

N ational Fire Plan

H azardous Fuels R eduction
N ebraska
2003



The Deadman Complex Fires of 2000 in northwest Nebraska were small in comparison to the Bitterroot fires and even South Dakota's Jasper fire just to the north. However, the complex was difficult to manage and caused misunderstandings, misconceptions, and strained relations among local volunteer fire departments and the Forest Service.



One thing everyone could agree on was that the conditions of the Forest would not get better by itself. So, the fire community and Forest Service managers began to make tentative steps toward focusing on common, community-based goals with the help of the National Fire Plan. The Chadron Creek Hazardous Fuels Project involved local volunteer fire departments, the Nebraska Forest Service, Game and Parks Commission, and State Fire Marshal, as well as county commissioners, and local people living in the

Chadron Creek wildland-urban interface area surrounded by national forest.

The Nebraska National Forest began the effort of coordinating a series of well-attended public field trips as part of the environmental analysis/public involvement process. Relationships began to take a turn for the better.

As the Chadron Creek project moved from planning to implementation in late 2002, the Chadron (NE) Volunteer Fire Department also applied for a grant through the NFP to contract with a fire and natural resource planning firm to complete an area fire plan. A steering committee composed of VFD, State Forest Service, and USFS representatives worked closely with the planning firm over several months to complete the plan. A truly cooperative relationship has been the result, with two members of the committee receiving Regional Forester Awards as external cooperators.

