

## **Hazardous Fuels Reduction Implementation Staffing**

Since 2003 the implementation of the National Fire Plan and associated funding mechanisms has been accomplished by the Southwest Area fuels shop. This shop is comprised of one wildland urban interface coordinator and a fuels specialist.

This shop submits grants, manages funds to engage and encourage communities to remove or modify fuel and delivers many aspects of community education. Development and maintaining Community Wildfire Protection Plans for over forty communities at risk is also among the duties of this shop.

The duties of these folks were extended to manage a six to nine person seasonal fuels squad in order to get fuels projects done during fire season. A secondary use of this crew to provide initial attack assistance to the area has proved valuable. Fulfilling commitments made to communities for fuels reduction throughout the year has been priority one.

All of these staff functions are dependent on federal funding and are currently not career positions in the state system. A request for funding would be desired to ensure the continuity of the fuels reduction effort. It is estimated that \$325,000 would be needed to support this program on a yearly basis. Grant funding will hopefully offset many of these costs but, with federal funding being constricted there will need to be another funding stream provided to implement a fuels reduction program continuing forward.

As found in past years, a dedicated fuels staff is necessary to deliver any wildfire risk reduction program on a consistent basis due to the responsibilities of suppression resources during the summer field season.