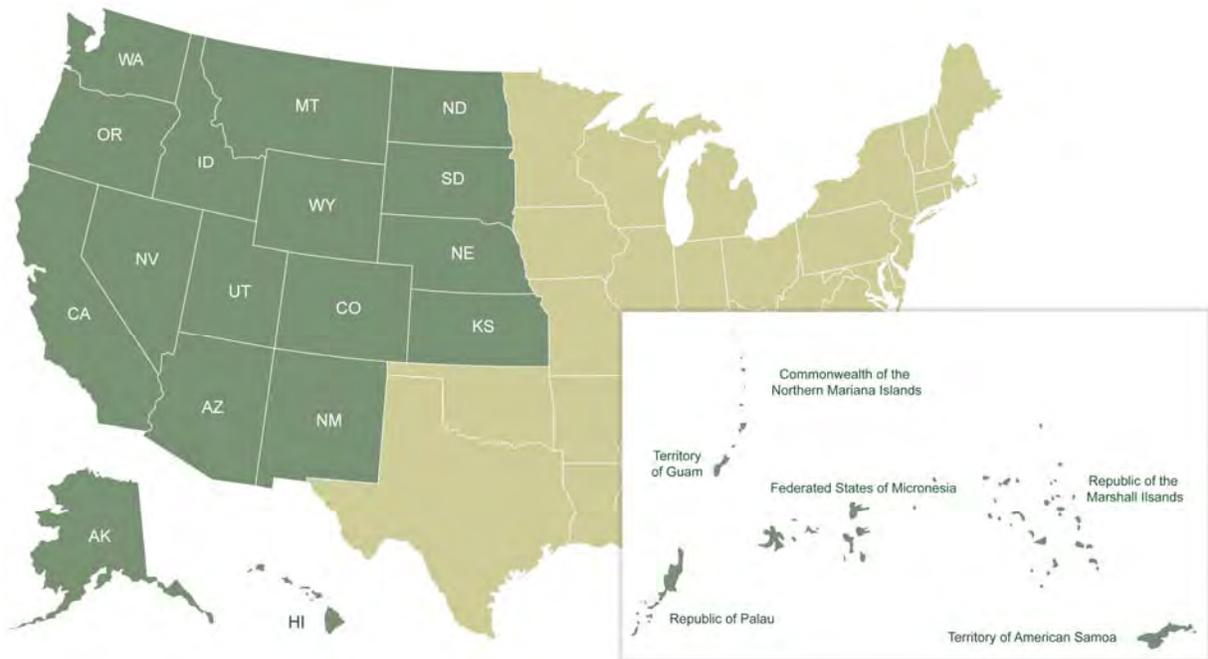




National Wildland Fire Management Cohesive Strategy Western Region Strategy Assessment

Phase II Outreach and Content Analysis



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1.0 Introduction

This report documents the process and outcomes of outreach conducted during Phase II of developing the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy in the Western Region. It characterizes the nature of comments by stakeholders assessing the Strategy's potential impact and implementation in the area encompassed by the Western Region.

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, industry groups, and landowner groups. 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 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 Western Region's Communication Plan (see Appendix A) identifies goals and describes objectives for the collaborative effort underlying Phase II. These objectives include:

1. Engage people affected by this strategy in its development in the proposed timeframe.
2. Follow a collaborative, rigorous, transparent development path.
3. Collect data representing interests and opinions of stakeholders.
4. Use local, regional, and traditional knowledge and insights to frame the strategy.
5. Disseminate clear, current information to stakeholders.

Developing the Western Region's assessment and strategies relies upon those methods that could be employed within the timeframes established by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC).

The WRSC and WG employed the services of Management and Engineering Technologies International, Inc. (METI) to assist with the outreach effort. Members of the METI Outreach and Content Analysis Team (see Appendix D) provided assistance in communication planning, preparing and conducting field and virtual discussion forums, conducting the content analysis process, and preparing this report.

1.1 Phase II Outreach Effort

Phase II of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy continues development of a national strategy by engaging people affected by and essential to implementation at a regional scale. The goals of Phase II are twofold, 1) to solicit input and initiate collaborative relationships between wildland fire management organizations and stakeholders affected by the strategy and 2) to better represent the unique resources and values associated with distinct geographic regions of the United States.

Formal Phase II outreach efforts began on June 27, 2011 and concluded on July 29, 2011. The WRSC Communication Plan for outreach outlined several ways in which the WG was to inform and invite participation from Western stakeholders. Two desired outcomes were identified by the WRSC for the outreach effort.

1. Comments and suggestions provided by stakeholders assist in validating and confirming objectives, values, barriers, and actions being considered for the western region.

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2. Stakeholder input helps identify and refine the objectives, values, barriers, and actions needed to address wildland fire management issues in the west.

As a starting point for Phase II, the WRSC considered comments made during twelve Phase I field forums held in the West. The WG used these comments to help establish Western regional values, and to help define objectives, actions and activities important for the West to be successful.

The vision of the WRSC’s collaborative foundation is that people and communities in the West contribute to and are actively involved in shaping the western components of the national strategy. To realize this vision, members of the WRSC and WG employed three approaches to seek input and build relationships during the outreach effort:

- Direct interaction with individuals and organizations
- A series of virtual and field discussion forums
- A web-based information outreach and comment process

The outreach efforts of the WRSC and WG are summarized in the following sections.

1.1.1 WRSC and WG Personal Outreach

Personal outreach and interaction with stakeholders conducted by members of the WRSC and WG during the outreach effort are consistent with roles described in their respective charters. Members of the WRSC and WG sought input from the communities of interest they represent, informing them of progress, and incorporating information provided by these stakeholders into the western assessment. These efforts included disseminating information and notices on organizational websites, in teleconferences, via email distribution, and in personal discussions.

The WG assigned members to conduct outreach within six geographic areas corresponding to the western wildfire suppression coordination centers. WG geographic area representatives sent emails, made phone calls and in some cases posted notice to message boards inviting stakeholders to view the website and submit comments using the web comment form. Working Group and WRSC members contacted approximately 700 stakeholders directly to invite them to participate in the forums. The following are representative of the types of personal outreach conducted by members of the WRSC and WG:

- Provided announcements and updates at various meetings including:
 - The Idaho Association of Counties
 - National Association of Counties, particularly the Western Interstate Region
- Posted notice to websites and web-forums including the:
 - International Journal of Wildland Fire’s FireNet, with 1,378 subscribers
 - Wildfire News of the Day, with a current readership of 239 people
 - International Association of Fire Chiefs’ Daily Dispatches, distribution up to 15,000 members in 11 western states
 - Wildland Fire Today Website, on two occasions
 - Wildland fire website called “They Said”, oriented to rank and file wildland fire specialists

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- Emailed outreach updates and invitations to the following networks requesting further distribution to their networks:
 - Individual member mailing lists and networks
 - Western Governors’ Association – Forest Health Advisory Committee
 - Scientists in the Forest Service’s Rocky Mountain, Pacific Southwest, and Pacific Northwest Research Stations
 - Western Region Forest Service Regional Foresters and fire management directors
 - Forest Service State and Private Forestry staff in Washington, DC and their regional counterparts
 - International Association of Fire Chiefs western division, which includes 15,000 members in 11 western states
 - BLM Executive Leadership Teams in the west, Associate State Directors, and State Fire Management Officers; these leaders then distributed this information through the rest of the BLM employee ranks in the west
 - Eighty-six stakeholders in Pacific Northwest including a cross section of county commissioners, environmental groups, landowners, ranchers, and others
 - Seventeen Western State fire managers, which is a subset of the Council of Western State Foresters
 - All Forest Service Northern Region Forest Supervisors, Deputy Forest Supervisors and Fire Management Officers and Northern Rockies Coordination Group

In response to outreach efforts the following stakeholders sent letters and position statements to the WRSC or WG members;

- Inland Empire and Intermountain Chapters of the Society of American Forester’s
- Montana Department of Natural Resource Conservation
- David Nelson, no affiliation identified
- Sustainable Northwest and 14 member organizations of the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition
- Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership

Information contained in these submissions will be incorporated into the strategy assessment process by WRSC and WG members.

1.1.2 Field and Virtual Discussion Forums

A series of discussion forums were held during late June and July, 2011 (see Table 1.1). Personal invitations to participate in the forums were extended by the WRSC and WG to groups and individuals listed above. Discussion forums were organized around the Western Region wildland fire geographic coordinating area boundaries. Initially, 13 discussion forums were proposed, but only six were actually held based on the discretion of the forum lead. A number of individuals who signed up to participate were unable due to scheduling conflicts resulting from the short advance notice. These participants were invited to join a forum at an alternate time. Some who were invited also indicated a preference for providing written comments, rather than participating in a lengthy virtual forum, and some simply did not respond to their invitations. Invitations and the forum discussion outline are included in Appendix B. A total of 107 individuals participated in the discussion forums.

