United States Department of Agriculture | **Forest Service** | **Northern Region** | **200 E. Broadway, P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807**

File Code: 6520/2520-3 **Date:** September 7, 2000
Route To:

Subject: Elk Mountain Fire, Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER)

To: Forest Supervisor, Kootenai National Forest

Enclosed is the approved Initial Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAER) for the Elk Mountain Fire. You are authorized to spend up to $6,000 for the assessment and monitoring activities shown in Part VI of the report. For out year monitoring needs, you must submit an annual interim request that describes monitoring needs based on previous year's results.

The job code for this action is SULT. Please provide me with your Final Accomplishment Report (FS 2500-8), describing actual costs and accomplishments, within 60 days of project completion. Based on your monitoring schedule, a monitoring report is due by June 30, 2001. Contact Bruce Sims (406-329-3447) if you have any questions.

/s/ Ronald S. Larson for

DALE N. BOSWORTH
Regional Forester

Enclosure

USDA-FOREST SERVICE FS-2500-8 (7/00)

Date of Report: **Sept 5, 2000**

BURNED-AREA REPORT
(Reference FSH 2509.13)

PART I - TYPE OF REQUEST

A. Type of Report

[**X**] 1. Funding request for estimated WFSU-SULT funds
[ ] 2. Accomplishment Report
[ ] 3. No Treatment Recommendation

B. Type of Action

[**X**] 1. Initial Request (Best estimate of funds needed to complete eligible rehabilitation measures)

[ ] 2. Interim Report
[ ] Updating the initial funding request based on more accurate site data or design analysis
[ ] Status of accomplishments to date

[ ] 3. Final Report (Following completion of work)

PART II - BURNED-AREA DESCRIPTION

A. Fire Name: **Elk Mountain**

B. Fire Number**: P15035**

C. State: **MT**

D. County: **Lincoln**

E. Region: **1**

F. Forest: **Kootenai**

G. District: **Libby**

H. Date Fire Started: **08/04/00**

I. Date Fire Contained: **08/20/00**

J. Suppression Cost: **$4.365MM** (estimated final)

K. Fire Suppression Activity Repair (or *to be Repaired*) **with Suppression Funds**
1. Fireline waterbarred (miles): **18.3**
2. Fireline seeded: **18.3**
3. Other (identify): Roads, camps, helispots, vehicle wash (noxious weed concern) stations (2), (Complete **Fire Supression Damage Rehab Plan** available on request.)

L. Watershed Numbesr: **170101021907 (KNF) and 170102100201 (FNF)**

M. Total Acres Burned:**1024**
NFS Acres (KNF and FNF)- **667** Other Federal- 0 State- 0 Private Acres- **357**

N. Vegetation Types: **Mixed forest of Douglas-Fir, Western Larch, Lodgepple Pine and Grand Fir**.

O. Dominant Soils: **KNF LT 352: compact glacial till with surface loess layer from volcanic ash.**

P. Geologic Types: **Dense brittle glacial till and argillite, siltite and quartzite of the Belt Subgroup.**

Q. Miles of Stream Channels by Order or Class:
Class 1: 1.67 miles Class 2: 0 miles Class 3-: 0 miles

R. Transportation System (miles within the burn perimeter)

Trails: 2.48 miles **Roads: .03 miles**

PART III - WATERSHED CONDITION

A. Burn Severity (acres): **low- approx. 1000** **moderate-approx. 24** **high- none found**

B. Water-Repellent Soil (acres): **none found**

C. Soil Erosion Hazard Rating (acres): **NA**
___ (low) ___ (moderate) ___ (high)

D. Erosion Potential: **NA** tons/acre

E. Sediment Potential: **NA** cubic yards / square mile

PART IV - HYDROLOGIC DESIGN FACTORS

Because this BAER request is only for noxious weed treatment (monitoring, then spot-spraying if monitoring identifies the need), Bruce Simms said this section of the Form was not needed.

PART V - SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

A. **Describe Watershed Emergency:** In 1994 the Little Wolf Fire burned 15,121 acres of the Kootenai and Flathead National Forests. Tansy ragwort (Senecio jacobea), a particularly invasive and agressive noxious weed which was present in the fire area, exploded post-fire. Tansy contains alkaloids that cause liver failure in livestock. Because of its spread after the fire, the Montana Cooperative Tansy Ragwort Project was initiated to try to get a handle on the spread of the weed. The Flathead NF completed an EIS for aerial spraying in 1998 and has been spraying ever since. The Kootenai NF developed a programatic EA for spot spraying of their portion of the Tansy Area and also identified approved herbicides.

A review of the Elk Mountain Fire did not find any areas that indicated a need for traditional BAER-type funding. No areas of soil hydrophobicity were found and only approximately 20-25 acres of even moderate intensity burn conditions were identified. No areas of high burn intensity were found. No dead roots were found deeper than 3 inches, even on the moderate intensity burn areas. Duff and debris remains on much of the fire area. Re-sprouting of this remaining intact-root vegetation is expected to be vigorous, maybe even later this fall (experience with the 1994 KNF fires).

