



## PROTECTING LIVES, RESOURCES, AND PROPERTY

*Collaboration lies at the heart of our fuels reduction and fire program including community wildlife protection plans and multi-agency firefighting.*

*Deputy Secretary P. Lynn Scarlett, July 14, 2005*

### WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

The Department of the Interior's 2007 proposal for the Wildland Fire Management program continues implementing the National Fire Plan and the President's Healthy Forests Initiative. Interior's fire bureaus, working with the Forest Service and State and local partners, will continue meeting the Department's Strategic Plan goal of reducing risks to communities and the environment from wildland fires.

Since adoption of the National Fire Plan, significant investments in preparedness resources have strengthened initial and extended attack capability. Combined with on-going improvements in management and operations, these investments have led to significant long-term improvements in Interior's firefighting capability. The Department's success rate for containing wildfires at initial attack was 92 percent in 2000. Compared to its 2004 goal of 95 percent, Interior contained 98 percent of fires on initial attack. In 2005, Interior again exceeded its goal by containing 97 percent of fires on initial attack. Success on initial attack prevents the emer-

gence of large-scale, catastrophic fires and is the single most important factor in avoiding high costs for fire suppression. Interior anticipates that it will maintain at least a 95 percent success rate in 2007.

The Department has also made substantial progress in addressing the threat posed by heavy fuels buildup through the hazardous fuels reduction program. Over the last five years, 2001 – 2005, the Department has treated nearly 5.6 million acres with National Fire Plan funding. By contrast, in the five years preceding the National Fire Plan, Interior bureaus treated fewer than 2.7 million acres. The annual average of 1.1 million acres treated since 2001 approaches two and one-half times the amount treated in 2000, the last year before adoption of the National Fire Plan.

The management and effectiveness of the hazardous fuels reduction program have also improved, with treatments more effectively targeted to maximize risk reduction. Treatments in the wildland-urban interface have grown from 22 percent of acres in 2001 to nearly 44 percent of projected acres in 2006.

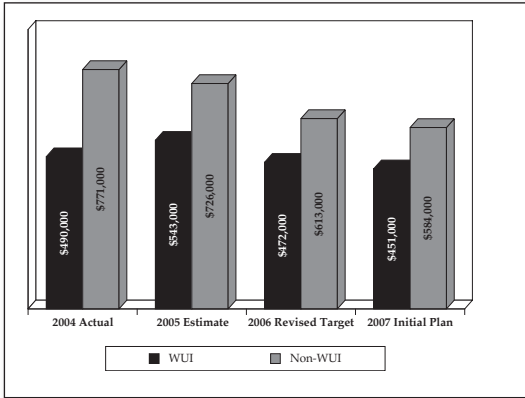
The 2007 budget for hazardous fuels is \$199.8 million, compared with \$208.1 million in 2006 and \$201.4 million in 2005. The Department estimates it will treat 1.035 million acres in 2007. The Department will continue to strive for effectiveness in maximizing risk reduction through improvements in the program's project prioritization and selection process. Through improved collaboration with partners and increased utilization of LANDFIRE mapping technology to better identify areas at risk, the program more precisely targets fuels reduction projects to maximize their benefits. Additionally,

#### INITIAL ATTACK SUCCESS

TARGET: Percent of Unwanted  
Fires Contained at Initial Attack

	2005	2006	2007
Percent	95	95	95

## HAZARDOUS FUEL TREATMENT ACRES



the Department anticipates a reduction in fuels treatment costs due to stewardship contracts and other arrangements that allow contractors to utilize small diameter woody biomass produced as a by-product.

**Ready-Reserve**— The National Fire Plan requires effective collaboration with local fire departments. Local fire departments serve as initial responders in nearly 90 percent of all wildland fires across the United States. This coordination has helped constrain the cost of Interior’s preparedness and suppression efforts. Local firefighters can be mobilized more economically than Federal and contractor firefighting resources, which often have to be transported long distances and paid at higher rates. The success of this collaborative partnership depends on local fire departments’ capability to assist in initial and extended attack.

