

A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment

*10-Year Strategy
Implementation Plan*



December 2006

Congressional Direction for the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy

Conference Report for the Fiscal Year 2001 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (Public Law 106-291)

“The Secretaries should also work with the Governors on a long-term strategy to deal with the wildland fire and hazardous fuels situation, as well as the needs for habitat restoration and rehabilitation in the Nation. The managers expect that a collaborative structure, with the states and local governments as full partners, will be the most efficient and effective way of implementing a long-term program.

The managers are very concerned that the agencies need to work closely with the affected states, including Governors, county official, and other citizens. Successful implementation of this program will require close collaboration among citizens and governments at all levels... The managers direct the Secretaries to engage Governors in a collaborative structure to cooperatively develop a coordinated, National ten-year comprehensive strategy with the states as full partners in the planning, decision-making, and implementation of the plan.

Key decisions should be made at local levels.”

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I. Introduction

The goals and guiding principles of the 10-Year Strategy are intended to remain constant over time. Performance measures and implementation tasks are subject to review and modification as needed.

The 10-Year Strategy August 2001

The fires of 2000 focused national attention on the threats wildland fire posed to people, communities, and natural resources. All levels of government responded and, in concert with a wide spectrum of non-governmental interests, joined forces to develop a comprehensive nationwide approach to lessen the impacts of unwanted fires.

A major component of that overall effort emerged in August 2001 with the approval of “A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment: 10-Year Strategy,” (10-Year Strategy) by the Western Governors’ Association (WGA), the Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior, and many others including southern Governors, counties, and tribes. The Governors, Secretaries, and their partners subsequently approved the *Implementation Plan* for the 10-Year Strategy in May 2002. Both documents benefited from the contributions of numerous non-governmental partners.

Recognizing that effective management depends on adaptation in response to new understanding, the *Implementation Plan* envisioned its own review and modification over time. The Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC), chartered by the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to give collaborative strategic and policy oversight to the fire program, initiated a review of the *Implementation Plan* in December 2004. As an important part of this review, WFLC considered an evaluation completed in November 2004 by the WGA Forest Health Advisory Committee.

This updated *Implementation Plan* focuses anew on the collaborative framework essential for success, and as to the Strategy’s four goals, sets forth desired outcomes, performance measures, and responsibilities for tasks identified. The goals are interrelated and mutually reinforcing: restoring fire-adapted ecosystems and reducing hazardous fuels will reduce risks to communities and provide economic benefits, as well as improve fire prevention and suppression. This updated *Implementation Plan* emphasizes:

- Information sharing and monitoring of accomplishments and forest conditions to improve transparency,
- A long-term commitment to maintaining the essential resources for implementation,
- Landscape-level vision for restoration of fire adapted ecosystems,
- The importance of using fire as a management tool, and
- Continuing to improve collaboration consistent with the vision of the 10-Year Strategy and this *Implementation Plan*.¹

¹ References to collaboration and planning throughout this document should be consistent with tribal sovereignty and their government-to-government relationship with the federal government.

Progress to Date and Future Challenges

Since the advent of the National Fire Plan in 2000, governmental and non-governmental entities have collaborated to make significant progress on multiple fronts in addressing the issues brought to national attention by the fires of 2000 and addressed in the *10-Year Strategy and Implementation Plan*.

The President and the Congress agreed on substantially increased spending for fire-related issues, including the appropriation of \$2.7 billion for fuels treatment from 2001 to 2006. Increased funding levels, coupled with new management tools and improved coordination of vegetation management programs, have enabled federal and state agencies to greatly expand their capability to remove hazardous fuels. Together, land managers have treated a total of nearly 19 million acres on federal, state, and private land in the six years from 2001 through 2006 compared to 9 million acres of hazardous fuels treatments in the previous six years.

The Department of the Interior (DOI) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service further improved the effectiveness of wildfire mitigation and suppression activities by jointly adopting and publishing a “Cohesive Fuels Treatment Strategy;” developing a now widely-used national data base (National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System—NFPORS) to track fuels treatments, community assistance, and restoration/rehabilitation work across all agencies and bureaus; and by putting in place a mechanism to track fire suppression costs on a consistent basis. The WFLC approved a comprehensive monitoring program to provide increased program oversight, which puts in place a consistent means of tracking trends and following the impacts of fuels treatments for all federal lands. It captures a nationwide picture of burn severity and incorporates third-party monitoring to insure transparency under this *Implementation Plan*.

The last six years have also seen a new focus on the wildland urban interface (WUI), the zone where structures and other human development meet at-risk forest and rangelands. Federal land management agencies have invested more than 60 percent of fuels treatment dollars in the WUI, enabling the collaborative treatment of some 8.5 million acres near communities beginning in 2001.