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Table 1.1 – Western Region Phase II Field and Virtual Discussion Forums

Date	Forum
June 28, 2011	Great Basin Field Forum
July 12, 2011	Great Basin Virtual Forum
July 19, 2011	Southwest/Rocky Mountain Virtual Forum
July 14, 2011	California Field Forum
July 27, 2011	Tribal/BIA Virtual Forum
July 27, 2011	Northern Rockies/Pacific Northwest Virtual Forum

Table 1.2 provides a portrait of the participation in the discussion forums by geographic area and organizational affiliation.

Table 1.2 – Forum Participation by Affiliation Group

Affiliation	GB Field	GB Virtual	SW/RM Virtual	Firescope ¹ CA Field	Tribal/BIA Virtual	NR/PNW Virtual
Federal Government	10	1	4	6	12	4
Tribal	0	0	0	0	10	1
State Government	1	1	1	8	0	4
Local Government	0	0	3	5	0	4
NGOs	2	1	2	0	0	12
Industry	1	1	0	0	0	5
Fire Departments	4	1	3	0	0	0
Homeowner/Landowner	0	0	0	0	0	2
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	18	5	13	19	22	30

Note 1: Firescope is an organization of California fire service organizations. This field forum was an extension of a previously scheduled meeting of this group.

Comments and suggestions resulting from the discussion forums are evaluated in this report.

1.1.3 Web-Based Outreach and Comment Forms

The WG established an outreach webpage with information about the national strategy and the regional assessment, along with a comment form for stakeholder feedback and input on the assessment (see Appendix C).

The following are the web comment form questions:

1. The Cohesive Strategy is focused around three goals: Resilient Landscapes, Fire Adapted Communities and Response to Wildland Fires. What do you see as the three greatest risks or challenges related to each of these goals?
2. For each of the risks or challenges you have identified, please provide up to three actions that you think will help us best address them and why you feel they are important.

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3. What methods or tactics would you recommend to align the efforts of individuals, homeowners, and communities in preparing for and responding to wildland fire risk, and accepting responsibilities for threats and consequences of wildland fire?
4. Are there other high priority areas or issues that you believe the Cohesive Strategy should address in the west?

Comments provided using the web-based form are evaluated in this report.

1.1.4 Outreach Summary

The number of outreach participants and 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 1.3.

Table 1.3 – Number of Participants by Method and Affiliation Group

Affiliation	Web Comment Forms	Forum Participants	Letters to WRSC/WG	Total
Federal Government	39	37	0	76
Tribal	3	11	0	14
State Government	14	15	1	30
Local Government	13	10	0	23
Non-Governmental Organization	20	17	1	38
Industry	12	8	0	20
Fire Departments	11	7	0	18
Homeowner/Landowner	10	2	0	12
Other	13	0	1	14
Totals	135	107	3	245

Note: It is possible that some participants commented during the discussion forums and also submitted comments via the web form, therefore totals may be double counting some participants.

What is notable about outreach participation is that 49 percent of web comment participants and 59 percent of forum participants represented federal, state and local governments. Participation by homeowners/landowners, fire departments, and Tribal representatives appears to be underrepresented, especially in the discussion forums. A specific discussion forum was held to ensure Tribal and Bureau of Indian Affairs representatives had access to and were included in the outreach effort.

1.2 Document Organization

This report documents comments received during the outreach effort including; field and virtual forums, web-based comment forms, and letters provided to members of the Western Region Strategy Committee (WRSC). This content analysis report will be considered by the WRSC and Working Group during their deliberations and preparation of the Western Region Assessment for Phase II.

The document is organized into the following sections:

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- | | |
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| Section 2 | Describes the content analysis process and provides an analysis of those comments received during the Phase II outreach efforts related to: a) Objectives by National Goal, b) Values, c) Barriers, and d) Actions and Activities. |
| Section 3 | Provides an analysis of comments based on the affiliation of commenters and Western Region geographic areas, using the same format as Section 2. |
| Section 4 | Summarizes key observations for consideration by the Western Region Strategy Committee and Working Group |

Additional information and detail are provided in appendices:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Appendix A | Western Region Phase II Outreach Communication Plan |
| Appendix B | Outreach Forum Invitation and Discussion Outline |
| Appendix C | Website Comment Form |
| Appendix D | Outreach and Content Analysis Team Members |

2.0 Content Analysis

Content analysis and the information presented below focuses on comments received on 135 web-based comment forms, from 107 participants in the six virtual and field discussion forums, and 3 letters provided directly to the chair of the 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 1,444 separate comments were included in the documents reviewed. Comments were analyzed and classified as related to one of the following groups and categories within these groups: goal/objective, value, barrier, or action/activity. Categories are described at the beginning of each following the following sections. Similar comments were grouped, characterized and edited for clarity. Comment summaries and excerpts are presented in Section 2.0.

Comments from the forums were evaluated to determine the geographic distribution of their occurrence, while comments from the website were evaluated to determine affiliation of the commenter for each of the goals/objectives, values, barriers, and action/activity categories. This evaluation is presented in Section 3.0.

The final phase of the content analysis process takes a “big picture view” to highlight key observations and essential ingredients for the strategy, as identified by the Outreach Team, presented in Section 4.0.

Note to Reviewers

The information derived from the content analysis only represents 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. However, it does provide information about the variety of perspectives and in some cases points of agreement on different issues.

There was a natural limit to the number of comments that could be made during the time allotted for the virtual and field discussion forums.

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Those participating in the discussion forums were reminded they had opportunity to expound upon their views using the web-based comment form. Those submitting comments through multiple channels, or submitting the same comments multiple times received no greater consideration than those submitting once.

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 Objectives Supporting Goal 1: Resilient Landscapes

The desired outcome associated with this national goal is:

Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire related disturbances in accordance with management objectives.

Declining vegetative health has contributed to increasing risk of catastrophic wildfire that threatens landscapes and communities. Factors including weather, fire exclusion, insects and disease and non-native species, changing land use, fragmentation, and urbanization pose significant challenges to establishing and maintaining healthy and resilient landscapes and communities. The primary tools for restoring and maintaining resilience include active management such as thinning, commercial harvest and mechanical fuel treatments and prescribed fire or wildland fire.

Comments related to this goal were sorted into the following objective groups and are summarized in this section:

Objective Group	Description
Vegetation manipulation	Desired vegetation composition and structure using prescribed fire, mechanical treatments, and wildfire; priorities linked to defense of human communities and ecological values/services; treat areas affected by disturbances that increase fire hazard
Local Economies	Foster the local economies that support, maintain, and enhance working landscapes to sustain traditional land uses (e.g., forest products, grazing, sustainable use, tourism, recreation, biomass market viability) and encourage new uses
Threatened & Endangered (T&E) Species/Water/Air	Protect water resources and watersheds. Restore and maintain western ecosystems and their functions to be resistant to wildfire effects. Provide for T&E habitats, water quality/quantity and maintain air quality
Strategic planning	Planning across agencies and publics to more effectively integrate wildland fire planning into land-use planning and economic development
Interagency Coordination	Enhance interagency coordination, planning, and implementation of actions and activities
Professional/industrial capacity	Cadre of trained professionals needed for a comprehensive prescribed fire program. Infrastructure (public and private) needed to mechanically treat areas of concern
Policies/Procedures	Provide management flexibility needed to appropriately implement a mix of landscape treatments; stewardship contracts/agreements
Education/Incentives	Public education, outreach, and engagement/landowner incentives
Mitigate Other Stressors	Mitigate environmental threats other than wildfire that reduce ecosystem vitality and increase susceptibility to wildfire/I&D/invasive species that alter

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fire behavior/dynamics

2.1.1 Vegetation Manipulation

Vegetation Manipulation is at the base of everything that is done for landscape management. The West has vast expanses of vegetation subject to a wide range of change agents, including fire, insects and disease, weather-related events such as windstorms, and removal for human uses through commercial and non-commercial means. Of these, fire probably has the greatest potential to change the landscape, and fire's effects can be exacerbated or ameliorated by the other change agents. As a result of such change agents, vegetation is not static in composition or structure in any given place, nor is it static across the landscape, but rather forms a rich and varied mosaic.

Many landscapes have evolved with fire as an active change agent, whether through natural ignition sources such as lightning or through human ignition for a variety of reasons. As modern humans have settled in the western landscape, there has been increased interest in controlling and/or managing fire occurrence and extent to protect human investments in infrastructure and the resources necessary for human livelihood.

Comments received reflect the complexity of this task as well as its importance. There are 60-80 million acres currently at risk to insects, disease, and/or wildfire i.e. in Condition Class II or III. Treating this is a daunting task, based on size alone. Another comment illustrates an additional aspect of this problem:

"In Idaho if all FS projects pass NEPA and are implemented (100% project success) then FS will only remove 5% of new growth each year –there is too much new growth, compared to historic levels."

