



## Northeast Regional Strategy Committee releases draft Regional Action Plan for comment

The Northeast Regional Strategy Committee (NE RSC) has completed an initial draft of the Regional Action Plan. Using both the contents of the Northeast Regional Risk Analysis Report (October 2012) and stakeholder comments provided in December, the NERSC developed an initial draft of an action plan that will guide wildland fire management agencies in meeting the goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy in the Northeast Region. The overall comments were favorable to the objectives and actions identified to date.

A final comment period will be open January 21 – February 1, 2013 and is open to all stakeholders: state and federal agencies, local fire departments, non-governmental organizations, counties, communities and landowners – any organization or individual who has an interest in or whose mission involves wildland fire. Fire management agency support for the actions identified in the Regional Action Plan is important to the success of the Cohesive Strategy.

The NERSC invites you to visit the website to learn more about the Cohesive Strategy in the Northeast Region. You can [view and download](#) a copy of the draft NE Regional Action Plan; provide comments; and participate in the upcoming webinars during the comment period. Register for the webinar you will be able to attend:

**Thursday, January 24 – 10:00 AM EST**

**Thursday, January 24 – 5:00 PM EST**

**Wednesday, January 30 – 10:00 AM EST**

## A Preview of the Northeast Regional Action Plan

The [draft Northeast Regional Action Plan](#) details the goals, desired outcomes, investment options, outcome-based performance measures, and priority implementation tasks for the Northeast Region's Cohesive Strategy. These actions, as identified by the NERSC, will enable the Northeast Region to make progress in achieving the overarching national 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 withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.*
3. *Wildfire Response: All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.*

Success in achieving these three broad goals of the Cohesive Strategy is a long-term proposition – no single decision by policymakers or management actions by land managers will solve our Nation's complex wildland fire issues. The strength and success of this Phase III report will lie in its ability to motivate collaborative actions to reduce wildland fire risk. The Northeast Regional Risk Analysis identified a set of feasible alternative investment options for addressing the Cohesive Strategy goals in the Northeast U.S. For each of the investment options, the key risks, barriers, and opportunities were identified, and are addressed in the draft Regional Action Plan:

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<b>Goal 1:</b> Restore & Maintain Landscapes	<b>Goal 2:</b> Fire Adapted Communities	<b>Goal 3:</b> Response to Wildfire
<p><b>Option 1A</b> – Expand the use of pre-scribed fire as an integral tool to meet management objectives in the Northeast.</p>	<p><b>Option 2A</b> -Focus on promoting and supporting local adaptation activities to be taken by communities such as increasing capacity of volunteer fire departments (VFD), passing ordinances, developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP), joining Firewise, or other similar programs.</p>	<p><b>Option 3A</b> - Improve the organizational efficiency and effectiveness of the wild-land fire community (pre-suppression and pre-planning; administration). Areas to address include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and Memorandums of Agreement (MOA)</li> <li>• Radio compatibility and interoperability</li> <li>• Appropriate suppression and de-tection responsibilities regardless of landownership through agreements or contracts</li> <li>• Sharing of personnel (co-funding or contracting)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 1B</b> – Emphasize and actively manage to maintain, restore, and expand when possible, to increase the extent of fire dependent ecosystems and expand the use of fire as a disturbance process. Employ mechanical or other non-fire treatments to reduce risk before re-introducing fire to the ecosystem.</p>	<p><b>Option 2B</b> - Focus on directing hazardous fuel treatments to the wildland-urban interface (WUI). Treatments of WUI lands should provide a broader area of effective protection and reduced risk.</p>	<p><b>Option 3B</b> - Increase the local response capacity for initial attack of wildfires Areas to address include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support rural fire departments to include wildland fire training, personal protective equipment (PPE), equipment, and risk reduction.</li> <li>• Reduce redundant response and reallocate/increase resources to areas needing stronger initial attack.</li> <li>• Use existing capacity more effectively such as authorities, finances, liability, qualifications, and agreements or MOUs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 1C</b> - Focus on mitigating “event” fuels through mechanical treatments and utilizing markets for biomass products to clean up and reduce the potential fire hazard from blowdowns, ice storms, and other forest damaging events.</p>	<p><b>Option 2C</b> - Focus on promoting and supporting prevention programs and activities by targeting them toward reducing when and where human-caused wildfires occur.</p>	<p><b>Option 3C</b> - Further develop shared response capacity for extended attack and managing wildfire incidents with long duration fire potential. Focus areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve mobility of resources to respond to larger, longer fires; better utilize Compacts</li> <li>• Providing additional resources that could be used for initial response, but would not be primary initial response resources</li> <li>• Remove administrative and fiscal barriers that limit use of resources during extended or long-duration fires</li> </ul>

The Action Plan will define and document the actions intended for implementation over the course of the next five years to make progress in achieving the three CS goals. The performance measures and implementation outcomes will enable all parties to assess and track progress toward the desired outcomes envisioned within each goal. The priority implementation tasks will identify specific actions needed to realize measurable progress within the next five years.

**Visit the [NE RSC website](#) to review the draft action plan and provide your comments on the plan.**



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### **Why should you 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. The collaborative approach to developing the regional action plan benefits the local decision makers in considering responsibilities for issues such as fire prevention, preparedness, suppression, hazardous fuels reduction, community protection, and the management and restoration of lands before and after a wildland fire incident.

(Cohesive Strategy). The cohesive strategy effort utilizes a collaborative, science-based approach with active involvement of all levels of government and non-governmental organizations, as well as the public, to seek solutions to wildland fire management issues on all lands.

The cohesive strategy effort is being implemented in three phases, allowing stakeholders to systematically and thoroughly develop a dynamic approach to planning for, responding to, and recovering from wildland fire incidents. Information on this effort is available on the web via [www.forestsandrangelands.gov](http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov). A status update for each of the three phases is provided below.

### **The Development of the Cohesive Strategy in the Northeast Region**

The Cohesive Strategy is a collaborative process with active involvement of all levels of government and non-governmental organizations, as well as the public, to seek national, all-lands solutions to wildland fire management issues.

In response to requirements of the Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement (FLAME) Act of 2009, the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) directed the development of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

### **Cohesive Strategy: Core Values and Vision for the Future**

The Cohesive Strategy is built on several principles and values, including engaging stakeholders, managers, and scientists; using the best available science, knowledge, and experience; and emphasizing partnerships and collaboration. The Cohesive Strategy sets out a vision for the future of wildland fire management: The vision for the next century 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."

