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February 28, 2014

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250-3700

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of the membership of the International Association of Wildland Fire (IAWF), I am pleased to convey our congratulations for the enduring and all-inclusive efforts to complete the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.

As these efforts began in 2009, there was much uncertainty associated with understanding and defining exactly what was needed and what the appropriate scope would be. Since 2001, many companion, but individualized activities have taken place, including the National Fire Plan, the Healthy Forests Initiative, the 10 year Comprehensive Strategy, the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, two modifications and operational clarifications to the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, two Quadrennial Fire Reviews, and implementation of the Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act of 2009 Report to Congress. However, these efforts did not achieve the level of collaborative engagement, collective actions, and consideration of biophysical and socioeconomic data in planning efforts as well as integrated implementation actions needed for a national effort.

A National Strategy was needed. The completion of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Phase I in 2011, Phase II in 2012, and now the Final Phase in 2014, unites the strengths of all previous efforts and activities in the most comprehensive and detailed presentation ever produced. This groundbreaking effort has successfully addressed the necessary scope and widespread potential impacts that are needed and represents a sound National Strategy.

In looking back over our history, it can easily be acknowledged that our fire environment is changing, fire complexity is escalating, impacts from wildland fires are mounting, and a one-size-fits-all approach cannot meet all needs and situations across our Nation. The IAWF is particularly impressed and excited with the Vision this Strategy is based on. The safe and effective extinguishment of wildfire when needed, the use of wildland fire where allowable and needed, the integration of fire with natural resource management, and the understanding and acceptance as a Nation, to live with wildland fire, represent the level of significant forward thinking appropriate for the future we face.

We are reminded of an article written by William R. (Bud) Moore, a career Forest Service employee and a very innovative leader in wildland fire management. At the end of Bud's career as he prepared for retirement he presented four challenges facing fire management in the future. These were:

- Replace growth ethic with a true land and people ethic. Develop sound land use planning to chart toward a stronger land and people ethic.
- Develop people. Develop people fully capable of implementing quality land management. Fire management is part of this opportunity. Direction is sound, plans are comprehensive, and concepts are visionary.
- Improve quality, reduce costs.
- Maximize involvement. Maximize people involvement in natural resource activities.



# FireNet

Publishers of *Wildfire Magazine*<sup>®</sup>  
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and *FireNet*, the online news of IAWF.

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UNITING THE GLOBAL WILDLAND FIRE COMMUNITY

Bud's article was published as Towards the Future...Land, People, and Fire (Fire Management, Summer 1974, Vol. 35, No. 3) by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.

There are two thoughts that connect this article to the Cohesive Strategy effort. First, Bud's article was prepared in 1974, the very same year that wildland fire changed its program name from fire control to fire management to meet a wider range of needs for the future. Second, the underlying principles of the Cohesive Strategy such as strategic alignment, communications and collaborative engagement, and programmatic alignment are very similar to the challenges he presented. This is reflective of the forward thinking, comprehensive nature, and progressiveness of the National Cohesive Strategy.

We are very pleased that the National Cohesive Strategy has been completed and are enthusiastically looking forward to its implementation. We would offer any support that we can provide to assist with these efforts.

Thank you for leadership and efforts in completion of this Strategy and all future associated efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Zimmerman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "T".

Thomas Zimmerman  
International Association of Wildland Fire