



## Status Report

**Date:** 5/1/12

**Subcommittee:** CSSC

### **Accomplishments Since Last Report:**

Last month the CSSC asked the RSC's to identify the barriers that are their highest priority to mitigate to help ensure successful implementation of the Cohesive Strategy. The RSC's submitted their responses and the CSSC has begun discussions about them. During the discussion, it was noted that some things may not be "barriers" but are opportunities for better integration. The group agreed and is discussing changing the negative connotation of "barriers" to something more positive such as "opportunities for success" or "critical success factors".

The CSSC has also identified a few high priority tasks that need to be completed and established due dates for completion. These include: (1) compiling the identified barriers (opportunities for success/critical success factors) and developing a proposed path forward to address these factors to send to WFEC, (2) drafting the regional and national report templates (as the CSSC did in Phase II), and (3) thinking beyond February 2013 and drafting the national action plan.

### **Planned Activities for Next Reporting Period:**

The CSSC will develop the barriers document and proposed path forward. They will submit it for discussion at the May 18 WFEC meeting. They will also continue drafting the regional and national report templates and plan to submit those for discussion at the June 1 WFEC meeting.

### **Issues Identified:**

None

### **WFEC Decisions/Approvals Needed:**

None

### **References:**

### **Contact Information:**

Dan Smith - [desmith@blm.gov](mailto:desmith@blm.gov)



## Status Report

**Date:** May 18, 2012

**Subcommittee:** Western RSC

### **Accomplishments Since Last Report:**

The Western Region completed the Regional Worksheet which identified priority action items, utilizing the Technical Team with the NSAT. This priority worksheet was then used by the Strategic Group along with representatives of the NSAT to develop “preliminary” alternatives and performance measures in SLC last week. The NSAT and representatives from the West will continue viewing available science/data to quantify the performance measures and further refine the alternatives. There will be a face to face meeting in SLC July 17-18. We are encouraged by the progress; the efforts between the Region and NSAT have been outstanding. The Communications Strategy Committee continues to produce monthly updates, contact stakeholders and identify immediate successes that are shared on the western website and through other means. We have developed a 1,200 person contact list for distribution of our endeavors. We will be participating in the WFLC (Western Forestry Leadership Coalition) conference to provide an update; members of the WRSC will be making that presentation. We are making additional presentations throughout the West as an update and looking for “new voices” for our outreach efforts.

### **Planned Activities for Next Reporting Period:**

We will be working with the NSAT reviewing science and developing/refining alternatives and performance measures, which will be an ongoing endeavor. The Communications Strategy Group continues weekly conference calls and the West continues participating in the CSSC and WFEC scheduled calls. We will be sending out the “preliminary” alternatives and performance measures to our stakeholders and looking for their feedback as we work with NSAT. The WRSC will finalize the top 3-5 barriers to be submitted to WFEC. We are on track with the Program of Work, and once the Phase III Analysis Template is finalized will begin the “boilerplate” completion of the document.

### **Issues Identified:**

None

### **WFEC Decisions/Approvals Needed:**

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### **References:**

### **Contact Information:**

Joe Stutler, Alan Quan or Joe Freeland

Western Region Strategy Committee/Western Strategy Group:

Last week in SLC, the Western Strategy Group (including those on the phone) spent two productive days developing “preliminary” alternatives and “possible” performance measures for the Phase III Analysis. Additionally we examined potential science and data that would quantify both alternatives and performance measures.

At this stage we agreed that the first set of “preliminary” alternatives would come from the Management Scenarios developed during the Phase II Assessment. Accordingly, at least for now the West would begin with four alternatives, develop performance measures and see where that path takes us in terms of additional alternatives. Perhaps more alternatives would be developed along with performance measures. For now, we’ll see what results from these and build accordingly.

To refresh your memories, here’s what we said in the Phase II Report:

“Throughout the Cohesive Strategy effort there has been a desire to offer alternative means of accomplishing the three national goals. Phase I identified the need to formulate regional alternatives during Phase II. However, as Phase II progressed it became apparent that a more effective way to move forward was through an interactive process during the trade-off analysis scheduled in Phase III. To that end, the WRSC has developed management scenarios that reflect the insights of the western region and facilitate transition into Phase III. These scenarios are not meant to be a complete picture of the future, but to characterize a range of possible and realistic futures in a way that highlights the interrelatedness of the national goals and the potential impacts of various prioritization and investment strategies across those goals and the related western objectives and actions. The scenarios are budget neutral – based on the reallocation of existing resources rather than an increase or decrease from current investment levels – but lend themselves to being combined with various investment support alternatives during Phase III of the Cohesive Strategy”.

Consequently the first four alternatives will be shaped from the following:

Alternative #1: Key Words—EMPHASIZES Landscape Resiliency; wildland fire (all uses) will be a driver; mechanical fuels treatment will be used prior to wildland fire; aggressive wildland fire suppression is essential to protect values and mechanical treatment primary tool to achieve and maintain resiliency; activities prioritized geographically and driven by opportunities to stimulate economic activity to the largest extent possible; over time significantly reduces/modifies wildland fire response.

Potential Measurements: Employment rates, # of large wildland fires, response to resiliency (yes they have science to measure), risk to landscapes is reduced, departure for Historic Range of Variability (HRV), acres negatively affected by wildland fire, communities impacted by wildland fire.

Alternative #2: Key Word—EMPHASIZES Fuels Treatments to Create Fire Adapted Communities; substantially increase fuels treatments by all means within WUI; treats the middle ground, directly connected to approved CWPP's or other planning efforts which have prioritized fuels treatment in WUI; focus on the overall well-being of the community; over time significantly reduces/modifies wildland fire response.

Potential Measurements: Communities negatively affected by wildland fire; employment rates, market changes by virtue of the work, acres treated within WUI by all means; homes lost where treatments have and have not been implemented; FMAG declarations which are FEMA declarations when structures threatened; acres negatively affected by wildland fire within WUI

Alternative #3: Key Words—EMPHASIZES Creation of Fire Adapted Communities through Collaboration and Self-Sufficiency; similar to Alternative #2, additionally remove barriers to encourage actions that promote private citizens and all stakeholders which increases collaboration efforts and results in action to protect values at risk; over time significantly reduces/modifies wildland fire response.

Potential Measurements: # of collaborative efforts focused on fire adapted communities; communities negatively affected by wildland fire; employment rates, market changes by virtue of the work, acres treated within WUI by all means; homes lost where treatments have and have not been implemented; FMAG declarations which are FEMA declarations when structures threatened; acres negatively affected by wildland fire within WUI.

Alternative #4: Key Words—EMPHASIZES Effectiveness in Wildland Fire Response; effective/efficient risk based response that maximizes firefighter and public safety; wildland fire use for resource benefit blended with aggressive wildland fire suppression; protection of property/resources are emphasized, cost management which means wise use of funds; all hands/all lands; integrate local (including community) capacity including private sector resources; shifts in training, mobilization, decision making and does not inadvertently transfer risks; and pre-planning and situational preparedness are key.

Potential Measurements: Acres burned at acceptable fire intensity levels, successful initial attack percentages where appropriate; achieve landscape resilience through suppression by protecting important values; # of acres and communities negatively affected by wildland fire.

### Western Region Phase III Operations Schedule

	NSAT Activities	WR Technical and Strategic Group Activities (POW-Item 1)	Communication Working Group Activities (POW-Item 2)	Collaboration/Outreach Working Group Activities (POW-Item 3)	Western Region RSC/WG Activities
			Compile WR Monthly Update Western Region Webpage Update (POW-Item 2c)	New "targets" for collaboration from the Content Analysis Report	
May		5/10-11 Western Strategic Group Exploration of outcomes from Regional objectives/actions	Content Analysis Complete Comm Plan Addendum Complete May Regional Update (Draft) Success Stories/Lessons Template WR Webpage Redesign/Update Phase III Communication Plan Message and Presentation Update	Outreach/Collaboration Schedule Immediate Actions/Success Stories (POW-Item 3-3)  Outreach/Collaboration Schedule Item 3-1:Success Stories/LL	Via email: - Draft WR May Update - Website Redesign - Item 3-2: Success Stories/LL  5/18- RSC/WG Call -Item 2: Engagements/Messages -Item 3: Success Stories/LL
June	Step D - Specific Alternatives	6/5 - Western Strategic Group Initial Work on Alternatives	June Regional Update (Draft) WR Webpage Update Success Stories/LL Template  Compile WR Monthly Update Western Region Webpage Update (POW-Item 2c)	Outreach/Collaboration Schedule Item 3-1: I&C Framework (Draft) Item 3-2: Success Stories/LL  Outreach/Collaboration Schedule Item 3-1:Success Stories/LL  Outreach/Collaboration Schedule Immediate Actions/Success Stories (POW-Item 3-3)	Via email: -Draft WR June Update -Item 3-1: "Operating Environments" Proposal  6/8 - RSC/WG Call -Item 2: Engagements/Messages -Item 3: Success Stories/LL  6/29 - RSC/WG Call -Item 2: Engagements/Messages -Item 3: Success Stories/LL
July	Step E - More Complete Analysis	7/17-18 Western Strategic Group Develop Specific Alternatives	Regional Update (Draft) and Western Region Webpage Update  Phase III Communication Plan Message and Presentation Update  Compile WR Monthly Update Western Region Webpage Update (POW-Item 2c)	Outreach/Collaboration Schedule Item 3-1:Success Stories/LL  Outreach/Collaboration Schedule Immediate Actions/Success Stories (POW-Item 3-3)	Via email: - Draft WR July Update - Item 3-2: Success Stories Report  7/20 - RSC/WG Call -Item 2: Engagements/Messages -Item 3: Success Stories/LL



**Western Region Phase III Operations Schedule**

December				Regional Update (Draft) and Western Region Webpage Update			12/14 - RSC/WG Call
January				Regional Update (Draft) and Western Region Webpage Update  WR Monthly Update Western Region Webpage Update (POW-Task 2c)			1/11 - RSC/WG Call
February				Regional Update (Draft) and Western Region Webpage Update  WR Monthly Update Western Region Webpage Update (POW-Task 2c)			2/1 - RSC/WG Call  2/22 - RSC/WG Call Escape from the Island?

## Western Region Phase III Communication and Outreach Plan Addendum

The Western Regional Strategy Committee (WRSC) desires to continue an emphasis on stakeholder communication and outreach during Phase III of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. Communication and outreach objectives identified in the Western Region's Phase II Outreach Communication Plan will persist and be built upon during Phase III, and include:

1. Engaging people affected by this strategy in its development within the timeframes identified by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC).
2. Following a collaborative, rigorous, transparent development path.
3. Collecting data representing interests and opinions of stakeholders.
4. Using local, regional, and traditional knowledge and insights, as well as science and technology, to inform the western strategy assessment.
5. Disseminating clear and current information to stakeholders using multiple media on a routine basis.
6. Identifying and sharing on-the-ground success stories, including "key ingredients to success" that could be of immediate help to other communities or organizations.
7. Seeking input from stakeholders to develop Cohesive Strategy implementation plans, and applying their ideas and "key ingredients" associated with successful projects to implementation planning.

### Desired Outcomes for Phase III Communication and Outreach

The Western Region Outreach and Communication Plan dovetails with and supports the objectives of the National Communication Framework. This update includes activities leading to and through Strategy Implementation (February 28, 2013).

Outreach and communication efforts during Phase II provided the WRSC/WG with valuable information used to develop the Western Assessment. Efforts by the WRSC/WG to fully engage all stakeholder groups across the West was hampered by a combination of the time of year outreach was conducted and time limitations established by WFLC. As a result, opportunities remain to strengthen and expand stakeholder engagement during Phase III and set the stage for successful implementation of the Cohesive Strategy

The WRSC has identified the following desired communication and collaboration outcomes and activities to be achieved during Phase III:

- Strengthen and expand stakeholder support throughout the West and ensure all affected stakeholder "voices" are heard and engaged.
  - Share the Western Assessment - expand the dialog and stakeholder participation and continue to identify and add good ideas.
  - Seek specific input to the Goals, Objectives, Sub-Objectives, Actions and broad policy questions described in the Western Assessment.
  - Expand stakeholder support beyond that developed in Phase II by actively reaching out to engage "new voices" in the conversation.
- Continue to identify "Immediate Opportunities for Success" in the West focused on those examples where the three national goals are being met.
  - Identify and describe "key ingredients" including performance measures and metrics that effectively work on the ground.

- Actively share and expand the application of these techniques with willing stakeholder groups.
- Facilitate agency efforts to streamline processes and increase the pace and effectiveness of implementation by taking full advantage of existing authorities to accomplish goals outlined in the Strategy.
  - Solicit ideas from successful collaborative efforts on ways to cut through process and achieve results.
  - Identify perceived and actual procedural barriers to accomplishment of work and provide guidance or materials that clarify procedural options and/or identify options to improve procedures.
  - Provide tools and materials to assist the WRSC/WG in communicating with stakeholders regarding procedural options available to them.
- Actively engage with the Science Team during the Phase III effort.
  - Keep western stakeholders updated on progress, products, and opportunities to provide input.
  - Clarify what the Phase III trade off analysis is, and provide tangible descriptions of Phase III's expected outcomes to western stakeholders.
- Continue to keep the CSSC, WFEC and other Regions apprised of Western Region communication and outreach efforts.
  - Coordinate West-wide efforts with the national communication strategy and team.

### **Western Region Communication Strategy Working Group Goals**

The Western Region Communication Strategy Working Group's goals support the WRSC's desired outcomes for Phase III communication and outreach:

- 1) Strengthen and expand existing WRSC/WG stakeholder engagement and support.
- 2) Improve elements of the Western Assessment by providing opportunity for stakeholder comment prior to Phase III development work.
- 3) Create opportunities for continuous and expanded stakeholder involvement using multiple media and networks (newsletter/updates, website, social media, etc.).
- 4) Distribute accurate, timely information regarding Phase III objectives, progress, and participation opportunities.
- 5) Emphasize elements and tools for successful National Cohesive Strategy implementation that can be pursued immediately.

### **Phase III Western Region Outreach and Communication Actions**

A detailed action plan for the Western Region will be developed by the Communication Strategy Working Group to support the updated Western Region Outreach Communication Plan. The following actions are not intended to be all-inclusive, but illustrate the range of actions that could be taken during Phase III. In some instances, actions can achieve more than one of the desired outcomes described above:

1. Provide communication support and assistance to the WRSC/WG.
  - Assist WRSC/WG members assigned to maintain and pursue expanded stakeholder engagement by providing communication tools and outreach materials.
  - Maintain a calendar of Western CS engagements and track information from those engagements using a "trip report". The trip report will be used to record discussion

topics, identify additional communication support needs, and note any immediate success story “leads”.

