

The National Strategy:

The Final Phase in the Development of the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy?

A: The National Cohesive Strategy is a collaborative process with active involvement of all levels of government and non-governmental organizations, as well as the public, to seek national, all-lands solutions to wildland fire management issues. The Strategy has been implemented in three phases, allowing stakeholders to develop a dynamic approach to planning for, responding to, and recovering from wildland fire incidents. This phased approach was designed to promote dialogue between national, regional, and local leadership.

The release of [*The National Strategy: The Final Phase in the Development of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*](#) (National Cohesive Strategy) brings to a close the three-phased, collaborative approach to evaluating and addressing the nation's most significant wildland fire management issues, now and into the future.

Q: Why is the National Cohesive Strategy important to us as a nation?

A: Wildland fire burns across landscapes without regard for political jurisdictions, property lines or land management units. The effects of fire on wildlife, water, air quality, recreation, and communities extend far beyond the burn boundaries. Rural and urban economies depend on services generated by wildland ecosystems; most of those ecosystems depend on wildland fire of appropriate timing and intensity but can be damaged by fires that burn outside the range to which they are adapted. Whether it is implementation of a community wildfire protection plan or restoration of fire resilience to a watershed hundreds of thousands of acres in size - it requires collaboration among stakeholders with different authorities and resources,

Q: What is the purpose of The National Strategy?

A: The purpose is to provide a national framework to guide and support decision-makers. It provides policy options, risks, consequences of decisions, and how these decisions fit into the broader goals and objectives of the vision for the future of wildland fire management. The National Strategy builds on all three phases of planning and analysis conducted at multiple scales and involving a diverse set of stakeholders and the public.

The National Strategy includes analysis of the national challenges to help understand where the greatest opportunity is to address these challenges and meet national goals. The analysis sought to answer three questions: 1) Why is this a national issue or challenge? 2) How does the issue vary across the nation? 3) Where are the greatest opportunities for positively addressing these challenges and mitigating risks?

Q: What content is included in the National Strategy?

A: The National Strategy is designed to identify strategic opportunities and establish national priorities for achieving Cohesive Strategy goals. A structured scientific analysis used over 100 different data sources of wildland fire issues across the nation to better understand the differences and similarities among locations. The result is greater consistency and specificity in understanding national challenges, their underlying causes, and the management opportunities available to address them. Thus, the National Strategy explicitly links potential actions or opportunities to locations—a key element not found in prior documents.

Q: How should I use this information?

A: Maps that provide details by county inform stakeholders more fully on the risks and management options that make sense in their current locations. For example, the maps specify locations where fuels can and cannot be managed to match historical levels. Stakeholders who work in wildland fire management and communities that are at risk could use the analysis in The National Cohesive Strategy to identify what actions make sense in their communities and decide what would work under the current environments and conditions. The National Strategy provides information on the potential risks and actions to mitigate risks to fire responders, homes, property, and those who manage and work in wildland fire management. Find national priority maps [on the National Priorities web page of the Forests and Rangelands website](#).

Q: How can my agency or organization implement the Cohesive Strategy?

A: There are three key premises that underlie meaningful reductions in risk: (1) prioritization of investment; (2) use of resources and acceptance of increased short-term risk and; (3) greater collective investment.

Once your agency and organization can agree on these key assumptions, the activities that make sense for your region can be planned and implemented. The opportunities or key actions that make sense based on the data and depending on location are included in the National Strategy. Implementing actions will take much collaboration, planning, and time, but once the three key premises are understood and accepted, activities are more likely to occur and more likely to be successful.

Q: What's next?

A: The phases completed to this point are just the beginning of a larger and longer effort needed to include a broad network of expertise, experience, and resources to improve the efficiencies and safety of wildland fire management on the ground.

A National Action Plan: An Implementation Framework for the National Cohesive Strategy, released with the National Strategy provides a coordinated framework of implementation activities at various scales. The Action Plan provides a bridge between the Cohesive Strategy and implementation; it does not prescribe how entities will undertake their responsibilities, leaving those details to be determined through respective stakeholders.

For More Information

Visit the Forests and Rangelands website

(<http://www.forestsandangelands.gov/strategy/thestrategy.shtml>).