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ There is additional complexity in the objectives of treatment. Do we want the landscape to be resilient to fire? Insects/disease? These are agents of change that are bigger than any one of us individually or collectively. A challenge we face is the notion we can change nature's natural course. We can affect a change on a small scale, for sure, but we also have to accept what nature has done for far longer than we have experience in managing. There was comment that we cannot create fire-resilient landscapes without causing irreparable ecological damage and creating unnatural ecosystems; it would be illogical, ecologically devastating, and financially infeasible to try.
- ✓ There are also a variety of natural fire regimes. Within landscapes that support a historical pattern of high frequency, low severity fire regimes, the movement towards a more resilient landscape is likely achieved by implementation of functioning fire regimes. These regimes also have significant benefits with regard to the protection of communities and other social values. Still, other landscapes supporting low frequency, mixed or high severity fire regimes may create challenges with regard to vegetation management and mitigating fire risks.
- ✓ Also, the myth of fire being natural is not true in today's world. The fuel loading, whether it be grass, brush or timber, is generally far above the amounts found when the first settlers lived here, and used fire to meet their needs – or, when fire spread unchecked due to virtually no fire

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suppression. This Indian fire has shaped our landscape, and while the use of fire is still definitely needed to reduce wildfires and their effects, it can't be used today as it was then. The term “fire adapted” needs to be reviewed. Much of our landscape has changed to the point where it will not be able to stand fire, and when fire burns it many ecosystems will be radically changed. Whether this change is good or bad depends upon the burned lands’ impact on resources needed by citizens

- ✓ Comprehensive understanding of the uniqueness of different western fire adapted habitats. Willingness to treat every location on a case-by-case basis to the extent possible when considering the local ecological network and effects of management efforts.
- ✓ Comments on methods of treatment stated commercial logging increases fire risk, and that the greatest risk is using fire as a catalyst for over-thinning forests. Others are concerned that enough land can be managed and maintained at the proper intensity to make a meaningful difference in terms of reduced fire risk.
- ✓ And that is before you add people into the equation. Land ownership/management patterns are complex, and management objectives vary – and may be in direct conflict. Reliable funding is not available, especially over multiple years. And people have strong emotional connections to the land and resources. But the current situation of deteriorating health of the forest impacts communities with increased risk of catastrophic wildfires, and the loss of forest industry reduces the viability of some communities and the social welfare of the residents.
- ✓ *“Fires originating from federal lands especially Condition Class 2 & 3 are costly to non-federal neighbors. The general lack of active management on federal forests create a significantly increased risk of loss, cost and environmental damage by burning onto adjacent neighboring non-federal ownerships due to increased federal fuel loads, fire hazards, diminished forest health, insufficient road access, and limited suppression tactics.”*

2.1.2 Local Economies

Local Economies have long depended on the natural resources first for subsistence during settlement and then for economic development through extraction of resources by logging, grazing, etc. Currently, communities have a strong interest in using natural resources for economic stability, as well as designing landscape treatments that “pay for themselves” by using commercially those resources removed during landscape management.

The most frequently cited concern here was a lack of infrastructure to utilize biomass. We need to create better market-based solutions that provide energy, heat, wood products and help to revitalize forest-dependent rural areas. A consistent long-term supply is necessary to support investment in infrastructure. Ideally, the resulting products pay the cost of treatment, but there will continue to be a need for publicly financed service projects where they don't.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ Preservation of forest management infrastructure is key to managing costs of treatment. Revenue generation must be a key objective for ALL land management activities to help offset costs. Active forest management generates 40 jobs for every \$1 million invested. No other

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sector of the economy is even close; crop agriculture is second at 22 jobs per \$1 million invested.

- ✓ Rural America is experiencing extremely high unemployment rates (12-20% in California rural counties). The rural counties of many States are dominated by Forest Service lands. Active forest management would provide year 'round high paying jobs that would rebuild the economies of these badly depressed counties.
- ✓ Need to create sustained yields so creative business ventures can get the capital they need to adapt to emerging market needs
- ✓ In the NW economic values of forests are critical to existence of tribes on reservations. This is a key component of goal 1, and addressing restoring healthy forest for deriving economic gains is critical.
- ✓ Another key to future success is to empower the growth of a new market of forest raw materials. Example: In the Southern Piney Woods stands are thinned at a break-even rate. In the West the US Government pays \$1,000/acre or more to thin and burn in piles. The main difference is a market for pulpwood.
- ✓ *“There is not enough money in the Treasury to solve this problem, but there is in the economy. We need to use economic principles to address environmental problems.”*

2.1.3 Threatened & Endangered (T&E) Species, Water, and Air

Humans are not the only element of the ecosystem dependent on the landscape. Threatened & Endangered (T&E) Species, Water Supplies, and Clean Air all depend on functioning ecosystems across the landscape.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ Responders wrote about the degree of change to the western landscapes since the time they were resilient, mentioning the level of change in landscapes from active vegetation management, the introduction of new species including invasives, climate change, loss of biodiversity and corridors, poor watershed condition, and the current overstocked biomass condition. These transformations have taken many years so will require multiple entries to treat in order to return conditions of a resilient landscape.

2.1.4 Strategic Planning

The landscape management job ahead is large and complex and will not be successful without strategic planning, or indeed without involvement of a wide variety of players and interests. There are tradeoffs between parts of the West, between areas immediately adjacent to communities (the WUI) and the larger landscape, and between historic and traditional interests and more contemporary ones.

The comments in strategic planning reflect the complexity of the task described in vegetation management. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

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- ✓ Identify a common framework and range of tools (in other words, a strategic plan) for cooperative fire management and allow solutions to be creatively developed and applied at the local landscape level.
- ✓ There have been many plans, goals, and proposals over the years and the question is, are these goals achievable? How will success or failure be measured? Will these goals stand the test of time?
- ✓ All three goals are key to successful wildland fire management, but that being directed to do 90% of our treatments in WUI and 10% outside the WUI does not allow us to do the treatments required to maintain resilient landscapes.
- ✓ It is impossible to determine the necessary physical product, and that we should focus on fire as an ecosystem process and write your strategy to deal with that process, not some physical landscape condition.
- ✓ There are inherent conflicts between ongoing management and activities such as fire suppression, roads and grazing, and achieving a resilient landscape. Environmental concerns coupled with public desires limit effectiveness of reaching these goals. Science very often has little to do with what we are actually able to accomplish on the ground.

2.1.5 Interagency Coordination

Part of managing resilient landscapes in the West is appreciating the complexity of every region and locality. There are unique relationships among local fuels, topography, and temperature and moisture regimes. The flora and fauna of the region experience environmental influence from long-standing processes of seasonal changes, periodic wildfire from natural and human ignition, etc., as well as more recent influences such as biodiversity loss, type change, and invasive species. These complex resource situations are managed by a similarly complex array of private, public, and Tribal owners and managers. These managers grapple with many of the same challenges, including how to reduce the damaging effects wildland fire can cause when it burns where fuel accumulations are uncharacteristically high or where communities are established within the wildland urban interface.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ “Across all jurisdictions” is very important to all stakeholders (not just formal agencies). The strategy needs to be an all lands approach – this is foundational, and cannot be just lip service.
- ✓ In many parts of the west, there is already an effective, in-place regional, state, and local system to work on an integrated basis on natural resource issues. One arena is the Western Governors Association; another is the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition, which involves State Foresters, Regional Foresters, and Research Station Directors. The final arena is the State Forest Action Plan where, on a state and sub-state level, natural resources coordination can take place.
- ✓ Traditional ecological knowledge provided by native tribes is essential for understanding and strategizing fire reintroduction, preparedness, and resiliency. Native American cultural and historical properties should take precedence and native tribes must be involved in decision making during fire events concerning these areas.

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- ✓ Interagency coordination must take place on a continuing basis. It cannot – and does not – wait until there is a fire situation to manage. It is critical to coordinate vegetation management, fire prevention, detection, management, and recovery, and issues of community protection. It is imperative that strategic plans are done prior to fire events, and that incident commanders follow through with those plans and coordinate with land managers.

2.1.6 Professional and Industrial Capacity

Given the scope and complexity of the task, it is important to have matching professional and industrial capacity. Skilled and experienced people are needed to plan and implement, organize, and execute activities, and to provide technical expertise to communities. Industrial capacity is required to efficiently and effectively execute planned activities.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ Sustaining the long-term capability of wildfire Incident Management Teams is an essential part of accomplishing goal 3. The Cohesive Strategy should assure this need is identified and met.
- ✓ Also the federal agencies must have skilled and experience people managing fuels programs. Landowners need technical assistance to do what's right. Agencies are less than fully staffed and are using old tools. They need to be innovative and use all approaches and methods. Doing less than perfect is better than doing nothing.
- ✓ How can we create fire resilient ecosystems that contain both fire-adapted and non-fire tolerant species without an industrial component?
- ✓ A lack of commitment for long-term management exists. Require a demonstrated knowledge of and a record of personal application of ecological principles in their professional careers as a critical criterion in their selection to agency leadership positions. Develop continuing education courses that challenge journey level and mid-level employees to demonstrate their knowledge of ecological principles and the role that active management plays in the continuation of implementing these principles.

2.1.7 Policies and Procedures

There is room for improvement in the policies and procedures that apply to activities to facilitate appropriate actions. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ Provide comprehensive and reliable funding that supports local agency priorities set by program objectives rather than a computer program.
- ✓ There is a need for mechanisms for cross-jurisdictional application of resources and contracts.
- ✓ As a result of the National Fire Plan (NFP), the focus has been on the WUI and communities, but it's now time to take it further out, but local agencies don't understand permitting and watershed hoops.