- Identify key opportunities for the RSC to provide NSAT with information needed to generate program option tradeoffs and performance measures and integrate those opportunities into the Western Region's communication and outreach plan.
  - Develop communication tools/messages to describe NSAT's role and purpose, and how the outcomes from the trade-off analysis may be used in implementation.
2. Provide stakeholders the opportunity to review and comment on the Western Assessment. Analyze comments and provide the WRSC a portrait of comments and stakeholder response.
  3. Identify stakeholder groups that were not engaged or were inadequately represented in Phase II, and expand outreach to connect with these groups to ensure that the WRSC/WG hears from these “new voices” and engages them in the process.
    - Identify sub-regions and communities of interest not engaged (e.g., conservation groups and organizations, agency non-fire staff, business and industry, and urban stakeholders)
    - Attract and retain these groups’ attention. Strive for understanding, acceptance and support for the Western Assessment and the Cohesive Strategy.
  4. Identify success stories and examples of successful implementation that can be shared with Western stakeholders:
    - Identify groups and individuals that have demonstrated "on the ground" success in achieving the goals of the CS, and encourage them to support the broader application of their successful methods throughout the West.
    - Solicit ideas from successful collaborative efforts about their techniques to reduce process barriers and achieve results.
  5. Use a variety of media to sustain and expand stakeholder outreach and communication to create the social connection and traction needed for a collaborative foundation for strategy implementation. Use these communication methods to enhance understanding of the Western RSC and the Strategy effort by filling in the picture of who we are, what we are doing and why.
    - Develop monthly stakeholder update messages and materials. Develop coordinated messaging that considers: current work of the NSAT, activities of the Western Region Strategy Group and Technical Group, Communication Strategy Working Group, RSC/WG activities, and collaboration and outreach activities. The activities and products of these groups will all feed into the messages developed for internal and external use.
    - Maintain a current mailing list to be used for outreach and updates
    - Maintain information on the Western Region's webpage regarding status, comment opportunities, and who and how to engage in development of the West's strategy.
      - include current updates to reflect the status of the CS Phase III
      - include success stories gleaned from around the West
      - describe immediate actions that can be taken to move communities toward the three goals of the CS
      - promote any opportunities for stakeholders to comment on the development of Phase III



***National Wildland Fire Management Cohesive Strategy  
Western Region Strategy and Assessment***

***Content Analysis of Stakeholder Comments on  
the Western Regional Strategy and Assessment***



Prepared by:

***METI***

...a Merging of Excellence

**Management and Engineering Technologies International, Inc.  
8600 Boeing Drive, El Paso, Texas 79925**

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April 30, 2012

# Western Region Strategy and Assessment Stakeholder Comment Content Analysis Report

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## 1.0 Introduction

This report documents the comments and suggestions provided by stakeholders on the Regional Strategy and Assessment completed during Phase II of developing the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy in the Western Region. The Strategy and Assessment was developed by the Western Region Strategy Committee (WRSC) and Working Group (WG) and completed in the fall of 2011. The Strategy and Assessment was distributed to a broad mailing list for review and comment; in addition it was posted on the [Western Outreach website](http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/) at <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/>.

The Western Regional Strategy Committee (WRSC) and Working Group (WG) are comprised of representatives from federal, tribal, state and local governments and non-government organizations, local natural resource and fire service agencies. Each member represents a wide range of communities of interest with extensive networks of practitioners and constituents. As chartered, the WRSC and WG members are charged with communicating the purposes of the Phase II effort as well as soliciting comments and suggestions regarding the Strategy and Assessment and its implementation. A list of the WRSC and WG members and their affiliations may be found at <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/members/>.

The WRSC and WG tasked members of their groups to identify evaluate the comments received and focus on those comments that provided suggestions and improvements consistent with the intent of the Western Strategy and Assessment. The goal was to make editorial changes and improve the Assessment before the National Science and Analysis Team (NSAT) initiated the trade-off analysis in Phase III. Members of this task group are identified in Appendix A.

Subsequent to those efforts, the WRSC employed the services of Management and Engineering Technologies International, Inc. (METI) to assist with evaluation of other comments and to prepare this content analysis report (see Appendix A).

## 1.1 Outreach Effort

This step in the process was designed to collect feedback from stakeholders on the draft Assessment and Strategy. This opportunity for comment reaffirms the WRSC's desire to provide transparency and provide stakeholders the opportunity to help shape the suite of potential solutions to best meet the West's needs. Stakeholders were asked to review the Western Region Strategy and Assessment and comment on the objectives and sub-objectives, actions and "broad policy questions" described in the document.

The WRSC posted an update to its outreach website in December 2011 soliciting feedback on the Assessment. E-mails were also sent to the outreach mailing list. The following email message was sent by Joe Stutler, Co-Chair of the WRSC on December 8, 2011 to his personal mailing list and typifies the personal distribution of this request to western stakeholders.

*Greetings from the Western Region for the Cohesive Strategy. We are completing Phase II of our efforts and again want to express our gratitude for all your hard work and feedback. At this time we are asking for “stakeholder” feedback on the Western Assessment and have specifically focused on the objectives, sub-objectives, actions and broad policy questions. If you have previously provided feedback for the Western Assessment, here is your opportunity to see how we used [the information you provided] and [why we would like] to keep hearing from you. Please go to the following site: <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/updates/> for a complete update (See December 5, 2011), the complete report with appendices and we’d love to hear from folks. Also please share with any others that may want to provide us feedback on the Western Assessment. Happy Holidays folks, Joe*

During December 2011 and January 2012, members of the WRSC and WG conveyed a similar message to an undetermined number of stakeholders via their personal networks (email and direct contacts) within the communities of interest that they represent.

## 1.2 Outreach Summary

The number of outreach participants and the perspective of their comments represent only those who elected to participate. The results of the outreach effort by number of participants, method of participation, and affiliation group, are presented in Table 1-1.

**Table 1-1: Number of Stakeholders Commenting By Affiliation Group**

Stakeholder Affiliation	Number
Federal Government	10
Local Government	1
Non-Government Organizations	4
Industry	1
Other	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>17</b>

Stakeholder affiliations used are consistent with those used in the Western Region Phase II Content Analysis.

## 1.3 Document Organization

This report documents comments received during the outreach effort including e-mailings and web-based solicitation. The information in content analysis report will be considered by the WRSC, Working Group, and the NSAT during their deliberations and preparation for Phase III of the Western Strategy.

This document is organized into the following sections:

**Section 1: Introduction** describes the intent and process used to solicit feedback from the Western Assessment and Strategy.

**Section 2: Content Analysis** describes the process used and provides an analysis of those comments received related to objectives, actions and policy questions.

**Section 3: Comment Evaluation** describes the affiliation of those who commented and compares this to the previous outreach results for Phase II effort and the nature of comments provided.

**Section 4: Observations** provides recommendations to the WRSC and WG regarding outreach “gaps,” potential focus areas, options to improve understanding of the Strategy, and information useful for interactions between the Strategic and Technical Groups interacting with NSAT during Phase III.

## 2.0 Content Analysis

Content analysis and the information presented below focuses on comments received from 17 stakeholders via email and correspondence in response to the request by the Chair of the Western RSC. Comments made to members of the WG or RSC via avenues other than those listed above are not included in the content analysis.

A total of 203 separate comments were made by 17 stakeholders in the documents reviewed. Comments were analyzed and classified as related to one of the following categories:

- 1) Suggestions/improvements within the intent of the original document and useful for defining options or alternatives for the NSAT and Western RSC and to consider, or may be used to develop performance measures or implementation actions for the West.
- 2) Suggestions that have merit, but are different than the intent of the WRSC in the original document, the WRSC will consider these later, following initial trade-off analysis and these comments may affect options, alternatives, and implementation actions or develop additional performance measures. This analysis would occur near the end of the Phase III effort.
- 3) Suggestions that identify immediate success opportunities that either mirror Phase II content analysis comments or it is clear that an immediate success opportunity exists for follow-up.
- 4) Suggestions that simply don't fit with the Western Assessment or merged National Phase II Report; these may be incongruent with the Flame Act or guiding principles of the Cohesive Strategy.
- 5) Suggestions that are beyond the authority or scope of the Western Region due to timing or previous agreements at a higher level.

Section 2.0 documents the classification of and summarizes comments provided for each of these five categories. Table 2-1 identifies the classification of comments in each category.

The Working Group content analysis team completed an initial sort of the 203 comments into separate categories. Because the WRSC agreed to the recommendations for the 81 comments in category 1, the METI content analysis team preserved all category 1 classifications. The METI team reviewed all remaining comments and reclassified them into appropriate categories and prepared the summary of comments of all categories presented in Section 2.0.

**Table 2-1: Number of Comments by Category**

Comment Category	Number of Comments
1 – Within Intent; Changes Made	81
2 – To be Considered in Phase III	85
3 – Immediate Opportunities	0
4 – Beyond Scope of the WRSC	16
5 – Beyond Authority	21
Total	203

Note: In some cases comments were classified into more than one category; the total above reflects potential double-counting of some comments.

Section 3.0 provides an evaluation of stakeholder participation relative to Phase II and an assessment of comments provided during this comment period.

The final phase of the content analysis process takes a “big picture view” to highlight key observations identified by the METI Content Analysis Team, which are presented in Section 4.0.

#### Note to Reviewers

The information derived from the content analysis represents only a portrait of comments provided by those who elected to participate in the outreach effort. It is not a statistically valid sample of stakeholders affected by wildland fire issues in the West. It does, however, provide information about the variety of perspectives and in some cases points of agreement on different issues.

Although every attempt was made to identify individual comments and categorize them correctly, error is inevitable and thus some mistakes in classification may have occurred despite quality control and reviews conducted during the analysis process.

#### 2.1 Suggestions and Improvements within the Intent of the Strategy and Assessment

This section includes suggestions and improvements within the intent of the original document, and useful for defining options or alternatives for the NSAT and Western RSC and to consider, or may be used to develop performance measures or implementation actions for the West.

Of the 203 comments received, 81 were determined to be in this category, which was further refined into the following sub-categories:

Subcategory and Description		Number
2.1.1	Comments that generated new sub-objectives or action items or significant revisions to existing sub-objectives or action items	19
2.1.2	Comments that resulted in editorial corrections that improve the wording in the Strategy and Assessment	44
2.1.3	Identification of unsubstantiated statements or inconsistent treatment of the same topic in different parts of the document	4
2.1.4	Other- includes recommendations to consider in the Phase III analysis and recommendations to the Communication team	14

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity. Direct quotes from commenters are *italicized*.

### **2.1.1 Summary of Comments that generated new sub-objectives or action items**

Significantly revised or new additions are listed under the appropriate Goal and Objective. All but one major addition or revision falls under Goal 1 - Resilient Landscapes. One comment addresses Goal 3 - Wildfire Response. The following summarizes the 19 comments included in this sub-category. Comments are referenced to the Strategy and Assessment outline.

#### **Goal 1 – Resilient Landscapes**

##### **Guiding Questions:**

- ✓ Are quality Forest Plan approved fire prescriptions in place and experienced field people present on the unit to decide and implement where wildland fire can be used immediately to achieve resilient landscape conditions and Forest Plan Goals and Objectives?
- ✓ Have we postponed previously identified landscape vegetation treatments due to prioritizing the WUI in the past 10 years?

##### **1.1. Objective: Actively manage the land and water to achieve healthy forest, watershed, and rangeland conditions.**

- ✓ 1.1.3.3 Accelerate revision of federal LRMPs and FMPs that currently prevent fire management for multiple objectives, including resource benefit.
- ✓ 1.1.3.4 Update federal Land and Resource Management Plans and Fire Management Plans, especially those that specify “suppression only,” to allow full range of management options (2009 Implementation Guidance), including management of fire for multiple objectives, including resource benefit.
- ✓ 1.1.8 Identify and map areas nationwide where changes in fire management and landscape treatments would bring the most needed improvements in landscape resilience.
- ✓ 1.1.4.2 Emphasize restoration of forests, rangelands, and watersheds at large landscape scales with a priority focus on the “middle ground.” Actively use “middle ground” treatments to accelerate restoration and maintenance of landscape resilience.
- ✓ 1.1.9 Conduct assessments of fuel treatment effectiveness, including improvements in multiple dimensions: firefighter and public safety, ecological impact, watershed health, fire suppression costs, extreme fire behavior and contributions to local economies.

##### **1.2 Objective: Protect landscapes and multiple values from the effects of unwanted fire.**

- ✓ 1.2.1.1 Expand fire prevention programs to include the relationship between severe wildfire and landscape resilience, including water quantity and quality.
- ✓ 1.2.5 In advance of fire seasons, identify post-fire hazards, as well as places where managing wildfires for multiple objectives would bring benefits to landscape resilience. Clarify roles and responsibilities, position for taking advantage of fire opportunities and responding to impacts on landscapes and communities. Engage the local workforce.
- ✓ 1.2.6 Develop a methodology for resolving the conflict between the costs and benefits gained by aggressive initial attack and the costs and benefits gained from managing fires for multiple objectives including resource be

### 1.3 Objective: Improve interagency and stakeholder coordination and planning of actions that contribute to achieving landscape resiliency.

- ✓ 1.3.2 Launch a multi-agency workforce development initiative (including knowledge sharing, recruitment, training, incentives, mentoring and promotion) aimed at building workforce skills in collaborative fire planning and problem solving, stakeholder engagement, conflict management and group facilitation.
- ✓ 1.3.3 Design and commit to a focused multi-party monitoring component for treatment activities that allows effective data comparison across multiple jurisdictions, encourages managers and stakeholders to address key uncertainties about treatment effectiveness, and drives investments based on specific types of effectiveness.
- ✓ 1.3.4 Reduce administrative and operational barriers to landscape- level, cross-boundary resource management

### Goal 3 – Wildfire Response

#### Guiding Question:

- ✓ Is there unified understanding of landscape, community, natural resource values and stewardship investments at risk and how to lower “total wildfire costs and impacts?”

#### 2.1.2 Comments that Resulted in Editorial Corrections that Improve the Wording

The team identified a total of 44 comments that helped improve clarity or added a key point that was missing. Changes are in bold italics; text with a strike through it was deleted. Examples include:

- ✓ Performance Measures: Risks to Landscapes, ***watersheds and natural resources*** is diminished.
- ✓ Emphasize the design and use of treatments that reduce hazardous fuels and contribute to resilient landscapes ***and healthy watersheds*** while meeting social and economic needs.
- ✓ *Basic premise:* A balanced wildfire response requires integrated pre-fire planning with effective, efficient, and coordinated ~~emergency~~ ***response***.
- ✓ A century of fire ~~suppression~~ ***exclusion*** has led to dramatic increases in forest stand densities and understory growth.
- ✓ Actively restore and maintain biodiversity, desired species (***including threatened, endangered, and proposed listed species***), and their habitat.
- ✓ Support land uses and industries (e.g., timber, grazing, fishing, hunting, tourism, recreation, and energy development using biomass removal) where ***they improve landscape resilience*** and support local economies.
- ✓ Assist private property ***and local government*** landowners in mitigating the effects of natural hazards resulting from wildland fire on public lands (e.g. flash flooding, debris-flows, loss of rangeland productivity, loss of timber).

#### 2.1.3 Unsubstantiated Comments or Inconsistent Treatment of the Same Topic

Stakeholders provided comments that identified statements in the Strategy and Assessment that lacked supporting rationale or topics that were treated differently in different parts of the document, for example:

- ✓ Logging and grazing are never acknowledged as part of the problem in western landscapes and instead, without qualification, treated as important remedial practices.
- ✓ A specific requirement for the strategy is to incorporate policies that are “consistent with the recommendations described in recent reports of the Government Accountability Office regarding management strategies. However, the Phase I National Strategy did not cite any GAO report, let alone detail any effort to be consistent with any such report. Similarly, the Western Report does not mention, or discuss consistency with, any GAO report.

