

Fiscal Year: 2012

State: Idaho

Agency: National Park Service

Theme: Maintain and Restore Landscapes

National Park Service Communicates Cohesive Strategy to Stakeholders

National Interagency Fire Center, Idaho

Cohesive Strategy – Maintain and Restore Landscapes

On a daily basis, the National Park Service (NPS) Division of Fire and Aviation Management (FAM) works with interagency counterparts and other stakeholders to facilitate implementation of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. The Cohesive Strategy (CS) is an ongoing effort by Federal, Tribal, state and local governments and non-government organizations to address growing wildfire challenges in the United States. For more information, visit <http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/>. Since the inception of the CS, NPS FAM has learned many valuable lessons about communicating the CS effort. First and foremost, is that effective implementation of the Cohesive Strategy will only occur if the NPS has successfully communicated the CS tenets first to the NPS community.

Good communications is inherent in the mission of the NPS. It is a recognized part of the job of all employees. As part of the strategy of open communication, FAM collects success stories focused on how units implement Cohesive Strategy at the ground level. This is done using the existing chain of command; from the park unit to the region where the material is reviewed and subsequently submitted to NPS FAM. . In the spirit of a national, multi-agency, multi-stakeholder approach to Cohesive Strategy, the NPS success stories are shared with all interested parties via the National Park Service website (<http://www.nps.gov/fire/wildland-fire/connect/fire-stories/2012-parks.cfm>) and the Forest and Rangelands website (www.forestandrangelands.gov).

In addition to compiling success stories, NPS leadership initiated bimonthly phone calls for the first two phases of the CS, connecting the Wildland Fire Branch Chief to NPS employees on regional and park-level committees. . As the CS moves into Phase III, calls occur on a monthly basis, reinforcing internal agency communication in order to support the goals of the Cohesive Strategy.

Through already tested modes of communication, the NPS FAM community has been able to disseminate the key messages of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy in an efficient and effective manner. The National Park Service understands that it must do its part in this “All-Lands, All-Hands” approach to fire.

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Cohesive Strategy Key Messages

Purpose and Intent of Cohesive Strategy

The National Cohesive Wildfire Management Strategy is an all-lands approach that reaches across jurisdictional boundaries. This strategy – born from an act of Congress (Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act of 2009) and overseen by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) and the Wildland Fire Executive Council (WFEC) is leading the way towards a more cohesive approach to how all stakeholders manage wildland fire.



Three Phases of Cohesive Strategy

To facilitate stakeholder participation in planning for, responding to, and recovering from wildland fire incidents the CS has three phases. These are:

- Phase I: Development of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (*complete*).
- Phase II: Development of Regional Strategies and Assessments (*complete*).
- Phase III: Implementation (*Current phase*).

Historical Background to Cohesive Strategy

In response to the danger, impacts and costs of large fires, Congress passed the 2009 FLAME Act, which:

- Directed the USDA and DOI to develop a new Cohesive Wildfire Management Strategy.
- WFLC established to provide oversight and direction.

The Vision of Cohesive Strategy is to:

- *Safely and effectively extinguish fire when needed.*
- *Use fire only when allowable.*
- *Manage our natural resources.*
- *Live with wildland fire.*

More than a Fire Management Issue...

- Wildland fire is more than a fire management, fire operations, or Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) challenge. Wildland fire is a complex land management and societal issue. The Cohesive Strategy addresses these issues head on.
- CS is an “*All-Lands, All-Hands*” approach to improved wildland management, engaging stakeholders from all levels of government, NGOs, and people with interests in wildland fire, working together collaboratively.

Three Principal Goals of CS

- **Restoring and maintaining resilient landscapes:** - a recognition of the lack of ecosystem health within many of our forests and rangelands across the country and the need to address it.
- **Creating fire-adapted communities:** acknowledging the need to develop options and opportunities to engage communities at the lowest level to help them become more resistant to wildfire threat.
- **Effectively responding to wildfire:** a critical component to insure all levels of government, local, state, tribal and federal, work together when wild fire occurs.