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- ✓ We need to keep land in better condition before the fires occur. Some efforts to manipulate the landscape have backfired; one example is efforts that remove sagebrush and plant more grass in the name of fuel reduction, but just exacerbate the problem. Another is planting non-native grasses after fire so grazing can return quicker.
- ✓ We heard that current policy contradicts the first two goals of the National Cohesive Strategy. US DOI policy makes WUI treatments the highest priority. More flexibility is needed to treat broader areas outside some tightly defined WUI.
- ✓ Some felt that WUI treatments need to be better integrated with the larger landscape treatments, treating WUI as a separate entity is artificial and contrary to integrated fire ecology.
- ✓ National policy should not hamstring community-driven local priorities.

2.1.8 Education and Incentives

Making sure that communities make informed decisions will require both education about the biologic, economic, and aesthetic aspects of the landscape and incentives to take action that will be most beneficial in the longterm.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ We have an increasingly urban public with little or no understanding of the biologic, economic, and aesthetic risks of non-management of forest and range lands. This public tends to be entitlement oriented – born too far from the stump or barn. This public has unreasonable expectations about the landscape – thinking of nature only in terms of beauty, and that what has “always” been there will always continue to be there.
- ✓ *“Education and community outreach are key to an effective program to increase fire safety.”*
- ✓ Many landowners view fire prevention measures, such as defensible space requirements, building materials mandates, and requirements to add new FireSafe technologies.
- ✓ *“Many issues will be helped with a strong, long, inclusive, informative and instructive public education program on the needs and importance of being fire-adapted, what role the private landowner plays in the equation (and why no one else can play this role!). The public does respond to educational campaign efforts; we have seen this across the country. Educational efforts will be challenging, though, because the private landowners role could vary from place to place, especially in the Western Region. It needs to be noted, however, that there are many good educational programs that already exist that are successful. Firewise, FireSafe, etc. could all be expanded to include the full role of a private landowner and how they fit into and help make a fire-adapted community. However, unless the federal, state and local agencies are also teaching the same things and supporting this campaign in the field every day, it won’t be effective (such as sprinklers) as an invasion of their property rights and as needlessly increasing costs.”*
- ✓ Explore opportunities to incentivize treatments in communities. Define and produce a national education campaign that places fire preparation as an individual responsibility, not the government

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- ✓ Regulations, which admittedly are not widely accepted in today's political environment are vitally important. Protecting public safety is a linchpin to zoning. Requiring landowners and subdivisions to be Firewise is a necessity.
- ✓ The strategy needs to address the benefit of using unplanned wildland fires to reduce fuels. Mechanical removal alone can never occur at the rate needed to keep up with growth. The public doesn't understand this, therefore support is lacking. Local communities could better protect themselves if a greater use of wildland fire across larger undeveloped landscape was accepted.
- ✓ Educate small, private landowners on how to safely maintain their land.
- ✓ We need to explain treatment practices and tradeoffs without using fear as a driver. Unfortunately, we may have the attention of a large segment of the public only when fear gets that attention for us.

2.1.9 Mitigation of Other Environmental Stressors

While this discussion focuses primarily on fire, there are many other environmental stressors such as climate change, insects and disease, invasive species, and drought that interact with fire on the landscape. Considering these factors informs a more accurate and holistic view of the ecological situation addressed by strategy components.

There was only one comment that directly identified other stressors as risks to resilient landscapes. It mentioned hazardous fuels accumulation, the impact of insects and disease on healthy forests, climate change and its effects of drought, and increased intensity/impacts from wildland fire.

2.2 Objectives Supporting Goal 2: Fire Adaptive Communities

The desired outcome associated with this national goal is:

Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life or property.

The past two decades have seen a rapid escalation of severe fire behavior, home and property losses, and increased threats to communities. Nationwide, about 70,000 communities are estimated to be at risk from wildfire. While much good work has been accomplished through Community Wildfire Protection Plans, Firewise, and other programs, much remains to be done.

Comments related to this goal were sorted into the following objective groups and are summarized in this section:

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Objective Group	Description
Prevention	Prevent human-caused wildfire ignitions within or in close proximity to human communities; education and ordinances
WUI Treatments	Reduce hazardous fuels within the WUI and intermix zones (public/private); incentives to manage fuels
Structural Ignition Potential	Reduce the potential for structures igniting; landscaping, fire resistant materials/design (public/private)
Improved Emergency Response	Improve effectiveness of community emergency response (staffing, coordination/communication, evacuation procedures, equipment/infrastructure, planning)
Public Health and Safety	Reduce negative effects to public health and safety (awareness/preparedness, sensitive populations/institutions, evacuation/shelter in place)
Coordination and Planning	Improve coordination and planning across jurisdictions (community responders, state and federal agencies, between communities)
Post-Fire Recovery	Improve post-fire recovery efforts (assessment procedures, resource coordination, public education/engagement)

2.2.1 Prevention

The recent history of large and fierce wildfires has grabbed the attention of rural and urban residents alike. Communities throughout the west have increasingly been looking inward to resolve the issues around their vulnerability to wildfire. Local voluntary prevention programs, focused on reducing loss of life and property to wildfire, serve as an example of some of the remarkable successes happening at the local level.

A common theme among participants was to continue the use of such voluntary programs as Firewise, FireSafe, and Ready, Set, Go to enable communities to reduce property losses from wildfire. An objective must be to ensure that homeowners are prepared for wildfire, including situational awareness, defensible space and knowledge of other prevention practices.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity:

- ✓ Some participants were also concerned with the vulnerability of fire prevention funding – usually the first element to be cut from declining budgets – to budget cuts, and felt that these programs were wise investments.
- ✓ Some felt that better and more objective, conclusive, irrefutable evaluations of fire prevention investments, including cost-benefit analysis, would be a good selling point for the programs, especially in times of tight budgets.

2.2.2 WUI Treatments

Residents of communities located near and within fire prone forests are discussing the division of responsibilities for WUI treatments to help create fire-adapted communities. And it's clear that the pace of treatment needs to accelerate within, around, and adjacent to the interface zone, transcending property boundaries and using all of the tools that are available. Broader assessments of the key components of community infrastructure are needed as well, and must be incorporated in the CWPP. And as you might expect, innovation is emerging in the private sector, rising to meet the challenge of community protection.

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A common refrain was that the community needs to be both involved and responsible for moving forward with treatments within the wildland urban interface. Some felt that accountability for landowner fuels treatments is necessary for an effective strategy.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ The use of fire in or near the community, as well as the impact of smoke is a logical and natural consequence of choosing to live in or near a forest.
- ✓ The quantity and effectiveness of vegetation treatments in the WUI need to be increased. Some felt that achieving the goal of resilient landscapes will help achieve the goal of fire-adapted communities. And that treating fuels in the outer boundaries of large WUIs will continue to be a challenge. Treatments must transcend ownership boundaries (i.e., treating both sides of the fence) to maximize effectiveness.
- ✓ Landscaping within the community was also mentioned as a form of WUI treatment, where fire resistant plants and shrubs were selected over those that were more conducive to fire spread. It was noted that wildfire may also occur within city limits and landscaping standards could contribute to reducing in-community wildfires.
- ✓ There is an opportunity to use successful treatments as models for WUI management, including those that reflect a diversity of ownerships and land uses in order to gain a broad level of buy-in by the community.
- ✓ A strategy should be considered that offers the property owner the choice of “leave early or stay and defend,” after the Australian model. The goal is to allow homeowners who are able to safely monitor and protect their own homes in a wildfire event.
- ✓ The strategy should consider that innovation is being sparked by the WUI issue as well, as a new independent and capitalistic commerce arises. Private interests are now participating in the solutions by creatively inventing products and services such as firefighters-for-hire, home safety systems, individual or community notification technologies, building products or specialized WUI consulting services for landscaping, architecture and land use planning.
- ✓ The strategy should shine additional light on the importance of protecting infrastructure. Community-based prevention efforts, through groups such as Fire Safe Councils, tend to focus on the important work around homes, businesses and key evacuation routes. A point of focus for any new strategy should be the protection of other key infrastructure such as power lines and plants and water treatment facilities, as well as ensuring appropriate space for major evacuations and the housing of displaced residents.

2.2.3 Structural Ignition Potential

Recent experience and research has ignited a movement to reduce the structural ignition potential through design and building codes, though enforcement remains an issue in some places. Local government may also affect wildfire vulnerability through improved standards for new development. But despite some of these advances, local fire departments are still challenged to meet the expectations of the public to protect property in the face of increasingly serious wildfire events.

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Many believe that building codes that consider the wildfire vulnerability of the community are necessary to provide protection for lives and property and critical infrastructure.

- ✓ The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity.
- ✓ Community standards need to address both the issue of new construction as well as the existing older portions of communities that were constructed prior to the development of basic wildfire principles.
- ✓ There is a need for consistency from responsible jurisdictions in enforcement of defensible space requirements.
- ✓ There needs to be a realistic expectation of the ability of fire departments to protect structures during large fire events. Strategies to increase fire resistance of structures should not depend wholly upon emergency intervention by firefighters.

