
USDA Forest Service Report to Congress Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018



Consolidated Appropriations Act 2018
(P.L. 115-141) Section 605
Section 605. Wildfire Resilience Projects
Use of Categorical Exclusion and Acres Treated
Annual Report
June 2023

Introduction

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 (2018 Omnibus Act) (P.L. 115-141) amended the 2003 Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) by adding Section 605, which established a Categorical Exclusion (CE) from extensive National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for authorized hazardous fuels reduction projects as defined in HFRA Title I. Use of the CE is limited to areas designated under Section 602 of HFRA as of enactment of the 2018 Omnibus Bill, on March 23, 2018, and treatment can occur on up to 3,000 acres.

Criteria for Project Selection

An authorized hazardous fuels reduction project is defined by Title I of HFRA. Projects being developed using the Section 605 CE must meet the established definition and parameters in Title I as well as other limiting factors specifically identified in HFRA Section 605. All authorized hazardous fuels reduction projects being analyzed through the Section 605 CE shall:

- be limited to 3,000 acres of treatment and be located with an area designated under HFRA Section 602; and
- be prioritized within the wildland-urban interface, or if outside of the wildland-urban interface, must be limited to areas within Condition Classes 2 or 3 in Fire Regime Groups I, II, or III that contain very high wildfire hazard potential.

A project using the Section 605 CE is a project to carry out forest restoration treatments that:

- maximize the retention of old-growth and large trees, as appropriate for the forest type, to the extent that the trees promote stands that are resilient to insects and disease, and reduce the risk or extent of, or increase the resilience to, wildfires,
- considers the best available scientific information to maintain or restore the ecological integrity, including maintaining or restoring structure, function, composition, and connectivity; and
- is developed and implemented through a collaborative process.

Use of the Section 605 Categorical Exclusion

All of the projects in Tables A, and B below were selected because they met the Title I criteria. Eight of nine Forest Service regions are using the Section 605 CE for authorized hazardous fuels reduction projects. As of December 31st, 2022:

- 71 projects have signed a decision memo using Section 605 CE,
- 10 projects using both the Section 605 CE and the Section 603 CE have signed a decision memo,
- 16 projects are currently in-progress on their environmental analysis; and
- the 97 completed/in-progress projects span 14 states (AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, ID, MT, NH, NM, OR, SD, TX, UT and WY).

In total, 81 projects have entered the implementation phase and have or will likely treat a total of 154,753 acres. Of the 81 total projects that have signed a decision memo using the Section 605 authority, over 33% of the projects concluded their NEPA analysis in Calendar Year 2022. The USDA Forest Service anticipates the treated acres using the HFRA Section 605 CE to continue at a similar pace in Calendar Year 2023.

Table A: Section 605 and Joint Section 603/605 Categorical Exclusions with Decision Memo Completed as of December 31st, 2022

F.S.	National	State	Project Title	Proposed Treatment Authorized in Decision Memo
1	Nez Perce-Clearwater	ID	Red Moose Divide Salvage Project	Regeneration harvest 890 acres; roadside salvage 773 acres; site prep and reforestation 1,266 acres.
1	Nez Perce-Clearwater	ID	Parachute Fuels	Create mosaic of fuel breaks through intermediate and regeneration harvest, hand thinning, hand and mechanical piling, under-burning, and pile burning on 90 acres.
1	Lolo	MT	Pattee Canyon Maintenance Project	Hand thinning, girdling, hand piling, pile burning, under-burning on 1,725 acres.
1	Nez Perce-Clearwater	ID	Florence Fuels Project	970 acres hazardous fuels reduction and fuel breaks, commercial harvest, prescribed burning, hand thinning.
1	Kootenai	MT	Hoodoo Wildfire Resiliency	684 acres of commercial thinning, 37 acres clearcutting, 1,209 acres pre-commercial thinning.
1	Kootenai	MT	Skidale	132 acres precommercial thinning and commercial harvest.
1	Bitterroot	MT	Piquett Creek Project	Improve landscape resilience to disturbances (such as fire, insects and diseases) by diversifying forest structure and composition and reducing fuels. Improve habitat diversity, forage quality and quantity for mule deer elk and bighorn sheep.
1	Flathead	MT	March Madness Blowdown Salvage	1,028 acres of salvage and sanitation-driven regeneration.
1	Lolo	MT	Lower Blackfoot Corridor Ecosystem Maintenance, Forest Restoration and Fuels Reduction Project	Project includes prescribed fire, manual, and mechanical treatments on 974 acres.
1	Helena-Lewis & Clark	MT	Hogum Wildfire Resilience Project	The proposed project is to help restore and maintain the structure, function, composition and ecological connectivity of the forest system in order to increase resiliency to future natural disturbance events like wildfire, insects, and disease.
1	Flathead	MT	Jackknife Project	A project to reduce fuel loadings and fire intensity in the WUI and improve the diversity and resilience of vegetative communities.
1	Los Padres	CA	Reyes Peak Forest Health and Fuels Reduction	In the Reyes Peak Ridge Area, treatments would be completed to reduce surface and ladder fuels, reduce potential fire intensities and make the area more resilient to wildfire for community protection, forest health, and to protect wildlife habitat.
1	Lolo	MT	Westside Bypass Wildfire Resiliency Project	2,700 acres of commercial and non-commercial vegetation management activities, including pile burning, jackpot burning, and under burning.
2	Pike and San Isabel	CO	Methodist Mountain Vegetation Treatment	Conifer thinning & removal through mechanical treatments & prescribed burning is proposed in order to 1) diversify forest structure, 2) improve forest & watershed health, 3) improve winter range, and 4) reduce the risk of large wildfires near Salida, CO.
2	Arapaho and	CO	Strawberry Bench	The Forest Service proposes to salvage up to 1,700 acres of

