

Project Summary
Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Development and Refinement of the 2002 Montana Fire Department Survey
Type of Project: Technical Assistance
Funding Agency: BLM
Other Partners/Cooperators: MT DNRC
Effective Dates: October 1, 2003 – January 31, 2004
Funding Amount: \$18,000
Investigators and Agency Representative: Principal Investigator: Ronald H. Wakimoto, Professor of Wildland Fire Management, The University of Montana (e-mail: wakimoto@forestry.umt.edu) Research Assistant: Billy Preston, M.S. candidate (e-mail: prestons@ixi.net) BLM Contact: Mike Dannenberg, Fire Mitigation and Education Specialist, BLM-Montana State Office (e-mail: mike_dannenberg@blm.gov)
Project Abstract: We propose to develop and refine the fire department survey using modern survey science, coordinating with the needs of the Bureau of Land Management and Montana DNRC. Currently we believe that a well written, web-based survey would allow the rapid, accurate assessment of the Montana fire department situation. If funded, we will coordinate the re-writing of questions by developing goals and objectives appropriate for the State of Montana. We will do this in conjunction with agency personnel with statewide fire management responsibilities. We will develop a “key” at the start of the questionnaire to direct small departments with limited resources to specific questions rather than the entire survey. Larger departments with more complicated funding arrangements may be directed to a different set of questions more appropriate for their situations. We will also develop an appropriate “help” section for each question in the computer-based survey. In addition, we will conduct the pre-test of the survey instrument using fire departments selected to span a range of budget and area responsibilities. Agency personnel familiar with these organizations will help select these pre-test departments. We believe that a great value to be gained by investing in the development of this kind of survey is the ease of which the instrument could be adapted to different state situations. In addition, the analysis will be more straightforward. Of critical importance is the ability to compare state situations, question by question where appropriate. This cannot be done currently because of the variance in methodology used in conducting the survey (one-on-one versus mail out) and the wide range of responses we observed to unclear questions. Currently the Montana survey has a very poor response rate (39 %) so definitive conclusions are difficult to make at this time.
Outcomes with completion dates (reports, publications, workshops, videos, etc.): Deliverables will be the completed survey instrument including support documents, help sections, and analysis set-up. In addition, a copy of the completed M.S. thesis will be provided.
Keywords: fire department survey
<u>For Administrative use only:</u> <i>Date Annual Report Received:</i> <i>Date Final Report Received:</i> <i>Publications, etc. on file:</i>