The protection of local communities was further enhanced by the completion in June 2003 of the report to Congress titled “The Changing Role and Needs of Local, Rural, and Volunteer Fire Departments in the Wildland Urban Interface” (also known as The Rural Fire Report, see at http://www.nvfc.org/pdf/wildland_fire_report_03.pdf). This document was developed by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), the U.S. Fire Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and federal and state land managers in response to an action item in the original *10-Year Strategy and Implementation Plan*. It identifies critical needs and outlines recommendations for improving the safety, equipment, and training of local fire responders working in WUI situations. Implementation of the recommendations is underway.

Policy reform has reflected a growing national priority for protecting communities and the environment from the risk of wildfire. The President’s 2002 Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI) emphasized administrative and legislative reforms to expedite the delivery of fuels treatments and post-fire actions. Congress joined this streamlining effort when it gave long-term stewardship contracting authority to the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management in February 2003 and passed the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) in December

2003. Congress expanded this authority to allow the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to enter into sole source contracts with Indian tribes under the Tribal Forest Protection Act in 2004. By 2005, federal agencies were using the tools provided by HFI and HFRA to expedite environmental review on new projects. These two agencies have also used stewardship contracting on some 250 contracts reaching over 100,000 acres.

The HFRA also called for the preparation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) or comparable plans to define the WUI and establish locally based strategic priorities for wildfire preparedness and hazardous fuels reduction work in these areas. In June 2003, the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) developed guidance for identifying and prioritizing communities at-risk. Subsequently, in March 2004, NASF partnered with WGA, Society of American Foresters, National Association of Counties, and the Communities Committee of the 7th American Forest Congress to develop a handbook for the preparation of CWPPs (see handbook at <http://www.safnet.org/policyandpress/cwpphandbook.pdf>). By the end of 2005, states, tribes, and local communities had completed some 650 CWPPs covering 2,700 communities, with an additional 600 plans still in progress. Land managers at the local, state, and federal levels are using these CWPPs to help them identify and prioritize locations and methods for fuels treatment projects in the WUI.

State and federal agencies have also worked cooperatively to improve scientific contributions to decision-making. The interagency LANDFIRE program now provides nationally consistent spatial data sets on over two-dozen primary fire-related variables as well as dozens of additional underlying variables. Coverage for the western states will be complete by the end of 2006 with the remainder of the contiguous states finished by the end of 2008. Federal scientists are mining LANDSAT data back to 1982 to develop fire severity atlases for the country as well as preparing annual burn severity maps for the nation that will allow managers to track fire impacts in a comprehensive and consistent manner. Researchers are continuing to develop models that will improve the ability to strategically place fuels treatments on the landscape to better protect people and natural resources.

Despite the best efforts of government and others thus far, it is understood that much work remains. For example, in many areas, drought conditions are contributing to extensive outbreaks of tree-killing insects. Given the potential for the existing wildfire problem created by excessive fuel loading to become even more severe due to other potentially contributing factors, efforts must be redoubled to implement this comprehensive and collaborative forest health strategy.

Together, government agencies at all levels, tribes, communities, volunteers, scientists, and a variety of other participants have reduced the threats posed by wildland fire since adoption of the *10-Year Strategy*. This revision of the *Implementation Plan* helps point the way to continued improvement in the efforts to do two things: create landscape conditions that improve our effectiveness in suppressing unwanted fires and reducing risks to firefighters, communities, and the environment; and using desirable fires to help achieve natural resource management objectives.

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II. Implementing a Collaborative Framework

Successful implementation of this strategy requires a collaborative process among multiple levels of government and a range of interests, resulting in healthier watersheds, enhanced community protection, and diminished risk and consequences of severe wildland fire.

The 10-Year Strategy

A Framework for Success

The authors of the *10-Year Strategy* established a Collaborative Framework through which the strategy is to be implemented. This framework reflects their understanding that, in order to be successful, implementation must involve communication and collaboration across ownership boundaries, administrative jurisdictions, and areas of interest. Further, the strategy “should enhance collaboration among all levels and all parties for planning, decision-making, implementation, monitoring and learning, without altering the responsibilities or statutory authorities of participating federal and state agencies.”

In 2002, the *Implementation Plan* for the *10-Year Strategy* reiterated the importance of this framework for achieving the desired principles, goals, and objectives. The *Implementation Plan* identified the three levels of accountability on which the framework is built. The 2006 update of the *Implementation Plan* provides Characteristics of Successful Collaboration (see below) and identifies three Implementation Tasks. These additions are intended to promote more effective implementation of the plan by participants at all levels.

Three-Tiered Organizational Structure

The foundation of the Collaborative Framework lies in its three levels of action and accountability. This three-tiered organizational structure facilitates collaboration among governments and stakeholders at the local, state, regional, and national levels. Each tier is based on the participants’ scope of decision-making, management responsibility, and/or interest rather than on traditional governmental hierarchies. Federal, tribal, state, and local government representatives should be participating at each level, along with their non-governmental partners.