#### **2.1.4 Other Recommendations to Consider in Phase III**

Fourteen of the 81 category 1 comments defined options or alternatives for the Western RSC to consider, outlined key ideas to consider in the Phase III Assessment, or offered advice to the Communication team on important issues.

Referred to WRSC for resolution:

- ✓ The following recommendation to remove 1.2.3 from Landscapes and relocate it to Wildland Urban Interface goal.
  - Remove: 1.2.3. Identify, prioritize, and protect economic and commodity values and high priority natural resources (e.g., timber and grazing) across all ownerships.
- ✓ 2.2: "Identify, prioritize, and protect economic and commodity values and high priority natural resources (e.g., timber and grazing) across all ownerships"

The following comments were recommended for consideration/inclusion within the Phase III Report:

- ✓ *“Critical to any successful fire management and restoration strategy will be identifying priority areas where active management is needed so that resources can be focused on those areas.”*
- ✓ *“If we’re trying to get local residents to take a role, get local federal employees more on board. Right now they know nothing about the CS. And also, don’t skip over some of the tasks that speak to working with local, county and state folks on issues, because if the science team does, and just stays in their room talking to one another, they’ll never be successful. Items like 1.2.5 (Identify potential post-fire hazards in advance of fire seasons to clarify roles and responsibilities) and 3.5 (Develop community-based strategies to deal with post-fire hazards), and they need to be addressed with local input - from the beginning.”*
- ✓ *“A specific requirement for the strategy is to incorporate policies that are “consistent with the recommendations described in recent reports of the Government Accountability Office regarding management strategies. However, the Phase I National Strategy did not cite any GAO report, let alone detail any effort to be consistent with any such report. Similarly, the Western Report does not mention, or discuss consistency with, any GAO report.”*
- ✓ *“It is essential that decisions which are based on factual inquiry, as we trust most will be, should be held in abeyance until the science phase of this process can inform them.”*
- ✓ *“The Western Report proceeds on a simplistic account of how landscapes have come to be damaged. The effort to remediate those problems that do exist are not likely to succeed if all major causes are not identified and addressed. Thus, not only logging of large trees and grazing need to be part of what is changed, but fire suppression itself. The report is schizophrenic on this subject, explaining the harm that fire suppression has caused while at the same time arguing for measures to make it more effective and rapidly applied. There is probably no more important challenge for wildfire management and landscape*

*restoration planning in the west than identifying where to let fires burn, and how to add as much let burn acreage as possible with limited investment in active management”.*

- ✓ *“Comments regarding science team structure. Breaking out those 3 goals into separate committees does a disservice to them all. By combining fuels and suppression, leaving fire adapted communities on its own with a separate committee, you are allowing the hard science folks to duck some of the real issues, such as how to get the public on board. Sure, that’s not their forte, but I feel they need to hear the issues as they move forward with their work. It will help connect the 3 goals better.”*
- ✓ *“I believe that the biggest issue in the CS is that it includes more players than just the federal agencies - it’s going to try and get private landowners to take a role in wildfire issues. It practically mandates this, but how is this going to be done??”*
- ✓ *“CWPPs need to be made a part of FMPs for federal agencies. There is no reason for locals to spend so much energy on their CWPPs every year if the feds don’t even know they exist, much less have read or incorporated findings within them into their own work.”*

The following comments were referred to the communication team for their consideration:

- ✓ *“Studies also show that by publicizing what, when, where, why, and how prescribed fire is going to occur, there is more acceptance and less complaints about the smoke. During this CS process, the feds should be publicizing what they are doing. It might still be too soon to start sharing what we are looking to accomplish, but by later this year it won’t be.”*
- ✓ *“I think that whomever is designing the communications program for the public needs to play up the concept of roles and responsibilities. We all will have them. Make the public part of the team. If they understand the big picture, the objectives, the R & R’s and such, they will come to understand their role, and then take on the responsibility.”*
- ✓ *“I think the current economic and political situations make it imperative that we are careful how we promote personal responsibility.”*
- ✓ *“Money/grants isn’t always the solution, though. We need the landowner to understand the whys and how’s of what they are being asked to do on their land, so that when the funding goes away, they know they have to maintain the treatments!”*
- ✓ *“More communication and more information from the CS planners/developers is needed, because it isn’t being sifted down to local levels, and so there are rumors, angst, and tensions between partners who normally work well together in their communities.”*
- ✓ *“Item 2.4 is the toughest but most vital item of the CS. But, we or the feds can’t “define” the private landowner’s “role” in the CS. The private landowners need to be given enough education so that they discover their role, and accept it.”*

The following comments were referred to WFLC to address because these changes were established at the national level and cannot be modified by a single region:

- ✓ *Edit “National Outcome-based Performance Measure” to say \*Risks to landscapes, “watersheds and natural resources.”*
- ✓ *Responding to Wildfires. Add to the listed National Outcome-based Performance Measures the following additional measure.\* “Losses of significant natural resource values and stewardship investments are diminished.”*

## 2.2 Suggestions different than the WRSC's intent to be addressed during Phase III

Comments received that were included in this category have potential utility during the trade-off analysis and interactions with NSAT during Phase III. Many responses stressed the need for more and better information about topics covered in the Assessment. Cooperation and planning was another common theme. There were numerous ideas and suggestions that can apply to the Implementation Plan for the Strategy, scheduled to be completed by March 1, 2013. Comments pertaining to procedure or law were also split out for their unique value. Finally, the need for science and the use of performance measures was also a recurring theme.

Of the 203 comments received, 85 were determined to be in this category, which was further refined into the following sub-categories:

Subcategory and Description		Number
2.2.1	Comments requesting clarification, definition or description of Strategy elements or terms	11
2.2.2	Comments pertaining to cooperation and planning	13
2.2.3	Comments about implementation ideas and options	21
2.2.4	Comments regarding procedure and law	5
2.2.5	Comments about science and performance measures	10
2.2.6	Suggested editorial changes to Strategy and Assessment outside the intent of the WRSC	25

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity. Direct quotes from commenters are *italicized*.

### 2.2.1 Clarification, Definition, Description

A number of respondents were concerned that definitions of specific terms or concepts were lacking in the document. Others required more background information about the use of fire on the landscape; the historical uses of the western landscape and how that affects the current situation; or even what qualifications might be required for personnel implementing prescribed fire. These comments may be useful for the development of Phase III and any implementation documents.

- ✓ A number of respondents thought there was a need to improve the explanation of the role of fire on the landscape.
- ✓ Commenters asked for improved definitions associated with fire use and landscapes.
- ✓ *"Where does private sector fit in this dispatch system? We believe that we should be considered a federal resource as that is the intent of our agreements/contract."*
- ✓ Some claim that the report falls short in that logging and grazing are not adequately recognized as contributing to the problems in our western forests.
- ✓ *"I think the current economical and political situations make it imperative that we are careful how we promote personal responsibility. Folks can barely afford food and heat, let alone doing a lot of work on their property and being told to put a new roof or siding on their home."*
- ✓ There is a need for a more comprehensive description of the pre-conditions for the use of prescribed fire.
- ✓ Improve the discussion of priority setting with regard to watershed values, habitat, forest structure, and other desired outcomes.

- ✓ One commenter said that the word “resilient” doesn’t resonate very well with WUI residents..
- ✓ *“We need the landowner to understand the whys and how’s of what they are being asked to do on their land, so that when the funding goes away, they know they have to maintain the treatments!”*
- ✓ There is a need to improve the definition of “resources” and “investment levels” when discussing the management scenarios.
- ✓ The Strategy should acknowledge that “stay and defend” is a valid choice for well-informed and prepared homeowners.
- ✓ Is there suggested guidance or verbiage in this document on how to address differences in management objectives of adjacent landowners or jurisdictions when they differ? Doesn't agency policy dictate this? (refers to “Guiding Principles from Phase 1” p.10 of WRSA)
- ✓ *“Fire management programs and activities are economically viable and commensurate with values to be protected, land and resource management objectives, and social and environmental quality considerations.” Is there suggested guidance or verbiage in this document on how to address these issues when they differ? Doesn't agency policy dictate? (refers to “Guiding Principles from Phase 1” p.10 of WRSA)*

### **2.2.2 Cooperation and Planning**

These are examples of comments received from respondents that remain concerned about the level of coordination among stakeholders and government agencies as the strategy is developed and implementation planning proceeds.

- ✓ *“My comment is to reinforce that fire management is one team working toward multiple ends, and that each of those ends are interconnected These three objectives should be intertwined so that the document demonstrates how improvement in one area facilitates improvement or changes in another.”*
- ✓ Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP’s) need to be incorporated into federal land management plans.
- ✓ *“There needs to be a way to easily input the values identified in CWPPs into programs like WFDSS. If a community identified ‘X’ as an important value to protect, then: 1) they need to have identified a method/means to protect that resources; and 2) whoever is the IC and IMT must recognize that particular value and plan accordingly.”*
- ✓ Agency employees need better information about the Cohesive Strategy; it’s not getting down to local levels.
- ✓ *“Many government facilities are unprepared for wildfire events and have done little in utilizing Firewise concepts for protection in the event of wildfire events, thus requiring significant expenditure of suppression funds in the protection of such facilities.”*
- ✓ *“Greater federal representation will not create better plans nor will it foster ownership on the part of communities. There needs to be an entirely different tact in gaining participation from individuals and communities; and until that happens there likely will be little improvement in community buy-in and action on the plans.”*
- ✓ Communities with effective CWPP’s should receive priority funding or resources in the Strategy.
- ✓ *“Incentive programs created under the original NFP funding and guidance were a great idea but never fully utilized. Perhaps this is due to the fact they were not consistent or well-advertised. We should*

*consider one consistent incentive package, promote it, and share the resulting successes broadly (in the media campaign)."*

- ✓ *"Studies also show that by publicizing what, when, where, why, and how prescribed fire is going to occur, there is more acceptance and less complaints about the smoke. During this CS process, the feds should be publicizing what they are doing. It might still be too soon to start sharing what we are looking to accomplish, but by later this year it won't be."*

### **2.2.3 Implementation Ideas and Options**

There were numerous comments and suggestions about how to move forward on implementing actions to meet the goals of the Strategy. These ranged from specific advice about contracting or the use of private fire management services to how to articulate actions that are needed to meet the goals.

- ✓ Need to make better distinction between market-based solutions for restoration versus market-driven prescriptions, which may put landscapes at further risk.
- ✓ One person suggested a need for a liability protection program for those who use fire on the landscape.
- ✓ *"Small, piecemeal projects will not achieve the kinds of changes needed to promote healthy, fire-adapted ecosystems. A cohesive strategy must ensure commitments to collaborative efforts and partnerships that have developed in improving landscape health."*
- ✓ There's a need to increase the emphasis on the impacts of invasive species on our ability to meet the three CS goals
- ✓ Need to clarify which active management techniques will achieve positive results on the ground. The report references fishing, hunting, etc. as creating positive results when these really are positive outcomes created by good land management.
- ✓ *"If we are EVER going to change the way people live and build in the WUI, it's going to be with a frank, honest, innovative, public education campaign using both traditional (TV and radio) and non-traditional (social) media. This idea is not new but is well supported in the 2005 and 2009 QFRs so let's get after it before we hear it again in the 2013 QFR. Think Super Bowl ad! Let's save the dollars we plan on spending to analyze, model and contract experts in Phase III and instead finally make a true investment in education."*
- ✓ IDIQ (indefinite delivery indefinite quantity) contracts have been very successful in many places in the West. These should be considered in any implementation plan.
- ✓ One commenter reminds us that private fire resources are often available to a community to do restoration work.
- ✓ The Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center can be utilized to meet the intent of 3.2.2, a national health and safety reporting system.
- ✓ *"The Western Report repeatedly suggests that resources have been mistakenly focused on the immediate vicinity of homes, and seeks to equate other areas of human use and interest with communities as priorities. For example, expressing concern over "an artificial distinction between 'home' and 'homeland' that often results in a lower priority for active management of the larger landscape". This distinction is anything but artificial and should indeed be utilized to set priorities."*
- ✓ We need to work toward the goal of "every burnable acre has a fire management plan". This will help solve coordination, planning, efficiency, safety and other issues.

- ✓ *“Would like to see the opportunity for local members of the private industry have a place at the table on a local level as well as state and national We have historically made up over 40% of the fire resources national and as much as 70% in the NW we are big partner in this effort.”*
- ✓ Some commenters question the need for developing a new AD hiring system; they do not see what is “broke or needs fixing.”
- ✓ Communities can increase their self-reliance through the use of existing programs such as VFA and RFA. Those programs are underfunded, however.
- ✓ *“The items 1.4.1 through 1.4.5 have all been implemented for a number of years with at best only marginal success. Rather than list these things here, why not provide some consideration of why success has been limited and provide guidance geared toward improving the results?”*
- ✓ One suggests establishing interagency/multijurisdictional Type 3 Incident Management Team standards to help meet the Fire Response objective (3.4.2.3).
- ✓ *“It lacks the sense of how it will play out, and be carried out in the field. How it will be managed and what effect it will have on programs at the field level seem to be conspicuously missing elements.”*
- ✓ Training and qualifications for firefighters need to be reviewed and applied consistently across all cooperators.
- ✓ *“Critical to any successful fire management and restoration strategy will be identifying areas where active management is needed so that resources can be focused on those areas. While the report recognizes the need for priorities, it contains assertions about priorities that are counter-factual or fail to help distinguish the areas most in need of treatment.”*

#### **2.2.4 Procedure and Law**

Some commenters were focused on the laws or regulations that guide or dictate the development of the Strategy or the actions that might be required to meet the goals of the strategy. The FLAME Act was referenced a number of times. These comments should be considered as Phase III proceeds and as any implementation plans are put forward.

- ✓ There needs to be an emphasis on a requirement for properly qualified personnel to develop and implement sound fire management plans.
- ✓ Some identified a need to accelerate the revision of federal land and resource management plans in order to facilitate the development of local fire use policies.
- ✓ The FLAME Act requires references to GAO reports regarding management strategies. There are no references to any of these in the report.
- ✓ The FLAME Act (Sec. 503(6)1) requires that treatments focus on the most cost effective means for allocating fuels dollars. The WUI is not the most cost effective use of funds.
- ✓ Some commenters feel that it is not appropriate for this strategy to discuss the need to change environmental laws. .

#### **2.2.5 Science and Performance Measures**

As Phase III of the Cohesive Strategy proceeds, a number of commenters had science questions or advice or concerns about topics that are directly related to how science will be used or incorporated into

the process. Performance measures were also noted as areas of interest. These comments may be useful to the science team for guidance or for areas that need further clarification.