2.2.4 Public Health and Safety

While protection of public health and safety will remain the over-arching objective of Goal 2, infrastructure and the logistics of evacuation of residents and even livestock are additional considerations. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ Protection of life and property were deemed to be the over-arching objectives for this goal.
- ✓ The strategy should also include protection for the key community infrastructure components such as power lines and power plants and water treatment facilities, as well as ensuring appropriate space for major evacuations and the housing of displaced residents and their livestock. Timely community drills and exercises dealing with wildfire threats are an important component of local strategies. *“If a resident knows about and is confident that their family and livestock have a safe and appropriate place to go, they are more likely to evacuate when needed.”*
- ✓ Some believe that keeping the public and politicians engaged in the issue, even in those “wet” years without a wildfire threat to the community, is an important step in achieving the goal. Apathy and short memories were named as the enemy here.
- ✓ *“There are lots of answers out there; it’s just that some of them are not ones we like.”*

2.2.5 Coordination and Planning

Another very positive trend in the past decade is that communities are adopting truly collaborative approaches to addressing their fire issues. Engagement of the broadest scope of community interests is essential. Shared responsibility within the community and the value of consistent leadership is also important. And it’s not surprising that designation and planning for actions in the WUI is a prime target for coordination and planning. Long-term commitment, good communication, and building capacity are on the agenda.

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The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ Proposed definitions for fire-adapted communities included:
 - 1) An organized effort committed to reducing fire losses,
 - 2) Responsibility of ownership,
 - 3) Building codes and design standards,
 - 4) Defensible space,
 - 5) Hazardous fuels reduction,
 - 6) Maintenance and education.

- ✓ Many who are familiar with the community processes active throughout the west believe that increased collaborative efforts will improve results. The responsibility for increasing collaboration lies with government entities. And individuals and the private sector need to share responsibility and remain engaged with the community. Consistent leadership was also mentioned as an asset.

- ✓ Local government plays a key role in the development of plans and must include developers and residents, as well as fire professionals, from the start. These master plans should also consider statewide assessments.

- ✓ The WUI designation should be kept precise and specific, and not too far-reaching. Utilize the research of Jack Cohen in keeping the WUI designated boundaries closer to homes. If too much wildland area is contained within the WUI or community protection zone, then this will require more time, resources, and funds to implement projects, making them both inefficient and ineffective for protecting structures.

- ✓ The federal government must be sensitive to the fact that it manages a large portion of the wild lands surrounding the community in some areas.

- ✓ The commitment to planning for fire adapted communities needs to be long term and continuous. The “maintenance” of a plan is important.

- ✓ Plans should be developed using consistent and easily understood terminology to assist in facilitating communication about this issue.

- ✓ It is critical that communities continue to participate in National Fire Plan cost-share programs, because they are effective and increase community capacity.

2.2.6 Post-Fire Recovery

The catastrophic fires that we’ve seen in the west in the past few decades can create the potential for serious erosion and flood emergencies. The events following the Shultz Fire in Flagstaff, AZ last year show only too clearly that post-fire recovery efforts can be critical to protecting communities following wildfire. There was only one comment addressing this topic:

Post-fire effects can be devastating to community infrastructure and ecosystem services. Post-fire rehabilitation treatments must be high priority and fully financed. *“We can’t exclude fire from the forests, yet we can’t spend all dollars suppressing and rehabilitating from fires.”*

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2.3 Objectives Supporting Goal 3: Wildfire Response

The desired outcome associated with this national goal is:

All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, risk based wildfire management decisions.

The national strategy considers the full spectrum of fire management from preparedness, to full suppression, to managing fires for multiple objectives. The strategy recognizes differences in missions among local, state, tribal and Federal organizations and the need for strong collaboration and cooperation.

Comments related to this goal were sorted into the following objective groups and are summarized in this section:

Objective Group	Description
Responder Health and Safety	Protect the health and safety of wildfire responders (awareness and risk assessment, minimize exposure to risks, training and PPE for all jurisdictions, effective communication)
Fire Response Effectiveness	Maintain fire response effectiveness (resource placement across jurisdictions, cost-share and grant programs)
Response Objectives and Values	Suppression response reflects strategic landscape objectives or landowner values (integrate wildland fire use with prescribed fire and mechanical treatments, balance against objectives and landowner or management priorities)

2.3.1 Responder Health and Safety

The one thing that everyone can agree on is that responder health safety isn't just an objective, it's the prime directive. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ Firefighter and public safety is one thing that all agencies and departments agree on. There's less agreement on how the protection of property and natural resources should be ranked. Fire fighter safety is the primary goal of all fire service agencies. So far this year, 11 fatalities have occurred in the US. That's 30% of those reported worldwide. This is far too high a number. We should be world leaders in reducing injury and death to firefighters. Unfortunately, we're not there yet.
- ✓ Cutting corners is unsafe, but in times of budget and staffing reductions, it's tempting. In recent decades we've had to change tactics used to fight fires, increased use of under-trained volunteers, and an increasing number of close calls with many firefighters just barely escaping injury resulting in a wide margin of risk for a thin margin of success. In other words, they've been lucky so far, but continuing with this lack of parity in funding and staffing is a huge risk to safety.

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- ✓ Absolutely everything that happens, or doesn't happen, in firefighting has safety implications. All items that become part of the Cohesive Strategy should be evaluated on their safety merit. How will they improve safety? If they don't, they should be discarded.

2.3.2 *Fire Response Effectiveness*

There are several areas where noticeable improvements in fire response effectiveness can be successful. In most cases these represent the low hanging fruit of this exercise. But that's not to say it will be an easy chore for everyone to come to agreement on what fruit to pick. Human behavior will likely prevent us from making some very rational choices. A turf battle over who's in charge of what, how declining budgets should be spent and how high or low the bar should be set for qualifications will likely ensue.

Some think that putting all fire service agencies under one coordinating Federal agency umbrella will force better utilization of existing resources, increasing effectiveness. Others say the existence of two separate fire services, wildland and structural, is in many ways redundant and needs serious evaluation. A related issue is the various firefighter qualifications and training systems currently in use and how most attempts to create bridges or equality in similar positions has all but failed; that it's now time for one integrated, national system.

Most fire agencies are under severe stress. Budget stress, declining forces stress, attrition of expertise stress, inability to secure quality equipment stress, and other stress factors are making their job more difficult on a daily basis. Each agency or fire department is looking to a neighbor for reinforcements with increasing frequency. But their neighboring units are just as thin. Local firefighting units are almost always the first to respond to those fires that threaten human values the most. Yet, they are underfunded, understaffed, underequipped, and as you'll hear in the comments, in many cases underutilized.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ Over the next two decades a general increase in fire occurrence, size and severity is expected. These wildland fires will be more complex and present higher risks to the public and firefighters. This increase is largely due to historic accumulations of fuel, apparent trends in climate and weather patterns and increasing human development in fire-prone wildlands. Increasing human development has already converged with weather patterns, resulting in many more fires in the wildland-urban interface. While aviation is just one part of the response to wildland fire, a robust aviation capability is essential to meet this challenge.
- ✓ The key to success is aggressive fuels management, adequately funded, trained and experienced federal fire forces with the goal of controlling all wildfires as quickly as possible with the exception of areas designated and planned for less than aggressive attack. It is also essential for safety, fire loss reduction and lowering suppression costs.
- ✓ Well trained, experienced Federal fire managers should be protected by the federal government from legal and criminal liability when they are doing their jobs within the bounds of approved operating policies.

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- ✓ The use of contract fire crews needs to be reformed to improve the quality of crews, equipment and allow the contractors a decent profit margin. The agencies basically need to see these assets as a value and quit harassing them with paperwork and treating them as second-class citizens. Likewise, we need to better utilize private sector wildland fire fighters/contractors resources. Many are going out of business due to less active fire seasons. The irregular pattern of suppression work could be balanced or offset by using them for fuels mitigation work.
- ✓ The three key actions to fire control during extreme burning conditions are Initial Attack, Initial Attack and Initial Attack. You cannot afford to lose ANY fires during Initial Attack under these conditions. If a fire "blows-up" under extreme conditions (wind-driven or plume-dominated) it will likely be large, very destructive and won't be controlled until there is a major change in weather. A major increase in Initial Attack capability is necessary during extreme burning conditions.
- ✓ More integration of State, local and federal resources is needed. We have made many great strides towards this and efforts need to continue. Fire protection areas need to be defined and assigned closest resources.
- ✓ Succession planning is needed at all levels. From rural fire districts to federal agencies the average age of the firefighting force is increasing to an alarming level. Young people seem mostly uninterested in the profession. The succession of leadership skills is also a concern. There's a big training and experience gap between those that are retiring and those that are moving up. Along with this is the attrition of institutional intelligence and memory for all agencies. Many are leaving early due to economic issues. This is leaving a choke point; a bottleneck in the system. Existing systems are not producing qualified replacements quick enough.
- ✓ The federal wildland fire workforce is declining in numbers and skill positions. Many federal employees are exercising choice to not participate in fire and have no fire qualifications, even in support roles (logistics, plans, finance). Federal fire agencies need to build a standing reserve of fire response capability among their regular ranks. This will improve capacity and reduce funding a full time fire preparedness organization yearlong. Build wildland fire response into every Fed employee job description (militia concept).
- ✓ Explore using the huge unemployed workforce in a CCC-like program to lower unemployment, increase firefighting capacity, and do restoration work. This includes keeping seasonal firefighters employed that normally get laid off during the off-season and collect unemployment insurance benefits. These benefits are paid by the hiring agency anyway so why not put them to work doing community mitigation work.
- ✓ The California internal mobilization system SIMS, is superior to the national system NIIMS. It includes evacuation, medical and law enforcement as well as fire response personnel and equipment mobilization. What can CA offer up as solutions to other states and what can CA learn from them?
- ✓ 20-30% of Incident Management Team (IMT) staffing is by non-Federal personnel. It's critical to encourage/maintain this level of participation as the breadth of experience gained by these individuals becomes a significant contribution in creating fire adapted communities on their home units. A draft report is out that evaluates 5 options for staffing IMTs, only 1 of which includes local government involvement. This gives the impression that local government is not a