In 2006, the Department is building upon the success of its past efforts to work with local firefighters by preparing local fire departments to undertake both initial attack on small fires and to assist in initial and extended attack on large fires as well. Using \$1.9 million from the preparedness program



and a portion of the 2006 Rural Fire Assistance funding, the Department is providing training and personal protective equipment to local and volunteer firefighters. The ultimate goal of the ready-reserve concept is to develop local Type III teams. In 2007, the Department will continue to implement the ready-reserve initiative with the \$1.9 million in preparedness program base funds.

The 2007 Interior budget terminates the Rural Fire Assistance program. The Department will continue ongoing efforts to work with the Department of Homeland Security to meet the needs of rural fire departments for basic training and equipment through the DHS Assistance to Firefighters grant program. The Department recently updated an existing agreement with DHS that will ensure a greater role for the wildland fire agencies in reviewing and issuing grants to States through programs they administer.

**Suppression Cost Containment**— The 2007 budget proposes to fund fire suppression operations at \$257.0 million, an increase of \$26.3 million over the 2006 enacted level to reflect the ten-year average cost of fire suppression.

Interior remains concerned about the high costs of wildland firefighting and continues to look for opportunities to contain suppression costs. Continued progress in reducing hazardous fuels loads and maximizing the effectiveness of these efforts through the utilization of the LANDFIRE technology will help restrain future suppression costs. Improved planning for preparedness resources will also help restrain future suppression costs. In 2007 the Federal wildland fire management agencies will continue developing and implementing the Fire Program Analysis system to provide input into cost-effective preparedness planning.

The Wildland Fire Leadership Council has made management of suppression costs one of its highest priorities. The Council has recommended, and agencies have taken, a number of actions to better understand the cost drivers for fire suppression, generating information now used to revise policies and operational procedures to better manage suppression costs.

In 2003 and 2004, Interior and the Forest Service conducted large fire management and cost reviews at most large incidents. These reviews, each of which focused on a single event, provided insights that led to specific changes in the management of

fire incidents. Now, for example, incident business advisors and contract officer representatives are assigned to all large fires. These advisors help line officers understand the cost implications of fire-fighting options and provide oversight to prevent oversupply or ineffective cost actions.

In December 2004, the Wildland Fire Leadership Council adopted a package of strategies for suppression costs management. These strategies are based on recommendations of the WFLC-chartered Strategic Issues Panel on Fire Suppression. The



strategies are wide ranging and offer a number of institutional and management changes across the sequence of activities that make up a large fire suppression effort. The strategies include improved land planning to consider cost issues, better data collection and analysis methods to offer improved foundations for decisionmaking, and greater cooperation between Federal wildland fire management agencies and the communities they serve.

Over the last year, seven interagency cost-action teams have been working on implementation of the costs management strategies. Each of the seven teams has developed an ambitious work plan with milestones, action items, deliverables, and due dates. The work of the seven teams is guided by an executive leadership committee. Additional guidance and actions are expected to be in place for the next fire season as a part of this long-term effort to stabilize large fire costs.

The following are examples of cost management strategies being pursued by the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior through the cost action teams.

- The Departments are employing expert review teams to observe how strategic decisions made early in an incident affect wildland fire suppression costs.
- Forest Service economists are testing predictive cost models for both agencies to see if suppression budget allocations can be modified for the future.
- The linkages between land and resource management plans and the role of fire are being strengthened to better ensure appropriate use of wildland fire and tailor land management decisions to incorporate fire risk considerations.
- The Departments are strengthening coordination with local firefighters, who are first responders on initial attack for the majority of wildland fires, including those on Federal lands.

Some of these measures were already underway prior to creation of the cost action teams, but the teams were subsequently assigned to guide their implementation.