- ✓ Establish the scientific basis for the relationship among insect and disease epidemics, dead trees and wildfire risk.
- ✓ Establish the scientific basis for post fire restoration needs.
- ✓ How will “risk to landscapes” be measured?
- ✓ Regarding the development of trade-offs and alternatives, use caution to not over-rely on models. Incorporate successful experiences and ground based knowledge as well.
- ✓ One commenter questions how we will assess the performance measure: "Injuries and loss of life to the public and firefighters are diminished".
- ✓ How will the “risk of wildfire impacts to communities” be measured?
- ✓ Regarding the goal of “all jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions”: What will be the determined level of success and how will it be measured?
- ✓ Re: Performance measure "Response to shared jurisdiction wildfire is efficient and effective" By whose account? What classifies efficient and effective?
- ✓ *“I’ve recently seen surveys where WUI folks do not feel they are at risk, even though they’ve got a CWPP, have had fires in the area and have received lots of outreach & education over a period of 5-10 years. Why not? Many have done defensible space - do they think this makes everything OK? I’d sure like to see more research on this ASAP in areas that definitely are in high-risk areas.”*

### **2.2.6 Suggested Editorial Changes Outside the Intent of the WRSC**

These comments were editorial in nature and not substantive, and outside the intent of the Strategy and Assessment. Comments were not considered for further analysis. In some cases they suggested wording changes to material in the Assessment. In other cases, they questioned the proper location for the topic within the document. There were 25 comments in this group.

An example: *Change question from: “Can wildland fire be used..... as a tool to achieve resilient landscapes?” to ...“Can vegetation treatments be used..... as a tool to achieve resilient landscapes?”*

*Or: Remove 1.2.3. Identify, Prioritize, and protect economic and commodity values and high priority natural landscapes (e.g., timber and grazing) across all ownerships. Objective does not contribute to landscape resilience and fits better in Fire Adapted Communities.*

### **2.3 Immediate success opportunities**

This category includes suggestions and information useful in identifying immediate success opportunities that either mirror Phase II content analysis comments or it is clear that an immediate success opportunity exist for follow-up.

No comments were identified that fall within this category.

## 2.4 Suggestions Contrary to the Cohesive Strategy Guiding Principles or FLAME Act

The following comments and suggestions simply don't fit with the Western Assessment or merged Phase II Report; that are incongruent with the FLAME Act or guiding principles of the Cohesive Strategy.

The 16 comments included in this category all address Goal 3 – Wildfire Response. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity. Direct quotes from commenters are *italicized*.

### Comments Related to Goal 3 – Wildfire Response

- ✓ Objective 3.3.2: Create a new emergency hire system to replace the existing AD authority.
- ✓ Objective 3.3.3.2: Eliminate unprotected areas. The reason these areas exist is typically because residents and land-owners don't want to pay for protection.
- ✓ Objective 3.3.3.5: Expand FEMA fire mitigation and disaster assistance grant programs
- ✓ Objective 3.4.2.1: Enhance and support capability of state and local governments (through Federal Excess Property Program, Volunteer Fire A, Rural Fire Assistance and State Fire Assistance)
- ✓ Ensure that each Geographic Area has sufficient Type 3 interagency incident management teams to respond to wildfires that are managed either by the GACC or nationally during preparedness levels 4 and 5.

## 2.5 Suggestions and Comments beyond the Scope of the WRSC's Authority/Charter

The following suggestions were deemed to be beyond the authority or scope of the Western Region due to timing or previous agreements at a higher level. A total of 21 comments were included in this category. Most focused on Goal 3 – Wildfire Response.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity. Direct quotes from commenters are *italicized*.

### Comments Related to Goal 1 – Resilient Landscapes

- ✓ Scenario 1: The broad categories outlined in this scenario are too focused on the use of wildland fire and do not address rangeland scenarios adequately. NEPA documents identify the objectives for landscapes and these three broad categories do not describe ones that I have seen in most BLM RMPs.

### Comments Related to Goal 2 – Fire Adapted Communities

- ✓ 2.3.9 Clarify how the Federal register list of Communities at Risk (CARs) will be used in the future. Ensure a process is established in each state to update the list for use in planning or...abandon the concept of CARs to be replaced by CWPP mapping of high risk areas.

### Comments Related to Goal 3 – Wildfire Response

- ✓ Re: 3.3.1.4 "Clarify and communicate roles and responsibilities to enhance partnerships, recipient resource sharing, and acceptance of cooperator standards for training and resources"
- ✓ Re: 3.4.2.3. Ensure that each Geographic Area has sufficient Type 3 interagency incident management teams to respond to wildfires that are managed either by the GACC or nationally during preparedness levels 4 and 5

- ✓ Re: 3.4.4. Protect fire managers from legal and criminal liability when performing their jobs within delegated authority and approved operating policies and procedures.
- ✓ Re: 3.4.5. Maximize the use of technology to evaluate the numbers of coordination and dispatch centers including locations.
- ✓ Re: 3.4.7.1. Develop a western compact between states and tribes that allows for incident business payments to take place.
- ✓ *“Seems like a big theme going on behind the scenes here is the need for comprehensive, simple, logical, multi-jurisdictional/interagency fire management plans. This was once the lofty goal of the National Fire Plan (remember “every burnable acre will have a fire management plan”?) We have some models that work just fine right now (UIA, etc.), but we haven’t adopted them yet, and we certainly haven’t included any non-federal entities or resources in them. I think if we could work towards this large, complicated, but necessary goal, it would take care of everything else. If we had a truly interagency/all responsible party FMP that covers every acre, it would solve coordination, planning, dispatching, efficiency, safety, and funding issues, but maybe I’m too idealistic.”*
- ✓ Re: 3.4.8. Develop site-specific community-based strategies to reduce emergency spending over time (interagency agreements, closest forces, training, etc.).
- ✓ Re: 3.4.7.3. Develop an appropriate cost apportionment and variable agreements administered through a national payments system that would include wildfire and all-risk response.

### 3.0 Comment Evaluation

This section is designed to take a broader look at stakeholder participation and the overarching messages provided during this extended comment period.

A combination of the timing of the comment period (over the holidays) and informal nature of notice to stakeholders may have limited the number of stakeholders participating in and providing comments. Table 3-1 compares the number of commenting stakeholders by affiliation, whether they are represented on the WRSC/WG and whether they commented during Phase II.

**Table 3-1: Number of Stakeholders Commenting By Affiliation Group**

Stakeholder Affiliation	Number	Represented on RSC/WG	Commented in Phase II
Federal Government	10	10	1
Local Government	1	0	0
Non-Government Organizations	4	1	1
Industry	1	0	0
Other	1	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>

What is notable about the composition of those who commented are the number represented on the WRSC or WG. In some instances, members of the WRSC or WG provided comments as opposed to directly participating in the dialogue and interactions leading up to the development of the Western Strategy and Assessment.

The overall composition of stakeholder participation during Phase II and those providing comments on the Strategy and Assessment are similar (see Table 3-2). The percentage of participation by stakeholder

groups has not significantly changed and the focus on Federal Government stakeholders actually increased although these stakeholders are more geographically dispersed and expand representation within the Bureau of Land Management.

Participation by non-governmental organizations increased and there were “new voices” in the conversation. However, over 60% of those who commented represented Federal agencies and bureaus.

**Table 3-2 – Number and Percent of Stakeholders Participating by Affiliation**

Stakeholder Affiliation	Phase II		Assessment Comments		Cumulative Totals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Federal Government	76	31	10	59	86	33
Tribal	14	6	0	0	14	5
State Government	30	12	0	0	30	11
Local Government	23	9	1	6	24	9
Non-Governmental Organization	38	16	4	24	42	16
Industry	20	8	1	6	21	8
Fire Departments	18	7	0	0	18	7
Homeowner/Landowner	12	5	0	0	12	5
Other	14	6	1	6	15	6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>100</b>

A closer examination of comments from stakeholders representing “new voices” can be used to show the degree of alignment of these stakeholders with the Western Region Strategy and Assessment. In particular, the number of comments falling in Categories 2, 4 and 5 by definition indicate where there is not alignment. Table 3-3 shows the distribution of comments received from those who have not previously participated.

**Table 3-3 – Alignment of Stakeholders Representing “New Voices”**

Affiliation	Cat. 1	Cat. 2	Cat. 3	Cat. 4	Cat. 5
NGO – Group 1	2	11			
NGO – Group 2	3	3		1	2
NGO – Group 3	3	4		2	2
Local Government	15	8		2	4

As in the Phase II, information on success stories or immediate actions was limited. In fact, no comments were identified as falling within this category, although the solicitation for comments asked for this information.

Stakeholder perceptions regarding the Cohesive Strategy and Western Strategy and Assessment as a funding tool continues to persist. The underlying concept of the Cohesive Strategy and implementation plan as a unifying approach that relies on synergy and integration to increase implementation success is not evident in the comments provided.

## 4.0 Observations

The following observations were generated by the Content Analysis Team based on a combination of a review of comments, participation in Phase II outreach and content analysis, and their collective experience dealing with wildland fire management in the West.

1. Aggressively Pursue Expanded Stakeholder Involvement - A more focused, deliberate approach to expanding stakeholder involvement and engagement needs to be pursued. The WRSC's "engagement calendar" and "trip reports" present a method for recording the WG and WRSC members' face to face interactions with stakeholders, to clarify which stakeholders are aware and involved with the Strategy, and identify any gaps in this effort. Specific assignments by WRSC members may be necessary to significantly expand the dialogue with stakeholders beyond the results from Phase II and the comment period. This effort is consistent with the Western Region's Phase III Program of Work Items 2 and 3.
2. Seek to Gain Understanding and Support Among "New Voices" - "New voices" are supportive of the Cohesive Strategy goals but disagree with the orientation of the Western Strategy and Assessment in one or more goals. As with the first recommendation, a targeted approach to increasing stakeholder engagement must achieve improved understanding and support for the Western Region's Strategy and Assessment, or as a minimum, a better understanding on the part of the WRSC of stakeholder concerns that need to be addressed during implementation planning. This effort is also consistent with the Western Region's Phase III Program of Work Item 3.
3. Enhance Awareness and Understanding within Communities of Interest Represented by the WRSC and WG - Within the communities of interest represented by the WRSC/WG, awareness and understanding of the Cohesive Strategy and the Western Strategy and Assessment is inconsistent across stakeholder demographics. The "trickle down" approach is not effectively reaching these parties who are essential to successful implementation. Agency leadership, particularly within the federal land management agencies, needs to step up their emphasis and attention to the CS in order to gain better understanding, acceptance, and support by their local staff for the process and the product. This in turn will have a positive influence at the sub-region and community level in promoting the iterative and collaborative nature of the strategy and its expected outcomes.
4. Implement a Focused Effort to Identify Success Stories and Lessons Learned - Success stories were not identified during this opportunity to comment. To improve on what was collected in Phase II a more focused effort needs to be pursued to identify and communicate successes and lessons to stakeholders. Lessons learned do not always come from success stories so they may be solicited separately. This effort is consistent with the Western Region's Phase III Program of Work Item 3.
5. Capture Comments That Inform Implementation Planning - A common refrain from those who commented in the past raised concerns about how their comments would be used during the process. A specific effort was made by the WRSC/WG to ensure comments from Phase I that were not used directly in that effort were reflected in the starting point for the West. A similar effort needs to occur to ensure comments useful for implementation are acknowledged and used as a foundation for implementation planning.

6. Communicate a Clear Description of Expected Outcomes - Engagement in a nebulous process involving “trade-off” analysis, strategies, and implementation action plans is not compelling to many stakeholders. They (along with some members of the WRSC and WG) are unclear where this is all going. They would like to know what difference this will make at the local level! The WRSC must increase the understanding and the relevance of this effort to stakeholders to improve their participation in the effort. A more explicit “vision” of the expected outcomes of the Strategy is important. Without a compelling reason for engagement, the collaboration and coalition-building necessary for successful implementation may not occur.

## Appendix A – Content Analysis Team

Members of the Working Group who participated in analysis of comments and identified comments provided by stakeholders included:

- Joe Freeland, Bureau of Land Management
- Carol Daly, Western Governor’s Association/Flathead Economic Policy Center
- Alan Quan, Forest Service
- David Seesholtz, Forest Service
- Bill Tripp, Intertribal Timber Council
- Dana Coelho, Forest Service
- Kevin Ryan, Forest Service

Members of the METI Content Analysis Team included:

- Jim Golden, Senior Advisor for Natural Resource Management and consultant to METI, Inc., Sonora, CA
- Larry Timchak, Natural Resource Management Specialist and consultant to METI, Inc., Kalispell, MT
- Steve Solem, Senior Advisor for Natural Resource Planning and Inventory and consultant to METI, Inc., Missoula, MT
- Julie Woldow, Communication Specialist and consultant to METI, Inc., Anchorage, AK

## Appendix B – Comment Opportunity Notice and Distribution

Members of the Western RSC and WG provided an undetermined number of stakeholders notice of the opportunity to comment on the Western Strategy and Assessment via email and personal notification during December 2011 and January 2012. The following information was provided to stakeholders regarding the opportunity to comment on the Western Region Strategy and Assessment.

From the Co-Chair of the Western Region Strategy Committee:

*Greetings from the Western Region for the Cohesive Strategy. We are completing Phase II of our efforts and again want to express our gratitude for all your hard work and feedback. At this time we are asking for “stakeholder” feedback on the Western Assessment and have specifically focused on the objectives, sub-objectives, actions and broad policy questions. If you have previously provided feedback for the Western Assessment, here is your opportunity to see how we used [the information you provided] and [why we would like] to keep hearing from you. Please go to the following site: <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/updates/> for a complete update (See December 5, 2011), the complete report with appendices and we’d love to hear from folks. Also please share with any others that may want to provide us feedback on the Western Assessment. Happy Holidays folks, Joe*

From the Western RSC Outreach Website (<http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/updates/>) December 2011:

*The WRSC would like to take this opportunity in the spirit and intent of the iterative stakeholder process to solicit focused feedback on the Western Regional Assessment and Strategy. To strengthen the overall effort, we are asking all stakeholders – those who have already participated and those who may be new to the process – to focus on the West’s current objectives, actions, and policy questions that have been identified to support the three national goals. We are looking to strengthen and add to this outline in order to identify as accurately as possible a suite of potential solutions best meets the West’s needs.*

*The content to focus on is pages 20-34 of the Western Regional Assessment and Strategy.*

***The policy questions** that have been identified are the bullets in the shaded descriptions for each goal area and address the policy context within which the objectives and actions have been developed. Are there key ideas missing? Can issues be framed more effectively?*

***The objectives and actions** were developed through an iterative process and informed by stakeholder outreach. They address decision-making and planning efforts that are local, regional, and national in scope and are to be used in Phase III to construct and analyze different management scenarios. Are there key ideas missing? Can issues be framed more effectively?*

*Although there are many ways to phrase the complex challenges and opportunities in the West, we have a fairly high level of consensus on much of the text in the Western Regional Assessment and Strategy and are not soliciting general editorial suggestions.*



## Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Success Stories

### Flagstaff Fire Department Wildland Fire Management

In a location averaging hundreds of ignitions per year, the Flagstaff Fire Department Wildland Fire Management mission is to “create and maintain a sustainable healthy forest ecosystem and a FireWise community, thereby protecting and enhancing public safety and community well-being.” This is consistent with the goals of the National Cohesive Strategy.

The greater Flagstaff area is a community of 75,000 people surrounded by the Coconino National Forest, one of the more extensive Ponderosa Pine forests in the nation. The Department has been active for many years with the Greater Flagstaff Forest Partnership and the Ponderosa Fire Advisory Council in the development of innovative plans to protect their community from the impacts of wildfire. In 2005 the community developed a comprehensive Community Wildfire Protection Plan covering over 900,000 acres of mixed ownership surrounding Flagstaff.