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valued player. Sustaining the long-term capability of wildfire Incident Management Teams is essential to accomplishing the Response goal. The CS should assure this need is identified and met.

- ✓ FEMA fire mitigation grants are geared toward structure fire response, not wildland. In most western communities, wildfire is the #1 threat, not structure fire. The damage potential from wildfire is much greater. These grants need to be adjusted to include wildland fire response needs.
- ✓ Most fire departments and fire protection districts still think they need a fleet of large, expensive engines that almost never are used to their capacity and when they are they cause as much damage as the fire. No doubt in cities there is a need even if it is infrequent. However, in most rural areas they could do with smaller, less expensive equipment. In fact, most rural fire protection districts have more equipment than they can staff.
- ✓ Only about 1% of fires contribute most of the cost and damages. Do we have the right capacity for dealing with large fires? Are we using predictive services to best advantage; can we do a better job of prepositioning resources?
- ✓ Preparedness funding is declining. Reducing the number of dispatch/coordination center locations (GACCs as well as local centers) is past due. Advancements in technology now allow each center to effectively handle a greater volume of business over a greater area. The GACC turf wars need to end. We can't afford all of them anymore.
- ✓ The CS should identify the need for a comprehensive national aviation strategy that addresses the short and long-term aviation needs, as well as roles and responsibilities of local, state, and federal government aviation resources, as well as private contractor aircraft. This strategy will need to include a large air tanker replacement plan as well as full implementation of the NASF Cooperator Aviation Standards. The WGA supports implementation of the national aviation strategy.
- ✓ The roles and responsibilities of private/local/state/federal firefighting organizations should be further clarified and reinforced by the CS, particularly in the dispatch of resources and utilization for initial and extended attack. Including the need to maintain the national mobilization capacity for state-to-state
- ✓ The ability to communicate with all other firefighting resources is critical for safety and success. Too many areas still have incompatible radios systems with a mix of older analog and newer digital systems. The new digital systems required by the FCC are very expensive and many fire departments just don't have the money to switch. Feds also continue to use the analog system in some areas, probably for the same reason.
- ✓ In the past, a great deal of success has been accomplished fighting fire at night. It seems this is no longer done. I've been told it's a safety issue linked to limited visibility, falling snags and rocks, etc. Seems like we'd do better fighting the fire on our terms (cool & moist at night), rather than on the fire's terms (hot, dry and windy during the day).

2.3.3 Coordinated Response Objectives

In the summary of comments under response objectives you'll see the most hotly debated topic in wildland fire playing out. The agencies responsible for managing public wildlands have determined that more fire, not less, is needed on their degrading landscapes. On the other hand, most states, Tribes, counties, and cities have statute or other governing direction that all unplanned ignitions are to be suppressed. In their view, the potential threat posed by the Federal solution presents an unacceptable risk.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ Clearly, a diverse suite of Federal, State and Tribal, county and city wildland fire management laws, regulations and policies exists. Federal response to fire is fundamentally different than state/private response and is often incompatible with protection objectives on neighboring state and private lands. In some areas, all fires are illegal. In other areas, fires are encouraged to burn large landscapes. This creates the need for a full range of response options. Often times, however, this can result in inconsistent objectives and actions for dealing with fire on adjacent lands.
- ✓ All response objectives are geospatially or conditionally specific. Problems often occur when fires, or the smoke they create, decide to move across boundaries, or threaten to do so. Past failures to successfully contain some intentionally free spreading fires have resulted in significant threats to property and resources, by anyone's standard. To say that the general public remains skeptical that anyone can have a 100% success rate in this business is understated. Even the experts that manage wildfires for beneficial purposes agree that there's no guarantee the fire will do just what they forecast.
- ✓ There's a strong endorsement for empowering fire managers and firefighters to utilize all of the potential tools, tactics and strategies to respond to wildland fire, however, there are a number of potential risks associated with this.
- ✓ There is real danger that efforts to collaborate and coordinate response on multi-jurisdictional wildfires may lead to the lowest common denominator response objective among partners: put the fire out as quickly as possible. The new guidance for implementation of the Federal Fire Management Policy should be actively promoted to gain support among all partners. The Cohesive Strategy should educate and motivate the public and all partners to accept a greater role and use of wildland fire.
- ✓ There's a continuing problem that aggressive initial attack is the preferred option or default choice when responding to wildfires. This bias is reflected with the Cohesive Strategy, but it ignores the deferred costs of future large fire suppression, fuel not treated by wildfire in areas where current suppression policies result in fire exclusion, and ignores the costly environmental and ecological impacts of aggressive suppression and continued fire exclusion.

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- ✓ The metric for success for initial attack is success on 98 percent of the fires. If we don't suppress fires on initial attack our successful suppression metric goes down when we implement unplanned ignitions. This will be a significant culture change to our entire organizational structure. We need to teach young people at their early stages in their careers it is more important to apply the right fire at the right time and less important to suppress every fire. The real "response to wildland fire" is that business-as-usual fire suppression policies will prevail, when they clearly must change. Fire-adapted ecosystems need more fire, not less. We risk losing the investments of the past 10 years if we cannot maintain them through fire use.
- ✓ The goal should be that differences of fire policy across agencies are recognized and conflicts diminished to the greatest extent possible. The challenge is in developing strategies/tactics that are consistent with jurisdictional authorities, policies and land management mandates while ensuring that differing policies do not negatively impact the lands of an adjacent jurisdiction.
- ✓ Federal agencies should get out of the WUI firefighting business. Because they're good at managing incidents, the federal land management agencies are morphing into public safety organizations.
- ✓ Incident Management Teams are told that the number of acres burned is not important, but rather that they will contain the fire in a small area, like a drainage, but the fire can't be contained for many reasons and gets too big. Point protection strategies are a disaster because of increased damages to resources, public health issues due to smoke impacts, resource drawdown of adjacent agencies in anticipation of getting onto their lands, and increased suppression costs.
- ✓ Retain protection of life and property as the # 1 objective of wildfire response for most Federal, State, and Local Government programs. Values at risk need to be pinned down. You can't make investments in forests and just let them burn up.
- ✓ We need to learn more about different tools for using fire, and the different roles fire plays. What are the real impacts on the land? How many good/bad management acres? Repair and rehab don't indicate how much work there is to do. Lack of interagency communication about the situation of neighbors creates adversaries where allies are needed.
- ✓ Fire suppression managers must start looking at the total cost of wildfires, which includes health problems, air pollution, watershed damage, economic impacts, etc. Using fire as a management tool should be limited to well planned and executed prescribed fires.
- ✓ Often times no connection appears to exist between Federal land management plans, Fire Management Plans and the actual fire response action on the ground. Ensuring there is a good connection between the natural resource specialist and the firefighters to ensure the FMP's are reflected what is in the LRMP - and with dispatch - and with the public, each response is

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different depending on where the fire is located and we all need to make sure we communicate this effectively to our adjoining agencies and our co-workers.

- ✓ Response to wildfire needs to be based on agency objectives that are complimenting resources and population; not on a concept of a single set of suppression objectives applied across multiple agency boundaries.

2.4 Values

Comments related to the values important to people in the West were expressed across all affiliations and during several of the Forums. Values were often difficult to identify because they are interlaced with comments regarding objectives, barriers, or actions and not spoken to directly.

Values were classified using the following groups and excerpts appear below.

Value Groups	Description
Tribal Heritage/ Uses	Traditional uses, cultural values, ecological knowledge
Social Justice	Distribution of costs/capacity disproportionate, expectations unrealistic among all owners/individuals
Western Lifestyle	Western culture (pioneer spirit, liberty, self reliance, “don’t tell me what to do!”), Quality of life issues (providing clean water, disrupting services, etc.), Private property rights, Community/Individual Responsibility
Water	Both water quality and quantity. Water laws and values associated with clean and sustained water supplies –availability and for habitat, T&E and other species
Western Landscapes	Vast, wild landscapes, Traditional Land Uses - Hunting, recreation, etc., backdrop/physical setting for homes and communities, historic and cultural resources
Air	Air quality and visibility

The excerpts presented below represent the perspectives of those who commented on values. In some cases they have been edited for clarity.