*Prepared by NPS Division of Fire and Aviation Management, Branch of Wildland Fire.
For more information, contact [William Kaage@nps.gov](mailto:William.Kaage@nps.gov).*



Cohesive Strategy Questions and Answers

What is the Cohesive Strategy?

The Cohesive Strategy (CS) is an ongoing effort by Federal, Tribal, state and local governments and non-government organizations to address growing wildfire challenges in the United States. For more information, visit <http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/>.

Wildland fire is more than a fire management, fire operations, or Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) challenge. Wildland fire is a complex land management and societal issue. The vision of the Cohesive Strategy is to: *safely and effectively extinguish fire when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and as a nation, live with wildland fire.*

Why is it important?

The CS provides participants at all levels of government and non-governmental organizations a framework to engage in partnerships to address wildland fire management decisions.

Who oversees and implements the CS?

- Congress and the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior have established two governing boards.
- Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC), provides oversight of the Cohesive Strategy effort.
- Wildland Fire Executive Council (WFEC), makes recommendations to the WFLC on the development and implementation of the CS.
- Representatives include: Federal, state, Tribal, local governments, agencies, nonprofits as well as other key stakeholders.

How is the CS different than other strategies?

- More stakeholders are engaged now than in previous initiatives.
- Working together, the CS will be implemented by the collaborators. The CS has established systems for collaborative solutions to the problems.
- Research scientists are directly involved.

What is the CS vision?

- Safely and effectively extinguish fire when needed.
- Use fire only when allowable.
- Manage our natural resources.
- Live with wildland fire.

What are the guiding principles for the CS?

- Reducing risk to the public and firefighters is the first priority in every wildland fire management activity.
- Risk management is the foundation for all management activities.
- Wildland fire 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.
- Decisions are based on the best available science combined with experience to evaluate risk versus gain.
- Federal, state, local and Tribal governments actively engage in collaborative planning and the decision making process, recognizing the independence and statutory responsibilities among jurisdictions

What are the three goals of the CS?

- Restore and maintain resilient landscapes—recognize and address the lack of ecosystem health within many of our forests and rangelands across the country.
- Create fire adapted communities—develop options and opportunities to engage communities at the lowest level to help them become more resistant to wildfire threat.
- Effectively respond to wildfire—ensure all levels of government—local, state, Tribal, and Federal—work together when wildland fire happens.

What is the current status of Cohesive Strategy?

- Phase I: Development of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy—Completed.
- Phase II: Development of Regional Strategies and Assessments—Completed.
- Phase III: Implementation—In progress. This will not just be done by Federal agencies, it will also be implemented by Firesafe councils, groups working on restoring ecosystems, fire adapted communities, ranchers and many other stakeholders: All-hands, All-lands.

Prepared by NPS Division of Fire and Aviation Management, Branch of Wildland Fire. For more information, contact William.Kaage@nps.gov.



April 13, 2012

DRAFT - Department of the Interior (DOI) Success Stories Requirements

The National Park Service will follow this guidance until new guidance from DOI is released

Submission Guidance:

Themes:

Department of the Interior agencies' success stories submissions will be tied to the overarching themes of the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy* and DOI priorities. All submissions will be categorized under at least one of the following themes:

1. Maintain and Restore Landscapes –

Activities and projects that move landscapes toward desired condition or projects that maintain desired conditions, including those which specifically:

- Ensure project efficiencies
- Include contributed (non-bureau) labor and funding
- Maintain previous investments
- Protect special interest species
- Address areas of high-priority fire regime/condition class
- Establish and restore resilient landscapes
- Protect or restore treasured landscapes
- Promote carbon sequestration
- Provide collaboration opportunities
- Include joint (intra-bureau) labor and funding

2. Fire-Adapted Human Communities –

Activities and projects that protect values-at-risk and achieve fire management objectives identified in applicable management, including projects which specifically:

- Protect Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) or will influence the risk to the WUI if not treated
- Support a CWPP or CWPP equivalent
- Provide economic opportunities for communities, tribal members, or youth
- Perform work through the use of a contractor or cooperator

3. Response to Wildfire –

Activities and projects that provide the greatest opportunities to improve wildfire response, including projects which specifically:

- Provide for firefighter safety

- Reduce large fire costs
- Enhance full spectrum response to wildfires

Keyword Descriptor(s):