In the past year, the Flagstaff Fire Department has developed a localized version of the Cohesive Strategy, using a list of performance measures organized by the three goals, as presented at right. They integrated their Department’s five core disciplines into the strategy, and are using them to track accomplishments internally. This is an outstanding example of a local effort that could very easily be applied more broadly to include all ownerships such as the state and federal lands surrounding the community.

### Flagstaff FD Cohesive Strategy Local Goals

**GOAL #1:** Our forests are resilient to disturbances in accordance with management objectives as identified in the City’s Forest Stewardship Plan, Community Wildfire Protection Plan, site-specific Vegetation Management plans, Rx-Fire plans, the City Land Code, and other planning documents.

**GOAL #2:** Our community (populations and infrastructure) can withstand a wildland fire without loss of life and property because we have assessed our level of risk via the Community Wildfire Protection Plan and other assessment documents/ processes, and practice a shared responsibility for mitigating both the threat and the consequence via application of the Flagstaff Wildland Urban Interface Code and other professional resource management standards, engagement of stakeholders and partners, use of volunteers, collaboration with partners, and grant management.

**GOAL #3:** We practice making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildland fire management decisions.

For more information on Flagstaff Fire Dept. Wildland Fire Mgmt:  
<http://www.flagstaff.az.gov/index.aspx?NID=132>

To learn about collaboration on the Cohesive Strategy see our Partner Perspectives and Success Stories at:  
<http://forestsandrangelands.gov>



## Cohesive Strategy Performance Standards & Reporting Process – Flagstaff FD

**GOAL #1:** Our forests are resilient to disturbances in accordance with management objectives as Identified in the City’s Forest Stewardship Plan, Community Wildfire Protection Plan, site-specific Vegetation Management plans, Rx-Fire plans, the City Land Development Code, and other planning documents.

**Outcome:** Risk to resiliency of our forests is diminished: sustainability is enhanced.

**Discipline:** Hazard Mitigation

- Metrics:**
1. Marking - # Parcels and # Acres
  2. Thinning - # Parcels and # Acres
  3. Hazard Trees - # Identified and # Removed
  4. Debris Disposal - # Parcels and # Acres (pile burning, chipping, hauling)
  5. Broadcast Burning - # Parcels and # Acres (ecosystem enhancement)

**GOAL #2:** Our community (populations and infrastructure) can withstand a wildland fire without loss of life and property because we have assessed our level of risk via the Community Wildfire Protection Plan and other assessment documents/processes, and practice a shared responsibility for mitigating both the threat and the consequence via application of the Flagstaff Wildland Urban Interface Code and other professional resource management standards, engagement of stakeholders and partners, use of volunteers, collaboration with partners, and grant management.

**Outcome:** Risk to Flagstaff is diminished; community well-being is enhanced.

**Discipline:** Prevention

- Metrics:**
1. Home/Properties Inspections - # EXISTING Homes/Properties
  2. Development Reviews- #NEW Parcels and # Acres
  3. FireWise Communities - # New

**Discipline:** Preparedness

- Metrics:**
1. Engagement of stakeholders/partners - # Events and # Hrs
  2. Volunteers - # Hrs. Provided
  3. Grants - # and \$ Received

**GOAL #3:** We practice making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildland fire management decisions.

**Outcome:** Risk to the public and emergency personnel is diminished, and response and recovery is efficient and effective.

**Discipline:** Response

- Metrics:**
1. Emergency Operations Center - #Events; (Incidents and Trainings)
  2. Training - # hrs. Received by Staff and # hrs. Provided to Cooperators (Wildland Fire/Emergency Management)
  3. Certification - # hrs. engaged with AZ Red Card Committee, NWCG, etc. to obtain/maintain professional wildland fire/emergency management skills and standing
  4. Effect - # Fires and # Acres (both Treated and Untreated Parcels)

**Discipline:** Recovery

- Metrics:**
1. Reimbursements - # and \$ Submitted AND # and \$ Received
  2. Assessments & Plans - # Prepared



## National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy 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 doing exploratory analysis of an initial set of alternatives for meeting Cohesive Strategy goals. Drawing from information in the regional assessments of Phase II, the NSAT is developing this initial set of alternatives to explore with the WRSC/WG. The intent is to share draft model outcomes and examine how they are linked with available data. The expectation is that maps, tables and graphics will be used to display spatial relationships and potential outcomes.



The anticipated result of interacting with WRSC/WG members is that the team identifies potential opportunities where risks may be managed effectively and barriers that may prevent achieving risk reductions. The information will be helpful in modifying models as well as contributing to potential modifications to the actions proposed in the regional alternatives.



#### WRSC Lead Contact:

Joe Stutler  
Deschutes County Forester  
joest@co.deschutes.or.us  
(541) 322-7117

#### Working Group Lead Contact:

Joe Freeland  
BLM - Management & Program Analyst  
jfreeland@blm.gov  
(208) 387-5163



## Western Regional Strategy Committee (WRSC) Update

### Strategy Briefings Underway

Members of the Western Regional Strategy Committee and Working Group provided seven presentations on the Cohesive Strategy in 2012. These presentations have reached 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 Governor's 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

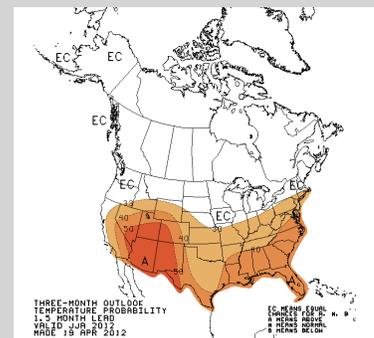
To learn about collaboration on the Cohesive Strategy see our Partner Perspectives and Success Stories at: <http://forestsandrangelands.gov>

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

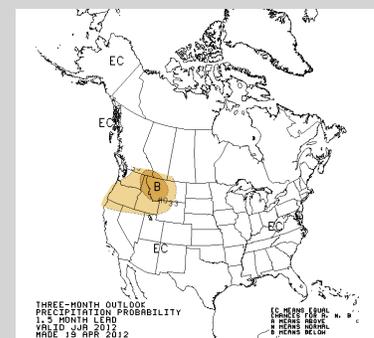
### Spring Wildfire Outlook

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 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



## Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Success Stories

As the Cohesive Strategy is developed and implemented throughout 2012 we are continuously integrating what we learn from successful collaboration by our stakeholders. Success stories and lessons learned at different geographic scales – national, regional, and local – guide future plans and approaches to implementing the Strategy.

### Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative

The Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative (CBBC) is a place-based collaborative to address the environmental, social and economic impacts of bark Beetles on high altitude forests. The steering committee is comprised of federal, state, and local government representatives and representatives of utility and water providers, wood products industry, conservation and public interest groups.



For more information on the Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative visit: <http://www.nwccog.org/index.php/programs/rural-resort-region/cbbc>

To learn about collaboration on the Cohesive Strategy see our Partner Perspectives and Success Stories at: <http://forestsandangelands.gov>

### 2011 Accomplishments

#### 501c3 Board of Directors

- Northwest Colorado Council of Governments has provided us with fiscal management
- Bylaws were updated to reflect the participating organizations and the various committee's powers and duties as well as the interactions between the steering committee, implementation team, and working groups

#### Steering Committee

- Established new working groups, including vision, communication, wood utilization, implementation and monitoring, and funding
- Worked with the Forest Health Advisory Council to identify our needs in conjunction with other place-based forest collaboratives
- Planned and held a "Future Forests Summit" open to all stakeholders
- Continued work with Colorado Forest Restoration Institute surveying public perception of the bark beetle outbreak
- Made a presentation to the gathering of collaboratives, along with follow-ups

#### Working Groups

- Vision - began developing a formal vision statement for CBBC
- Communications – developed basic goals for CBBC communications strategy





## Status Report

**Date: May 18, 2012**

**Subcommittee: Southern RSC**

### **Accomplishments Since Last Report:**

- Barriers Document – Southern input and prioritization
- Input to Craft Process better defining actions and activities
- Formed communications group – early discussions on outreach and tools
- Developed process for social network mapping to better understand gaps in stakeholders and outreach
- Enhancing stakeholder list
- Developing stakeholder engagement strategy
- Transferring funds to FS RO for lead funding – hung - up in process
- Communication Funds – hung up in process
- RSC Concalls (2 calls held) – discussions on next steps and preplanning meeting with NSAT

### **Planned Activities for Next Reporting Period:**

- May 22-23 meeting with NSAT to define input from science models and performance measures
- Begin social network mapping design, funding dependant
- Finalize full time lead with Southern Governors' Association, funding dependant
- Reconnecting with Phase II stakeholders once PII national document is rollout out

### **Issues Identified:**

### **WFEC Decisions/Approvals Needed:**

- **Understanding direction of the barriers document and role of RSCs in supporting movement at national level**

### **References:**

### **Contact Information:**

Mike Zupko

[mike@zup-co-inc.com](mailto:mike@zup-co-inc.com)

770-267-9630



# Status Report



## **TASKING MEMORANDUM**

May 3, 2012

**Subject:** Development of a Contingency Plan to Prepare for Continuation of Cohesive Strategy through Summer 2012 Fire Season

### **Background:**

Over the past two years, there has been significant progress in the development of a National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. Considerable effort has been made both regionally and nationally to get input across a broad group of stakeholders. Phases I and II are now complete, and a detailed schedule of activities and deliverables have been developed for Phase III and are well underway.

As we approach the primary summer fire season, the WFLC has tasked the WFEC with developing a contingency plan that will help insure that the Cohesive Strategy remains on schedule, regardless of what may happen nationally in the wildland fire arena.

### **Tasking:**

The WFEC will develop a contingency plan that will address two issues:

- Continued availability of sufficient staffing and resources necessary to remain on schedule for the Phase III process at both the national and regional levels in the event that key stakeholder contributors are pulled off of the process by their respective agencies as a result of an active fire season.
- Development of a plan of action to implement, if needed, should there be national pressure to escalate the Phase III schedule due to a severe fire season.

### **Outcome / Deliverables:**

- A list of pre-designated staff who will be assigned responsibility to perform the work necessary, or obtain resources necessary, to keep the cohesive strategy process on schedule, both at the regional and national levels.
- A set of very concise key messages that could be utilized in communication efforts with policy makers, Administration officials, and media should a severe fire season threaten the completion of the cohesive strategy as planned. These messages should address, at a minimum:
  - What the cohesive strategy is, and what it is not.
  - The level of collaboration that has occurred, the accomplishments to date, and the timeline for completion.

- The ramifications of pushing the schedule up, and how it would jeopardize the intent of the collaborative process, and ultimately, the implementation and acceptance of the national cohesive strategy.
- A pre-designated list of qualified spokespeople, representative of all of the stakeholder groups, who have been briefed and can effectively communicate the key messages developed as part of this contingency plan.

**Timeline and Responsible Parties:**

- A written plan will be developed by (who will be assigned) and distributed as a draft to WFEC members via e-mail by (date).
- WFEC members will have until (date) to provide written comments to (whomever is assigned).
- The plan will be placed on the (date) WFEC agenda for approval.
- The DFO will insure the plan is implemented accordingly, should it be necessary.

**Approval:**

This tasking is in effect on the date of approval (noted above) by the Designated Federal Official. This task shall sunset by October 1, 2012.

# Governance Principles

- Push decisions to lowest appropriate level
- No overlapping
- FACA Compliant Governance
- No loose ends
- Clear authorities
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Enable good, timely decisions
- Develop a responsibility matrix
- Stay sensitive to operations
- Well informed decisions
- Audit trail of authority



## **TASKING MEMORANDUM**

May 18, 2012

### **Subject:**

Wildland Fire Governance

### **Background:**

Over the last several years there have been many iterations of the Wildland Fire Governance Structure. There is a need for the purpose, authorities, roles and responsibilities of the various wildland fire governance groups to be clearly defined.

The Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) has tasked the WFEC with reviewing the Wildland Fire Governance structure

The guiding principles which will guide this effort are:

- Governance Structure will promote an effective and efficient Wildland Fire Management Program.
- Clear authorities with defined roles and responsibilities.
- Limit overlap where we can; where overlap is inevitable, establish collaboration protocols.
- Risk accountability determines appropriate decision maker.
- Decisions made at the lowest appropriate and accountable level.
- Timely decisions based on need and risk.
- Closed loop governance, no loose ends.
- Participation at the right level. Participation means active engagement.
- FACA Compliant Governance
- Enable well informed, sustainable, and timely decisions

### **Tasking:**

The Wildland Fire Governance task will include:

- Review the existing wildland fire governance structure
- Identify the stated purpose of each governance group
- Identify the roles and responsibilities for each governance group
- Identify the products that result from the activities of each governance group
- Identify the decision space of each governance group
- Identify redundancies between the governance groups
- Identify the authorities for each governance group

- Identify the gaps that are not addressed by any of the governance groups
- Develop recommendations and rationale for changing the Wildland Governance Structure
- Develop recommendations with supporting statements for membership based on analyzing the above information.

**Outcome / Deliverables:**

Develop a report which includes:

- Description of the As-Is Wildland Fire Governance Structure
- Description of the To-Be Wildland Fire Governance Structure
  - Includes what was considered in the development of the To-Be structure
  - Includes the rationale for the preferred Wildland Fire Governance Structure
- Recommendation on changes to the Wildland Fire Governance Structure along with recommendations for membership

**Timeline and Responsible Parties:**

- The lead for this effort will be: \_\_\_\_\_
- Resources assigned to participate are: \_\_\_\_\_
- Status updates delivered for each WFEC meeting – lead.
- Final deliverable due to WFEC by October 1, 2012 – lead.
- WFEC Review, Deliberation and Concurrence by October 15 – WFEC members.
- Final recommendations from WFEC to WFLC by the November 13-14 WFLC Meeting.

**Approval:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
WFEC, DFO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **West Regional Strategy Subcommittee**

### **(West RSC)**

**Purpose:** The West RSC will provide leadership, oversight and guidance within the western region for completing the tasks assigned by the WFEC during the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy* implementation.

**Functions:** The RSC is tasked to complete a regional risk analysis and submit to WFEC two deliverables: regional risk analysis report and a Regional Action Plan. The regional risk analysis report must be submitted to the WFEC by the September 30, 2012. The Regional Action Plan must be submitted to WFEC by December 31, 2012. The RSC is tasked to conduct appropriate communication and outreach activities, consistent with the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Communications Framework*, to ensure stakeholder engagement throughout Phase III. The RSC may be assigned additional tasks associated with the development of the National Action Plan and/or national risk analysis report.

The RSC reports directly to the WFEC and will provide a recommendation for each assigned tasks and associated deliverables directly to the WFEC for their consideration. The National Science and Analysis Team (NSAT) will guide and support this RSC throughout the risk analysis process. The RSC may elect to establish a regional or sub-regional Working Group(s) to support the completion of these tasks and associated deliverables.

### **Guiding Principles:**

- As a subcommittee to WFEC you are not subject to FACA.
- Meetings are not subject to the public notice and open meeting.
- Reports must have RSC consensus prior to submitting to WFEC.
- Reports submitted to the WFEC are public documents and are available to the public.
- Subcommittees report directly to the WFEC and their work is to develop recommendations for WFEC's consideration.
- All decisions and recommendations made by the subcommittee will include documentation of what was considered in making the decision or recommendation as well as the rationale.
- Conduct the RSC in a collaborative and cohesive manner, ensuring RSC consensus on interim decisions and deliverables.