At each level of the Collaborative Framework, activities will focus on:

- Planning
- Prioritizing actions and implementation responsibilities
- Timely decision making, particularly for implementing projects and activities
- Tracking performance, monitoring, and assuring that activities are consistent with relevant science and new information
- Communicating to the public the goals, tasks, and outcomes of the *10-Year Strategy* and *Implementation Plan*

Local Level

Local level collaboration should involve participants with direct responsibility for management decisions affecting public and/or private land and resources, fire protection responsibilities, or good working knowledge of and interest in local resources. Participants should include tribal representatives, local personnel from federal and state agencies, local governments, landowners and other stakeholders, and community-based groups with a demonstrated commitment to achieving the strategy's four goals. Existing resource advisory committees, watershed councils, or other collaborative entities may achieve the needed coordination at this level. Local involvement, expected to be broadly representative, is a primary source of planning, project prioritization, and resource allocation and coordination.

State/Regional and Tribal Level

State, multi-state, or regional collaboration should involve all relevant land management, wildland fire response, and regulatory agencies, as well as interested stakeholders. Activity at this level will focus on addressing geographically distinct needs and issues, facilitating communication between local and national levels, and resource allocation and prioritization.

National Level

The WFLC will provide coordinated policy direction for the federal wildland fire management agencies. WFLC will collaborate with other federal regulatory agencies as well as state, tribal, and local governments with wildfire and/or land management responsibilities. WFLC will also incorporate into its activities participation by non-governmental stakeholders through an ongoing collaborative process convened by the Western Governors' Association. The WFLC will meet regularly to address large-scale policy, programmatic, resource allocation, prioritization, and budget issues.

Characteristics of Successful Collaboration

Collaboration continues to be a cornerstone in successfully accomplishing the objectives of the *10-Year Strategy and Implementation Plan*. The observations below were developed by a diverse group of stakeholders, based on their first-hand experience with collaborative endeavors. They are offered to inform collaboration participants at all levels in order to strengthen the *Implementation Plan's* Collaborative Framework and improve the effectiveness of those undertaking the *Implementation Plan's* individual implementation tasks. Local, state, and national level participants may use these observations as appropriate to meet the unique needs of their communities and landscapes.

Successful collaboration may include some or all of the following features:

- **Include Diverse and Balanced Stakeholder Representation.** Potential stakeholders include local property owners, local governments, tribal representatives, industry groups, conservation groups, academics, scientists, and the interested public. Collaborative organizers should make a reasonable effort to include balanced representation from relevant interests in the collaborative process.
- **Establish Clear Expectations and Goals.** The collaborative process itself should be open, accessible, and tailored, as much as possible, to participants' needs. Meetings should be civil and respect the ideas of all participants. Participants should agree on how they are going to collaborate and develop clearly articulated and achievable goals for action. Commitments made during collaboration should be honored.
- **Collaborate Early and Often.** Collaboration is enhanced when participants are involved at all stages of project planning. This includes the identification of issues and concerns, potential project areas, the development of alternatives, project design, and where applicable, implementation and post-treatment monitoring.
- **Strive for Maximum Transparency in the Decision-Making Process.** The criteria that will be used by decision-makers to select a final project or alternative should be made clear to the participants and the decision making process that will be used to apply the criteria should also be transparent and understood by all. There should be flexibility in the decision-making process to allow for multiple options to be considered.
- **Encourage Stakeholders to Function as Representatives.** Participants in collaboration should serve as a liaison between the collaborative group and the interests they represent and, when appropriate, advocate within their constituency for the agreed to plan, project, or activity. Communication between the entities should be enhanced as a result of the collaborative effort.
- **Foster Long-Term Participation.** Collaboration will yield longer-term benefits if participants maintain regular communication and active participation in the collaborative process and are committed to staying engaged through completion of the plan, project, or activity. New stakeholders should be added when appropriate.
- **Recognize Time Frames and Resources.** Participants in collaboration should mutually agree on ways to accomplish their objectives within reasonable time frames and in consideration of resource limitations.
- **Enhanced Decision-Making.** Collaboration should be conducted in a way that complements and informs formal decision-making.

Implementation Tasks

- 1) Regularly engage the members of the WFLC in a review of progress made, successes achieved, and barriers identified in the use of collaboration to achieve desired outcomes or in the use of the Collaborative Framework in particular. Discussion topics may include: collaborative success stories, desired outcomes, line officer accountability, interagency project planning and selection, federal and non-federal incentives, and related issues.

Collaboration Level: National
Lead Collaborator(s): *USFS, DOI, ITC, NASF, IAFC and WGA*²
Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing

- 2) Develop enhanced guidance for inclusion in the CWPP Handbook on the collaborative component of Community Wildfire Protection Plan development. (See also Goal 3a Task 4 regarding an update to the CWPP Handbook)

Collaboration Level: National
Lead Collaborator(s): *NASF, SAF, NACo, IAFC, Communities Committee, WGA*
Implementation Timeframe: Summer 2007

- 3) Establish an effective mechanism for improving the involvement of non-federal and non-governmental stakeholders in the activities and meetings of the WFLC.

Collaboration Level: National
Lead Collaborator(s): *WGA, USFS, DOI*
Implementation Timeframe: Spring 2007

² Throughout this document the lead collaborator(s) are italicized.