Keyword descriptor(s) are optional to include with submissions; however emphasis should be placed on submitting success stories which illustrate accomplishment in the following priority areas:

- Climate Change
- America's Great Outdoors
- Treasured Landscapes
- Youth Involvement, Volunteerism and Employment
- Water Conservation and Restoration
- New Energy Frontier
- Native American Nations
- Cost Effectiveness and Efficiencies
- Partnerships
- Woody Biomass Utilization
- Fire Ecology and Restoration
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Keywords should be integrated into the text of the story. For those keywords that reference an initiative or program (e.g. "America's Great Outdoors," "Treasured Landscapes," etc.) keywords should be capitalized in the story. In the cases where keywords are not initiatives or programs (e.g. "cost effectiveness and efficiencies," "partnerships," "fire ecology and restoration," etc.) leave them lower-cased in the story text.

In addition, keywords should be called out and referenced as a field at the bottom of the story under the title "**Keywords**" – see attached story for example to follow on formatting.

DOI Utilization of Success Stories

Success stories are an important way for DOI to celebrate accomplishments made in reducing risk posed by wildfire. Submissions will be utilized in a variety of ways by the Office of Wildland Fire Coordination, such as:

- Updating the Wildland Fire Leadership Council's website, located at <http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov>.
- Including a selection in future DOI Annual Reports
- Posting on www.doi.gov as a Featured Story or Latest Happening on the homepage
- Including in DOI publication(s)
- Including anecdotes in briefings materials, testimony, congressional hearings, etc. [note follow-up would likely occur with the submission office in these cases].

NPS Utilization of Success Stories

The National Park Service Division of Fire and Aviation will also utilize all stories submitted to DOI in support of the Cohesive Strategy. Stories will be posted on the NPS Fire and Aviation website at <http://www.nps.gov/fire> and may be also utilized for other purposes including:

- Briefing packages
- Congressional requests
- FAM / Visitor and Resource Protection / NPS publications

NPS-specific Due Dates

Stories should be submitted to the NPS Branch of Communication and Education at the National Interagency Fire Center through regional fire communication and education contacts on a quarterly basis:

- March 15
- June 15
- September 15
- December 15

The FTP location - <ftp://ftp.den.nps.gov/incoming/FIRE/Tina/SuccessStories/> is the designated location for all success stories that have been approved at the regional level. Upon reaching the national level, stories not meeting all standards, or requiring edits, will be returned to the regional contact for editing and follow-up.

Success Stories Template

Font and Identifying Information

Submissions should be in Word using 12 point, Times New Roman font. You do not need to include the banner as the Web Manager will provide it. Please include all of the following as identifying information:

- **Fiscal Year:**
- **State(s):**
- **Agency(s):**
- **Theme(s):** Maintain and Restore Landscapes; Fire-Adapted Human Communities; Response to Wildfire
- **Contact:**
- **Contact Email and Phone:**
- **Keyword(s) (optional):**
 - Climate Change
 - America's Great Outdoors
 - Treasured Landscapes
 - Youth Involvement, Volunteerism and Employment
 - Water Conservation and Restoration

- New Energy Frontier
- Native American Nations
- Cost Effectiveness and Efficiencies
- Partnerships
- Woody Biomass Utilization
- Fire Ecology and Restoration
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)
- Or define a new general keyword category if one of these does not apply. New categories are subject to approval.

Content:

Provide enough information about a success story to develop a web page for internal and external audiences. Describe who, what, when, where, and why about the project, accomplishment, or event in a word document. Generally submissions are between 500-1000 words, although there is no minimum or maximum word requirement.

- Provide who (entity or entities), including the department, agency, state, institution, organization to specifically identify the party or parties involved.
- Describe completely and concisely what the story is about, the project, accomplishment, or event.
- Include where the story took place or is taking place.
- Include when the story took place or is taking place. Include start and/or stop dates, by calendar or fiscal year.
- Describe why the story took place or is taking place. Concisely, provide as much detail as possible about the story.

