



# General Management Evaluation Recommendations

## LANDFIRE Program Strategy and Operational Improvements

December 14, 2009

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The LANDFIRE Project is transitioning to an Operations and Maintenance program. A general management evaluation (GME) was initiated to improve the effectiveness of future program efforts. The GME was conducted by an independent; third-party review team retained by METI, Inc. The GME team conducted 110 interviews and reviewed program documents as the foundation for its report.

### Principal recommendations:

1. **Develop a contemporary vision and program strategy** - Critical decisions must be made soon regarding LANDFIRE's role as a data provider for a broad range of users (the "LAND" in LANDFIRE) vs. a more narrow focus that supports of wildland fire decision support systems as its primary mission (the "FIRE" in LANDFIRE). A strategic plan must then be developed to carry out the vision of the program sponsors and partners.
2. **Assess coordinated governance and organization design** - The LANDFIRE Program should be organized to support its primary mission of providing high quality, objective data products needed to support wildland fire management and landscape conservation approaches and initiatives. Executive leadership and governance of LANDFIRE and other national wildland fire decision support systems should be combined.
3. **Establish LANDFIRE National data as a base federal program** - LANDFIRE data standards and data products should be adopted by wildland fire leadership as a "base Federal program" and as national data standards for supporting wildland fire management. Key data quality improvements must be addressed. Resolution of issues facing the FGDC vegetation subcommittee for finer-scale existing vegetation classification is needed before LANDFIRE can provide these products.
4. **Improve coordination and marketing** - Establish a dedicated joint communication and marketing effort with other wildland fire organizations. The LANDFIRE website should be redesigned to meet current user demands.
5. **Establish a coordinated technology transfer program** - Develop a robust technology transfer program fully coordinated with other wildland fire systems. Technology transfer methods used by the Fire Learning Network and Fire Modeling Institute should serve as the core of this program.
6. **Plan for and execute an effective organizational transition** - Transition to operations and maintenance program must be well managed. A permanent agency organization should be fully defined, fully staffed and affiliated with a DOI or FS organization "host" and be operational at the start of the transition.

LANDFIRE is only beginning to realize its vast potential as the first and only consistent national all-lands data set available for addressing landscape-level disturbances. The success of the LANDFIRE Project and foundation created for working cooperatively across multiple organizations is an investment that must be leveraged to address a broader range of issues (e.g., climate change) facing Department of the Interior agencies, USDA-Forest Service, and The Nature Conservancy.

A fully staffed, funded, and appropriately governed LANDFIRE Program should be allowed to mature and be visibly and actively supported by Departmental, Bureau, and Agency leadership.