

**Group J Summary, Olympia, WA
May 18, 2010**

What are the most critical issues that the Cohesive Strategy must address?

Stewardship and mission – Fire strategy should be consistent.

Compliance with laws that oversee federal and state land management agencies (e.g., NFMA, MUSY, HFRA, FLRA, NEPA, ESA, NHPA, FACA, etc.).

Restoration – Fire strategy should be consistent with statutory requirements of HRFA and FLRA

Economic values, cost + loss risk assessment – Minimize loss of damage (fire suppression) balanced with reduction of expenses.

Need independent outside review of science from outside agencies to ensure best available science.

Determining an appropriate balance between providing for protection of people & developed property and ecosystem functions/recovery/maintenance.

How will the “Fire Adapted Communities” concept be incorporated in the Strategy? How do “Leave Early or Stay & Defend” and “Ready, Set, Go” fit in?

Incorporating recognition that climate change is affecting, and will continue to affect, the nature, duration and risks associated with wildfire in the western states (and elsewhere).

Optimizing allocation of finite risk mitigation funding among wildfire prevention/mitigation community projects.

Recognizing that complex, long-duration fire incidents will continue (and perhaps become more frequent), a critical issue lies with sustaining adequate numbers of incident management organizations and teams available to respond to complex wildfire incidents (as well as other kinds of incidents).

Tribes have a unique relationship with federal government; trust responsibility must be acknowledged.

Need uniform funding program that treats all participants the same. Funding distribution in the past has not been equitable.

Tribes depend on forest resources for financial livelihood.

Utilize resources that are available

Ensure the optimal mix of agency and private resources

All hazard/all risk

Costs? Rehab is more expensive than the resource loss/fire suppression costs

Need more emphasis on fuel reduction to prevent long-term costs of large fires; reduce emphasis on cost of fire suppression.

Have concerns about “appropriate management response” and “wildland fire use” due to effects on air quality and other resources, as well as liability of contractors involved in fire suppression.

Most contractors are located in rural communities where financial benefits are direct and significant; contractors work as needed, which is an efficient process.

Concurrent management of fire and fuels with other resource management objectives; consider tradeoffs.

Assessment and long-term planning for effects of climate change on long-term fire and fuels management.

Focus on restoring resilient, fire-adapted ecosystems; consider this process before the next big fire.

Support development of the “next generation” of fire behavior modeling.

Protect public health and safety, especially effects of smoke (Clean Air Act).

Protect National Ambient Air Quality Standards, especially PM2.5

Determine cost for protecting resources, including human health.

Coordinate and communicate with regulatory agencies, health agencies, and general public.

Protect visibility in Class I areas with respect to smoke.

Maintain focus on resource conservation in federal agencies and states.
Consider role of prescribed fire for resource objectives beyond fuel treatment.
Educate public about living with fire in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).

CS needs to be relevant for on-the-ground managers and public in the WUI.
Emphasize personal responsibility at the local level.
Collaboration among agencies and stakeholders is critical.
CS should be applicable/implementable at all levels, including local
Consideration of successes/lessons learned from the 10-yr strategy
Consideration of CWPPs-framework for outcomes
Communication—buy-in and education with general public

Need support of the general public to make CS work.
Ensure that CS can be implemented at the local level.
Ensure that local governments and fire agencies can take on additional work.
Address regional variability of natural resources and ecosystems in development of strategies.
Will “stay and defend / ready, set, go” be considered?

Protect public health and welfare (structures, agriculture, etc.).
Consideration of smoke should be in the context of all air pollution sources – requires collaborative solutions.
Share airsheds with various sources of fire and other pollutants.
Public generally accepts smoke from wildfires if there is active suppression.
CS should be consistent with missions of local and state regulatory bodies.

Determine the balance between providing protection vs. resource management objectives.
Define and implement the concept of fire-adapted communities.
Consider how “stay and defend / ready, set, go” will be evaluated.
Climate change needs to be considered.
Determine optimal allocation of funding for fire and fuels management in the WUI.
We will have large, complex fire issues for the foreseeable future – we will need planning and funding to have teams and resources available to deal with them.

Determine the balance between providing protection vs. resource management objectives; biomass-based energy program might be a good example.
Modeling needed to integrate climate science with fire modeling, management, and CS.
Establish pilot programs to demonstrate innovative strategies relative to fuels management and biomass.

Define terminology so there is no confusion.
CS can establish trust across a broad range of agencies and issues; seek a shared strategy, rather than top-down administration.

Focus on integrated approach across all natural resources.
Address habitat and wildlife issues across multiple spatial scales, especially in dry forest systems.
Increase emphasis on non-forest systems.
Merge forest and fire modeling with wildlife habitat modeling.
Prescribed fire and biomass utilization are potential tools for improving forest health, as well as addressing wildlife habitat.
Incorporate climate change effects as a context for determining future conditions.
Develop collaborations for determining regional strategies for forest health and fire.

