



## AGENDA REPORT

### City Council Meeting

**TODAY'S DATE:** February 25, 2026

**MEETING DATE:** March 4, 2026

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Erik Bush, PLA, Project Manager, City Forester

**SUBJECT:** Watershed Fuel Break Funding

#### **DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:**

##### *Watershed Funding Opportunities:*

At the November 5, 2025 City Council meeting, City Forester Erik Bush and Elynn Reirson of Inland Forest Management (IFM) presented information on fire mitigation opportunities and funding options within the Little Sand Creek Watershed. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has offered \$50,000 to the City of Sandpoint to support planning and implementation of a shaded fuel break within the watershed. Final funding requirements and project details are currently being coordinated with IFM and USFWS. Staff will provide the landowner agreement to City Council at a future meeting for review and acceptance.

Staff also presented information on November 5, 2025 on the Western States Fire Managers Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) grant opportunity administered by the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL). This grant program is intended for projects such as hazard fuel reduction, information/education, assessment/planning and project monitoring through landowner actions that mitigate risk of wildland fire from the Wildland Urban Interface. The grant program requires a 15% match, Sandpoint can apply for up to \$300,000. If accepted, these funds require the activities completed by the project to be maintained for a period of 10 years. The intent of submitting a proposal for this grant is to develop a project with IDL assistance that will provide a fuel break, protecting Little Sand Creek Water Quality, and the watershed at large. Specific locations for the fuel break/project scope have not yet been determined. If the project proposal is accepted by IDL, staff will provide an update to City Council on the location and scope of work for the selected project.

The grant application period is currently open. If the City's proposal is selected, staff will work with the Idaho Department of Lands grants team to further develop the project.

##### *Watershed Forest Management:*

In accordance with the Little Sand Creek Timber Management Plan (Resolution 19-28) IFM Forester Ryan Pennick has recommended two upcoming forest management priority locations. Ryan will present on the two upcoming priority locations for forest management to be completed in Spring of 2027 and 2029.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Request authorization to submit a proposal for the Western States Fire Managers funding opportunity.

**ACTION:**

**WILL THERE BE ANY FINANCIAL IMPACT? Yes HAS THIS ITEM BEEN BUDGETED? Yes**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Idaho Department of Lands Wildland Urban Interface Grant Proposal Packet