Tansy ragwort was found at two sites within the Elk Mountain Fire. To mitigate the spread from these populations, all ground disturbing vehicles were washed at the drop points to reduce seed transport off-site. The Fire Suppression Activity Rehab Plan stipulated that these wash points would be sprayed both next spring (2001) and the following spring (2002) to eliminate the possibility of a new population developing there. Aggressive seeding and fertilizing of these sites and all disturbed sites will also be done, to reduce the availale sites for noxious weed development. This was identified in the Fire Suppression Activity Rehab Plan and will be accomplished using the fire P-code.

Even with this level of precaution, there is great concern that Tansy and other similar invasive noxious weeds might spread from this fire as Tansy did from the Little Wolf Fire in 1994. Therefore, in consultation with National BAER "experts" and referencing all of the recent excellent advice and direction, we decided to go with a plan that will emphasize monitoring and then spot spraying if the monitoring indicates the need. If the monitoring does not indicate a need, no spraying of the fire area will be done. The fire supression activity areas, particularly the drop points, will be sprayed under the fire P-code, per the approved plan.

B. **Emergency Treatment Objectives:** 1) Identify any new populations of Tansy ragwort through monitoring; 2) Treat, through spot spraying, the new Tansy areas found during the monitoring phase.

C. Probability of Completing Treatment Prior to First Major Damage-Producing Storm: **NA**

D. Probability of Treatment Success (**Treatment = Spot spraying if monitoring indicates need**)

	Years after Treatment		
	1	3	5
Land	**80%**	**100%**	**100%**
Channel			
Roads			
Other			

E. Cost of No-Action (Including Loss): **$300,000**

F. **Cost of Selected Alternative (Including Loss**):
BAER Field Review and 2500-8 Development: $3000
Monitoring for noxious weed new populations in FY01: $3000
Spot spraying if monitoring indicates need: $$1000 + $150/acre

G. Skills Represented on Burned-Area Survey Team:

[X] Hydrology	[ ] Soils	[ ] Geology	[ ] Range	[ ]
[ ] Forestry	[ ] Wildlife	[X] Fire Mgmt.	[ ] Engineering	[ ]
[ ] Contracting	[ ] Ecology	[X] Botany	[ ] Archaeology	[ ]

[X] Fisheries [ ] Research [ ] Landscape Arch [ ] GIS

Team Leader: **Steve Johnson**

Email: **sjohnson03@fs.fed.us** Phone: **406-293-6211** FAX: **406-293-6139**

H. **Treatment Narrative:**

Land Treatments: **Monitoring phase**: The Forest Supervisors of the Kootenai and Flathead National Forests will agree on a person who will monitor the Elk Mountain Fire for both Forests. That person will ground review the fire next spring (June) and will identify any areas where Tansy is found. This will be repated in the spring of 2002 as well.

Spray phase: IF a population of Tansy or other new invader noxious weed is found during the monitoring phase, it will be spot-sprayed with transline (chlopyralid) which is used in areas with coniferous vegetation. The spot spraying will be done by licensed applicators using standard techniques and procedures.

Channel Treatments: None

Roads and Trail Treatments: None beyond fire-supression damage rehab.

Structures: None

Monitoring Narrative:
Monitoring phase from above: The Forest Supervisors of the Kootenai and Flathead National Forests will agree on a person who will monitor the Elk Mountain Fire for both Forests. That person will ground review the fire next spring (2001) and the following spring (2002) and will identify any areas where Tansy is found.

Part VI – Emergency Rehabilitation Treatments and Source of Funds by Land Ownership

			NFS Lands				Other Lands			All
		Unit	# of	WFSU	Other	# of	Fed	# of	Non Fed	Total
Line Items	Units	Cost	Units	SULT $	$	units	$	Units	$*	$
A. Land Treatments	1									
				$0			$0		$0	$0
				$0			$0			
				$0			$0		$0	$0
				$0			$0		$0	$0
Subtotal Land Treatments				$0			$0		$0	$0
B. Channel Treatments										
				$0			$0		$0	$0
				$0			$0		$0	$0
				$0			$0		$0	$0
				$0			$0		$0	$0
Subtotal Channel Treat.				$0			$0		$0	$0
C. Road and Trails										
				$0			$0		$0	$0
				$0			$0		$0	$0
				$0			$0		$0	$0
				$0			$0		$0	$0
Subtotal Road & Trails				$0			$0		$0	$0
D. Structures										
				$0			$0		$0	$0
				$0			$0		$0	$0
				$0			$0		$0	$0
				$0			$0		$0	$0
Subtotal Structures				$0			$0		$0	$0
E. BAER Evaluation										
Field Review	each	$2,000	1	$2,000			$0		$0	$2,000
2500-8 Prep	each	$1,000	1	$1,000			$0		$0	$1,000
F. Monitoring	each	$3,000	1	$3,000			$0		$0	$3,000
G. Totals				**$6,000**			**$0**		**$0**	**$6,000**

*** Coordinating with Lincoln County to develop funding mechanism for private portion.**

PART VII - APPROVALS

1. /s/ *Bob Castaneda* — 9/5/00
   Forest Supervisor (signature) — Date

2. /s/ Ronald D. Larsen — 9/7/00
   Regional Forester (signature) — Date