Photos:

You are encouraged to provide photo(s) with your submissions. Photos can be worth 1,000 words. Provide caption and photo credit information. You may insert the image into the Word document for the story, but must also provide the related story images separately as jpg images.

Sample Story Using Cohesive Strategy Template

Fiscal Year: 2011

State: California

Agency: National Park Service

Theme: Maintain and Restore Landscapes

The Rehabilitation of Travertine Springs Death Valley National Park, California Cohesive Strategy – Maintain and Restore Landscapes

On August 9, 2010, the Travertine Fire burned 22 acres of a lush desert oasis in Death Valley National Park. The Travertine Springs complex provides habitat to four rare plant species and nine endemic aquatic invertebrates. This habitat was particularly vulnerable to fire due to the invasion of non-native palm trees that had been introduced to nearby Furnace Creek over a century ago. A mixture of date palms from Africa and fan palms from the Coachella Valley created a dense and volatile thatch that not only shaded and crowded native species, but also used a tremendous amount of water, making precious resources unavailable to native plants and wildlife.

A Burned Area Rehabilitation plan was developed and fully funded in 2011 providing crucial resources to remove invasive palms from the burned area. While the areas with the densest palm growth were left completely scorched and sterilized of native vegetation, over 99% of the palm trees survived. Both date palms and California fan palms are highly adapted to fire and will produce even more fruit with the post-fire release of water and nutrients. Palms are notoriously difficult to control and can often re-sprout from roots even after herbicide treatments. The control of palm trees was critical for the recovery of this sensitive spring habitat. The project was aimed at water conservation and restoration as well as fire ecology and restoration.

In January 2011, contractors were hired to extract all of the palms with roots included. With the use of heavy machinery, over 500 palm trees were removed in just 15 work days. All disturbed sites were smoothed using an excavator and tracks were raked out by hand. Just days after the project was completed, it was difficult to imagine the presence of heavy machinery or the hundreds of palms that had dominated the landscape around springs.



Photo point at Travertine Springs: pre-fire in February 2009 (top), during rehabilitation in February 2011 (middle), and five months after palm removal in August 2011 (bottom).

Since the removal of palms, the burned area has been monitored closely and all non-native plants have been tightly controlled. With the release of large amounts of water formerly held by palms, the recovery of native vegetation is occurring at a rapid rate.

Contact: Jane Cipra, Botanist

Email: Jane_Cipra@nps.gov

Phone: (760)786-3233

Keywords: Water Conservation and Restoration, Fire Ecology and Restoration



Status Report

Date: August 3, 2012

Subcommittee: Southern RSC

Accomplishments Since Last Report:

- Joint RSC, NSAT and WG Meeting on science team input and preferred alternatives
- WG call to discuss emphasis alternatives v values matrix and initialize risk analysis report.
- Developed timeline for accomplishing risk analysis report including aggressive stakeholder engagement
- Interaction with IAFC and National Council of Forestry Association Executives
- Development of success stories and monthly regional report

Planned Activities for Next Reporting Period:

- Early input from social network mapping into stakeholder engagement process.
- Proposal for communications evaluation of regional communications strategies and campaigns.
- Direct contacts to minimally active stakeholders and participants
- More aggressive development of success stories

Issues Identified:

WFEC Decisions/Approvals Needed:

References:

Contact Information:

Mike Zupko
Southern Governors' Association
mike@zup-co-inc.com 770-267-9630



Status Report

Date: August 3, 2012

Subcommittee: Northeast RSC

Accomplishments Since Last Report:

- ✧ As a result of the NSAT meeting, the NE RSC will be surveying its members and working groups to refine and prioritize its preliminary alternatives. Both the NE RSC and NSAT agreed to work toward refining the alternatives and science information in addressing the risk priorities in order to more effectively use the available data.
- ✧ The NE RSC communications and outreach work group, with support by METI, have produced the first Phase III monthly update for August, which includes success stories, and will be distributed to a wide range of stakeholders. The NE Region website on Forest and Rangelands.gov has also been updated and will be maintained to stay current for stakeholders throughout Phase III.
- ✧ The Northeast RSC Chair and Coordinator have worked with the other RSCs and CSSC Chair on the Barriers and Critical Success factors.