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F.S. Region	National Forest	State	Project Title	Proposed Treatment Authorized in Decision Memo
	Roosevelt		Vegetation Management Project	standing dead lodgepole pine trees, which are a result of widespread mountain pine beetle.
2	Rio Grande	CO	Crestone WUI Hand Thinning Project	Hand thinning on 85 acres using chainsaws. Residual slash would be hand piled and burned.
2	San Juan	CO	Fuels – Valle Seco Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project	Fuels reduction on up to 2,800 acres - mechanically mowing & shredding shrubs & small trees, and/or felling trees by hand or machinery. Material removed as saw logs, firewood, post/pole, biomass, or left on site.
2	Pike and San Isabel	CO	Cuchara Hazardous Fuels Reduction	Vegetation treatments on approximately 3,000 acres.
2	Black Hills	SD	Tepee Canyon Project	Commercial and non-commercial treatments in ponderosa pine stands - 2,669 acres.
2	White River	CO	Derby Mesa	Mechanized treatments and broadcast burning up to 3,000 acres.
2	Shoshone	WY	Russell Peak Sanitation and Fuels Reduction	173 acres commercial timber harvest.
2	Medicine Bow-Routt	CO	North Routt Fuels Reduction	Fuels reduction on up to 3,000 acres.
2	Black Hills	SD	Summit-Blacktail Project	Commercial and non-commercial treatments on 2,845 acres.
2	White River	CO	Peak 7 Hazardous Fuels Reduction	Hazardous fuels reduction on 522 acres.
2	Black Hills	SD	Freeland Project	Vegetation treatment using commercial and non-commercial treatments on approximately 2,600 acres.
2	Pike and San Isabel	CO	Warm Springs Fuels Mitigation Project	Conduct fuels reduction activities on approx. 415 acres using mechanical and hand thinning techniques. Activities may include product removal and pile burning.
2	Shoshone	WY	2021 North Fork Fuels Project	Vegetation treatment and pile burning across 1,430 acres.
2	Pike and San Isabel	CO	Raspberry Mountain Fuels Reduction Project	2,540 acres; Hand treatments, mechanical treatments, and forest product removal to increase wildfire resilience in a critical municipal watershed and adjacent to critical infrastructure. Developed with adjacent landowner (utilities) and state agencies.
2	Black Hills	WY	Bearlodge Isolated Parcels Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project	Reduce hazardous fuels on isolated NFS parcels surrounded by privately owned land.
2	Black Hills	WY	Pactola Vegetation Management Project	The purpose and need of this project are to increase the resiliency of the project area to wildfire and forest health threats from insects and disease using a variety of commercial and non-commercial treatments.
2	Medicine Bow-Routt	CO	Laramie Peak Unit Timber and Fuels Management	Treatments on 3,000 acres - mechanical treatments, prescribed burning, fuel break creation/maintenance, commercial harvest, site prep, planting/seeding.

