

## Billings Q-set Summary

### Most Critical Issues

Workforce to fire mgt is declining; risk goes up as experience goes down

Assumption of risk vs. full suppression—no incentive to assume risk except it's the right thing to do

Use of biomass w/o a timber market

Proper management of public lands; healthy forests

Get Congress to identify an adequate level of environmental analysis and protect it with sufficiency language (adequate=level that is safe from environmental litigation)

Develop industry to utilize the products in the small rural communities for long term cleanup

The cause of the fire, not the fire itself

Bug killed trees; need a way to clean the forest so wildfires are not so fierce

Better management (land of many uses)

Timber harvest

Grazing

Active management

Economic incentives for timber companies

Adaptive management of grazing resources to address cheatgrass

Allow roads for access

Forest plans should contain age class and diversity criteria and management plans to achieve

We are slowly losing prescribed fire as a tool for resource management for 2 reasons (1) funding for resource habitat mgmt burns is declining while funding for WUI treatments is increasing (2) increasing Rx fire requirements due to complexity creep gave elevated training, qualifications, equipment and staff requirements needed to conduct burns.

The short and long range effects of global climate change

The problematic availability of the necessary public (and private) funding to carry out the strategy

The changes in long standing perceptions and attitudes that will need to occur, both within and outside the traditional wildland fire community

The necessity of broadening the “wildland fire community” to meaningfully include those non-traditional participants, without whose participation the Strategy cannot succeed

The need to develop and/or maintain the infrastructure and trained workforce necessary to carry out all parts of the strategy

The need to incorporate social, economic, and environmental equity as a factor in the allocation of resources and responsibilities

The development and implementation of continuous monitoring and evaluation processes and related outcome-based performance measures to determine the success of the strategy and the need for modifications, if any

Coordinated fire suppression response strategy and vegetation management strategy

Suppression: Transfer of responsibility (fed/state/local), capacity of state and local govt to take up responsibility, can state and local afford to pay costs?

Veg Management: Fix the broken NEPA process, skeptical of actual ability to pull off, ability to respond to bugs in a timely manner

Existing federal statutes make it impossible to achieve what is required to reduce or eliminate catastrophic wildfires. Congress should fund and require a comprehensive review of all relevant statutes with the purpose of eliminating conflicts. This was done in 1990 for the federal procurement statutes when at least 300 laws were found to directly conflict with one or more other procurement laws.

The buildup of the fuel load by the lack of managing the vegetation. This created an impact to the Urban Interface where the public is moving to.

### **Priority Values & Attributes**

Cultural values

Timber

Homeland for Tribes

Isn't here some way to increase resource extraction and lessen ecological damages all at the same time?

Empower counties to address emerging forest health situations as well as general forest health situations. Empowerment is more than just rubber stamping Federal decisions.

Local economies

Decisions on burning or let burning

Emergency nature of forest conditions

Local risks to life and property

Socio-economic effects

Forest Health

Local concerns and knowledge

What has caused the increased fire numbers and extensive damage

Rural communities go to cities for services, we help their economy. They need to help ours.

Determine the delicate balance between safety of people and property versus administering a productive, functional and fiscally responsible prescribed fire program for habitat management (and other resource mgt needs).

There is a need to differentiate between root causes and symptoms and , when possible, to focus strategic resources and activities on addressing the root causes. When communities are in immediate peril, of course, suppression will no doubt be the tool of immediate use. But if we are having more or worse fires because our ecosystems ate out of whack, then restoration should be the long range objective and should be accorded an appropriately significant level of effort and expenditure.

Determine at the local level

Does the agency administrator have enough authority to make local deals?

Affect of long term resource benefit fires on IMT availability, readiness of local forces?

How to educate the public that moves into the urban areas on how to Fire wise their property and then maintain the property.

Create ways for the public to learn by examples.

Explain how the proper management of the vegetation is actually beneficial to the environment.

### **Rating and Incorporating Risk**

Risk of escapes, cost share, funding between agencies and state vs cost containment

Definitions lead to less knowledge of what is being done with fire. Ensure definition on types of fire is useful

Tons per acre of dead trees

Moisture content

Wind patterns

Work with each county fire warden and state forester to assess needs locally

Do we want to have a forest in 10 years?

Why is bug kill on the rise in our Federal forests?

What laws, rules, regulations are causing the problem or impeding the solution?

Re-establishing the woods products industry with long term contracts

The only risk is taking too much time to act!

Risk assessments must be give equal consideration to the costs of NOT conducting Rx burn programs both ecologically and economically. Maintaining a functioning, healthy ecosystem using frequent fire is always less expensive and onerous than attempting to restore an ecosystem deteriorated through fire exclusion.

Is any loose an acceptable risk; if so, how much?

What is the likelihood of success in avoiding or minimizing the loss?

Who bears the burden?

Is the loss likely to be permanent, recoverable over the long term (watershed, habitat) , or recoverable over the short term (rebuilding structures)?

Was the loss potentially avoidable? Was any attempt made to do so?

Look at NMAC model for risk weighting in suppression

The risk is high.  
The priority is huge.

### **Time Frame**

ASAP because we are losing our forests rapidly

Fires are hotter because of poor management. It worked on fires 50 years ago and never found a fire as intense as they are today. Stop all the crap and get the job done

Enough talk; let's get moving on a plan of action and get it done!

Whatever is established by Congress

The time to start is now.  
The landscape grows each season faster than management can keep up. By doing nothing we just put off the need to do more.

5 years...to avoid mission drift

Generations, however a 10 year implementations plan with annual monitoring would seem too be appropriate.

10-15 years

50 years

### **Land Unit Plans, State Risk Assessments, CWPPs, Land management regulations**

Variation of acres burned per year leads to unnecessary downsizing of workforce; uneven planning

Coordinate with local plans...they live there, they know what is needed

What kind of cohesive strategy can overcome all this (items listed above). Get back to local control and decision making.

NEPA should be looked at, not as a savor but as a hindrance

Let the state and locals take over the management. Each area varies and grows different time frames. What are you afraid of; success? Let's do what we know.

Air quality regulations need to be administered in a practical manner allowing windows to accommodate prescribed burning for resource management.

How best can individuals, organizations, government units, etc. who are responsible for carrying out the strategy collaboratively work together to accomplish that?

Don Artley's report speaks eloquently to the problem of interagency tensions. The resolution of these is long overdue. What will it take to make that happen?

If this is an all lands strategy, how will implementation occur on private and local lands?

How can we work together to find common goals?

What resources are available to start the process?

What barriers exist that would hinder the process?

Is there buy in by the community? Does the community understand the issue and risks?

Do local management programs exist to help address the issues?

**All things considered – most significant issue**

Replacement of aging workforce

Cost savings leads to less skills

No incentive to cut costs

Treasures are health of the forests and the local people

God speed and thanks for your work...and thanks for letting people vent!!!

How to properly protect and manage the land without outside influence of environmental groups who have no vested interest in the forest

Access to the forest (for industry)

Local management—we end up with the bill so let us manage it.

Articulate the importance for direct funding of prescribed fire programs for resource management. This fundamental stewardship practice benefits all Americans ecologically, economically and accumulatively helps prevent catastrophic wildfire events.

The allocation of responsibility for carrying out each component of the strategy and ensuring those individuals, organizations, government units have the information, resources, capacity, and commitment needed to carry them out.

Comprehensive suppression strategy between all levels of govt

Education of the public on the risks involved.