



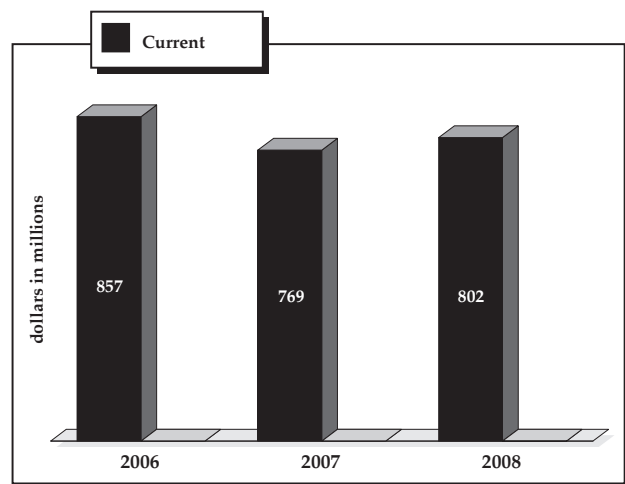
# WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

**Program Overview** — The Wildland Fire Management appropriation provides the Interior Department's funding for wildland fire prevention, suppression, and rehabilitation activities in support of the National Fire Plan. The program supports two of the mission goals of the Department's Strategic Plan, serving communities and resource protection. Wildland Fire Management activities are performed by four Interior bureaus, the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Office of Wildland Fire Coordination coordinates the Department's National Fire Plan efforts among the Interior bureaus and with other agencies. Multi-bureau operational programs are managed by the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. Interior's major partner in the National Fire Plan is the U.S. Forest Service at the Department of Agriculture. The Wildland Fire Leadership Council, consisting of high-level Federal, State and county officials, and other non-Federal partners, provides policy guidance for the National Fire Plan participating agencies.

The program serves communities by reducing hazardous fuels and improving the management of wildland fires. Through this program, the Department cooperates with its Federal, State, and local partners to reduce the levels of hazardous fuels, prepare for and respond to wildfires, suppress and contain unwanted and unplanned fires, and stabilize areas that have suffered damage from the wildfires. The Department devotes about 65 percent of its Hazardous Fuels Reduction funding to reducing fuel loads in the wildland urban interface.

The program supports the Departmental goal of resource protection through activities that restore and maintain proper functioning of watersheds and landscapes by reducing hazardous fuels outside the WUI and beginning the restoration of burned areas into fire-adapted areas. The buildup of hazardous fuels on an estimated 180 million acres of lands under Federal management not only presents a danger to WUI communities, but also sets the stage for long-term damage to the land and the valuable natural resources found there.

## Wildland Fire Funding



**Management Excellence** — The program is also proposing a number of realignments to focus resources on highest priority needs. These efforts are described below in the Budget Overview section. However, Interior continues to focus its efforts to contain the high costs of suppression. The Wildland Fire Management program has worked to better understand the factors leading to the high costs of suppression, conducting large fire management and cost reviews at most large incidents. The reviews have led to significant improvements in the management of fire incidents such as assigning advisors and contract officer representatives to oversee all large fires and helping line officers understand the cost implications of fire fighting options. Over the next year, Interior will continue to examine methods for holding costs down while maintaining program performance.

**Budget Overview** — The 2008 budget proposes \$801.8 million to support the fire preparedness, suppression, fuels reduction, and burned area rehabilitation needs of the Interior Department. This request is \$32.6 million above the 2007 continuing resolution and \$32.3 million

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above the 2007 President's budget. The request includes a \$307,000 program increase to restore the priorities of the 2007 President's budget that are not included at the 2007 continuing resolution level, including fixed costs and implementing other program enhancements and reduction proposals included in the 2007 President's budget request.

Interior continues to provide a robust level of support to the Healthy Forests Initiative. The budget proposes \$202.8 million for the hazardous fuels reduction program, an increase of \$3.0 million for fixed costs. In addition, the Department will shift funds within the Hazardous Fuels Reduction program to support more on-the-ground projects. Specifically, Interior plans to shift funding from the National Center for Landscape Analysis in Montana to critical fuels treatment projects and to reduce funding that has been used in the past for other national level efforts to advance progress in treating high priority acres.