III. Goals, Implementation Outcomes, Performance Measures and Implementation Tasks

This section details the implementation goals, implementation outcomes, performance measures, and priority tasks of the revised *Implementation Plan*. These items implement the goals and action items and are consistent with the guiding principles of the *10-Year Strategy*. The performance measures enable all parties to assess and track progress toward the desired implementation outcomes envisioned by each goal.³ The implementation tasks identify specific actions needed to realize measurable progress.

Goal 1 - Improve Fire Prevention and Suppression

Implementation Outcome

Losses of life are eliminated, and firefighter injuries and damage to communities and the environment from wildfires are reduced.

Performance Measures

- a) Percent change from 10-year average for:
 - Percent of wildfires controlled during initial attack, and
 - Number of unwanted human-caused wildfires.
- b) Percent of fires not contained in initial attack that exceed a stratified cost index.⁴

³ Unless otherwise noted, tracking and reporting on the performance measures contained herein will be carried out by the Department of the Interior and the USDA Forest Service.

⁴ A Stratified Cost Index employs an analysis methodology whereby individual incident costs are compared to average incident costs that are stratified by incident attributes. Those incidents with costs outside the norm are reported as exceeding the stratified cost index.

Implementation Tasks

- 1) Prepare and implement a consistent preparedness-planning model for federal agencies that provides cost-effective fire protection among all administrative boundaries, considers state and local protection needs and resources in the wildland-urban interface, and is based on historic levels of fire activity.

Collaboration Level: National
Lead Collaborator(s): *USDA, DOI, NASF, IAFC*
Implementation Timeframe: 2008

- 2) Finalize an interagency aviation strategy to address short- and long-term concerns for fire suppression needs across ownerships.

Collaboration Level: National/State
Lead Collaborator(s): *DOI, USDA, NASF*
Implementation Timeframe: 2007

- 3) Continue implementation of recommended action items from the report to Congress titled “The Changing Role and Needs of Local, Rural, and Volunteer Fire Departments in the Wildland Urban Interface” and convene a representative task force to make recommendations to the WFLC on whether additional action items are needed.

Collaboration Level: National/State/Local
Lead Collaborator(s): *NASF, USDA, DOI, IAFC*
Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing and 2008 for task force review

- 4) Continue to implement and report on status of the actions from the Strategic Cost Panel that have not yet been completed and any other actions taken by the federal agencies regarding cost control. Take additional actions as needed and determined by WFLC.

Collaboration Level: National
Lead Collaborator(s): *USDA, DOI, ITC, WGA, NASF*
Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing

5) Annually assess the capability of geographic areas to respond to wildland fire using Type III organizations and specify the percent of that capability that is provided by local responders.

Collaboration Level:	National/Geographic Area/Local
Lead Collaborator(s):	<i>NMAC</i>
Implementation Timeframe:	Annually

Goal 2 - Reduce Hazardous Fuels

Implementation Outcome

Hazardous fuels are treated, using appropriate tools, to reduce the risk of wildfire to communities and to the environment.

Performance Measures

- a) Number and percent of WUI acres treated that are identified in CWPPs or other applicable collaboratively developed plans, and the number and percent of non-WUI acres treated that are identified through collaboration consistent with this *Implementation Plan*.
- b) Number of acres treated per million dollars gross investment in WUI and non-WUI areas.
- c) Percent of collaboratively identified high priority acres treated where fire management objectives are achieved as identified in applicable management plans or strategies.

Implementation Tasks

- 1) Convene a task force to make prioritized recommendations to WFLC regarding the information in NFPORS and LANDFIRE that should be available to the public. An example of such information might be the number and location of hazardous fuel reduction projects that involve multiple ownerships.

Collaboration Level:	National/State/Local
Lead Collaborator(s):	USDA, DOI, WGA, ITC, NASF, NACo
Implementation Timeframe:	2007

- 2) Establish a national team to annually assess and report to the WFLC on the implementation of the Fuels Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) approved by the Department of Interior Bureaus, the USDA Forest Service, the National Association of State Foresters, and the National Association of Counties.

Collaboration Level:	National
Lead Collaborator(s):	USDA, DOI, NASF, NACo, WGA
Implementation Timeframe:	Annually

3) Convene a task force to prepare and disseminate a list of existing models and methods that can be used to determine when a fuels treatment meets plan objectives. The task force should also indicate what data sources (such as LANDFIRE) are available to inform the determination.

Collaboration Level: National/State
Lead Collaborator(s): *USDA, DOI, NASF*
Implementation Timeframe: February 2007

4) Convene a multiparty task group to explore the feasibility of developing measures that determine the degree and longevity of fire hazard reduction achieved by hazardous fuels treatments.

Collaboration Level: National
Lead Collaborator(s): *WGA, NASF, USDA, DOI*
Implementation Timeframe: 2008

5) Convene a task group to review efforts to gather and report treatment-specific spatial data, including transparency regarding the number of times each acre is treated, and make recommendations to the WFLC.

