

# STATE & PRIVATE FORESTRY – STATE FIRE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:

## FUNDS FUEL TREATMENTS THAT HELP FIREFIGHTERS SAVE 100 HOMES ON TIN CUP FIRE

**“The extent of hazardous fuel treatments that you have on private lands in this area is not common. We did not see a single home in the Stage I and II evacuation areas that we felt we could not defend. This is a tribute to the hard work of your community.”**

*Joe Molhoek, Type II Deputy Incident Commander, Tin Cup Fire*

Recent hazardous fuel treatments on public and private lands were significant in allowing firefighters to successfully contain the Tin Cup Fire outside Darby, Montana during the 2007 fire season.

These fuel reduction projects resulted from partnerships between the US Forest Service (USFS), MT Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (MT DNRC), the Bitter Root Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc. (RC&D), and private landowners. The locations of these treatments were guided by priorities set in the Bitterroot Valley’s **Community Wildfire Protection Plan**.

- The Bitterroot National Forest treated 214 acres during the past few months, and
- The Bitter Root RC&D, working with grants from the USFS State & Private Forestry organization and the MT DNRC, assisted 5 landowners in treating 102 acres during the past 5 years.

**“These treatments eliminated the ladder fuels resulting in less torching and crown fire activity. This, in turn, limited the fire spread and spotting, and allowed fire fighters to get in and fight the fire more effectively.”**

*Tobin Kelley, Type III Incident Commander, Tin Cup Fire*

This is just one small scale example of how S&PF grant funds invested in private land hazardous fuel treatments have been utilized throughout the West in the past six years, to treat high priority forested lands within the wildland-urban interface. The grants originated in the Forest Service State & Private Forestry’s **State Fire Assistance (SFA) Program**. Utilization of the grants is accomplished through a partnership between the Forest Service, State Foresters, non-profit organizations such as the RC&D, and private landowners.

The State Fire Assistance Program provides financial and technical support directly to the States, to enhance firefighting capacity, support

community-based hazard mitigation, and expand outreach and education to homeowners and communities concerning fire prevention. The program requires that the federal grant funds be matched, usually at a 50:50 ratio, by state and private funds. As a result of the National Fire Plan and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, the hazardous fuels reduction component is a major part of the SFA Program.

Photo Captions:

- 1) Private property during fuel treatments. Note thick stands and ladder fuels in untreated area. (“...Ryn80” and “...Ryn90” photos)
- 2) Same home, surrounded by completed fuel treatment project. (“...Ryn 87 photo”)