Planned Activities for Next Reporting Period:

- ✧ Work on the Phase III Analysis Report will continue on the risk descriptions and alternatives section by NE RSC Coordinator and Technical/Strategic Working Group. Coordination through the National Writer/Editors team on the regional risk analysis report continues.
- ✧ Communications activities are expected to increase.
- ✧ The Northeast RSC continues bi-weekly conference calls and continues participating in the CSSC and WFEC scheduled calls.

Issues Identified:

Given the discussions with the NSAT regarding the completion of the Regional Risk Analysis Reports, it would be desirable to have a revised time line agreed upon to be able to communicate to stakeholders.

WFEC Decisions/Approvals Needed:

None

References:

Contact Information:

Brad Simpkins or Larry Mastic



Status Report

Date: 7/31/12

Subcommittee: CSSC

Accomplishments Since Last Report:

The Science Team had very successful meeting with all three regions and are now in the process of doing the risk analyses. They will be having regular conversations with the regions to validate the models and data.

The CSSC received the comments on the barriers document from WFEC members and is currently incorporating and finalizing that document. It will be sent back to WFEC for discussion at the mid-August meeting.

Planned Activities for Next Reporting Period:

The CSSC is continuing to work on developing the Regional and National Action Plan Templates. In addition, they are working on developing the National Performance Measures. These are expected to be closely linked with the areas that the regions highlighted as being the most significant.

Issues Identified:

None

WFEC Decisions/Approvals Needed:

None

References:

Contact Information:

Sandy Cantler - scantler@fs.fed.us or Dan Smith - desmith@blm.gov



Status Report

Date: 03 AUGUST 12

Subcommittee: WRSC

Accomplishments Since Last Report:

SLC NSAT/WRSCSWG meeting July 17-19, outcomes were substantial. The chosen previously four Alternatives were refined and three were recommended to move forward in the process. A sub team of the WRSC completed a new generation roadmap, assigned tasking toward the Regional Report document the WFEC approved in July and the WRSC has approved the WRSC three Alternatives version.

Identification of leads, teams and due dates for the writing of the first draft of the WFEC approved regional report template were assigned with August 20th first draft completion. Exception being section B and parts of the other sections which are specific to the science analysis component of the regional report.

The mapping of activities the WRSC will conduct over the next few months and responsible/accountable individual(s) assigned with the focus being the completion of the Regional Report.

Discussion on WRSC activity post delivery of the Regional Report on October 15(?) was conducted by a short team of WRSC/SWG. E.G. actions, implementation, for Phase III until February 2013 was discussed, more work is needed in that area.

Received the PIII Preliminary Alternatives Performance Measures Content Analysis of Stakeholder Comments 33 page report from METI. Very valuable, interesting, telling and take notice report. Probably an appendices to the regional risk report; however, the key will be to actually built progress in the field by the utilization of the information in the report.

Monies were reassigned from previous agreements to appropriate functional specific areas of deliverables and activities of the WRSC.



Status Report

Barriers document for WFEC was revised and in the finalization process with the other two regions and the SSC Chair.

Planned Activities for Next Reporting Period:

Thank you letters to those stakeholders contributing suggestions and comments will be sent out in the next two weeks. Once the Regional Report is complete (OCT) a final stakeholder thank you and explanation of how their input was used or considered will be developed for individually specific distribution.

Continue path forward on all deliverables. First REV of Regional Report pre NSAT analysis.

However as we are reporting every two weeks the reporting requirement is often times ahead of the activities accomplished.

Issues Identified:

Short and long-term senior level leadership for WRSC critical to success
Short and long-term support staff functions for WRSC critical to success
Identifying the implementation strategy recommendation for the CS after PIII.

FY 13 funding structure

Institutionalization of the CS the next five years

Measures for the science as well as for the non science activity within each alternative

Stakeholder ownership strategies

NSAT/ALL REGIONAL SC's meeting September 4-7 format and outcome expectation

Role of the WRSC in the next 5 years

Role of the Partners in the next 5 years

Role of Science in the next 5 years



Status Report

WFEC Decisions/Approvals Needed:

NONE for this meeting, monumental for upcoming meetings

References:

Contact Information:

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