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F.S. Region	National Forest	State	Project Title	Proposed Treatment Authorized in Decision Memo
2	Medicine Bow-Routt	CO	Rob Roy Vegetation and Fuels Management	3,000 acres of treatment - regeneration harvests, reforestation, prescribed fire, mechanized site prep, thinning, mastication.
2	Medicine Bow-Routt	WY	Laramie Peak Unit Vegetation Management - Ellison Pass	Vegetation management to improve forest conditions and reduce wildfire risk.
2	Medicine Bow-Routt	CO	Laramie Peak Unit Vegetation Management - Cold Springs and Deer Creek	Vegetation management to improve forest conditions and reduce wildfire risk.
2	Medicine Bow-Routt	CO	Laramie Peak Unit Vegetation Management - Gunnysack	Vegetation management to improve forest conditions and reduce wildfire risk.
3	Cibola	NM	Capilla Fuels Reduction and Forest Restoration Project	Thinning, hazard tree removal, prescribed fire.
3	Cibola	NM	Corona Fuels Reduction and Forest Restoration	This project will restore the forest ecosystem and reduce fuel loadings on the Gallinas Unit of the Mountainair District. The treatments are needed to reduce the potential of uncharacteristic wildfires to protect the Community of Corona.
3	Cibola	NM	Terrero Forest Restoration and Fuels Reduction	The purpose of the Terrero Forest Restoration and Fuels Reduction Project is to improve the ecosystem resilience of a priority landscape to future disturbances by restoring forest structure and composition and reducing the risk of wildfire.
3	Apache-Sitgreaves	AZ	Oky Flat Farm Bill Insect and Disease	Up to 3,000 acres mechanical thinning.
4	Boise	ID	Tripod	Commercial and non-commercial thinning, prescribed burning, slash treatments up to 3,000 acres.
4	Caribou-Targhee	ID	Flatiron Wildland Urban Interface Fuels Reduction Project	Use prescribed fire to treat 1533 acres.
4	Uinta-Wasatch-Cache	UT	Reese Flat Fuels Mitigation	Mechanical treatments (mastication, lop and scatter, cut and chip on 1,070 acres of NFS lands, 1,278 acres of State lands, and 80 acres of private lands).
4	Uinta-Wasatch-Cache	UT	Parley's Canyon Watershed Restoration	Mechanical treatments and prescribed burning across approximately 2,000 acres.
4	Caribou-Targhee	ID	Bear Lake West Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Restoration Projects	The Forest Service is proposing to treat approximately 2,984 acres (2,510 forested acres, 179 non-forested acres, and 295 woodland acres) within the project area. Treatment types may include harvest, fuel modification zones, and

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				prescribed burn.
4	Caribou-Targhee	ID	Stone King Project	The Westside Ranger District proposes to treat up to 3,000 acres of vegetation. Treatments would use a mix of mechanical and prescribed fire methods to diversify the age class structure of vegetation.
4	Unita-Wasatch-Cache	UT	Mill Creek Stewardship Fuels Treatments	Proposal to construct shaded fuel breaks to break up the continuity of unhealthy stands, connect natural barriers to provide protective buffers around infrastructure and assist with fire suppression efforts.
4	Boise	ID	Ola Summit	Treatment on 2,640 acres – commercial, non-commercial, and mixed.
4	Salmon-Challis	ID	Williams Farm Bill	Mechanical and non-mechanical treatments, prescribed fire, and other activities to increase resiliency to insect and disease infestation, reduce fuels, and reduce potential effects of high-severity fire.
5	Tahoe	CA	Cuckoo Vegetation Management Project	Cuckoo is an approximately 4,500-acre vegetation management and fuels reduction project including thinning, mastication, prescribed fire, etc. The proposal also includes road maintenance, hazard tree removal and decommissioning unauthorized roads.
5	Eldorado	CA	Vulcan Forest Health Fuels Treatment Project	Hazardous fuels treatment to improve wildfire resilience. Commercial thinning, biomass cutting, tractor piling, and pile burning on approximately 1,100 acres. Includes areas of post-treatment prescribed fire and herbicide use.
5	Eldorado	CA	Sly Park Fuels Reduction Project	Fuels reduction treatments, including understory thinning, removal of brush and small trees, on approximately 3,000 acres.
5	Eldorado	CA	Camino Pollock Pines Fuel Break	Mastication and hand thinning on 1,500 acres (of which 750 acres is National Forest System lands).
5	Eldorado	CA	General Sherman Wildfire Resilience Project	Fuels reduction treatments along key ridges and roads on approximately 400 acres through mastication and hand thinning with follow up herbicide treatments.
5	Eldorado	CA	Scottiago Fuels Reduction Project	Create and maintain a fuel treatment network through a combination of thinning surface and ladder fuels and prescribed burning on approximately 3,000 acres.
5	Plumas	CA	Strawberry Wildfire Resilience Project	Mechanical and hand thinning, mastication of brush, grapple and hand piling, targeted grazing, and prescribed and pile burning.
5	Tahoe	CA	Michigan Bluff Community Protection Project	Mastication and prescribed fire on 1,792 acres, thin conifers on 925 acres, create roadside fuel breaks on 4.3 miles of roads and remove hazard trees on 13 miles of roads to reduce fuels and improve forest health and resilience.
5	Lassen	CA	Crossroads	2,646 acres proposed for treatment.
5	Plumas	CA	Big Bar Hazardous Fuels Reduction	Salvage harvest 736 acres; reforestation and maintenance activities.

