

The Bureau of Land Management Community Assistance Program

The Community Assistance Program works through strong cooperative partnerships in a given area. These partnerships are made up of local government folks and the citizens of Montana and the Dakotas. Through these cooperative partnerships, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, Wildfire Hazard and Mitigation Plans, and Population Protection Plans are developed. Further, fuel treatments are planned and implemented, education programs implemented, and defensible space concepts are taught to private landowners and community groups.

Just a few of the successful partnerships within the Central Montana Fire Zone include:

- **Monarch/Neihart:** BLM has partnered with the Monarch Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) to complete home assessments to determine a property's potential risk from a wildfire. Once the home assessment is complete and the VFD has educated the property owner's on how to make their properties more defensible against wildfire. The property owners can then work with the VFD through a cost share agreement to remove trees, brush and other vegetative matter from their properties. Several properties have been assessed and projects have been completed in the area.
- **East Glacier:** BLM has partnered with the North Central Resource, Conservation & Development (RC&D) agency as well as the Blackfoot Tribal Fire Management to complete several hazardous fuels reduction projects in the East Glacier area. One notable project is working with Glacier Park Inc., the concessionaire for Glacier Park to complete over 120 acres around the historic east glacier lodge. Utilizing the local tribal forestry and fuels crew to complete the work – they thinned and piled most of the trees and brush that was cut. The crews also cut and piled teepee poles to make available for tribal members. Some of the timber will be used to heat the lodging in the fall and winter and the piles that are left will be burned during the winter months by employees of Glacier Park Inc.
- **Valley County:** BLM has partnered with Valley County to develop a hazardous fuels program in the Pines Area, south of Glasgow. With grant funds, a wood chipper was purchased and has been made available to residents of the Pines Recreation Area, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Several acres of ponderosa pine and juniper have been removed from around the cabins as well as the surrounding USFWS and USACE lands.

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Photos: Tree removal from around a home in the Monarch/Neihart Area.

