



Cooperative Wildfire System

— Spring 2025 Newsletter —

The Cooperative Wildfire System (“CWS”) is a partnership between the state of Utah’s Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands (“FFSL”) and local governments responsible for wildfire suppression. CWS “is based on the simple principle of risk reduction wherein the state will pay the costs of large and extended attack wildland fire (“catastrophic fires”) in exchange for local government providing initial attack and implementing prevention, preparedness and mitigation actions that are proven to reduce the risk and costs of wildland fire in the long run.”



New Cooperative Agreement

It's almost here!

The 2025 Cooperative Agreement is in its final draft and will be released soon. Reminder that all CWS participating entities who signed the 2023 extension agreement are still covered for their delegated wildfire costs until the new agreement is released.

Who can have an agreement?

Primarily counties and municipalities, as they have legal responsibility for wildfire suppression in Utah State Code. Special service districts that have been delegated taxing authority and wildfire suppression responsibility may also participate. Note that these districts must agree that the county(s) and/or municipality(s) they cover are fulfilling the terms of the agreement (such as having a county fire warden).

What's in the agreement?

The Cooperative Agreement says the state of Utah will manage and pay for catastrophic wildfires on behalf of participating entities that perform initial attack on wildfires and take action to reduce their wildfire risk.

Specifically, the Participating Entity agrees to:

- Implement a Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan
- Annually complete and sign their Participation Commitment Statement
- Fulfill their Participation Commitment
- Report to FFSL on wildfire mitigation, prevention and preparedness actions taken
- Adopt and enforce the WUI code (applies to municipalities January 1, 2026)
- Ensure firefighters are trained to FFSL standards
- Ensure equipment meets NWCG standards
- Initiate cost recovery legal action on human-caused wildfires
- Have a County Fire Warden (for counties and fire districts that cover a county)



Participating Entities that are NOT taking serious efforts to comply with the above

will NOT be able to sign the new agreement. The top priorities are to:

- 1) complete the 2024 Participation Commitment reporting,
- 2) complete and sign the 2025 Participation Commitment Statement, and
- 3) develop an active Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan.



Tips for Meeting Participation Commitment

IN-KIND WORK

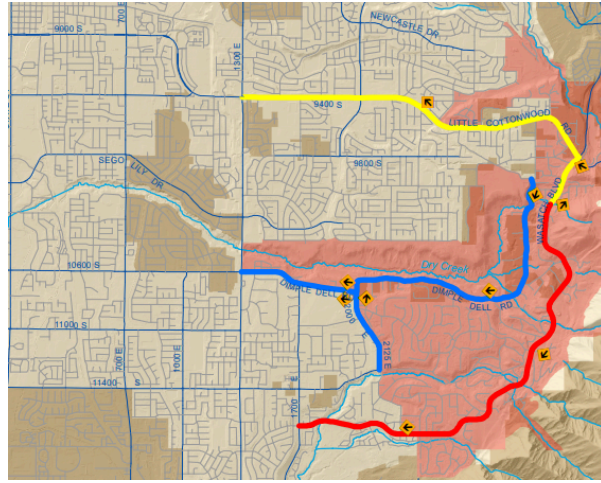
Lean into the community! Many landowners and volunteer groups are doing great work to reduce hazardous fuels.

DIRECT EXPENDITURES

Now may be a great time to invest in new wildland fire engines, PPE, firefighter training, and mitigation equipment.

DIRECT PAYMENT

A recent bill allows participating entities to write a check to FFSL for all or part of their Participation Commitment. This may be especially helpful to make up the difference in seasons where the work falls a bit short.



Impacts of HB 48

Among the many provisions of this new law, House Bill 48 impacts property owners within the high risk Wildland Urban Interface, insurance companies, counties and municipalities. See the full text of the bill here: [H.B. 48 Wildland Urban Interface Modifications](#)

There are three tie-ins to the CWS program:

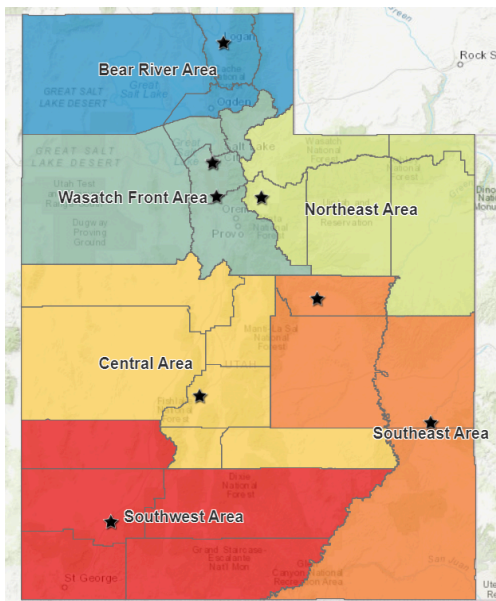
1. Counties with high risk WUI are now required to participate in CWS
2. Municipalities are required to map their WUI boundary and adopt the most recent Utah WUI Code (currently the 2006 version)
3. Lot Assessments performed by a Participating Entity may count toward their Participation Commitment

Excerpt from the CWS Manual

CROSS-BOUNDARY PROJECTS

“Wildland fire knows no boundaries”, a common phrase in the industry, also applies to wildfire risk reduction activities. Cooperation between neighboring municipalities and counties may result in work crews paid for by one entity performing mitigation work in their neighbor’s jurisdiction. Those actions can count toward Participation Commitment if the reporting PE: 1) paid for the work (or administered it with volunteer labor), and 2) the work reduces the wildfire risk to the reporting PE.

Contact Us!



For questions on the Cooperative Wildfire System, please reach out to the CWS Manager or our Area Offices:

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