## SUPPORTING THE U.S. PARK POLICE

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, dramatically changed the responsibilities of all Federal law enforcement agencies. The threat of attacks on icons administered by the National Park Service became an issue of serious national concern. Attention turned to the U.S. Park Police as the entity primarily responsible for protecting the most likely icon targets. At the same time, the Park Police were expected to continue providing a broad range of traditional law enforcement services in the three locations in which they operate: Washington, D.C., New York, and San Francisco.

The 2007 budget proposes an increase of \$2.8 million to address both icon protection responsibilities and traditional law enforcement services. The request is based on a new strategic plan that has resulted in a realignment of the force to focus on highest priority mission responsibilities.

In August 2003, the Secretary directed a comprehensive internal effort to complete the task of clearly



defining the mission, priorities, and responsibilities of the Park Police. Closely coordinated with the National Academy of Public Administration, the internal review prioritized each function of the USPP and focused the USPP on the NPS core law enforcement needs.

A new USPP strategic plan and mission statement emphasizes the security of national icons and special events occurring on the National Mall, the safety of national park visitors and employees, and protecting natural and cultural resources. The result is a redeployed force that addresses icon protection needs; more appropriately shares duties with other Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies; seeks reimbursement as appropriate; and uses civilian personnel instead of sworn officers to coordinate some functions.

Over the long term, the Department's analysis recommends reaching a steady state level for the force of 639 officers. At the end of 2005, the force had 603 officers. Because of the measures instituted as an outcome of the NAPA study and the internal review, sworn officer strength needs can be met at the 639 level as compared to an estimated 771 officers that would have been required without these measures.

The 2007 budget proposal includes an increase of \$755,000 that will allow the Park Police to recruit and train larger recruit classes, sustaining a force of 613 sworn officers. The remaining increase will expand the force to 620 officers by the end of 2007, with \$948,000 dedicated to national icon security and \$1.1 million for highest priority police operations.



## SAFETY IN INDIAN COUNTRY

A safe community with a sufficient number of trained and equipped law enforcement officers is critical to Tribes achieving self-sufficiency and economic success. This goal becomes particularly challenging given the breadth of BIA responsibilities for law enforcement.

Indian Country comprises 56 million acres of land and 1.6 million people. Existing data show that Indian Country has 1.75 law enforcement officers per thousand people served, compared to 4.2 officers per thousand people in comparable rural communities.

The BIA supports 201 law enforcement programs, including 47 that are bureau operated and 154 that are tribally operated. These programs serve Indian communities in 35 States. Each law enforcement program typically includes uniformed officers, a criminal investigations capability, detention facilities, telecommunications and dispatchers, and administrative support.

One of the largest challenges facing the BIA law enforcement program is violent crime. The violent crime rate in Indian Country is twice the national average. Tribes are less able to attract businesses or ensure citizen safety on reservations where the crime rate is high. Indian communities spend approximately \$83 in public safety funds on each resident compared to \$101 - \$104 spent on each resident in non-Indian communities.

The 2007 budget requests \$1.8 million for BIA law enforcement officers and equipment to be allocated to locations with the most serious crime. The BIA is currently undertaking a workforce analysis of Bureau operated law enforcement programs to ensure that the additional funding will have a direct impact on reducing violent crime, decreasing the illegal drug trade, and reducing other crime in Indian Country.

Another of the highest priorities for BIA law enforcement has been to provide staff for the new detention centers funded with Department of Justice grants. The BIA expects that the construction of two detention centers, Standing Rock and Yankton Sioux, will

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be completed by 2007. The budget includes \$2.7 million for operations of these new detention centers.

The BIA law enforcement program also includes the public safety and justice construction program. In 2006, funding for this program doubled to \$8.1 million to address deficiencies at existing detention centers, as documented in the Department's Inspector General report, *Neither Safe Nor Secure – An Assessment of Indian Detention Facilities, September 2004*. Maintaining this level of funding in 2007 will allow the complete restoration of four detention centers and minor improvement and repair projects at several others.

