

Mitigation Cost-Share Assistance

Cost-Share Assistance to Reduce Your Wildfire Risk

Anything that can burn is fuel for a fire. During a wildland fire all kinds of plant material can act as fuel - grasses, shrubs, trees, dead leaves, and fallen pine needles. As these burnable materials pile up, so do the chances of impacts from wildland fire. In the right conditions, excess fuel allows fires to burn hotter, larger, longer, and faster, making them more difficult and dangerous to manage.

Houses and other developments near forests or other undeveloped areas (aka: wildland urban interface) are vulnerable to wildfires because they're essentially surrounded by fuel. The extent and density of vegetation around a structure influence the ability of firefighters to prevent it from burning in a wildfire. There are simple fuel treatments (wildfire mitigation tasks) that can make unwanted wildfires less likely and easier to manage. By learning to live with fire, we improve public and firefighter safety and reduce impacts of fire when it occurs.

Mountain Valleys RC&D's Mitigation Cost-Share Assistance Program offers **50% reimbursement** for residents within our eight-county region to hire out a contractor or rent equipment to reduce their home's risk of ignition from wildfire.

This program can assist full-time residents living in the following WNC counties: Buncombe, Madison, Henderson, McDowell, Polk, Transylvania, Cleveland, & Rutherford Counties. Preference is given to homes or communities within a moderate-to-high wildfire risk area.

Funding is available until April 30, 2023 or until funds run out.

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Mitigation Cost-share Assistance Guidelines

Wildfire Mitigation Tasks

To qualify, mitigation work must be **within 100 feet of the home or within a 10-foot buffer along driveway access**. Qualifying wildfire mitigation tasks for vegetation removal are listed below:

- Vegetation and tree thinning, pruning, and removal.
 - Trimming branches that are within 10 feet of the home (or removing the entire tree).
 - Removing vegetation within 5 feet of the home or adjacent to storage sheds or other outbuildings within 100 feet of the house.
 - Pruning lower hanging branches at least 6-10 feet off the ground for large trees and no more than 1/3 of the height for shrubs.
 - Mid-story vegetation thinning to reduce ladder fuels within 100 feet of the home.
 - Thinning trees to have 6 to 18ft between crowns (distance between crowns depends on proximity to house).
 - Breaking up continuous vegetation into well-spaced clumps within 30 feet of the home.
 - Clearing vegetation surrounding and underneath large stationary propane tanks.
- Disposing of heavy accumulations or ground litter/debris that is considered hazardous fuel within 100 feet of the home (chip or remove).
- Cleaning roofs and clearing gutters of dead leaves, debris, and pine needles.
- Moving any flammable material away from home wall exteriors – mulch (5 ft), leaves and needles, flammable plants, firewood piles (30 feet). Moving flammable items stored underneath decks or porches.
- Clearing the driveway access of overhanging branches up to 14 feet high (or removing the entire tree). Clearing any vegetation that impedes emergency vehicles access.
- Removing *Miscanthus sinensis* (aka: Chinese Silvergrass, pampas grass) from within 100 feet of the house. Includes mowing and spraying herbicide for up to 3 years.

One or more of these tasks listed above must be identified as a mitigation priority on the resident's current home assessment to qualify for cost-share. A resident may choose **up to 2 contractors** to complete tasks (no more than 2 contractors on the application). Residents can apply for cost-share assistance once per calendar year.

Reimbursement Cap

The reimbursement amount is capped at \$2,000 (50% of \$4,000 project). If you have a quote that is above \$4,000, we cannot reimburse more than \$2,000. Community project reimbursement is capped at \$4,000. Community projects must be identified in the community assessment and be within 100 feet of community infrastructure and/or homes.

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Mitigation Cost-share Assistance Checklist

You are encouraged to use this checklist as you are going through the cost-share assistance process. Contact Jen Gustafson to submit paperwork and ask questions: jen@mountainvalleysrccd.org or 828-206-6159.

Application Packet: ****Must be completed before project begins.** Send the following 4 items as a complete application packet.

- NC Forest Service **Home Assessment:** Free service. Assessments typically take 30-45 minutes. Contact your Local NCFS County Ranger to schedule (or contact MVRC&D to coordinate): www.ncforestservice.gov/contacts. One or more of the wildfire mitigation tasks must be identified as a mitigation priority on the home assessment to qualify for cost-share. Assessment must be less than 5 years old.
- Contractor quote(s)** for the mitigation priority projects identified on the home assessment. We can offer contractor suggestions, but it is up to the resident to choose the contractor who will complete the work. The contractor quote(s) must be itemized with each task individually priced. A resident may choose up to 2 contractors to complete tasks (no more than 2 contractors on the application).
- 2-3 **before pictures** of the project area(s). Try to include the house in proximity to the project in at least one photo.
- Mitigation cost-share assistance **application form**.

Reimbursement Agreement: ****Must be completed before project begins.**

- Read and sign the reimbursement agreement that is sent after the application is accepted. Note: The reimbursement amount is capped at \$2,000 for residents and \$4,000 for communities.
- Send the **signed reimbursement agreement** back. Once the agreement is signed, have the contractor complete the mitigation work.

Project Summary:

Once the project is complete, pay the contractor(s) invoice in full. Complete and send the **project summary form** with the following items attached within 30 days:

- Proof of payment** in the form of an invoice with “Paid in full” noted or \$0 balance. This proof of payment must be a receipt from the contractor.
- 2-3 **after pictures** of the project area(s) from the same location(s) as the before pictures.

Reimbursement: Once we have received the project summary form, we will process the reimbursement. We will mail you a check to the mailing address indicated on your application within 30 days of receipt.

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Appendix

Cubic Yards Conversion Table:



Lawn and Leaf Bag, avg 39-gal bag size

*1 cubic yard = 202 gallons



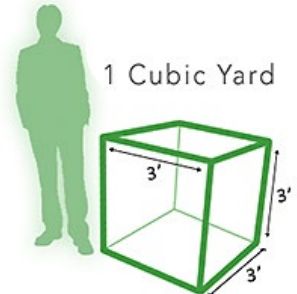
Pickup Truck = 3 cubic yards avg



Dump Truck = 12 cubic yards avg



Roll Off Dumpster = 20 cubic yards avg



Links to more information:

Resist Wildfire NC (NC Forest Service): <http://www.resistwildfirenc.org/>

Fire Resistant Landscaping in NC: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/fire-resistant-landscaping-in-north-carolina>

Firewise USA Program: <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>

Mountain Valleys Forest Program and Resources: <https://www.mountainvalleysrcd.org/forest>

Miscanthus sinensis: https://www.ncforestservice.gov/contacts/pdf/Miscanthus_Info_Sheet_Madison_Co.pdf



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