

PROTECTING LIVES, RESOURCES, AND PROPERTY



WILDLAND FIRE

As it nears its fifth year, the National Fire Plan continues to provide a framework for wildland fire management across the United States. The President's Healthy Forests Initiative and the Healthy Forest Restoration Act provide key tools to achieve the goals of the plan. Working with the U.S. Forest Service, the Interior Department has met the major milestones of the National Fire Plan, and the President's Healthy Forests Initiative.

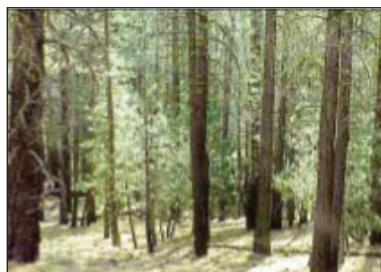
Since adoption of the plan, significant investments in preparedness resources have strengthened initial and extended attack capability. Interior's success rate for containing wildfires at initial attack increased from 92 percent in 2000 to over 98 percent in 2004. Success on initial attack helps prevent the emergence of large-scale, high cost catastrophic fires that put communities at risk.

Key technology investments, skillful management of available resources, and continued coordination and collaboration with partners will help Interior to meet its goal of suppressing over 95 percent of fires on initial attack while also improving the overall cost-effectiveness of the fire program.

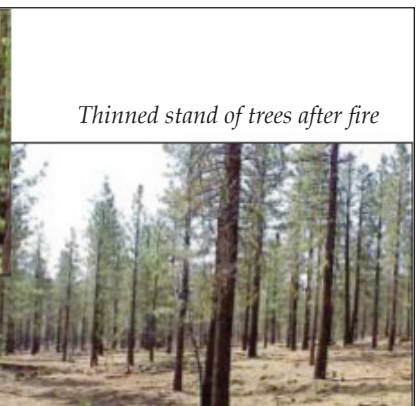
Under the leadership of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, comprising all Federal public land management agencies, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, and State, tribal, and local governments, agencies have approved a number of initiatives to enhance

cost-effectiveness in wildland fire fighting. These initiatives include: setting policy and direction to incorporate cost management on large wildfires; managing resources effectively to avoid compromising initial attack response and extended attack; ensuring initial responses are always aggressive and driven by the principle of utilizing the closest appropriate resources; collaborating with non-Federal land managers to incorporate fuels management into decisionmaking and future fire cost considerations when planning resource management projects for public and private lands; and improving fire cost data infrastructure.

Healthy Forests Initiative — Interior has built an effective hazardous fuels reduction program to address a key underlying cause of catastrophic wildfires. The implementation and utilization of guidelines and new authorities contained in the President's Healthy Forests Initiative and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act significantly enhanced the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the fuels program.



Thinned stand of trees before fire



Thinned stand of trees after fire

Approximately 190 million acres of federally managed forests, woodlands, and grasslands in the lower-48 States are at increased risk of catastrophic wildland fire. To address this challenge, the fuels program targets resources to the highest priority areas. The program increasingly is focusing on the wildland urban interface and other areas of extreme hazardous fuels buildup that pose significant risks to communities and other resources. Working with Federal, State, tribal, and local partners, fuels reduction projects are collaboratively identified and ranked.



Accomplishments in the fuels program have increased substantially in the last few years. Interior and its partners have improved project selection, contracting, and execution. In 2004, Interior agencies treated 73 percent more acres than were treated in 2001, with wildland urban interface acres now comprising nearly 40 percent of all acres, up from 23 percent in 2001.

To improve the prioritization and selection process, the program continues to invest in the LANDFIRE vegetative mapping and imaging technology. This technology will assist program managers in better identifying areas at risk to help managers more precisely target fuels reduction projects to maximize their benefits.

Of the significant fuels funding increase provided in the 2005 appropriation, the program will devote \$4.0 million to strengthen monitoring of fuels treatment projects. The ongoing results of this monitoring will also contribute to productivity and efficiency of the fuels program as program managers and specialists gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of treatment types under various conditions and share that information across the fuels program.

