retained through contractual work performed.

### III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS/TARGETS: SUMMARY OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES:

**Fire Management Plans:** 12 Plans totaling 25,000 acres by 9/30/10.  
(For all lands within Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation's State Parks.)

**Hazard Fuel Reduction:** Treat 4.6 miles of WUI edge by 9/30/10.  
(All treatment to occur on State Forest and State Parks lands to reduce hazardous fuel loads.)

**Ecosystem Improvement Projects:** Treat 300 acres by 12/01/10.  
(All treatment to occur on State Forest and State Park lands; these projects will include invasive species removal, tree planting, and thinning overstocked forested stands.)

**Hazard Fuels – Mechanical Acres & Communities Assisted:** Assist 5 communities by treating 100 acres through chemical and mechanical applications by December 1, 2010. (This will include a repeat treatment, with the first treatment in the late summer and fall of 2009 and the second in the late summer and fall of 2010 for each site.)

**Jobs Created/Retained:** 12 jobs will be created for one year. Additionally, two consultants (one to write fire management plans and one to administer the five hazard fuels reduction projects with communities) will retain work and an estimated 4 additional jobs will be retained by contractors who will perform the hazard fuels reduction projects.

### IV. BUDGET INFORMATION:

**Positions (\$116,887):** These funds will pay for one casual/seasonal crew (3 crew members and one foreman) to conduct ecosystem improvement and hazard fuel reduction projects on State Forests for one year.

**Contractual Services (\$326,113):** These funds include \$60,000 for a consultant to complete the 12 fire management plans totaling 25,000 acres for the State Park properties and \$55,000 to assist 5 communities with hazard fuels mitigation projects totaling an estimated 100 acres. The remaining funds are for ecosystem improvement and hazard fuel reduction projects on State Park lands. The Delaware Forest Service will provide these funds to the Division of State Parks as the work is completed.

**Supplies (\$6,000):** These funds are for field supplies related to the hazard fuels reduction and ecosystem improvement projects, such as fuel, herbicides, and tools.