Trust responsibility for tribes is an important context for CS.
Need systematic process for setting priorities for fuel treatments, but recognize local and strategic considerations.

Modeling should be used more to inform than to make decisions.
Be cautious about data sources used for fuels and fire planning.
Fuels management should be better integrated with other aspects of resource management.
Measure fuel treatment success more effectively – need standard protocol.
Provide incentives for sustainable biomass utilization.
Current focus on fuel treatments mostly in the WUI needs to be revisited.

Non-monetary values need to be considered in the context of fire and fuels planning; this may affect evaluation of cost effectiveness.

Will resources be available for increased suppression responsibilities?

Need to improve characterization of fuels to better manage fuels and fire.
Need better and faster science delivery.

Consider air quality impacts in decision making related to wildland fires.
Communicate timely information to the public about potential smoke effects.

Shift from reactive mode to proactive mode.
Ensure safety for fire personnel, while allowing managers to accept some risk (e.g., prescribed burning).
CS must be ecologically sound and cost effective.
Increase wildland fire use where possible, based on ecological and economic benefits.
Fire suppression should have minimal ecological impacts.
Increase emphasis on fire management planning – important to be proactive; this can be done collaboratively with agencies and communities.
Increase emphasis on fuel treatment outside WUI.
Coordinate fuel reduction with restoration objectives.

Consider interrelationship of federal and private lands – actions on one ownership affects adjacent lands.
Be proactive on fuel treatments on federal lands, thus protecting adjacent private lands.
Improve science delivery.
Assist private landowners to make treatments affordable.

Ensure that budgeting process for fuel treatment is logical and effective.
Address reduced capacity and knowledge gaps in fire suppression.
Integrate silviculture and vegetation objectives with fuels and fire planning.

What questions should the Cohesive Strategy consider as Values and Priorities?

Increase focus on ecological values.

Examine conflict between non-monetary values and economic evaluations.

What is appropriate scale for data layers for model analysis?
Are data layers defined and consistent?
Are FPU's the appropriate means of allocating funding and effort?
Should analysis of fuel treatment funding be evaluated and then directly applied?

Ecosystem health is overarching value that encompasses most other concerns.

Consider statewide assessments and strategies required by state foresters.

Consider broader values related to social and cultural integrity.

Priorities will vary by spatial scale.

Incorporate non-market values in priorities.

Should states and non-feds participate actively in FPA?

Need strategies for private landowners to set their own priorities.

Biomass utilization can be a partial solution to fuels management.

What types of burners use an airshed, and how can burning be coordinated to accomplish air and other resource objectives?

How will a new strategy affect non-Class I areas where visibility and air quality are important values?

How will the CS affect requirements in meeting air quality standards and goals?

CS can enhance local agreements and collaboration.

Past fuel treatments are moving towards maintenance – these need to be valued.

CWPP's are often very successful and should be valued within the CS; local knowledge provides useful input.

Is it possible to have national consistency for state assessments to inform CWPP's?

Continue to nurture CWPP approach and increase its influence across the landscape; recognize maintenance issues.

Look back at the 10-year strategy – what was accomplished, what is still relevant?

Build a framework that facilitates collaboration among federal, state, and local agencies.

Determine difference between values at risk and values to be protected and how response differs

Will the strategy include biomass utilization and address funding to develop infrastructure to support it?

Will the strategy address the lack of funding for community assistance for fuels treatment and education?

How will the strategy address the growing number of acres in CC2 and CC3 on all lands?

Are strategies encouraging collaboration between govt and community stakeholders?

Fire fighter and public safety

Balance fire and fuels values with ecological, social, and cultural values.

Healthy ecosystems, including people, is the main priority.

Effective strategy as opposed to efficient

Collaboration, coordination, communication

Marketing to our customers; the public, elected officials, agency staff

Are CS elements effective in addressing big issues?

Are CS elements feasible and obtainable?

Are CS elements acceptable to policy makers and general public?

Are CS elements capable of addressing both short-term and long-term/future issues?

Are CS elements based on good scientific information or can new science be brought to bear on the issues?

Will the natural role of fire be applied across all landowners, or just federal agencies?

What resources have value?

Need more dollars to hit the ground for fuel reduction

How broadly would fire be allowed to play a natural role in ecosystems; across all landowners, or just federal agencies?

Is AMR too expensive? Does it place other landowners land at stake? Who carries the liability for these fires?

How can CS incorporate unique values in Indian Country, e.g. use of forest and wildlife resources?