The 2008 budget request includes \$268.3 million for the Preparedness for readiness program, a net reduction of \$6.5 million from the 2007 level, which is offset by a \$10.7 million increase in the program for fixed costs. Within this reduced level, the budget request also includes a proposal to realign the base resources in the Preparedness program to better support initial attack by increasing the

number of firefighters. Maintaining an effective initial attack capability is critical to controlling fires when they are small and less costly to suppress. To support the increased emphasis on initial attack at the request level, the Department will take a number of steps, including reducing some extended attack resources, continuing a gradual reduction in management and support personnel, and capitalizing on aviation program strategies begun in 2006 to achieve further efficiencies.

The 2008 Interior budget proposes \$4.0 million for the Joint Fire Science program, which is \$1.9 million below the 2007 level and is at the approximate level that existed prior to the National Fire Plan. The Department will reduce funding for research projects and increase the program's emphasis on processing research deliverables, such as journal papers and symposia proceedings from projects funded in previous years.

The 2008 Wildland Fire Management request includes \$294.4 million for suppression operations, an increase of \$37.4 million over the 2007 level, to reflect the ten-year average cost of fire suppression.

**Fixed Costs** — The 2008 budget request includes an increase of \$14.0 million to fully fund non-discretionary fixed cost increases.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF BUDGET CHANGES

By Appropriation Activity/Subactivity  
(all dollar amounts in thousands)

### APPROPRIATION: Wildland Fire Management

	2006 Actual	2007 CR	2008 Request	Change from 2007
Preparedness.....	268,839	274,801	268,334	-6,467
Suppression Operations.....	230,721	257,041	294,398	+37,357
Supplemental Appropriation .....	100,000	0	0	0
Other Operations				
Hazardous Fuels Reduction .....	208,113	199,787	202,792	+3,005
Burned Area Rehabilitation .....	24,116	24,286	24,591	+305
State and Local Assistance .....	9,852	0	0	0
Fire Facilities .....	7,734	7,734	7,734	0
Joint Fire Science (inc. FS transfer in 2006)	7,277	5,911	4,000	-1,911
Subtotal, Other Operations.....	257,092	237,718	239,117	+1,399
TOTAL APPROPRIATION (without fire) ....	856,652	769,560	801,849	+32,289
Impact of the Continuing Resolution...		-307		+307
TOTAL APPROPRIATION (without fire) ....	856,652	769,253	801,849	+32,596
Fire Transfer .....	+96,000	0	0	0
Fire Repayment .....	0	-96,000	0	+96,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATION (with fire).....	952,652	673,253	801,849	+128,596

Note: FTE are included in bureau totals.

### *Highlights of Budget Changes*

	<u>Amount</u>
Fixed Costs	[+14,018]
Impact of the Continuing Resolution	+307
Preparedness	-6,467
<p>The Department's fire organization and the base Preparedness budget are re-aligned to better support initial attack, which is critical to controlling fires when they are small and less costly to suppress. Proposed changes include adding additional initial attack firefighters (+\$5,402); disbanding or re-directing approximately six Type 1 crews that work primarily on extended attack instead to initial attack (-\$3,000); capitalizing on aviation program strategies begun in 2006 to achieve further efficiencies (-\$8,500); reducing management and support personnel at national, regional, and field unit offices (-\$5,800); and reducing operating and support costs to focus savings on initial attack capabilities (-\$5,277). Fixed costs budgeted total \$10,708.</p>	
Suppression Operations	+37,357
<p>An increase of \$37,357 is requested to fund the ten-year suppression average.</p>	
Other Operations	+1,399
<p><i>Joint Fire Science Program:</i> The request contains a reduction of \$1,911. It continues funding for ongoing research and allows initiation of a few new research projects. The program will focus on technology transfer and processing of research deliverables such as journal papers and symposia proceedings funded in previous years.</p>	