



Guidance and Direction: approx. 9:01 minutes

Lyle Carlile (Fire Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs)

So where did the specific direction to create a new interagency fire budgeting and planning tool come from?

Narrator

In 1995, an interagency working group developed the Federal Fire Management Policy. This guiding document was developed in response to the 1994 fire season during which 34 firefighters died. It became the first comprehensive unified federal fire policy for the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture. The agencies created the policy jointly acknowledging for the first time the essential role fire plays in maintaining natural systems. The Policy was reviewed and updated in 2001 by a similar interagency working group. Both the original document and the review highlighted the need for agencies to use a:

“compatible planning system that recognizes both fire use and fire protection as inherent parts of natural resource management, funding mechanisms, and values-to-be-protected.”

Alice Forbes (Former Assistant Director for Operations USDA Forest Service, Fire & Aviation)

-The Federal Fire Policy not only requires standardization with our training, our data, the way we collect data, the information we provide to the public, but also requires that we have a budget system that is applicable to all of the federal fire agencies, and to that end FPA was created.

As line officers, you know what we have been going through over the last several years as far as accountability and credibility. The very credibility of our agency is at stake if we cannot be successful with this process. The FPA process will bring more accountability into the system and we will better be prepared not only to suppress fires, but also to use the Appropriate Management Response for fires in the future. It is not going to change our agency missions. What this is going to accomplish is to allow the federal wildland fire agencies to work together in a more efficient and effective manner for the benefit of the American taxpayers and the natural resources we managed.

Narrator

The FPA system will analyze the full range of fire management objectives in a consistent way. This type of system is necessary for the federal wildland fire agencies to comply with federal fire management policy.

In 2001, the Office of Management and Budget and the Departments of Agriculture and Interior saw the need to work toward a consistent fire budgeting and planning tool. At their direction, interagency committees began to study the feasibility of creating a common system. Thus, the initial planning stages of FPA were born.

One interagency committee, headed by Jim Hubbard, the State Forester of Colorado at the time, was asked to provide a blueprint for developing a single, uniform, performance-based system for preparedness and fire management program planning.

Their findings were published in a report titled, *Developing an Interagency Landscape-scale Fire Planning Analysis and Budget Tool*. This document has come to be known as the Hubbard Report.

Lyle Carlile (Fire Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs)

-The Hubbard committee reviewed all federal agencies' existing wildland fire budget and planning models and suggested some fundamental changes in the traditional approach to the process.

Narrator

-The report found that it would be both feasible and desirable to create a comprehensive interagency fire planning and budget analysis tool. This tool would identify the most cost-effective program to achieve the full range of fire management goals and objectives.

Jim Hubbard (Former Director, Office of Wildland Fire Coordination)

The report that was produced looked at particularly the five federal agencies and how they were going to present to decision makers information that they could use to determining what was the most effective preparedness level. We wanted to design a system that allowed all to participate, because this is a landscape issue and if you don't work it together with all the jurisdictions, states and locals then it won't be effective. In the past we've concentrated on initial attack in our analysis and that is still very important and will be a part of any future analysis, but we want to broaden it, we want to look at beneficial use of fire, we want to look at prevention and we want to look at the other aspects of the fire management program. Combine all of those together so all the agencies are delivering the same message and taking the same approach.

Lyle Carlile (Fire Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs)

-Around the same time, other reports and committees made recommendations that fell in line with what the Hubbard Report had suggested.

Narrator

-As a part of implementing the National Fire Plan, Congress directed the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to work with the State Governors to develop a long-term comprehensive strategy to reduce wildland fire risks to communities and the environment.

The resulting report, *A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment, 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy*, identified four goals as being critical in successful National Fire Plan implementation. One of those goals is to improve prevention and suppression. In order to meet this goal, the strategy directed the five federal fire management agencies to "implement a consistent preparedness-planning model for federal agencies that provides cost-effective fire protection among all administrative boundaries, considers tribal, state and local protection needs and resources in the wildland-urban interface, and is based on historic levels of fire activity".

Don Artley (Fire Director, National Association of State Foresters)

The question we always have between here what where we have national forest land butting against state sections and in there we have a mix of private land. "How do we know between all the protection organizations, that we have the right mix of resources, and do we have enough resources or do we have too many? And up until now we've never been able to answer that question. Now we have a way to answer that question, and that's FPA. Are all states likely to participate in FPA across the country? Probably not, but where it makes sense to do so, then we expect that they will. Because we all have the same motive in mind, we need to provide the taxpayers of this country and of our states with some assurance that we are providing them adequate protection, but we are doing so in the least cost possible.

Narrator

-In their Fiscal Year 2002 Appropriations Bill, Congress mandated that the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior "develop and implement a coordinated and common system for calculating readiness" This system is to include provisions for working with the shared fire fighting resources of the states and other cooperators, and considers values of various resources across the landscape.

The Appropriation Committee issued direction for the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior “to design and develop a focused automated system for preparedness resource planning to replace the systems currently in use”

The Appropriation Committee set a deadline believing that a limited system could be designed and implemented by the end of fiscal year 2004.

The Office of Management and Budget gave their support to development of such a system, stating that the five agencies will “develop a common program and analysis system that is more transparent and easy to understand, scientifically-based, peer-reviewed, performance-oriented, and based on specific protection goals rather than on theoretical resource values.”

OMB further stated that the agencies will “Develop a system for use across agency boundaries that meets land management goals, considers benefits of fire to ecosystems, and incorporates protection of life and property.”