How can initial attack capability across all agencies be addressed?

What is utility of fire suppression in reducing value losses? This is relevant to sustainable resource management.

Consider cost-benefit analysis with respect to appropriation and allocation of fire suppression funding.

Consider opportunity cost for fire funding, e.g. prevention vs. treatment vs. suppression.

At what spatial scale should priority values be determined (e.g., watershed, CWPP, political subdivision, etc.)

When determining values at risk from wildfire, how should non-market values from natural ecosystems (e.g., clean, cool water production) be determined and incorporated?

What is the best methodology for prioritizing wildfire mitigation & prevention efforts and other investment decisions?

How might Fire Program Analysis be expanded to include non-federal agencies for the purposes of investment analysis and resource allocation?

How can provision be made for standards leading to better consistency in the content of risk assessments and CWPPs, in order to improve the ability to compare among them and establish priorities?

What strategies can be adopted to better induce individual property owners and communities to assume responsibility and active participation in community-based efforts to mitigate wildfire hazards?

How can the Strategy encourage/incentivize increased forest material utilization and development of infrastructure (e.g., biomass utilization)?

Collaboration is a core value of the CS, especially agencies with communities.

Transparency and accountability are critical.

Fire planning should be conducted open and accountable.

Define how cost effectiveness will be determined, e.g. economic benefits vs. jobs and training.

Fire itself has value as an ecological process.

How do we manage smoke relative to competing interests?

How does biomass utilization fit into the CS (e.g., fuels for schools)?

Locally led process in identifying values and resource concerns

What questions should the Cohesive Strategy consider in order to rate and incorporate risk?

Does non-compliance with air quality regulations put fire use at risk?

If we change our approach to fire management, how does this affect policy for protecting structures? (WUI development has assumed that fire protection would be provided.) Are there legal implications for this issue?

Use local knowledge from CWPP's to inform evaluation of risk.

Will risk be quantitative or qualitative? Need to clarify.

Which values will be protected?

Does CS identify who the decision maker is relative to risk? Is there accountability?

Compare risk of firefighter safety with risk to values. Firefighting is inherently risky, yet is commonly done – it is the least risky action for fire managers.

What is the risk of failing to take an action, failure to make a decision?

Compare value of fire use vs. fire suppression for sustainable flow of resources?

How will litigation affect risk evaluation and management and overall effects on fire management?

Recognize that the tribes have and maintain unique sets of uses of their resources. Management of these resources are critical to the native people who exclusively depend on them.

There are many kinds of risk, not just that posed by large fires.

There is considerable risk with losing the ability to use fire to achieve management objectives

Risk of losing habitat or ecosystems because there is not enough fire, or the wrong kind of fire at the wrong time

The risk is not so much that hazardous fuels will burn, but the greater hazard is if they don't burn and we don't have enough managed fire to accomplish our resource goals

Who bears risk and who benefits?

Should risk be evaluated at the regional, rather than national, level?

Is it appropriate to model risk using a WUI boundary or a broader landscape perspective?

Is there a difference between values at risk and values to be protected? Who determines this? How do communities participate in this evaluation?

Will the strategy consider CWPPs as a tool to define risk, WUI, priorities, etc?

Many different parties are potentially involved in the effects of decision making on risk to different parties – tradeoffs are inherently part of this.

Short-term and long-term risks to human and natural resources

Legal liabilities including potential tort actions against and by firefighters, fire managers, forest managers, private landowners, and the affected public

Recent court cases brought by private individuals and groups, and by the U.S. Department of Justice, set precedents for financial and criminal liabilities, including those based on negligence.

Measurement of risk, including consideration of uncertainties

Risk tradeoff, balancing, and cost/benefit.

Integration of fire risks with other risks, including insect infestations, disease epidemics, T&E population concerns

Who bears the risk?

How can adaptive management proceed under risk-avoidance strategies?

Cost-cost sharing

Does CS encourage or enable managers to take risks and learn from the outcomes (adaptive management)?

Does CS effectively integrate fire risk with risks from other factors (invasive species, insects, etc.)?

Does CS adequately recognize scientific uncertainties that are inherent in risk assessment?

Interagency collaboration in fire planning is needed to effectively evaluate risk and manage fire and other resources.

How different risk rating approaches being used in different planning/assessment efforts and at different levels of geographic resolution be harmonized (e.g., Westwide Wildfire Risk Assessment, individual State Forest Resource Assessment & Strategies, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, FireWise Communities)?

On multi-jurisdictional wildfire incidents where one agency adopts a strategy to allow a wildfire to burn on its land for ecological benefit and others manage for full suppression, who bears the risk if the portion of the fire allowed to burn for ecological benefit subsequently escapes and results in damages/costs to others?