Collaboration Level: All
Lead Collaborator(s): *USDA, DOI, WGA*
Implementation Timeframe: 2007

Goal 3 - Restoration and Post-Fire Recovery of Fire-Adapted Ecosystems

Part A - Restoration of Fire-Adapted Ecosystems⁵

Implementation Outcome

Fire-adapted ecosystems are restored and maintained, using appropriate tools, in a manner that will provide sustainable environmental, social, and economic benefits.

Performance Measures

- a) Number and percent of acres treated, through collaboration consistent with this *Implementation Plan*, identified by treatment category (*i.e.* prescribed fire, mechanical, and wildland fire use).
- b) Percent of the natural ignitions occurring in areas designated for wildland fire use or consistent with wildland fire use strategies that are allowed to burn and the number of acres burned.
- c) Number and percent of acres treated to restore fire-adapted ecosystems which are:
 - Moved toward desired conditions, and
 - Maintained in desired conditions.

Implementation Tasks

- 1) Analyze and recommend improvements to policies, incentive structures, and personnel capacity issues that present barriers to wildland fire use, mechanical treatments, and prescribed fire.

Collaboration Level:	All
Lead Collaborator(s):	USDA, DOI, WGA, NASF, Stakeholders
Implementation timeframe:	2008

⁵ “Restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems” means making management decisions that increase resiliency and improve landscape conditions so that fire can fulfill its appropriate ecological role and benefit other natural processes.

- 2) Further develop and implement a public education campaign such as the National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) Wildland Fire: A Natural Process to complement Smokey Bear's message of fire safety. The campaign will emphasize fire's role in ecosystems and the benefits of fire management to ecosystems and public health and safety.

Collaboration Level: All
Lead Collaborator(s): Stakeholders, NWCG
Implementation timeframe: Fall 2008

- 3) Develop a project to verify that LANDFIRE can be used to determine if conditions are improving across ownerships. Report the results to WFLC and, if appropriate, develop an implementation plan to start using the measure.

Collaboration Level: All
Lead Collaborator(s): DOI, USDA, WGA
Implementation timeframe: 2008

- 4) Add information to a revision of the CWPP Handbook concerning restoration objectives and wildland fire use so that communities can consider restoration and wildland fire use when developing CWPPs. (See also Task 2 under II. Implementing a Collaborative Framework)

Collaboration Level: National
Lead Collaborator(s): NASF, SAF, NACo, IAFC, Communities Committee
Implementation Timeframe: Summer 2007

- 5) During amendment, revision, or updates of federal land and resource management plans, ensure that those plans consider, and where appropriate, incorporate restoration and wildland fire use objectives consistent with the *10-Year Strategy*, the 2006 Cohesive Strategy, and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. Publish plan revision schedules and information informing the public on how to engage in the planning process on agency and bureau web sites on a continual, ongoing basis.

Collaboration Level: National
Lead Collaborator(s): USDA, DOI
Implementation Timeframe: Ongoing

6) As fire management plans or other authorizations of wildland fire use are reviewed or updated, consider, and where appropriate, incorporate restoration and wildland fire use objectives consistent with the *10-Year Strategy*, the 2006 Cohesive Strategy, and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

Collaboration Level:	National
Lead Collaborator(s):	<i>USDA, DOI</i>
Implementation Timeframe:	Ongoing

Goal 3 - Restoration and Post-Fire Recovery of Fire-Adapted Ecosystems

Part B - Post-Fire Recovery of Fire-Adapted Ecosystems⁶

Implementation Outcome

Lands damaged by wildfire recover to a desired condition.

Performance Measures

- a) Percent and number of burned acres identified in approved post-wildfire recovery plans as needing treatments that actually receive treatments.
- b) Percent of burned acres treated for post-wildfire recovery that are trending toward desired conditions.

Implementation Tasks

- 1) Propose a Joint Fire Sciences Program workplan for high priority applied research needs related to emergency stabilization, rehabilitation, and long-term restoration.

Collaboration Level:	National
Lead Collaborator(s):	USDA, DOI, NASF, JFSP, WGA
Implementation timeframe:	Spring 2007

- 2) Establish a task team to identify and propose solutions to policies and barriers that hamper effective treatment of non-native invasive species on burned acres.

Collaboration Level:	National
Lead Collaborator(s):	USDA, DOI, NASF, NACo
Implementation timeframe:	2008

⁶ “Post-fire recovery of fire-adapted ecosystems” means taking management actions to protect life, property, and natural and cultural resources (emergency stabilization) and to facilitate achievement of desired conditions and processes (rehabilitation) in fire-adapted ecosystems that would not otherwise occur.

3) Develop and implement a methodology for assessing conditions and trends on untreated burned acres.

Collaboration Level:	National/State
Lead Collaborator(s):	<i>USDA, DOI, NASF, NBAER</i>
Implementation timeframe:	2009

Goal Four - Promote Community Assistance

Implementation Outcome

Communities at-risk have increased capacity to prevent losses from wildland fire and realize economic benefits resulting from treatments and services.

