



The Cohesive Strategy in the Northeast Region

A cohesive strategy is one that takes a national, collaborative approach – in this case to addressing wildland fire across all lands and jurisdictions. In 2009 Congress passed the FLAME Act asking the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to address seven specific elements in creating a cohesive strategy for responding to wildfire. This strategy was also to incorporate a response to the previous Government Accounting Office concern about effectively, affordably addressing wildfire and any trade-offs associated with approaches established to do so.

The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy is therefore a collaboration on behalf of Federal, state, local and Tribal governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to approach growing wildfire problems in the U.S. It will address the nation's wildfire problems by focusing actions on three key areas and goals:

1. Restore and Maintain Landscapes – Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire related disturbances in accordance with management objectives.
2. Fire Adapted Communities – Human populations and infrastructure can survive a wildland fire. Communities can assess the level of wildfire risk to their communities and share responsibility for mitigating both the threat and the consequences.
3. Response to Fire – All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildland fire management decisions.

Developing the cohesive strategy has been defined by three phases:

Phase I: National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (completed)

Phase II: Development of Regional Strategies and Assessments (completed)



Stakeholders and RSC meeting during Phase I

Phase III: National Trade-Off Analysis and Execution (current)

Phase I developed a plan for how stakeholders in wildland fire issues of the United States would collaboratively prepare a national cohesive strategy. Numerous listening forums were held throughout the US to gather input on the challenges, opportunities and solutions to managing America's wildland fire programs and protecting communities. A range of people attended these forums – community representatives, local and volunteer fire departments, local, state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations and other interested parties. The views they shared helped form the process we would use to develop a national cohesive strategy.

During Phase II regional strategy committees (RSCs) and working groups were established for the Northeast, the Southeast, and the West. In each region, groups of stakeholders were convened (Continued next page)

We are committed to using your time wisely! In this first of our new monthly updates we bring you the reader up-to-date on Cohesive Strategy proceedings to this point. In the future you can expect brief features with links to our and our partners' websites.



Northeast Regional Strategy Committee (NE RSC) Update August 2012

to develop a regional strategy and assessment. Throughout Phase II, the NE RSC conducted public outreach using forums, webinars and email to contact individuals and groups for feedback on various aspects of this report. The information received was used in the final report, completed in September 2011. This regional report was then compiled with those of the other regions into a National Phase II report.

Now the NE RSC Phase III efforts are underway. The RSC is working with the National Science and Analysis Team to explore sets of management options, using data analysis to identify potential opportunities where risks may be managed more effectively and potential barriers to achieving risk reduction. During this phase the RSC is also expanding stakeholder involvement to develop the final Regional Action Plan. The intent of the Regional Action Plan is to capture actions that the NE RSC agrees to pursue in the next five years toward the three national goals of the Cohesive Strategy. The Action Plan will identify who will do what, where, and by when, plus document initial efforts in implementing the cohesive strategy at regional and local levels to make a positive difference on-the-ground.

We welcome interested stakeholders to keep involved in developing the Regional Action Plan by visiting the NE RSC website, providing feedback on important issues and management options, and communicating with NE RSC members.

For Phase I and Phase II Cohesive Strategy reports please visit our Northeast website's Reports section:

<http://sites.nemac.org/northeastcohesivefire/draft-report/>

National Science and Analysis Team and NE RSC meet to discuss initial data findings

Using information from the Phase II NE Regional Report, the National Science and Analysis Team (NSAT) has been working on exploratory analyses of an initial set of alternatives developed to meet the cohesive strategy goals. The NSAT recently shared these findings at a meeting with the NE RSC in Boston on July 10-11.

**Upcoming Success Story Profile:
Safer Homes & Healthy Waters
Maine**



The Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the Maine Forest Service collaborated to produce a brochure "How to be LakeSmart and Firewise" listing steps to help homeowners maintain and improve water quality while protecting their homes and camps from wildfire. More than 5,000 brochures have been mailed to lake association residents throughout Maine; the group has been asked to speak at more than 50 lake association meetings. They also offer a free risk assessment. The Defensible Space Fuel Reduction Program also helps communities remove and dispose of hazardous fuel around homes. Finally, the Maine Forest Service works with lake associations to apply for recognition in the Firewise Program.

LakeSmart & Firewise brochure addresses concerns of the Maine Dept of Environmental Protection for clean water and Firewise recommendations to reduce threat from wildland fire in the home ignition zone. Available at: http://www.maine.gov/doc/mfs/fpd/downloads/lakesmart_firewise_brochure.pdf

Find success stories from the NE at: <http://sites.nemac.org/northeastcohesivefire/about-you>

See our national Partner Perspectives and Success Stories at: <http://forestsandrangelands.gov>



Focusing on the Northeast Region, the current analyses helps the NSAT and RSC refine the NE cohesive strategy alternatives and discuss consequences. The initial data products were examined and discussed by the NE RSC, the working group, and the NSAT. This meeting provided the opportunity for the science group to obtain feedback on specific questions/issues from NE RSC based on the data presented and identify any perceived gaps or additional information needs. The NSAT will further refine the analyses over the coming weeks and provide the results to the NE RSC at a meeting in September.



Using science to inform and assist in decision making, the group will identify potential opportunities where risks may be managed effectively and the barriers that may prevent achieving risk reductions. The NE RSC will look at how and where certain alternatives and actions may improve the ability of the stakeholders to meet a CS goal throughout the NE Region. They will also examine the investment choices that can be made, and the outcomes and consequences of those choices. This information will be summarized in a Regional Risk Analysis report (due at the end of September/early October). The management options and strategies for the Northeast Region will be outlined in a Regional Action Plan due in early 2013.

NE RSC Briefs State Fire Supervisors

On June 20, NE RSC Chair Brad Simpkins and Coordinator Larry Mastic briefed the Northeast Forest Fire Supervisors annual meeting in Mystic, Connecticut. The group is comprised of state fire supervisors from the 20 northeastern states responsible for the fire management programs on state and private lands in their jurisdictions.

At their annual meeting, 18 of the 20 states were in attendance. They were joined by US Forest Service State and Private Forestry staff and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The briefing and discussion on the Cohesive Strategy lasted more than two hours. Some of the key topics raised included training for experience, safety, resource sharing with Canada and Federal agencies, and concerns over increased involvement by some state offices of emergency management in wildland fires without adequate training.

This important stakeholder group has been participating in the Cohesive Strategy during both Phase I and Phase II. Members of this group are actively involved in Phase III on the National Science and Analysis Team and on the NE RSC Technical and Strategic Working Group.

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Northeast website:
<http://sites.nemac.org/northeastcohesivefire/>
Cohesive Strategy National website:
www.forestsandangelands.gov
Visit the Fire Adapted Community website:
www.fireadapted.org