



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL COHESIVE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The members of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) strongly support the first two phases of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy). WFLC members encourage all agency personnel and other stakeholders to continue their active engagement in its continued development and implementation. Through this joint effort, we can bring attention to the policies and actions needed to strategically approach the issue of effective wildland fire mitigation and response. Addressing the requirements of the Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement Act of 2009 (FLAME Act) and subsequent reports, the Cohesive Strategy identifies the following three primary factors as presenting the greatest challenges and opportunities for making a positive difference in addressing this complex issue.

- ❖ ***Restoring and maintaining resilient landscapes***
- ❖ ***Creating fire-adapted communities***
- ❖ ***Responding to wildfires***

Addressing wildland fire is not simply a fire management, fire operations or wildland-urban interface problem – it is much larger and more complex. Each agency and organization represented by the WFLC has the authority, responsibility, and autonomy to develop and implement their own policy. But long-term success can only be achieved through a unified, collaborative and focused effort of all.

Commitment to addressing the greatest needs and achieving our common goals with the Cohesive Strategy is essential. Diversity of organizational and agency missions does not preclude, but rather can strengthen achievement toward the collaboratively developed goals. Agencies, organizations, and stakeholders represented on the WFLC must take timely, decisive and effective steps to follow the Cohesive Strategy's Guiding Principles and Core Values. These principles reflect foundational values and should be considered throughout our fire and land management programs and our day to day activities.

- ✓ Reducing risk to firefighters and the public is the first priority in every fire management activity.
- ✓ Sound risk management is the foundation for all management activities.
- ✓ Actively manage the land to make it more resilient to disturbance, in accordance with management objectives.
- ✓ Improve and sustain both community and individual responsibilities to prepare for, respond to and recover from wildfire through capacity-building activities.
- ✓ Rigorous wildfire prevention programs are supported across all jurisdictions.
- ✓ Wildland fire, as an essential ecological process and natural change agent, may be incorporated into the planning process and wildfire response.
- ✓ Fire management decisions are based on the best available science, knowledge and experience, and used to evaluate risk versus gain.
- ✓ Federal agencies, local, state, tribal governments support one another with wildfire response, including engagement in collaborative planning and the decision-making processes that take into account all lands and recognize the interdependence and statutory responsibilities among jurisdictions.
- ✓ Where land and resource management objectives differ, prudent and safe actions must be taken through collaborative fire planning and suppression response to keep unwanted wildfires from spreading to adjacent jurisdictions.
- ✓ Safe aggressive initial attack is often the best suppression strategy to keep unwanted wildfires small and costs down.
- ✓ Fire management programs and activities are economically viable and commensurate with values to be protected, land and resource management objectives, and social and environmental quality considerations.

Our shared vision is to safely and effectively extinguish fire when needed; use fire when allowable; manage our natural resources; and as a nation, live with wildland fire.

Collaboration is key. As opportunities arise, we encourage you to take the initiative to continue to work with your existing partners as well as reach out to other stakeholders on developing cohesive actions that will leverage resources and reduce risk. The completion of regional assessments in Phase II resulted in the identification of some common objectives that will move us closer to achieving our goals in addressing the nation's wildland fire problem. We can build upon successful actions that are already occurring in some areas, including:

- ✓ *Supporting collaborative efforts*, including Land Management Plans, Hazard Mitigation Plans and Community Wildfire Protection Plans, or their equivalent. Keep all parties informed and involved throughout the process.
- ✓ *Conducting effective education and outreach* to empower citizen engagement in, and support for, wildland fire management activities.
- ✓ *Proactively use active vegetation management tools and techniques*, including prescribed fire, to achieve local and large landscape objectives, including the communication of benefits.
- ✓ *Supporting working forests and wildlands, local economies and job creation, and diverse products and markets.* Communicate the need and the resultant benefits.

WFLC agencies and organizations are collectively committed to recognizing the differences among the diverse areas of the Nation, while jointly achieving the goals of the Cohesive Strategy through distinctive regional approaches. The WFLC remains committed to continuing to involve stakeholders to ensure that the Cohesive Strategy reflects the values, concerns, and needs of the public and all governments. The WFLC requests your commitment and involvement with the final phase of the process as we identify solutions together, and we urge you to support our vision as detailed in the Cohesive Strategy and supporting documents.

We encourage you to review reports and documents developed as a part of the Cohesive Strategy, including the FLAME Report to Congress, Phase I report of the Cohesive Strategy, Phase II regional assessments, and once approved, the Phase II Cohesive Strategy report and National Science and Analysis Team report, all of which can be found at www.forestsandrangelands.gov.

WILDLAND FIRE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The WFLC was established in April 2002 by the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to provide an intergovernmental committee to support the implementation and coordination of Federal Fire Management Policy. In April 2010, the Secretaries of Interior, Agriculture and Homeland Security authorized the continuation of the WFLC. The Council meets regularly to provide oversight and coordination of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

Agencies: U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Fire Administration, Western Governors' Association, National Governors' Association, National Association of Counties, Intertribal Timber Council, National League of Cities, National Association of State Foresters, International Association of Fire Chiefs