Performance Measures

State Foresters or their equivalent will be responsible for tracking performance measures (a) and (b) and for determining when communities have met the associated requirements. Federal agencies will be responsible for tracking performance measure (c).

- a) Number and percent of communities-at-risk covered by a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) or equivalent that are reducing their risk-from wildland fire. A community is at reduced risk if it has satisfied at least one of the following requirements:
 - Recognized as a FIREWISE community or equivalent, or
 - Enacted a mitigation/fire prevention ordinance, or
 - High priority hazardous fuels identified in a CWPP or equivalent are reduced or appropriate fuel levels on such lands are maintained in accordance with a plan.
- b) Percentage of at risk communities who report increased local suppression capacity as evidenced by:
 - The increasing number of trained and/or certified fire fighters and crews, or
 - Upgraded or new fire suppression equipment obtained, or
 - Formation of a new fire department or expansion of an existing department involved in wildland fire fighting.
- c) Number of green tons and/or volume of woody biomass from hazardous fuel reduction and restoration treatments on federal land that are made available for utilization through permits, contracts, grants, agreements, or equivalent.

Implementation Tasks

- 1) Develop and implement consistent and effective federal instruments and/or procedures for procurement, contracting (including stewardship contracting), grants, and agreements to support hazardous fuels reduction, restoration, and rehabilitation projects. Train agency staff and stakeholders in the application of the improved federal instruments and/or procedures.

Collaboration Level: National/State/Local
Lead Collaborator(s): *USDA, DOI*
Implementation timeframe: 2007

- 2) Compile examples of local zoning ordinances and state planning efforts that have successfully reduced risks associated with wildland fire. Use such information to develop model CWPPs and wildfire ordinances. Make all such information available to states, counties, municipalities, and the general public via the web and other media.

Collaboration Level: National/State/Local
Lead Collaborator(s): *NASF, NACo, cities (NLC), Tribes, IAFC, WGA*
Implementation timeframe: Winter 2008

- 3) Develop and maintain at the state level a list or map of all communities designated by states as being at-risk from wildland fire.

Collaboration Level: State
Lead Collaborator(s): *NASF and ITC*
Implementation timeframe: ongoing

- 4) Form a collaborative task force to recommend ways to incentivize and maximize commercial utilization of small-diameter material from hazardous fuels and restoration treatments with consideration given to improving agency technical assistance programs and the training of citizens.

Collaboration Level: National
Lead Collaborator(s): *USDA, DOI, ITC, NASF, local stakeholders*
Implementation Timeframe: 2008

5) Expand and diversify the utilization of woody biomass by improving the information available to the public regarding the quantity and quality of woody biomass that may be made available through fuels reduction treatments on federal, non-federal, and tribal lands and by identifying other woody biomass information needs.

Collaboration Level: National/State/Local
Lead Collaborator(s): DOI, USDA
Implementation timeframe: 2008

6) Develop improved and scalable technical assistance for at-risk communities to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans and equivalent plans as appropriate.

Collaboration Level: National/State/Local
Lead Collaborator(s): NASF, USDA, DOI, FEMA, NACo, ITC, WGA
Implementation Timeframe: Fall 2008

7) Convene a stakeholder group (agencies, NGOs, locals, etc.) to develop and present a strategy to WFLC that promotes private investment in forest-based economic development and addresses critical weaknesses in community capacity.

Collaboration Level: State/local
Lead Collaborator(s): WGA
Implementation Timeframe: 2008

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IV. Glossary

Appropriate Tools

Methods for reducing hazardous fuels including prescribed fire, wildland fire use, and various mechanical methods such as crushing, tractor and hand piling, tree removal (to produce commercial or pre-commercial products), and pruning. They are selected on a site-specific case and are ecologically appropriate and cost effective.

Burned Area Rehabilitation

The treatment of a burned area following a fire to minimize subsequent unwanted effects.

Burnable Acres

Areas containing any vegetative material/type that is susceptible to burning.

Communities Committee

The Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress is a nonprofit organization made up of a diverse group of people from across the United States who believe local participation in stewardship of natural resources is critical to both forest ecosystem health and community well-being. The Committee is comprised of urban foresters, environmental activists, private forest landowners, civil servants, forest stewardship practitioners, professional foresters, forest industry representatives, academics, and researchers. (For additional information visit the Web site at: <http://www.communitiescommittee.org/howeare.html>)

Desired Conditions

The ecological, economic, and social attributes toward which management of the land and resources in the plan area are directed. Desired conditions are aspirational and are usually long-term in nature. A lengthy period of time may be required to achieve them, and during that time they may be modified, if necessary, to respond to changing conditions and/or improved knowledge.

FIREWISE

A public education program developed by the National Wildland Fire Coordinating Group that assists communities located in proximity to fire-prone lands. (For additional information visit the Web site at: <http://www.firewise.org/>)

LANDFIRE

The Landscape Fire and Resource Management Planning Tools Project is an interagency vegetation, fire, and fuel characteristics mapping project that is producing a comprehensive, consistent, scientifically credible suite of spatial data layers for the entire United States.