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			Project	
5	Stanislaus	CA	Cedar Ridge Fuels Reduction	Up to 3,000 acres thinning, prescribed burning, mechanical, biomass removal, hand thinning.
5	Plumas	CA	Concow Resilience	859 acres reforestation and revegetation activities.
5	Stanislaus	CA	NDRC Fuel Breaks	1,800 acres ladder fuels reduction and fuel break.
5	Eldorado	CA	Kelsey Fuels Reduction Project	476 acres of mechanical and manual treatments and prescribed burning.
5	Plumas	CA	Mooreville Ridge Fire Salvage SIR and CE	The Forest Service originally proposed the Mooreville Ridge Insect and Disease Resilience Project to reduce the risk of insect- and disease-caused tree mortality and reduce fuel loads across the 3,030-acre project area using mechanical thinning, mastication, and prescribed burning. In September 2020, much of the project area burned in the North Complex Fire. As a result, there is now a need to address dead and dying trees in the burned area. To accomplish this task, the Forest Service proposes to add salvage logging as an additional activity included in the project plan.
5	Plumas	CA	Berry Brush WUI Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project	Treat no more than 3,000 acres using a variety of restoration techniques for wildlife habitat and fire- and climate-resilience; salvage cut, hand-cut-and-pile brush, burn brush piles, plant trees in the ground, masticate brush, prune, dig fire-lines.
5	Tahoe	CA	Greene Acres Project	Mechanical thinning and fuels reduction on approximately 1,252 acres of National Forest land adjacent to the community of Greene Acres in Sierra County, California.
5	Plumas	CA	Concow Pyrodiversity Project	We propose to perform prescribed fire treatments as a forest restoration strategy aimed at increasing wildfire resilience.
5	Plumas	CA	Bootsle Project	4,233 acres of mechanical and manual treatments and prescribed burning.
5	Sierra	CA	Huntington Recovery	The Huntington Recovery Project will be reducing fuel levels post Creek fire while recovering value in the trees that are dead in the Huntington Basin from the fire, providing for public safety and restoring a fire damaged area.
5	Shasta Trinity	CA	McFarland Fire Recovery	3,000 acres; post-fire restoration activities in order to treat the long-term impacts from the 2021 McFarland Fire. Activities include site preparation (mastication, salvage, machine piling/burning, etc.) and reforestation.
5	Eldorado	CA	Desert Cold Springs Project	Combination of fuels reduction and reforestation actions. Fall dead trees and remove to mill or biomass facility, or pile and burn on site. Plant conifer seedlings. Chemically control shrubs. Burn fuel accumulations (broadcast and jackpot burns).
5	Tahoe	CA	Alder Creek, 89	The Alder Creek 89 Wildland Urban Interface Project will

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F.S. Region	National Forest	State	Project Title	Proposed Treatment Authorized in Decision Memo
			Wildland Urban Interface Project	reduce hazardous fuels accumulation and restore forests around the Town of Truckee and the highway 89 Corridor in order to create defensible space around this busy community.
5	Sierra	CA	The Italian Project	This project will reduce fuel loading through site prep; maintain fuel breaks and reforest up to 2,975 acres.
5	Stanislaus	CA	McKays Strategic Fuelbreak Project	The McKays Strategic Fuelbreak Project includes hazardous fuels reduction treatments which vary across 3 treatment types: biomass removal and hazardous fuels reduction, mechanical thinning and forest health improvements, and hazard tree mitigation.
5	Stanislaus	CA	Arnold Avery Healthy Forest Restoration Add on Unit	The proposed additional unit 907A ties the current project area along Avery Sheep Ranch Road into Fullen Road, where another fuelbreak is being developed (improving a 2015 Butte Fire contingency line into a dedicated fuelbreak).
6	Malheur	OR	Neighbor Wildfire Resiliency	Reduce hazardous fuels adjacent to private property on the Forest Service boundary.
6	Malheur	OR	Loco Wildfire Resiliency	Commercial and pre-commercial thinning 2,832 acres.
6	Malheur	OR	Frost Wildfire Resiliency	Commercial and pre-commercial thinning 2,930 acres.
6	Malheur	OR	Laycock Creek Firewise Project	2,981 acres commercial and non-commercial thinning, prescribed burning, and juniper treatments.
6	Wallowa-Whitman	OR	Five Points Fuels Reduction Project	Fuels reduction on approximately 3,000 acres of wildland urban interface. Management activities include commercial harvest, noncommercial thinning, and prescribed burning.
8	NFs in AL	AL	Byler Road Hazard Tree Mitigation Project	26 acres treatment.
9	White Mountain	NH	Conway Wildfire Resiliency Project	Apply prescribed fire to about 210 total acres within the wildland urban interface. Conduct maintenance burning on prescribed fire areas every 5-7 years.