2.4.1 Tribal Heritage and Traditional Uses

- ✓ The number one priority of tribes is to protect tribal values whatever they are to that particular tribe. In many cases the economic values of its forests are critical to tribal existence and must be protected. Loss of a tribal forest to wildfire can be devastating. When a reservation burns there is no other place to go.
- ✓ It is important to include traditional ecological knowledge provided by tribes into local strategies and risk assessments. Traditional use patterns exist based on the total landscape when traditional use started. Including language on traditional use and why it was established is important such as indigenous plant use.

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- ✓ The WUI concept is somewhat foreign to many tribes. It is about the homeland and not just the home. The continuing emphasis and funding of the WUI to the detriment and separation of the surrounding forest is artificial and violates the idea of integrated fire ecology on the landscape. Goal one is the most important for many reasons but especially because significant progress on goals two and three depend on goal one. Healthy land leads to fire adapted communities.
- ✓ Tribes have a large and significant land base throughout the West. Understanding their sovereign rights is a key to future working relationships.

2.4.2 Social Justice

- ✓ Social justice is an important concept and treating homes and property equally regardless of appraised value is important. Commercial property is also important and should be treated fairly as houses are. Commercial trees are valuable property and should be valued as such in the decision making process.
- ✓ Vastly unequal funding should be viewed as a social justice issue in the view of some tribes.

2.4.3 Western Lifestyle

- ✓ The Western culture (pioneer spirit, liberty, self reliance) will require more dialog about what it means to be responsible neighbors in today's complex jurisdictional environment. Creating fire-adapted communities will take organized efforts like FireSafe Councils and County Commissioners developing acceptable master plans.
- ✓ Rural economic health is a part of Western culture and will require more attention to economic values and principles.
- ✓ The Western lifestyle represents more than a saved community surrounded by an intensively burned forest. There is a connection to the need for fire resilient landscapes.

2.4.4 Water

- ✓ Enough clean water has been and remains the key to the West and the need for healthy watersheds seems universally supported. However, the work of watershed restoration remains underfunded and significant damage to watersheds outside of the WUI goes untreated. Once again, the key is fire resilient landscapes.

2.4.5 Western Landscapes

- ✓ Western landscapes are scenic, vast, and treasured. They are also threatened because they are not fire resilient and other factors such as periodic drought and a difficult jurisdictional, funding, and regulatory environment making it expensive and slow to address problems. It will require a change from the status quo and active management to make a difference.

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- ✓ The focus of this and other initiative tends to be on communities and structures. There are other values at risk on private lands; specifically commercial timberland. From the small family forest landowner to the large industrial landowner, their greatest asset is the investment in sustainable forestry they have made. While it may be acceptable to some to burn up millions of acres of public land, to do the same to State and private land is devastating not only financially, but also from a community standpoint. The effect of wildfire on changing land use and ownership patterns should be studied. If the risk of owning forestland gets too great due to potential losses from fire, then families, individuals and corporations will make decisions about continued forestland ownership that may be contrary to other goals and objectives for our communities. We need to face the fact that wildfire has been unacceptable to human communities for centuries for good reason. The only predictable fire is the one that is put out! Trying to reintroduce fire into landscapes that are terribly out of character to natural fire regime is a recipe for disaster that it is impossible to adapt communities to.

2.4.6 Air

- ✓ Clean air and vast scenic vistas are key values. Complex federal and state air quality rules exist and are making it more and more difficult to accomplish the prescribed fire that will be necessary. A regional approach will become more necessary. Air basins will not accept the amount of fire that will be proposed.
- ✓ A fundamental education task is to create understanding and acceptance that prescribed fire will reduce the long-term amount of smoke and air pollution.

2.5 Barriers

Many who commented addressed barriers to accomplishing actions and the objectives included in the National Wildland Fire Cohesive Strategy. Comments relating to barriers were classified using the following groups and excerpts appear below.

Barrier Groups	Description
Litigation	Collaborative and coordinated planning at risk, projects not implemented, collaborative group empowerment to act
Regulatory Environment	Air/Water quality standards and interpretations, Policy and mission differences, administrative procedures, decision processes, definitions
Jurisdictional Environment	The complex landownership and administrative pattern in the west, overlapping roles and responsibilities
Budgets/Funding	Funding and cost agreements, declining federal and state budgets
Climate Change/Invasives	Rate of climate change and effects of invasive species on biological diversity and fire behavior/effects is increasing and affecting past and future mitigation efforts and suppression response
Administrative Procedures	Streamline and coordinate procedures, broader use of authorities to create an action environment

The excerpts presented below represent the perspectives of those who commented on barriers. In some cases they have been edited for clarity.

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2.5.1 Litigation

- ✓ Largescale treatments and active management are essential to creating fire resilient landscapes. It simply will not happen without litigation reform. Reform of the Equal Access to Justice Act is a necessary beginning. Endangered Species Act reform and better use of existing authorities are also important such as more use of Categorical Exclusions. At this point the environmental community has control because of the current judicial environment.
- ✓ Progress can still be made through improved collaborative efforts and better use of existing authorities.
- ✓ Federal partners cannot be counted upon to do their part because of the litigation and regulatory barriers.

2.5.2 Regulatory Environment

- ✓ The current environment is stifling and complex, making progress slow and expensive. The solution is not new regulations because we are over regulated now. It is review and reform of the ones causing problems.
- ✓ Specific ideas are out there such as requiring appellants and litigants to be full and early collaborative partners before they can appeal or litigate. The regulatory environment is clearly a barrier now and not a help.

2.5.3 Jurisdictional Environment

- ✓ “Across all jurisdictions” should be the watchword. An all lands approach is foundational. No one can do it alone.
- ✓ Upfront MOU’s and MOA’s that clearly spell out cost sharing and important details remain key. We need more of them. Good neighbor legislation has been helpful in some states and makes cross jurisdiction projects more possible and efficient.
- ✓ Western states and counties have different jurisdiction makeup, constituents, WUI and other issues. A one-size fits all west-wide approach will not work. Solutions will occur one at a time within a broad framework.

2.5.4 Budgets and Funding Procedures

- ✓ Significant concern exists about future funding and what that will mean.
- ✓ There are many concerns with the current funding approach. They include dissatisfaction with Fire Program Analysis (FPA), large funding inequities throughout the West, and too much funding emphasis on the WUI to the detriment of everything else. When funding is reduced the most important program is reduced-prevention.

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- ✓ No matter what happens in the future there will not be enough federal funding to even approach the scale of treatments necessary to truly create fire resilient landscapes the way it is being done today. The statement “there is not enough money in the treasury to do all the work but there is enough money in the economy” summarizes the situation. Until economic principles are restored the acres will not be treated.

2.5.5 *Climate Change, Invasive Species and other Environmental Stressors*

- ✓ The fire community will need more and not less involvement in climate partnerships. The effects of climate change on long-term fire cycles can now be seen and it is not good.
- ✓ Invasives remain a growing challenge none more so than cheat grass. Its effect across the West is huge. More research in this area is important. Current technology and efforts is not doing the job.

2.5.6 *Administrative Procedures*

- ✓ Cleaning up agency processes for service contracts is a good example of an administrative process that would get more work done on the ground. The operator must be able to make a profit. Each agency has its own procedures some of which need review.

2.6 *Actions and Activities*

Goals and objectives of the National Wildland Fire Cohesive Strategy are achieved using a variety of actions or activities. In some instances actions or activities contribute to multiple objectives and goals. These actions and activities represent the “toolbox” available to land managers and communities.

Comments related to actions and activities were sorted into the following action groups and are summarized in this section:

Action Group	Description
Collaborative Planning	Collaboratively develop science-based, landscape-scale ecological restoration plans that incorporate CWPP and agencies’ plans. Include measurable desired conditions, and identify and prioritize high-risk areas (ecological and cultural values) that are shared across jurisdictions. Establish cooperative partnerships across jurisdictional boundaries and responsibility areas. Develop wildland response strategies for currently unprotected lands in the West.
Integrated Treatment	Use landscape and trade-off analyses to guide site-level treatment decisions at the landscape level across all jurisdictions. Use all available tools to accomplish objectives and use prescribed fire to restore and maintain fire dependent ecosystems where fire is not feasible or desirable.
Community Protection	Support the development and implementation of CWPPs, development of new and existing Fire Safe Councils, and encourage Firewise principles in design of new communities and homes.