### **Responsibilities:**

- By December 31, 2012, develop a Regional Action Plan to identify actions to take in the next five years to make progress in achieving the three National Goals of the Cohesive Strategy. Regional Action Plans record actions the RSC and its members' organizations

are willing to commit to as a result of: the barriers and solutions identified in Phase II; the identification of immediate opportunities for success initiated in Phase II and continuing in Phase III; expanded regional dialog with additional stakeholders; and the information provided by the risk analysis to inform management choices and strategic investment options. Regional Action Plans also include the identification of ~~national and/or~~ regional performance measures. A template Regional Action Plan will be provided to illustrate the minimum content components of each Regional Action Plan.

- By September 30, 2012, complete regional risk analysis and associated report. The RSC members have the responsibility to be engaged in the risk analysis process to ensure that the risk analysis addresses each of the organizations' needs and that the content of the regional risk analysis report is acceptable to each organization as whole. An outline of the NSAT/RSC process and interaction to complete the risk analysis and report has been developed and will be shared with the RSC. Specific workshops and meetings have been scheduled. It is the RSC's responsibility to **establish the agenda, meeting objectives and topics, provide information ahead of time so the members can come prepared to represent their constituents**, determine who attends each critical interaction and to ensure appropriate participation. Progress updates will be regularly communicated to the **WFEC**.
- Determine the appropriate membership on the Working Group(s) to ensure necessary input from land managers, stakeholders, partners, and the public.
- Provide guidance to Working Group(s) on expectations for conducting outreach, interacting with the NSAT, ensuring stakeholder engagement, and/or any other tasks to complete the deliverables.
- Establish timeframes and ensure completion of the two deliverables.
- Communicate progress and/or issues to WFEC throughout the process.
- Ensure that regional interests are represented throughout the process.

## Membership

### *West Regional Strategy Committee*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency / Organization</b>
Aden Seidlitz	BLM
Ann Walker	WGA
Bob Harrington	Montana State Forester - NASF
Corbin Newman (Co-Chair)	USFS Southwest Region
Joe Stutler (Co-Chair; WWG Liaison)	Deschutes County, Oregon - IAFC
John Philbin	BIA
Karen Taylor-Goodrich	NPS
Pam Ensley	FWS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency / Organization</b>
Robert Cope	Lemhi County, Idaho - NACo
Sam Foster	USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station
Tony Harwood	Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Warren Day	USGS

***West Region Support Staff***

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency / Organization</b>
Alan Quan (Coordination Lead/CSSC Liaison)	USFS
Dana Coelho (Writer/Editor)	Western Forestry Leadership Coalition / USFS
Douglas MacDonald (WFEC Liaison)	IAFC

**Meetings and Reports**

The RSC shall meet as necessary to conduct business. Due to travel restrictions, the RSC is encouraged to provide video conferencing capabilities for any face-to-face meeting. The RSC must record progress resulting from meetings of the subcommittee, working groups, or other subgroups. This documentation may include, but is not limited to minutes, transcripts, reports, correspondence, briefing materials, and other related records. The subcommittee shall provide a progress report at the WFEC meetings, identifying actions, milestones and deliverables that are to be accomplished; providing a report on progress; identifying issues or barriers that need to be resolved; and developing proposals for any recommended decisions to be considered by WFEC. Subcommittee recommendations and supporting documentation will be submitted to WFEC one week prior to the meeting to allow members time to review and prepare.

**Approval:** This document is in effective on the date of approval of Designated Federal Official (DFO) and shall remain in effect until revised or revoked by the DFO.

Roy A. Johnson  
 Designated Federal Official  
 Wildland Fire Executive Council



## West Regional Strategy Subcommittee

### (West RSC)

**Purpose:** The West RSC will provide leadership, oversight and guidance within the western region for completing the tasks assigned by the WFEC during the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy* implementation.

**Functions:** The RSC is tasked to complete a regional risk analysis and submit to WFEC two deliverables: regional risk analysis report and a Regional Action Plan in accordance with the templates develop by the Cohesive Strategy Subcommittee and approved by WFEC. The regional risk analysis report must be submitted to the WFEC by ~~the~~ September 30, 2012. The Regional Action Plan must be submitted to WFEC by December 31, 2012. The RSC is tasked to conduct appropriate communication and outreach activities, consistent with the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Communications Framework*, to ensure stakeholder engagement throughout Phase III. The RSC may be assigned additional tasks associated with the development of the National Action Plan and/or national risk analysis report.

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- Conduct the RSC in a collaborative and cohesive manner, ensuring RSC consensus on interim decisions and deliverables.

#### Responsibilities:

- By December 31, 2012, develop a Regional Action Plan to identify actions to take in the next five years to make progress in achieving the three National Goals of the Cohesive

Comment [SRS1]: Perhaps something here that indicates in alignment with the approved regional program of work

Comment [SRS2]: ????

Strategy. Regional Action Plans record actions the RSC and its members' organizations are willing to commit to as a result of: the barriers and solutions identified in Phase II; the identification of immediate opportunities for success initiated in Phase II and continuing in Phase III; expanded regional dialog with additional stakeholders; and the information provided by the risk analysis to inform management choices and strategic investment options. Regional Action Plans also include the identification of ~~national and/or~~ regional performance measures. A template Regional Action Plan will be provided to illustrate the minimum content components of each Regional Action Plan.

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- Provide guidance to Working Group(s) on expectations for conducting outreach, interacting with the NSAT, ensuring stakeholder engagement, and/or any other tasks to complete the deliverables.
- Establish timeframes and ensure completion of the two deliverables.
- Communicate progress and/or issues to WFEC throughout the process.
- Ensure that regional interests are represented throughout the process.

## Membership

### *West Regional Strategy Committee*

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Douglas MacDonald (WFEC Liaison)	IAFC

**Meetings and Reports**

The RSC shall meet as necessary to conduct business. Due to travel restrictions, the RSC is encouraged to provide video conferencing capabilities for any face-to-face meeting. The RSC must record progress resulting from meetings of the subcommittee, working groups, or other subgroups. This documentation may include, but is not limited to minutes, transcripts, reports, correspondence, briefing materials, and other related records. The subcommittee shall provide a progress report at the WFEC meetings, identifying actions, milestones and deliverables that are to be accomplished; providing a report on progress; identifying issues or barriers that need to be resolved; and developing proposals for any recommended decisions to be considered by WFEC. Subcommittee recommendations and supporting documentation will be submitted to WFEC one week prior to the meeting to allow members time to review and prepare.

**Approval:** This document is in effective on the date of approval of Designated Federal Official (DFO) and shall remain in effect until revised or revoked by the DFO.

Roy A. Johnson  
 Designated Federal Official  
 Wildland Fire Executive Council

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**Wallow Fire**  
**Fuel Treatment Effectiveness**  
**On the Fort Apache Indian Reservation**



*Fireline personnel work the edge of a low-intensity surface fire south of Reservation Lake.*

**December • 2011**

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*"Had treatments [on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation] not been done, there was no good geographic feature to tie into the Black River."*

**Dugger Hughes**, Incident Commander,  
Southwest Area Incident Management Team

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[Cover Photo by Manny Martinez, Southwest Area Incident Management Team.]

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# I Wallow Fire Chronology on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation

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## **Pre-Fire Conditions in Arizona**

The area around the 2011 Wallow Fire had experienced a very dry winter, spring and early summer. Two weather stations near the fire's point of origin had received very minimal moisture from January 1 to the fire start date, May 29.

The Alpine Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS) had recorded ¼ inch of precipitation for the time period. The Stray Horse RAWS had received 1.01 inches during the same timeframe.

With the “La Nina” weather pattern set up strong over the southern tier of the United States, moisture had been all but nonexistent. Prior to the Wallow Fire's ignition, strong winds associated with frontal passages were normal events.

## **Chronology**

### **Sunday, May 29, 2011**

At approximately 2 p.m., a new fire start is called in to dispatch by the Maverick Fire Lookout on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. The start is located on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, near the southeast corner of the 2009 Reno Fire scar. This new start—the Wallow Fire—is estimated at 200 acres. It is believed to be human-caused.

### **Monday, May 30**

The Reno Fire Lookout on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest is evacuated due to fire



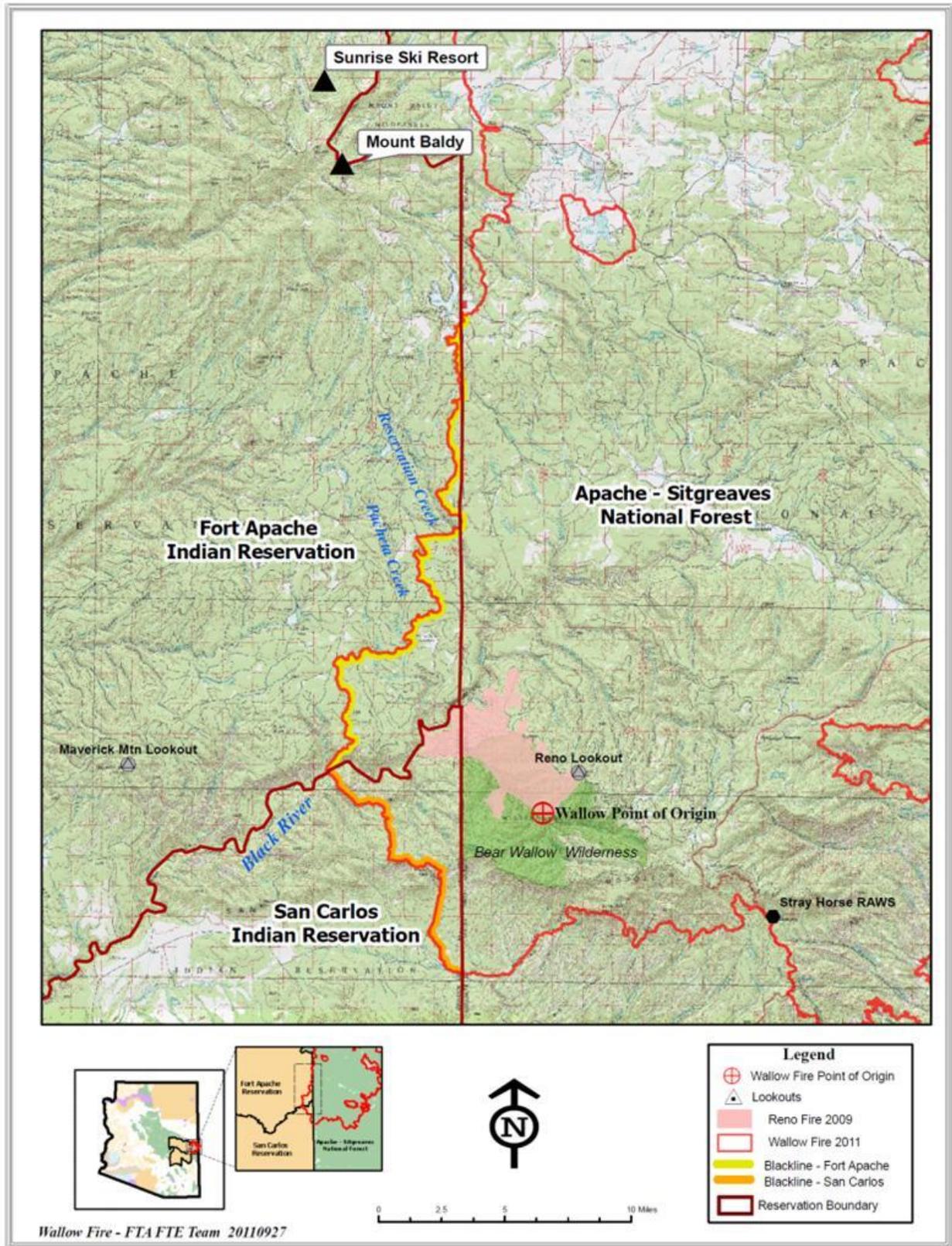
behavior. Spotting up to one mile is reported. A regional Type 2 Incident Management Team is assigned to the Wallow Fire, which is now estimated at 1,450 acres.

### **Wednesday through Friday, June 1-3**

During these three days, the Wallow Fire exhibits extreme fire behavior with long range spotting and grows to 98,000 acres. A national Type 1 Incident Management Team is assigned.

*Harold Quintero (left) and Robert Nix of the Fort Apache Agency Forest Development Crew burn out the line north of the Black River in an area that had been previously treated with prescribed fire.*  
Photo by Jere McLemore, Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Fuel Treatment Effectiveness on the Wallow Fire on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation





*The Wallow Fire on May 31 as seen from the historic Pair O Dice Ranch on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. Photo by Lucky Holden, Bureau of Indian Affairs.*

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### **Saturday, June 4**

The Wallow Fire moves around the south side of the 2009 Reno Fire scar and enters the San Carlos Indian Reservation.

### **The Burnout Strategy**

### **Monday, June 6**

The Wallow Fire, now 233,552 acres, reaches the Fort Apache Indian Reservation boundary just north of the Reno Fire scar. The Incident Management Team is searching for an area to implement an indirect strategy to the south and west of the fire—an area that can be safely burned out ahead of the arrival of the wildfire. Two more Type 1 Incident Management Teams and an Area Command Team are ordered.

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*"These larger, landscape-scale treatments outside the WUI [Wildland Urban Interface] make a difference in being able to control the fire."*

**Dugger Hughes**, Incident Commander  
Southwest Area Incident Management Team

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## Tuesday, June 7

The Wallow Fire gains 77,770 acres in one day, generating significant heat as it runs up the canyons on the fire's west side. A task force of local resources (the Fort Apache Interagency Hotshot Crew, two Fort Apache Type 2 handcrews, two dozers and two engines) begins burnout operations between Pacheta and Reservation creeks. The burnout follows reservation roads and landscape-level prescribed fire treatment units.

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*"We looked at the fuels treatments we'd done over the years to see where they could tie-in to help stop the fire."*

**Harrison Francis,**  
Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Specialist,  
Fort Apache Agency

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A separate taskforce of resources on the San Carlos Indian Reservation, including the Geronimo and Tahoe hotshots crews, is tasked with building and burning out a fire line from the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest boundary to the Black River, to tie into the Fort Apache line.

Predicted fire behavior in the afternoon: *Red Flag Warning. Flame lengths in excess of 200 feet are possible when torching and crowning occur; spotting distances may be more than one mile; the probability of an ember being able to ignite a new spot fire is 100 percent.*

Forty-five miles of line needs to be burned out—approximately 30 miles on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation and about 15 miles on the San Carlos section. The two lines will tie-in at the Black River Canyon, the boundary between the two reservations.

## Wednesday, June 8

The crews and equipment are moving quickly with the burnout operation. With few heavy fuels on the ground, the drip torch bearers can keep up a fast pace with little worry of getting more fire on the ground than they can handle. At their backs are more treated lands that make accessing and extinguishing the few spot fires that get over the road relatively easy suppression work.