To build on performance and implement the President's Healthy Forests Initiative, Interior proposes a \$10.3 million program increase in hazardous fuels project funding in 2006. This increase is partially offset by a reduction of \$2.5 million in the LANDFIRE budget to normalize the development and implementation schedule.

As the Department implements the fuels program in 2006, it will continue to shift its performance focus from the number of acres treated to consider the success in treating priority acres, providing a stronger focus on reduction in risk to communities and resources. This shift will provide better measurement of program success.

In 2006, the hazardous fuels reduction program will also continue to rely extensively on contracting, helping build an infrastructure to sustain fuels reduction productivity, and support the development and growth of biomass utilization industries. In 2004, over 60 percent of fuels treatment funding was invested with contractors. Also in 2004, 37 stewardship contracts were issued with a biomass dollar value of \$2.4 million. Use of stewardship contracts is expected to double in 2005.

Fire Program Analysis—Working with the Forest Service, the Department is continuing to develop and implement the Fire Program Analysis system. Agencies implemented the first module in October 2004, which focuses on fire preparedness, planning, and budgeting. The module will help agencies determine optimal staff and equipment resource allocations for fire management organizations that serve interagency fire planning units. Beginning in 2005, development is expanding to address extended attack, large fire support, fuels



management, and emergency stabilization and rehabilitation. When fully developed, the FPA will provide fire agencies with an important tool for identifying cost-effective, long term budget and planning strategies that fully integrate all wildland fire management activities. The 2006 budget contains, \$4.4 million for FPA.



Ready Reserve — In 2005 and 2006, Interior fire bureaus will continue to stress collaboration with local fire departments to further improve the cost-effectiveness of Interior’s preparedness efforts and help reduce suppression costs. The successful performance of this collaborative partnership depends heavily on the capability of local fire departments to assist in initial and extended attack.

The Department’s Rural Fire Assistance program and assistance programs administered by the Forest Service and FEMA have created a locally based, geographically dispersed cadre of firefighters by equipping and training thousands of local and volunteer firefighters, providing them with the knowledge and skills needed for personal safety and initial attack. These local firefighters have been an invaluable asset in wildland fire prevention and suppression, responding to the majority of all initial attacks on wildland fires across the United States.

Interior’s fire bureaus could further improve the effectiveness of their use of local firefighting resources. The response rate of local firefighters, to initially attack fires, has been phenomenal. However, they are usually relieved upon arrival of Federal and contract firefighters or if a fire escapes initial attack, because they are generally not certified for participating on larger, more severe fires.

In 2006, Interior proposes to maximize the return

on its prior RFA investments by beginning to develop a “ready reserve” to support extended attack. The budget proposes a \$1.9 million increase in the Preparedness program to begin a systematic training program to expand the pool of local firefighters available for extended attack. Ultimately, this expanded program will develop local Type III teams. Further enhancing local capacity will reduce the Department’s reliance on the more expensive alternative of transporting Federal and contracted firefighters from other regions of the country.

The 2006 budget reorients funds from the separate RFA account to the “ready reserve” preparedness investment account. However, the budget assumes that financial and technical assistance provided by the much larger Forest Service and FEMA fire assistance programs will address the highest priority equipment and basic training needs of local fire departments.

Fire Aviation Safety — During the 2004 fire season, Interior and the Department of Agriculture removed 33 large air tankers from wildland firefighting missions due to findings that the safety of these aircraft for firefighting could not be assured. To maintain critical fire aviation capability, the fire program replaced these aircraft with additional single engine air tankers and helicopters. Although some air tankers have been returned to service, Interior expects to continue to operate in the future with fewer heavy air tankers. An increase of \$5.0 million is proposed for Preparedness to cover the 2006 cost of the reconfigured aviation fleet.



Suppression Cost Containment — The budget proposes an increase of \$15.7 million to fund suppression operations in 2006 at the 10-year average updated to include the 2004 fire season.