NFPORS	National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System is an interagency system permitting management and field personnel gather, track, report, and manage information whose analysis is critical to effective implementation of the National Fire Plan.
Prescribed Fire	Any fire ignited by management actions to meet specific objectives. A written, approved prescribed fire plan must exist, and NEPA requirements (where applicable) must be met, prior to ignition.
Restore Fire-Adapted Ecosystems	Making management decisions that increase resiliency and improve landscape conditions so that fire can fulfill its appropriate ecological role and benefit other natural processes.
Post-Fire Recovery of Fire-Adapted Ecosystems	Management actions that protect life, property, and natural and cultural resources (emergency stabilization) and facilitate achievement of desired conditions and processes (rehabilitation) in fire-adapted ecosystems that would not occur otherwise.
Wildfire	An unplanned, unwanted wildland fire including unauthorized human-caused fires, escaped wildland fire use events, escaped prescribed fire projects, and all other wildland fires where the objective is to put the fire out. Unplanned is not the same as unscheduled. For example, a lightning-caused fire could still be used to meet fuels and ecosystem management objectives if that type of fire is expected to burn within the parameters of an approved plan; the fire is burning within the parameters for the area; is not causing, or has the potential to cause, unacceptable effects; and funding and resources to manage the fire are available.
Wildland Fire Use	The application of the appropriate management response to naturally ignited wildland fires to accomplish specific resource management objectives in pre-defined designated areas. Operational management is described in the Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP).
Woody Biomass	The trees and woody plants, including limbs, tops, needles, leaves, and other woody parts, grown in a forest, woodland, or rangeland environment that are the by-products of management, including restoration and hazardous fuel reduction.

V. List of Acronyms

BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CWPPs	Community Wildfire Protection Plans
DOI	Department of the Interior
EA	Environmental Assessment
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
HFI	Healthy Forests Initiative
HFRA	Healthy Forests Restoration Act
IAFC	International Association of Fire Chiefs
ITC	Inter-Tribal Timber Council
JFSP	Joint Fire Sciences Program
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NACo	National Association of Counties
NASF	National Association of State Foresters
NBAER	National Burned Area Emergency Response (Coordinators Group)
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFPORS	National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NLC	National League of Cities
NMAC	National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group
NWCG	National Wildfire Coordination Group
SAF	Society of American Foresters
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
WFIP	Wildland Fire Implementation Plan
WFLC	Wildland Fire Leadership Council
WGA	Western Governors' Association
WUI	Wildland Urban Interface

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VI. Appendices

Appendix A - Monitoring & Evaluation

In January 2006, WFLC adopted a four-part monitoring plan to implement a directive from the original *10-Year Strategy Implementation Plan*. Module One of the monitoring plan tracks the impacts of fire on human safety and infrastructure. It looks at the effects of fuels treatments, post-fire rehabilitation, and the link between hazardous fuels reduction and biomass use. Module Two establishes a means to identify and report nationally on wildland fire burn severity across time and space. Module Three will provide answers to questions regarding how fuels treatments impact the environment, and Module Four establishes parameters for gauging collaboration. The questions can be found at <http://www.fireplan.gov/resources/policies.html>. The plan and its details are subject to review and change as needed. WFLC will establish a means to report to the public annually on the results of this monitoring effort.

Appendix B - Reports & Initiatives

Relationships between Major Wildland Fire Reports and Initiatives		
Initiative/Report	What it does	Relationship to other initiatives
<p>Federal Fire Policy <i>1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review.</i> December 1995</p>	<p>A response to the tragic fires of 1994. Key elements include: (1) reaffirming that protection of life as the first priority, (2) recognizing wildland fire as a critical natural process, (3) requiring fire management plans be developed for all burnable acres, (4) requiring fire management decisions be consistent with approved land and resource management plans, and (5) clarifying the role of federal agencies in the wildland urban interface.</p>	<p>First national wildland fire policy document</p>
<p>Report to the President -- <i>Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment.</i> September 2000</p>	<p>Response to a Presidential request. Provides recommendations to the Departments of Agriculture and Interior on how best to respond to the severe fire season of 2000. Makes key recommendations, among them: (1) provide additional firefighting resources, (2) restore fire damaged landscapes and communities, (3) increase efforts to remove hazardous fuels, and (4) work directly with local communities to improve community fire-fighting capacity and coordination, implement restoration and fuel reduction projects, and expand education and risk mitigation efforts in the WUI.</p>	<p>Provided the basis and conceptual framework for the National Fire Plan, and the <i>10-Year Strategy</i> – this document was also known as the National Fire Plan.</p>