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*"The treatments removed most of the heavies [large downed logs]. If the heavies had still been there, we would've had to do the burnouts more slowly—it probably would've taken us over a week to get it done."*

**Brian Quintero,** Assistant Superintendent,  
Fort Apache Hotshots

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## Thursday, June 9

The Wallow Fire burns past the 2009 Reno Fire scar, gaining speed toward the fire crews as it encounters unburned fuels. The crew leaders burning out line near Reservation Creek describe hearing the Wallow Fire sounding like a freight train approaching. Burnout operations pick up speed—the time available to tie into the Pacheta Creek line and then down to the San Carlos line is running out. The crew leaders need to decide: *Keep going, and trust that the fuels treatments and their burnout operations are going to be effective in bringing the fire to the ground? Or, leave now, with the gap unclosed?*



***Burnout operation on 40K Road near the Tonto Unit.***  
Photo by Jere McLemore, Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The Division Supervisor decides to stay and complete the line. His observations of the fuel treatments and the results of the burnout operation indicate to him that it's safe to keep the fire crews on the line.

**Friday, June 10**

Burning operation continues. Burning will be more difficult in the last section—a pending timber sale unit on the plateau in this section has not been prescribed burned since the 1990s.

Fuel loads are higher, and more underbrush and logs will be on the ground for the

burners to negotiate.

In addition, structure protection assessments and preparation for Sunrise Ski Resort begin. Without successful management intervention, the Wallow Fire is predicted to reach the ski area before the end of the next day.

**Saturday, June 11**

The task force on the division located on the San Carlos Reservation ties their burnout into the Black River by 5 p.m. The Fort Apache resources tie-in by the end of the shift, closing the gap. Now, will this line hold? There's another "Red Flag" critical fire weather day predicted for tomorrow—with wind gusts forecasted up to 35 mph, and relative humidity as low as 5 percent.

**Sunday, June 12**

The Wallow Fire crosses the Black River Canyon and races uphill. It reaches the untreated timber sale unit on the plateau and burns across this geographic feature to the burned-out fireline. The fire severity is higher on the plateau than other areas of the burnout operation, but the fireline holds—even through wind gusts in excess of 30 mph.

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*"There is no doubt in my mind, that if the fire had come up Reservation Creek and Pacheta Creek, it would have gone to the top of Mount Baldy... It would've increased the acreage and the cost of the Wallow Fire by about 25 percent."*

**Dugger Hughes**, Incident Commander  
Southwest Area Incident Management Team

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**Monday, June 13**

As the completed burnout lines are widened in the more vulnerable areas of the fire's perimeter, the Wallow Fire gains minimum acreage on the reservations.

This will be the last day that the Wallow Fire grows in size on reservation lands.

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*"Those drainages act like 'fusee lines' to the top of [Mount] Baldy."*

**Robert LaCapa**, Forest Manager,  
Bureau of Indian Affairs,  
Fort Apache Agency

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**For the Next Three Weeks**

Now at 452,155 acres in total size, the Wallow Fire will continue to burn on lands located east of the reservations for another three weeks. The fire will gain 86,000 more acres as it heads farther north in Arizona and spreads into the state of New Mexico.

On Friday, July 8, it reaches its final size of 538,049 acres—at an estimated cost of \$109 million.

The Wallow Fire burned a total of 835 square miles in Arizona and 23 square miles in western New Mexico. The blaze destroys 32 residences, as well as 36 outbuildings. None were located on either of the reservations.



*Under-burned ponderosa pine forest on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.*

Photo by Chris Holbeck's Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team.

## II Values at Risk – What's at Stake on the Reservations?

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“Community” and “culture” define the tribal people’s intrinsic values—including those ideas, entities, and places that create traditions and cultural heritage.

According to Ramon Riley, cultural resource advisor to the White Mountain Apache Tribe, during the Wallow Fire, the values at risk included not only “life and property” but also holy areas, and areas of cultural significance. The tribes concerns also included ensuring that habitat for wildlife as well as native plants for medicine within the Mount Baldy Wilderness Area were not negatively impacted.

Such areas are not defined in terms of market value, but rather are intrinsic and essential to a culture and a way of living. On these Indian lands, such “resources” are equally valued as property and infrastructure. For in tribal communities, residents are not set apart or adjacent to the natural and cultural resources that comprise their reservation landscapes—they live among these resources. These resource values are a part of their legacy to be left to their children as part of their heritage—their economic and cultural survival depend on them.

Many values important to the tribes were threatened by the Wallow Fire. A few of these values will be explained here as examples of the complex relationships between the tribes, the values and resources on the reservations, and the impact of wildfires.

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*These resource values are a part of their legacy to be left to their children as part of their heritage—their economic and cultural survival depend on them.*

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### **Commercial Timber**

The White Mountain Apache Tribe is highly dependent on its timber resource as a source of employment, income, and subsistence. The tribe's forest products sector continues to be the largest source of employment on the reservation.

Stumpage, which is 29 percent of the gross revenue from lumber sales, is an important contributor of revenue toward tribal programs. Individual income and profits from tribal enterprises are important contributors to the tribe's local economy.

In addition, the timber cutting permit system provides individual income by allowing tribal members to obtain miscellaneous forest products—such as posts, poles, Christmas trees, and firewood—either for personal use or for sale.

Thus, the majority of individuals living or working on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation are dependent on some facet of forest resources.

### **Wildlife Habitat**

The Fort Apache Indian Reservation is abundant with wildlife. Approximately 70 species of mammals, more than 30 species of reptiles, and more than 200 species of birds are known to reside here.

Fire can have both positive and negative effects on wildlife habitat. It can be intentionally used to improve habitat and it can be a force of nature requiring suppression to protect wildlife habitat. Two of the greatest concerns for wildlife during the Wallow Fire were the big game hunting ranges and the habitat of Federally-listed Threatened and Endangered Species on the reservations.

#### **Elk Habitat**

The Fort Apache Indian Reservation is world-renowned as premier hunting grounds for record-class trophy elk. In addition to the substantial revenue generated by selling hunting permits, the hunts provide employment to tribal members as guides. This activity brings increased tourism revenue to the regional economy. Hunting is a crucial piece of the tribal landscape—both historically and economically—with many tribal members relying on the employment, recreational, and subsistence opportunities provided by the tribal hunting programs.

#### **Threatened and Endangered Species**

Three Federally-listed species occur on the reservation: the Mexican Spotted Owl, the Mexican grey wolf, and the Apache trout. The native range of the Apache trout is exclusively within the White Mountains of Arizona. Approximately 50 percent of this species' historic range is on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. The Mexican Spotted Owl uses the reservations' steep, rocky canyons and uneven-aged forests as their preferred nesting and

foraging grounds. Therefore, the responsible management of timber forests and fire are critical to preserving their habitat. In the 1990s, Mexican grey wolves were reintroduced just east of the reservations. Today, they are often observed on the reservations.

### **Mount Baldy and Sunrise Ski Area**

Mount Baldy (*Dzil Ligai* in the Apache language), rising to 11,420 feet, is the highest peak on the 1.6 million-acre Fort Apache Indian Reservation, home of the White Mountain Apache Tribe. The mountain is located within a Wilderness Management Emphasis Area (MEA) on the reservation.

Mount Baldy, first set aside as a primitive area in 1970, is comprised of approximately 9,848 acres of spruce-fir forest surrounding its eastern boundary of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

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“The tribal leaders asked the Zone Incident Commander Dugger Hughes to protect their land from the Wallow Fire so that their children and grandchildren could experience the full beauty of the White Mountain Apache homeland as they did.”

***Navajo Times Newspaper***, June 16, 2011

“Praying for Dzil Ligai – Largest Fire in Arizona History Threatens White Mountain Apache Homelands” by **Marley Shebala**.

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This area is designated as a Tribal Wilderness primarily because it encompasses the summit of Mount Baldy, which is sacred to the Apache People. There are no roads throughout the entire area. Management direction here is similar to Federal wilderness status lands. The overall objective for this wilderness MEA is to maintain natural characteristics and to protect the cultural significance of the mountain to the Apache people.



***Aerial view of the Sunrise Ski Resort.***

**Photo by Kim Kelly.**

According to Ramon Riley, cultural resource advisor to the White Mountain Apache Tribe, this area is considered a holy place. It is a landscape that Tribal elders did not want the Wallow Fire to reach.

Another concern in this area is the high infrastructure values associated with the Sunrise Ski Area, located on the north side of Mount Baldy. Wildfires in this area have the potential for significant impacts and may be an immediate threat to life and property due to the proximity of timber stands and fuels around the ski area. This wildland interface infrastructure includes: a hotel, six ski lodges, a general store, administrative facilities, and employee housing.

The Sunrise Ski Resort is wholly owned and operated by the White Mountain Apache Tribe. The facility generates between \$6-8 million dollars in revenue each year—approximately one-third of the tribe’s annual income.

## III The Fires That Came Before – A Legacy of Fuels Treatments

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The area of the Wallow Fire that impacted the Fort Apache Indian Reservation has a decades-long legacy of logging and prescribed burning. This legacy started in 1948 when Harold Weaver came to Phoenix as a Regional Forester for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

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*"The forests on the reservation have been well-taken care of in order to protect the commercial timber. All the folks responsible should be patted on the back for the work they've done over the years."*

**Dugger Hughes**, Incident Commander  
Southwest Area Incident Management Team

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Weaver, a strong proponent for prescribed fire, started a very active program on the reservation. In 1950, he implemented a controlled burning program on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, burning more than 50,000 acres of ponderosa pine. During the next two years, wildfires were reduced by more than 90 percent on this previously burned acreage, a rate less than one-ninth that on lands that had *not* been burned.

Weaver's program demonstrated that, in certain circumstances, planned fire could be used to mitigate the effects of wildfire in ponderosa pine forests.

From 1950 to 1970, more than 300,000 acres were burned on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, primarily for hazardous fuel reduction. In 1971, a lightning storm ignited 80 separate fires which joined to become the Carrizo Fire. This 60,000 acre fire, the largest timber fire to burn in Arizona at the time, prompted an aggressive program to treat 111,000 acres with prescribed burning in 1975 alone.

This effective prescribed fire program has carried on through subsequent decades on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation lands. During the 1980s, 347,778 acres were burned. During the 1990s, 197,257 acres were treated with prescribed fire.

### **Maverick Fuel Treatments Help Control the Wallow Fire Spread**

In more recent years, the Maverick Fuel Treatments of 2003-2009—located on the east boundary of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation—proved particularly effective in controlling the spread of the 2011 Wallow Fire.

The Maverick prescribed fire treatments, covering a total of 13,378 acres, were implemented to:

- Improve firefighter safety,
- Reduce the danger of fuel accumulations,
- Minimize damage caused by future wildfires,
- Enhance wildlife habitat, and
- Maintain forest aesthetics.

**Fort Apache  
Prescribed Fire  
Prevents the Reno Fire  
from Burning onto  
Reservation Lands**

The Reno Fire was started by lightning on Sept. 7, 2009, in the Bear Wallow Wilderness, located approximately 25 miles southwest of Alpine, Ariz. (This ignition location is almost exactly where the Wallow Fire ignites two years later.)



The U.S. Forest Service, after evaluating the potential impacts of the Reno Fire, decided to manage this incident for resource objectives, including the reduction of fuels to reduce future fire intensities.

*The 2009 prescribed fire operation implemented at night in the Maverick Treatment Area.*

Photo by Fort Apache Agency.

The Reno Fire burned for several weeks with largely low-intensity fire.

In October, the Reno Fire started to move toward the San Carlos and Fort Apache reservations. The

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*The Fort Apache Agency continued implementing this landscape-level prescribed fire, blocking the Reno Fire and safeguarding an impending timber sale.*

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San Carlos Indian Reservation made the decision to continue monitoring the fire for its effects on the reduction of downed fuels.

The Fort Apache Agency, conducting fall burning at the time, determined that their planned Maverick Treatment Area prescribed fire—immediately adjacent—

would provide essential protection and meet land management objectives.

The Fort Apache Agency continued implementing this landscape-level prescribed fire, blocking the Reno Fire and safeguarding an impending timber sale.

## IV The Aftermath: Post-Fire Effects and Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation

The area within the Wallow Fire perimeter is approximately 538,049 acres. Most of the burned area—representing 515,928 acres—is located on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest lands. However, the Wallow Fire extended onto approximately 12,959 acres of White Mountain Apache Tribal lands and approximately 9,162 acres of San Carlos Apache Tribal lands.

### Post-fire Effects/Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team Findings

*“Vegetation on reservation land was lightly impacted by the Wallow Fire. Fire behavior on Fort Apache and San Carlos Indian Reservations consisted of low-intensity, understory burn with less than 10 percent mature tree mortality. Active forest management limited the acres classified as high and moderate soil burn severity to less than 10 percent on San Carlos Indian Reservation, and less than 3 percent on Fort Apache Indian Reservation.”*

**2011 Wallow Fire Burned Area Emergency Stabilization Plan,  
San Carlos Apache Tribe, White Mountain Apache Tribe,  
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Pinetop, Arizona, July 2011**

### Vegetation and Forest Mortality

The majority of the Wallow Fire acreage on the Fort Apache and San Carlos Indian reservations was low-intensity, understory burn with minimal mature tree mortality. Active forest management practices, within the burned area resulted in a limited number of acres classified as high and moderate soil burn severity.

### Soil Burn Severity Acreages on Fort Apache Indian Reservation

#### Soil Burn Severity (Acres)

	Unburned	Low	Moderate	High
Wallow Fire (total)	86,088	258,264	107,610	86,088
Fort Apache	3,446	9,100	400	13

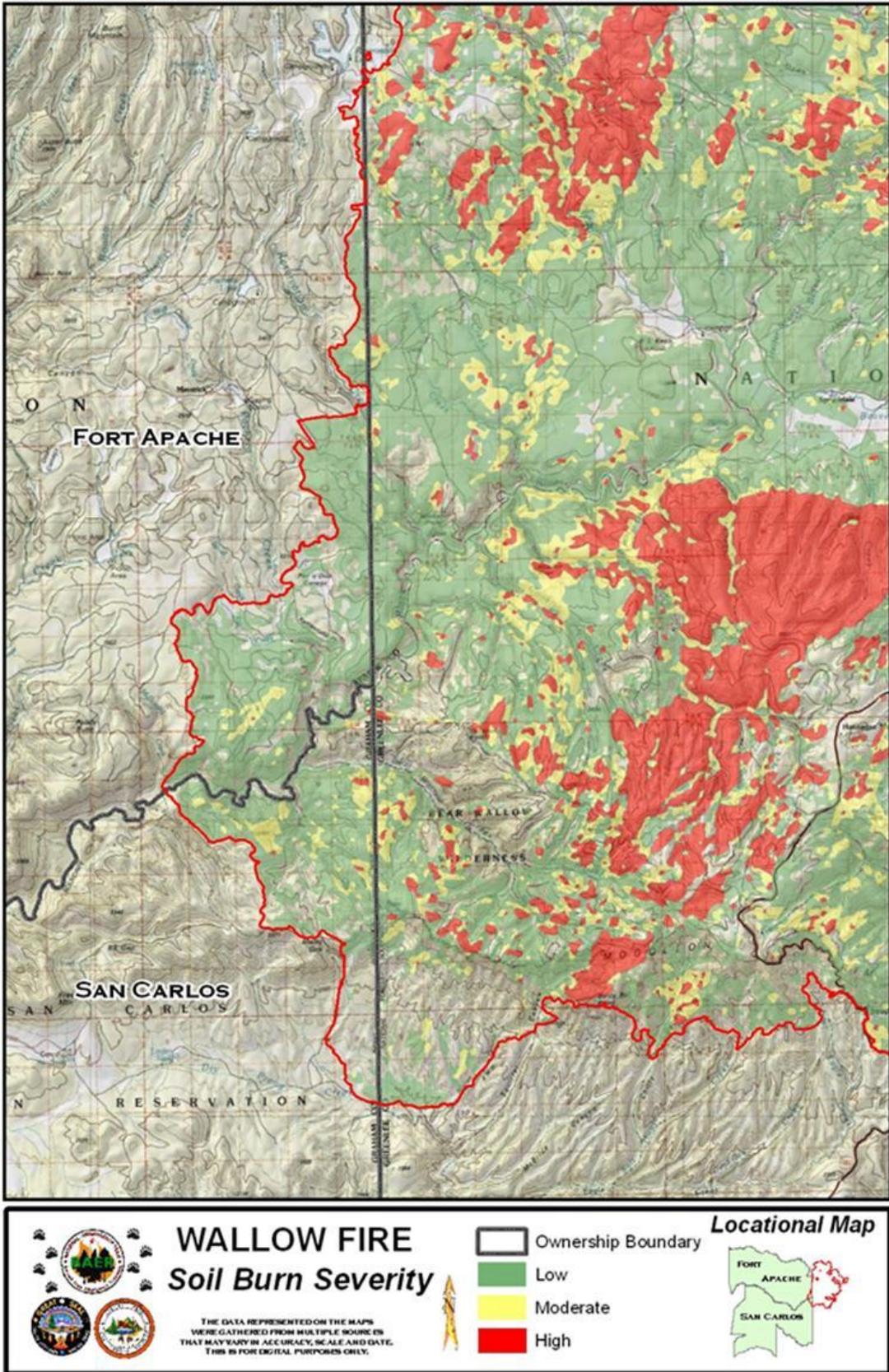
Understory grasses and forbs—observed while conducting the field reconnaissance—had already started to re-sprout. Fire in the cienegas (seasonally wet meadows) only burned the tops of the grasses and left the roots intact. Most tribal, agency, and BAER personnel agree that the burned area on the two reservations will have few, if any, lasting negative impacts.