Table B: Section 605 Categorical Exclusions In-Progress				
Region	Forest	State	Project Title	Proposed Treatment
1	Kootenai	MT	Edna Fortine Fuels Reduction Project	Fuels reduction in the wildland urban interface in the Edna Creek and Fortine Creek drainages adjacent to Trego, MT.
1	Custer Gallatin	MT	Red Lodge Mountain Fuels Project	Reduce wildfire behavior and provide a safer environment to conduct wildfire suppression. Treat 2,100 acres through commercial harvest, small tree treatments such as cutting/piling, prescribed fire, with 5 mi temp road construction/decommissioning.
1	Nez Perce-Clearwater	ID	Red Siegel	The overall purpose of the Red Siegel project is to improve forest health in stands affected by insects, reduce hazardous fuels and improve public and fire fighter safety, near Elk City, Idaho.
2	Pike and San Isabel	CO	Wet Mountains Wildfire Potential Control Locations	2,500 acres; In order to address the threat of landscape-scale wildfire in the Wet Mountains, the FS proposes to increase the defensibility of potential control features, such as roads & trails, by reducing fuels mechanically, with hand treatments, and prescribed fire.
5	Plumas	CA	French Creek Hazardous Fuels Reduction	Commercial and non-commercial thinning, prescribed burning up to 3,000 acres
5	Shasta Trinity	CA	August Fire Restoration Project Phase 2	Mechanical and hand thinning, prescribed fire, reforestation, and road repair and maintenance over 3,000 acres
5	Modoc	CA	Adin Pass Vegetation Project	Reduce projected flame length to <4'. Reduce risk of crown fire. Reduce tree stocking by green tree thinning, sanitation harvest, increased tree spacing. Reduce surface and ladder fuels by mechanical and hand fuel treatments, prescribed fire.
5	Eldorado	CA	Wrights Lake Forest Health and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project	Forest health and fuel reduction activities near Wrights Lake.
5	Los Padres	CA	Mount Pinos Forest Health Project	1,682 acres of mechanical and manual treatments and prescribed burning.
6	Deschutes	OR	42 Road GNA Wildfire Resilience Project	Commercial and noncommercial treatment on approximately 2,994 acres and prescribed burning.
6	Deschutes	OR	Residential WUI Hazardous Fuels Reduction Projects	Hazardous fuels reduction on 1,445 acres of Forest Service land in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Treatments are proposed for areas near the Fall River Estates area, Forest Lane neighborhood, and Oregon Water Wonderland subdivision.
6	Deschutes	OR	Fall River Residential WUI Hazardous Fuels Reduction	Hazardous fuels reduction on 1,125 acres of Forest Service land in the Fall River Estates area in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).
6	Malheur	OR	Austin Junction WUI	Vegetation fuels reduction on about 110 acres around the Austin House and Oregon Department of Transportation maintenance facility at the junction of US Highway 26 and US Highway 7.

Table B: Section 605 Categorical Exclusions In-Progress				
Region	Forest	State	Project Title	Proposed Treatment
8	NFs in TX	TX	Sabine Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project	The purpose of the project is to provide improved safety areas around critical infrastructure and to allow point source protection of that infrastructure in the event of a wildfire.
8	Ozark-St. Francis	AR	Rich Mountain Byway Farm Bill	Hazardous fuel reduction in the area surrounding the Rich Mountain Byway on the Mt. Magazine Ranger District.
9	White Mountain	NH	Hales Location Wildfire Resiliency Project	Apply fire to 913 acres across two units in Albany and Hales Location to reduce hazardous fuel loading and remove suppressed or overstocked tree species. Hazard trees would be identified during site preparation and removed before burning begins.

Future Projects

New projects will be included in future reports to Congress once they are identified as initiated. The attached map identifies those areas designated under Section 602 prior to December 31, 2022.

Approximately, 77,524,362 acres of National Forest System lands have been outlined as Section 602 designated areas. Use of the Section 605 CE is limited to these designated areas.

