



Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

The *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy* (Cohesive Strategy) recognizes wildland fire issues cross many jurisdictional boundaries. The Cohesive Strategy forges new ground in restoring and maintaining resilient landscapes, creating fire-adapted communities, and responding to wildfires by working together in an, ‘all-lands, all-hands’ approach to addressing wildland fire issues. Stakeholders agree that escalating fire costs and the adverse impact to public lands and private property require a comprehensive, cohesive approach to solving America’s wildland fire management issues.

The vision for the next century, as defined by the Cohesive Strategy, is *“to safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable; and as a nation, to live with wildland fire.”*

What is the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy?

The Cohesive Strategy was developed in response to a growing concern over the mounting costs and wildland fire losses in the United States and the need to involve more stakeholders in developing solutions to manage fire on a landscape scale. The Cohesive Strategy encourages a dialogue that seeks solutions from all stakeholders, including federal, state, tribal, and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and citizens, to reduce wildland fire risks to firefighters, the public, and our nation’s natural and cultural resources.

The Cohesive Strategy is an ‘**all-hands, all-lands**’ collaborative effort between federal, state, and local interests to address the increasing risks associated with wildland fire to life, property and the local environment. The Cohesive Strategy is unprecedented in its effort to initiate collaboration on a national scale; this inclusive approach sets a strong foundation for dialogue between a diverse number of interests and activities when wildfire happens.

What are the three goals of the Cohesive Strategy?

- Restoring and Maintaining Fire Resilient Landscapes
- Creating Fire Adapted Communities
- Responding to Wildfire

Why should I care about the Cohesive Strategy?

The Cohesive Strategy can help prioritize local efforts by outlining commonly shared goals. The Cohesive Strategy provides participants at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels an inclusive framework to build and engage in positive partnerships surrounding wildland fire management decisions.



What does the Cohesive Strategy provide me as a local decision maker?

The collaborative cohesive strategy approach assists in considering responsibilities for:

- Prevention;
- Preparedness;
- Suppression;
- Hazardous fuels reduction; and
- The management and restoration of lands before and after a wildland fire incident.

The Cohesive Strategy may specifically help address needs and opportunities as local priorities and decisions for wildland fire management are made, for example:

- How do I gain the support of shared interests?
- Are there others with mutual interests to partner with?
- How are other jurisdictions or interests affected by the priorities and decisions I make?
- How do my interests and priorities align to the collective goals of the Cohesive Strategy?
- What actions can I implement to support the Cohesive Strategy vision?
- What opportunities are there to leverage resources for project work?
- Is there an opportunity for project savings?

Why was the Cohesive Strategy developed?

The “Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act of 2009,” more commonly known as the FLAME Act, directed the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, to submit jointly to Congress, a cohesive wildfire management strategy that would review and reflect the recommendations described in reports by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) regarding wildland fire management strategies.

Who are some of the players involved with the Cohesive Strategy?

The Wildland Fire Leadership Council is comprised of representatives from the following groups: 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 Administrations, Western Governors’ Association, National Governors’ Association, National Association of Counties, Intertribal Timber Council, National League of Cities, National Association of State Foresters, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs. Collectively, members recognize long-term success is best achieved through a unified effort.



What are stakeholders saying about the Cohesive Strategy?

"Finally, a strategy founded in science, collaborative in scope, an all-lands vision, generational in perspective and functional from the fields and forests to the partners and politicians," Douglas R. MacDonald, International Association of Fire Chiefs, Retired Los Alamos County Fire Chief and Wildland Fire Executive Council member.

"I really believe that the Cohesive Strategy will help us to identify ways to do larger-scale forest restoration projects and treatments on the land, improve collaborative processes, and work through some of the barriers that we've been experiencing across the West for many years," Ann Walker, Western Governors' Association.

"The collaborative concepts surrounding the Cohesive Strategy were put to good use during the Monument wildfire last year. Proactive community measures, like our evacuation plan, were utilized by the Incident Management Team to further safeguard our city and the surrounding area," Mary Jacobs, Assistant City Manager, City of Sierra Vista, Arizona.

"The Cohesive Strategy provides a framework and expectation of engagement with stakeholders. We've been accustomed to discussions with the traditional players, through the avenues provided by the Cohesive Strategy, we are better positioned to broaden our circle of partners' perspective in future fire management," Bill Kaage, Wildland Fire Director, National Park Service.

What is the Current Status of the Cohesive Strategy?

The Cohesive Strategy is defined by three phases:

Phase I: National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management
Vision, Goals, and Approach Defined
Transmitted to Congress March 11, 2011

Phase II: Development of Regional Strategies and Assessments
Regional Strategy Committees representing the West, Southeast, and Northeast addressed national goals to the unique needs at local levels.
Release: May 2012

Phase III: Regional and National Risk Analyses and Action Plans
National Science and Analysis Team will apply risk-based analyses examining potential consequences, benefits, and alternative actions designed by regions to enhance decision-making.
Expected completion early spring 2013

The first phase established the shared vision and national goals for the future of fire management: restoring and maintaining resilient landscapes, creating fire-adapted communities, and improving wildfire response. Phase I was transmitted to Congress in March 2011.



In Phase II, released in May 2011, national goals were brought to the three regions of the country to identify and address unique issues. Regional Strategy Committees in 2011-2012, representing three regions of the country (the West, Southeast, and Northeast) took a closer look how the processes of wildfire, or absence thereof, affected their values-at-risk. Regional assessments examined not only wildland fire suppression, but also explored issues of natural resource management including wildlife habitats, watershed quality, public safety, and dependent economic factors including working forests and rangelands. This data has ensured that Phase III of the process rightly reflects the local level.

The current Phase III utilizes regionally important data obtained throughout Phase I and II of the development process. The Regional Strategy Committees and a National Science and Analysis Team (NSAT) are completing a regional analysis that analyzes potential consequences and benefits to enhance to decision making on the ground, but aid in subsequent action plan development.

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