Federal fire agencies continue to look for opportunities to contain suppression costs, both at individual fire incidents and, more broadly, by examining overall land management strategies and decision structures. The departments have considered the findings of a Strategic Issues Panel on Fire Suppression Costs, convened by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, and approved implementation of six of the panel's recommendations. The departments will continue to assign large-fire cost review teams to analyze the cost efficiency of various aspects of fire suppression.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Interior's law enforcement and security cadre includes over 4,400 commissioned officers, the third largest in the Federal government, with responsibilities to protect against illegal activities on over 507 million acres to ensure the safety of the visiting public, employees, and communities in Indian Country. These law enforcement, security, and emergency management professionals are working toward full implementation of 25 law enforcement directives that emerged from an assessment completed by the Office of Inspector General in 2002.

In collaboration with the bureaus and others, Interior has conducted a series of security and law enforcement program reviews that have provided the basis for management reforms and strategic budget increases. The Interior law enforcement and security community is bringing greater leadership, unity, and integration to budget formulation.

Interior's law enforcement community has increased coordination in the field, and with other Federal agencies, is implementing uniform strategic planning, leveraging resources, improving communications and dispatching operations, and setting priorities on a Department-wide basis. As a result, the Department is enhancing safety for law enforcement officers, other Interior employees, and the public.

Emphasis on these positive changes continue in the 2006 proposal, which includes \$613.4 million, an increase of \$32.8 million over the 2005 enacted level of \$580.7 million. Budget increases focus on strengthening security improvements at facilities designated as critical infrastructure, particular dams operated by the Bureau of Reclamation; staffing to protect employees, visitors, and resources at

high-risk locations; BIA detention center operations and maintenance; and improved internal affairs and evaluation support for law enforcement programs Department-wide.

A key priority of the Department is the completion of security improvements to protect designated critical infrastructure facilities and key resources. Interior continues to coordinate closely with the Department of Homeland Security to identify and implement security improvements at high-risk dams and monuments. The budget includes an increase of \$6.8 million for Reclamation to improve the security of its highest-priority dams from terrorist attack.

Interior agencies continue to prioritize the need to strengthen on-the-ground programs based on the degree of threat and the importance or vulnerability of facilities, staffing, programs, and resources. The budget request includes \$6.2 million to address areas where unacceptable threats of violence remain. The BLM budget includes \$1.0 million to increase law enforcement in the Four Corners area of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah. The FWS is requesting \$1.4 million for law enforcement officers in the highest priority



refuge areas, and \$700,000 for greater field agent presence. To strengthen law enforcement in the highest-risk areas of Indian Country, BIA is requesting an additional \$2.5 million.

As described in the Serving Tribal Communities section of this chapter, the 2006 budget request for BIA also includes an increase of \$16.7 million for detention centers to support detention operations and address facility conditions.

Consistent, timely, and accurate reporting of law enforcement incidents is critically important for risk

analysis and the deployment of law enforcement personnel and resources. The Incident Management, Analysis, and Reporting System, hosted by the National Park Service, has been selected as the platform for Department-wide incident reporting. The 2006 budget proposes incremental funding increases to continue to deploy IMARS, including \$1.2 million requested by FWS and includes continued funding of the NPS component from fees.

A strong professional responsibility program is critical to ensure that all Interior law enforcement personnel, and those who supervise law enforcement officers, are held accountable to the highest standards of professional conduct and integrity. An essential component of such a program is an internal affairs capability that enables each law enforcement component to conduct thorough and impartial investigations into allegations of misconduct. To strengthen this capability in FWS, the budget includes \$555,000 for internal affairs

positions in the refuge and law enforcement programs. The Departmental Management request includes \$510,000 for professional responsibility, compliance, and internal affairs staff, which will enable the Department to establish appropriate standards for internal affairs and other law enforcement programs, and to ensure compliance with those standards.

Finally, in a post September 11th environment, Interior must have a strong capability to gather, share, and analyze information relating to its infrastructure and icon protection, border security, emergency management, and a myriad of law enforcement responsibilities. The Departmental Management request includes \$190,000 to carry out these responsibilities and provide effective sharing of classified and law enforcement sensitive information with the Department of Homeland Security, Justice Department, and other components of the law enforcement and intelligence communities.