What time frame should the Cohesive Strategy encompass?

Plan for 5-10 years but look out to 100 years

The CS should be re-evaluated periodically, perhaps every 5-10 years; required by law to be every 5 years.

Along with revising the CS every 5 years, it should attempt to look forward 10 years

A 10-year strategy with review periods during the interim

10 years with a mid-course review after 5

Identify short-term expectations –15 years

Identify long-term expectation—100+ years

Ten years seems to be a reasonable time frame. This strikes a balance bridging the gap between a shorter period (with greater certainty of conditions) and a longer one (necessary to put into place and begin to implement many of the Strategy's elements).

10 years so we can account for climate change effects, we can get the American people on board, and so that we can get the strategy phased in across the country

15 years should be long enough to organize, implement and monitor so we can collect reliable data to make adaptive management decisions

15 years with climate change effects are generally projected to 2100

The Cohesive Strategy must consider history, particularly landscape and fire history, going back at least 10,000 years (the Holocene). Historical human influences including anthropogenic fire have shaped our ecosystems for at least that long. Failure to research and evaluate historical human influences has resulted in anomaly-filled theories that underpin current failed policies.

The Cohesive Strategy must consider desired future conditions and thus be forward looking for hundreds of years.

The Cohesive Strategy must be an adaptable set of policies or strategies that are subject to revision as new research findings and outcomes are realized.

How long will it take to implement tasks and achieve goals?

Review and revisions are more important than an end-point

What questions should the Cohesive Strategy include to inform and be informed by existing land unit plans?

Federal fire management plans need to be developed at the local level with other agencies and partners involved, just as CWPPs are.

Which track will be promoted; ready-set-go or stay and defend?

Are local land use ordinances and zoning laws being enforced, or are there many wildfire variances being granted?

What parts of “fire-adapted community” are not being accomplished through CWPPs?

Should this be an all-lands approach?

Apply NEPA to the effects of fire management.

Incorporate tribal self governance and research management into the CS.

Apply NEPA to the effects of fire management, including fire suppression.

Federal fire policy should be the foundation of the CS and fire management in general.

Can the CS increase the capacity of local communities to participate?

Examine the entire range of regulatory structures that are potentially involved in fire management.

Evaluate enforcement of local zoning laws and regulations.

Including non-governmental organizations is a good improvement in the process.

Communication via Website and other means is needed.

How do risk priorities established in existing plans inform resource allocation decisions made at increasingly higher decision-making levels?

How can we most effectively assess wildfire risk in order to consistently prioritize mitigation funding allocation?

How can existing barriers to adoption by state and local governmental agencies of appropriate building codes (e.g., ICC WUI Code) be overcome?

Can a method be adopted that would better measure progress among the states in accomplishing WUI hazard mitigation (presently, the states have different reporting mechanisms and there is no uniform way to collect and utilize the data).

Work towards building a national, intergovernmental wildfire policy

Include mechanisms for funding fire use activities called for in land management plans

How will the CS comply with the National Visibility goal and the federal, state, and tribal implementation plans?

How will the CS address the special and unique government to government relationship with tribes?

How will the CS address the unique mission statements of the 5 federal agencies responsible for wildfire suppression??

How will the CS support local communities, counties and states in their mission to become more responsible partners in creating local ordinances and regulations that put more responsibility on landowners to fire-proof their own lands, homes, structures and other infrastructure?

What is the range of regulatory structures controlling all types of burning?

As new laws and regulations are developed to meet and prevent violating Clean Air Act requirements, how will the CS remain flexible so it can adapt to this changing regulatory environment?

All things considered – most significant issue

That we achieve social understanding and acceptance of the components of the cohesive strategy across the country in a time frame that allows us to then be effective in implementation of the strategy

How to best leverage and sustain available resources to address a suite of challenges that significantly exceed existing and anticipated resource availability.

Consideration of the true cost of wildfires to resources, communities, and society. Focusing concern on fire suppression costs alone is short-sighted and woefully inadequate.

Is it sellable and can it be implemented

Concentrate on fuels reduction to bring down costs; fire suppression, loss of resources, and rehab costs

Cohesive=collaboration=consistency

Public health

Sharing the airshed with other sources without violating the NAAQS

Addressing climate change and how it will affect fire and habitats

Flexible fuel management under a dynamic changing environmental, socioeconomic, and political conditions

A fair and uniform application of policy and programs to such a complex and pressing problem. An equally fair and equitable funding mechanism must be developed and administered to allow each participant to gain from the strategy uniformly

As federal managers, we are here to serve our constituents. Each agency has unique missions that are not WUI-centric. FPA and fuel treatment prioritizations need to support Indian Self Determination and the trust responsibility that is unique to the BIA.