<p>Federal Fire Policy <i>Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy</i> January 2001</p>	<p>A response to the escaped Cerro Grande Prescribed Fire of May 2000 directed by the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to an interagency working group. Although the 1995 policy provides a sound footing, implementation remains incomplete in many areas, especially those that involve collaboration, coordination, and integration across agency jurisdictions and across different disciplines. Because there is no effective means of overseeing and evaluating implementation of fire policy, a new policy on evaluation is therefore included.</p>	<p>Replaces the 1995 Federal Fire Policy, which only applied to the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior. This policy recognizes six other federal agencies as full partners in wildland fire management activities and programs.</p>
<p>10-Year Strategy August 2001</p>	<p>A coordinated <i>10-Year Strategy</i> to comprehensively manage wildfire, hazardous fuels, and ecosystem restoration developed at the request of Congress. The <i>10-Year Strategy</i> was developed in collaboration with governors and in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders. Scope includes federal and adjacent state, tribal, and private lands.</p> <p>Primary goals are: (1) improve prevention and suppression, (2) reduce hazardous fuels, (3) restore fire adapted ecosystems, and (4) promote community assistance.</p> <p>Core principles of the strategy: priority setting, collaboration, and accountability.</p>	<p>Extends concepts of the President's report and focus of the National Fire Plan into a broader, longer-term, collaborative effort.</p>

<p><i>Implementation Plan, 10-Year Strategy</i> May 2002</p> <p>Revised version completed in December 2006</p>	<p>Identifies 22 specific tasks to achieve the four goals identified in the <i>10-Year Strategy</i>; and performance measures that are interagency and interdepartmental in scope. Developed in collaboration with governors and in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders.</p> <p>Emphasizes a collaborative, community-based approach to address wildland fire related issues.</p> <p>Superseded by a revised version completed in December 2006 developed in collaboration with governors and in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders.</p>	<p>Implements the <i>10-Year Strategy</i> through performance metrics and specific actions with timeframes for completion.</p>
<p>Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI) - <i>Healthy Forests: An Initiative for Wildfire Prevention and Stronger Communities</i> August 2002</p>	<p>Presidential initiative to expedite the reduction of hazardous fuels on public land, and to fulfill the original objectives of the Northwest Forest Plan. The initiative has legislative and administrative components.</p> <p>The administrative actions include: (1) create a uniform categorical exclusion for certain fuel reduction projects usable by all federal land managing agencies, (2) streamline the appeals process within the existing administrative appeals frameworks, and (3) streamline the EA documentation process, and (4) better coordinate Endangered Species Act consultations.</p> <p>The legislative proposal called for: (1) allowing agencies to enter into stewardship contracts, (2) further streamlining of NEPA analytic requirements, and (3) assure judges consider balance of harm between short- and long-term impacts of fuels treatments when considering any request for injunctive relief.</p>	<p>HFI speeds implementation of fuel reduction and post-fire projects. Legislative proposal requires use of a collaborative process consistent with the <i>Implementation Plan</i> for the <i>10-Year Strategy</i>.</p>

<p>Federal Fire Policy Implementation Strategy <i>Interagency Strategy for the Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy</i> June 2003</p>	<p>Chartered by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group and approved by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, this strategy includes specific policy objectives, policy requirements, and decision criteria that direct fire operations in a unified manner among the five federal agencies having wildland fire management responsibilities. The <i>Implementation Plan</i> was used in the development of clarifying comments, objectives, and measures where possible in order to avoid duplication and to compliment the implementation of both fire policy and the National Fire Plan.</p>	<p>Implements the 2001 federal fire policy with a unified approach among federal agencies and includes state involvement from the National Association of State Foresters.</p>
<p>Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) Became law December 2003</p>	<p>Earlier Congress had given stewardship authority to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) partially fulfilling a request within HFI. With HFRA, Congress addressed other issues raised in HFI and contains other changes. HFRA applies chiefly to USFS and BLM. Its major provisions include: (1) a streamlined EA process for certain fuels treatments and other activities that would remove hazardous fuels from public lands, (2) incentives for states and local communities to prepare Community Wildfire Protection Plans, (3) measures to expedite judicial review of challenges to the conduct of fuels treatment projects, and (4) a requirement the judges consider the consequences of delaying or preventing of a fuels treatment compared to the impacts of conducting the treatment.</p>	<p>Implements the legislative proposals in the Healthy Forests Initiative. Authorizes funding for projects and activities that implement the <i>10-Year Strategy</i> through the <i>Implementation Plan</i> and that meet the objectives of the Healthy Forest Initiative.</p>

<p><i>Protecting People and Natural Resources, A Cohesive Fuels Treatment Strategy,</i> February 2006.</p>	<p>Provides a succinct and integrated presentation of policy and management objectives and methods to achieve risk reduction and resource management goals.</p>	<p>Brings together direction regarding achievement of Goals II, III, and IV of August 2001 plan, <i>10-Year Strategy</i>.</p>
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Appendix C - Implementation Plan Collaboration

This *Implementation Plan* reflects a working collaboration with several individuals from the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, and the offices and representatives of the Governors. The Governors also consulted with and utilized input from a broader group of interested stakeholder and experts.

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