The degree of fire-related mature tree mortality was determined by aerial survey on June 22, 2011, and on the ground by BAER foresters and Fort Apache Agency Forestry staff on June 22-23.

Forest mortality fell into two categories: 1) 100 percent mortality, and 2) Less than 10 percent mortality of the mature trees.

Active forest management appeared to limit mortality on the reservation lands. Less than seven percent of the total area burned on the Fort Apache Reservation experienced the higher level (100 percent) of mature tree mortality.

Fuel Treatment Effectiveness on the Wallow Fire on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation



## Commercial Timber

The Wallow Fire burned predominately on commercial forest lands on the reservation.

Much of the area impacted by the Wallow Fire on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation occurred within the Maverick and Tonto Forest Management Units. The Wallow Fire burned a total of approximately 13,000 acres on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. The observed fire behavior and post-fire effects on the timbered areas were primarily low-intensity under-burning—with limited areas of mosaic burn patterns affecting the canopy.

Jere McLemore, Timber Sale Forester for the Fort Apache Agency, assessed the effect of the Wallow Fire and the burnout operation on the forested areas of the reservation impacted by the fire. His conclusions:

- Forest thinning was highly effective in reducing fire intensity.
- Prescribed fire use was highly effective in reducing fire intensity.
- Timber harvest and fuels management were effective in reducing fire intensity by reducing heavy fuels. *(Continued on next page)*



***Approximately two months after the Wallow Fire—in August 2011—at the end of the monsoon season, the treated forest in the Maverick Fuel Treatment area exhibits a rapid return to a green understory and little evidence of mature tree mortality. Photo by Kim Kelly.***

## Fuel Treatment Effectiveness on the Wallow Fire on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation

- The combination of forest thinning and prescribed fire use was most effective in reducing fire intensity. These sites exhibit under-burning fire effects.
- Single-method treatments (mechanical thinning or prescribed burning) were beneficial, but not as effective as combined treatments. These sites exhibit fire effects ranging from under-burning to mosaic burn patterns.
- Due to the low-intensity burning, the timbered areas will require little or no emergency stabilization, rehabilitation, or reforestation treatments.

To maintain the effectiveness of these fuels treatments, Fort Apache Agency Timber Sale Forester McLemore emphasized that prescribed fire and pre-commercial thinning need to reoccur on a regular schedule.

McLemore cautioned that the recent closure of local sawmills will reduce the amount of commercial timber harvested in the future—making fuels treatments even more critical to maintaining safe and healthy forest communities.



***After the Wallow Fire entered this area, this untreated timber sale had a higher level of mortality than the other areas on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. However, the extent of the stand-replacing fire here was limited to scattered small patches.***

August 2011 (Post Wallow Fire) Photo by Kim Kelly.

### **Apache Trout**

The Soldier Spring population of Apache trout occupies Fort Apache Indian Reservation lands within the Wallow Fire's eastern perimeter. The vast majority of the Soldier Spring drainage was burned at low severity, with three small patches (totaling approximately 40 acres) of moderate severity.

Fire behavior on the reservation lands within the Soldier Spring drainage appears to have been moderated by pre-fire fuels management and burn-out operations conducted on the Wallow Fire's eleventh day along the Y40 Road.



**Apache trout.**

Photo by Chris Holbeck's BAER Team.

An unburned vegetation strip remains around the spring and downstream on both sides of the channel to the reservation boundary. The Wallow Fire and suppression operations do not appear to have affected the Apache trout population.

### **Mexican Grey Wolf**

During the course of the Wallow Fire suppression efforts, several wolves were observed by suppression resources along the fire's western perimeter. Fire suppression did not result in changes to the habitat suitability for wolves and did not change the long-term potential for human interaction from existing levels.

### **Mexican Spotted Owl**

A total of 2 Mexican Spotted Owl Protected Activity Centers (PAC) have been identified on San Carlos Apache Tribal lands within the Wallow Fire perimeter. None of the Mexican Spotted Owl PACs on White Mountain Apache Tribal lands were within the Wallow Fire perimeter.

### **Elk Habitat**

Most wildlife species benefit from low-intensity fire. The vegetation has responded vigorously, allowing the herbivores to start to recover from the drought. This will help the herds for several years with better calf and fawn viability, the potential for a better survival rate, and enhanced antler production. Thus, these conditions will improve the tribe's big game hunting enterprise.

### **Mount Baldy and Sunrise Ski Area**

The Wallow Fire was successfully stopped near the base of Mount Baldy, nearly four miles from the Sunrise Ski Resort.

The flanks of Dzil Ligai and the powder dreams of Arizona skiers live on . . .

## V Conclusion

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### A. Fuel treatments on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation:

#### 1. Increased Firefighter Safety

- ❖ Fuel treatments allowed firefighters on the ground to implement their suppression strategy safely and quickly enough to be effective.

#### 2. Enhanced Management Options

- ❖ Fuel treatments provided fire managers a successful option in halting the spread of the Wallow Fire to the west.

#### 3. Substantially Reduced Suppression Cost and Fire Size

- ❖ Fuel treatments significantly reduced Wallow Fire costs for suppression and post-fire rehabilitation.
- ❖ Fuel treatments provided the “Best Safe Shot” of reducing fire size.

#### 4. Minimized Negative Effects on Resources

- ❖ Fuel treatments ensured that the Wallow Fire’s negative effects on resources and values stayed at minimal levels.

### B. Future Considerations

- ❖ Large, landscape-level treatment areas are a mosaic of many smaller treatments completed over many years. This is not an overnight solution.
- ❖ Fuel treatments outside of the Wildland Urban Interface [WUI] are critical strategic components to manage fire and protect areas within the WUI.
- ❖ It will be challenging to continue these treatment practices in the future due to: reduced timber harvesting, increased concern over smoke impacts, and funding emphasis on treating WUI-adjacent lands.
- ❖ Fuel treatments vary greatly across landscapes, requiring site-specific temporal and spatial implementation.
- ❖ In managing fire across a landscape, the real story is never about a single fire.

## VI Review Team Members

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**Mark Jackson**

Assistant Director, Fire Use & Fuels, Bureau of Indian Affairs,  
National Interagency Fire Center

**Mary Taber**

Fire Ecologist, Bureau of Indian Affairs,  
National Interagency Fire Center

**Carlos Nosie, Jr.**

Assistant Prescribed Fire Fuels Manager,  
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Western Regional Office

**Ryan Whiteaker**

Regional Fire Planner,  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2

**Kim Kelly**

Fuels Monitoring Specialist,  
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Rocky Mountain, Northwest and Alaska Regions

**Paul Keller**

Technical Writer-Editor,  
Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center

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Some of the information and photos in this report originally appeared in the *2011 Wallow Fire Burned Area Emergency Stabilization Plan* written by Chris Holbeck's Interagency Burned Area Emergency Response Team.

Special thanks to Nona Techawena, Ralph Thomas, Brian Quintero, Jere McLemore, The White Mountain Apache Tribe, Dugger Hughes, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for their contributions.

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# Regional Alternatives Development Workshop AGENDA

#	<i>Topic</i>
1	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> Introductions by each participant.</p>
2	<p><b>Expectations for Workshop and General Overview of Process</b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> RSC Chair will open with meeting expectations. NSAT leaders and facilitators will further describe meeting objectives, and specific expectations from the NSAT perspective.</p> <p>Danny will provide a brief overview of the Phase 3 comparative risk assessment process, thus providing context for the current discussions.</p> <p>Participants will have the opportunity to provide any feedback on the participants' expectations for the workshop and the ongoing risk assessment process.</p>
3	<p><b>Narrowing the Analysis using the Objective Hierarchy and Crosswalk</b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> This is a strategic discussion among the participants to help focus the regional risk assessment. Previous regional discussions regarding the objectives hierarchy and the crosswalk provided abundant detail regarding possible actions and activities. This discussion will step back and look at the bigger picture in order to set priorities for the analysis.</p> <p><u>Outcome(s):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and agreement to the assumptions and direction for the regional analysis.</li> </ul> <p><u>Materials:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reference the Objectives Hierarchy</li> <li>2. Reference the Crosswalk</li> </ol> <p><u>Pre-work Questions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Objectives Hierarchy and Crosswalk provide a lot of information. Of that, what are the primary issues that would benefit from rigorous analysis?</li> <li>2. What specific questions would you like to explore through the analysis?</li> </ol>

#	Topic
4	<p><b>Current and Desired Conditions</b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> To move forward with developing alternatives, we need to first discuss and describe a regional vision for the Cohesive Strategy. The Phase 2 report provides the basis for this discussion, but the vision needs to be further refined as a comparison between where we are (current conditions) and where we want to be in the future (desired conditions). The three national goals can provide a framework to discuss current and desired conditions for the region.</p> <p>The NSAT will facilitate this discussion using information gathered through various efforts. Maps and charts (as appropriate) will help display current conditions, which in turn provide the basis for a discussion of desirable future conditions. The group will discuss various means of describing a desirable future. For example, can the type, structure, composition, and location of various vegetation communities adequately describe components of a desired resilient landscape? What else might be needed in lieu of or in addition to such maps?</p> <p><u>Outcome(s):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement to desired conditions under each of the three national goals.</li> <li>• Agreement to current conditions under each of the three national goals.</li> </ul> <p><u>Materials:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Data and Maps to be displayed at the workshop by the NSAT.</li> </ol> <p><u>Pre-work Questions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In looking at each national goal individually, what is the desired future condition?</li> <li>2. What changes do you want to see in the region?</li> <li>3. What do the objectives hierarchy, report, and regional dialogs tell us about our desired future landscape?</li> </ol>
5	<p><b>Values</b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> Inherent in each of the previous discussions is the question of values within the region, both individually and collectively. This discussion allows us to think about what we care about, how that relates to what the current and desired conditions may be, and what may need to change based on our values. Understanding what we care about as values is an important step in defining what to explore in the analysis and ultimately what activities to include within alternatives.</p> <p><u>Pre-work Questions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do the objectives hierarchy, report, and regional dialogs tell us about key values that are directly affected by wildland fire?</li> <li>2. How do values affect the choices we can make to achieve desired conditions?</li> </ol>

#	Topic
6	<p><b>Measurable Objectives</b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> Building on the previous topics, this discussion focuses on assessing the difference between current and desired conditions and how we measure progress towards our goals. Establishing measurable objectives is both a necessary component of the analysis as well as critical to making progress in achieving desired results. The national goals will again be the framework for a discussion of measurable objectives. For example, what makes a community fire-adapted? How do we determine the current condition of communities? How do we measure or determine when a fire-adapted community has been achieved?</p> <p>The NSAT will present and display ideas for what measurable objectives could be. The participants will need to discuss and consider if the proposed objectives are appropriate for the region. The NSAT will also explain how measurable objectives will be applied within the context of the risk analysis as a basis for comparing the outcomes and performance of alternatives.</p> <p><u>Outcome(s):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Validate preliminary measurable objectives for conditions.</li> </ul> <p><u>Pre-work Questions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How can we assess the difference between current and desired conditions in the regions (i.e. what measures would you use to define progress and success in moving toward desired conditions)?</li> <li>2. What outcome-based metrics are appropriate in this region?</li> <li>3. Are there regionally specific measures that must be considered?</li> </ol>
7	<p><b>Major Processes, Linkages, and Interactions</b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> The NSAT will present an analytical framework of the major processes, linkages, and potential interactions based on the regional objectives hierarchy, crosswalk, and workshop discussion. Participants will discuss how processes interact and affect the desired conditions. Participants will discuss and determine if regionally specific processes should be incorporated.</p> <p>The NSAT will describe what data the NSAT has and how the data will be applied to the defined processes and linkages. The NSAT will also be able to describe models and tools related to the major processes and analysis.</p> <p><u>Outcome(s):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Validate an analytical framework for the region.</li> </ul> <p><u>Pre-work Questions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do the combination of conceptual models (NSAT report) and the objective hierarchy suggest clear pathways for moving from actions to outcomes?</li> </ol>

#	Topic
8	<p><b>Developing Preliminary Alternatives</b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> The Cohesive Strategy affords an opportunity to explore possibilities in an unconstrained environment. We will brainstorm about the full decision-space available to the region. This discussion will lead to management options that could be emphasized within various alternatives. We can also discuss and describe major assumptions associated with alternatives to be explored. Furthermore, we will consider the spatial specificity appropriate for various options.</p> <p><u>Outcome(s):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement to a set of preliminary alternatives to be explored.</li> </ul> <p><u>Pre-work:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What options could move us collectively toward desired conditions – what would that look like, what would that take?</li> </ol>
9	<p><b>Exploratory Analysis</b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> Based on previous discussions, the NSAT will propose a series of exploratory analyses.</p>
10	<p><b>Next Steps and Timeline</b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> The participants will discuss next steps, timeline, and determine a course of action for moving forward.</p> <p><u>Outcome(s):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment from the region and NSAT on next steps, future interactions, and responsibilities.</li> </ul>
11	<p><b>Wrap-Up</b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> Facilitator will wrap-up the meeting and addresses any 'bin' items. RSC Chair and NSAT Leads will provide closing remarks.</p>
	<p><b>ADJOURN</b></p>