



Western Regional Strategy Committee (WRSC) Update

May 2012

Secretaries of Agriculture & Interior On the Cohesive Strategy

The 2012 fire season is at hand. As we prepare across the West, the increasingly complex issues associated with large destructive wildfires have come into the focus of the federal agency's top leadership. At a press conference on April 26, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar outlined the federal government's readiness for the wildland fire season ensuring protection for communities and restoration of forests and public lands across the country. "We are ready to meet the challenge," said Secretary Vilsack.



"The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy provides a strong, new blueprint to ensure community safety and the restoration of ecosystems to benefit all Americans, especially those who live in the urban-wildland interface areas. Our concern does not stop at the border of federal lands, but rather a strategy that is an all-lands approach for safety and wildfire management.

National Science and Analysis Team Update

The National Science and Analysis Team (NSAT) is currently exploring an initial set of alternatives for meeting Cohesive Strategy goals, using risk-based analyses. These analyses draw from the regional assessments of Phase II, utilizing expertise and information from regional partners—namely scientists, those with traditional ecological knowledge, land managers, and other experts in wildland fire management.

The NSAT is developing this initial set of alternatives to share with the WRSC/WG. Together the groups will identify potential opportunities for managing risks effectively, as well as barriers that may prevent achieving risk reductions. The intent is to draft model outcomes, examining how they are linked with available data, using maps, tables and graphics to display spatial relationships. This information will be helpful in modifying models and, potentially, actions proposed in the regional alternatives.

Why have a science team? The National Science and Analysis Team will enhance decision making by analyzing risk, potential consequences, benefits and alternative actions designed by the regions. Expected completion time is early spring 2013.

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Strategy Briefings Underway

Members of the Western Regional Strategy Committee and Working Group (WG) have given seven presentations on the Cohesive Strategy in 2012, reaching over 400 stakeholders at events in 5 western states. Although stakeholders represented have been mostly fire personnel, broader stakeholder interests were also represented.

For instance, the Western Governors' Association hosted a briefing concurrent with the annual meeting of the International Association of Fire Chiefs in Reno, Nevada in March. Ann Walker, representing the Governor's Association and Dan Smith, representing the National Association of State Foresters, provided an overview of the Cohesive Strategy and lead stakeholder discussions. Stakeholders at this event included regional, state and local land managers, representatives of Firewise communities and collaborative landscape treatment groups, the insurance industry, and county commissioners.

The briefings have introduced the Cohesive Strategy, described the development process and next steps, and enabled WRSC/WG members to answer questions about a variety of concerns. They have also helped to discover new leads for the many "success stories" throughout the western states.

More events are scheduled in May and the WRSC/WG members are stepping up their efforts to find events where they can reach out to groups or stakeholders who may not have been engaged in the CS process yet. If you are planning an event and have an interest in a briefing or presentation about the Cohesive Strategy, please contact one of the representatives listed on the WRSC website:

<http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/members/>

Success Stories and Lessons Learned

To learn about collaboration on the Cohesive Strategy see our Partner Perspectives and Success Stories at:

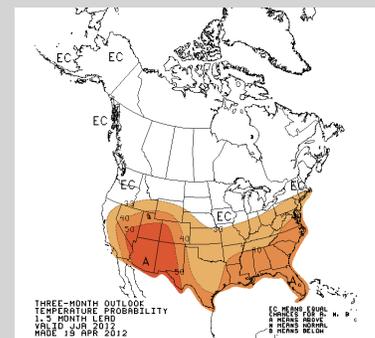
<http://forestsandrangelands.gov>

For earlier updates or read the Western Strategy Assessment itself visit: <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/updates/>

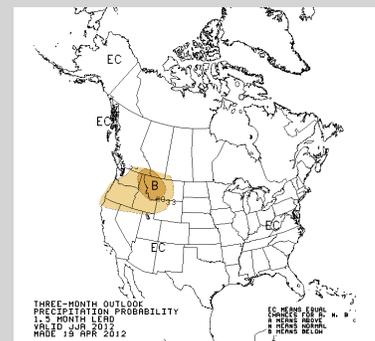
Spring Wildfire Outlook

Above Normal Significant Fire Potential is expected along the East coast from near Wilmington, North Carolina, to near Panama City, Florida, including all of the Florida peninsula; much of eastern Colorado and Wyoming, southwestern South Dakota, western Nebraska, and northwestern Kansas; much of northwestern Nevada; and the west side of the Hawaii's Big Island.

Significant Fire Potential will increase to above normal in the spring in the Sierras and southern mountains of California; most of Arizona except the southwest corner; southern Utah along the Arizona border; western New Mexico; western Colorado; and southwestern Wyoming.



Three month outlook - temperature



Three month outlook - precipitation