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Ecosystem Services	Maintain native species diversity, including threatened and endangered species Protect the health of watersheds and riparian areas, and minimize the impact of wildfire on plant and animal habitat. Maintain air quality and water quality/quantity.
Smoke Management	Maintain, and develop where necessary, state smoke management programs and ensure frequent, open communication and education among fire managers and air quality/smoke regulators. Consider smoke impacts when developing strategy and tactics for individual fires.
Monitoring	Monitoring of landscapes, treatments, effectiveness, and costs. Utilize local knowledge and experience to guide research and monitoring on landscape treatment to inform adaptive management actions, activities, and strategy review intervals. Establish multi-party monitoring and research activities.
Education	Work with media to describe the tradeoffs between short-duration smoke from prescribed burns and long-duration smoke from uncharacteristic wildfire, framed by the issue of public health and safety. Increase public and regulator acceptance of smoke so that fire can be used as a resource management tool.
Regulatory Review	Identify current policies and laws (e.g., Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, ESA, NEPA) that create barriers to or delay the accomplishment of wildland fire and natural resource management goals and objectives. Re-evaluate current policies that prevent accomplishment of shared goals and objectives
Cost Management	Balanced budget priorities: prevention, planning, mitigation, response, recovery, and who pays large fire suppression costs? Achieve effective landscape scale restoration in a cost efficient manner. Develop site-specific community based strategies for reduced emergency spending over time.
Administrative Procedures	Establish cooperative agreements, programmatic interdepartmental compacts, and contracting mechanisms in consideration of local partner treatment capabilities and response assistance capacities. Achieve consistent regional processes, while allowing for local variability in actions, activities, end results and additional needs. Reaffirm wildland fire governance and build a new national intergovernmental wildland fire policy framework that will realign roles, responsibilities, and authorities for wildland fire.
Fire Reporting	Fire reporting by all fire protection entities to ensure an accurate understanding of the fire risk and response workload across the country. Incentives/accountability measures (and protocols) for comprehensive reporting of all wildland fires across the country. Collaboratively develop national occurrence reporting standards.
Infrastructure	Foster development of local forest products infrastructure to support the work communities need to do. Includes staffing and equipment for suppression and prevention.
Incentives	Explore opportunities for financial and technical assistance to communities that develop the capacity to become and remain fire-adapted. Define partner liability coverage in agreements, contracts, and burn plans. Establish liability waivers based on achievement of consistent qualification standards and encourage liability apportionment between parent jurisdictional responsibility areas. Create tax break/credit for individuals who perform Firewise work.
Coordinated Response	Strive for interdependence among fire management resources from all cooperators. Maintain an up to date, comprehensive inventory of resources and their availability. Develop and accept cooperator standards for all incident resources. Establish consistent nationwide standards and protocols for dispatching contract resources.

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Decision Support	Decision support for scalable response, variable tactics, and use of knowledgeable local resources in consideration of projections relating to fire occurrence extent, intensity, duration, and seasonality within the site specific fire return interval, including potential re-ignition under safer conditions. Ensure strategic vegetation treatment and natural fire are tracked (mapped) and integrated with response tactics.
Response Options	Manage duration and intensity of fire. Consider public and responder smoke impacts when developing strategy and tactics for individual fires. Scale response tactics and manage resource assignments to control smoke exposure to fireline personnel. Encourage training exercises at all levels to develop common understanding of risk amongst all cooperators.
Training	NWCG 310-1 qualification system, “crosswalk” and “credit for prior learning” programs, rural and municipal fire firefighters as meeting wildland qualifications, structure vs. wildland firefighters. Establish realistic and reasonable standards and expectations for training and qualifications.
Post-Fire Response	Invasive species control for species that spread aggressively after fire, such as red brome and cheat grass. Evaluate the terrain impacted by wildland fires for post-fire flooding. Assess the vulnerability of municipal water supplies and infrastructure to infilling of reservoirs, water intake systems, and water distribution systems. Evaluate the potential for catastrophic landslide and debris-flow impacts and flooding on infrastructure and damage to resources.

2.6.1 Collaborative Planning

There are significant links between landscapes and communities, and that much education needs to take place. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ A major component of a fire-adapted community is the presence of stakeholders working together. There is generally broad agreement on many aspects of planning for fire-related issues:
 - Planning should include all phases of vegetation management related to fire – prevention, suppression, post-fire treatments, and fuels treatment/maintenance.
 - Planning needs to consider interactions with other land uses, especially as to how those other uses either work with or counter to the fire management objectives.
 - Planning should include all stakeholders, since fire does not respect political and administrative boundaries. There are significant reservoirs of traditional and historic knowledge regarding conditions and processes on the landscape.
 - Planning needs to be clear about what conditions for which lands, and to consider situations which cross property boundaries, such as wildlife corridors, water/utility supplies, etc.
 - Planning needs to address lands that are not currently at a critical point, and make provisions to keep them from becoming an issue.
 - Planning needs to be aligned with implementation funding available.

- ✓ The Strategy should focus on directing federal land management agencies to work more closely, as partners, with their communities, state and local fire responders and local governments so that those agencies have a better understanding of that particular community and appropriate methods can be employed to create safer communities that clearly understand the threat of

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wildfire and what can be done to limit it. The Strategy should leave the individual methods and tactics flexible, while making the directive to work with the community and its leaders clear and direct.

- ✓ *“Continue growing institutional support for collaborative groups. Improve ability of agencies to move staff members that are ineffective at leading in their local jurisdictions...”*
- ✓ National and Regional strategies should empower local collaborative groups to plan, control, and act locally with some influence in bringing national funding down to conduct local action. Allocate funds sooner to existing collaborative groups and plans than to groups/areas with no collaborative framework. Also give priority consideration to those with manufacturing infrastructure to make the treatments happen, and give jobs, and bring out useful products.

2.6.2 Integrated Landscape Treatments

No one said that the need for treatments is little or none. Comments centered on the kinds of treatments – more prescribed burning (with variations), more removal of woody material (especially commercial). On-going maintenance of treated areas is a concern, as in the need to treat “effective” acres – usually meaning treating enough to be effective.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ The vast majority of input relates to suggested treatments, with occasional suggestions for how to pay for them:
 - Subsidize fuel reduction projects on steep slopes
 - Increase use of wildfire to benefit resources where appropriate, and reduce hazardous fuels in priority areas
 - Promote woody biomass utilization on a broader scale to accomplish objectives and contribute to our nation’s energy demands
 - Use commercial logging only where net ecological benefits are clear; elsewhere make necessary investments in non-commercial restoration treatments
 - Make extensive use of prescribed fire at the right time(s) of the year
 - Roads and access must be maintained
 - Volumes of fuels need to be removed so as to create funding sources to treat fuels in other areas or to maintain a more fire resistant landscape
 - Recognize the opportunities in relationships between various funding opportunities
 - Need more green-stripping and managed grazing to modify grass to a lower hazard fuel
 - Look at treatments as a 12-15 year investment, not as a cost for that fiscal year
- ✓ Projects should be located strategically and designed to facilitate the whole suite of fire management goals, tactics and strategies, with controlled burning and wildfire management the dominant goal and use of these projects, with emergency wildfire suppression and other costly, risky management interventions eventually becoming the exception rather than the rule.
- ✓ One commenter noted that he was asked during a virtual forum to include info on FEMA:

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I made most of the comments on today's webinar.....but was asked to write one down in reference to a comment I made. I said that FEMA policy is not considered when we are talking about agency policy variation or alignment. I utilize FEMA hazard mitigation grant money when available and FEMA PDMC (Pre-Disaster Mitigation Competitive) grants on occasion. The prescription used on the proposed project cannot, cannot include a burning component. You cannot even tell them you want to burn piles! It will get thrown out every time. They [FEMA] are totally afraid of burning. This certainly is contrary to what most of us would support. And it certainly adds to the cost of the project when they require all chipping. The other was the alignment of biomass opportunity to fuels mitigation. I know some think, or thought, that was done with things like fuels for schools. But it's not, and that program has not furthered any mitigation activity. The recent fire activity in AZ certainly found praise for the mitigation activity that had been done, and the media loved it. They were making all kinds of comparisons of the treated private lands with the unmanaged federal side.

- ✓ Provide a mechanism and funding for state and private partners to actively reduce fuels in wilderness and other federal roadless areas within ½ mile of the border with private or state resources.
- ✓ Will grazing be addressed by this strategy? Timing of grazing helps to reduce the fuel load and to encourage the establishment of plants that are less flammable. Areas that have been grazed have less standing fuel that slows a fire down so that sometimes a cow trail will stop a fire.

2.6.3 Community Protection

Comments provided center primarily on getting communities to take responsibility for being ready for fire. Two approaches predominate – the “carrot” of incentives, and the “stick” of enforcement. The incentives and enforcements come in the form of lower/higher insurance rates, zoning and building code changes, treating fire prone areas like flood zones or earthquake zones, and paying state or federal crews to do protection work financed, or hiring private contractors to be paid by putting a lien on property that needs treatment. A strong education component is emphasized.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ Place-based relationships work for building and planning outside the “heat of the moment” during a wildfire.
- ✓ *“Over 70,000 communities at risk, and the fact that less than 10% have adopted a WUI code, or prepared a community wildfire protection plan, clearly shows that more effort is needed in solving this growing problem.”*
- ✓ Some of the challenges noted include lack of situational awareness, prevention practices and mitigation measure that can be adopted; lack of intergovernmental and community planning to set priorities and determine best actions and practices to address local problems; a lack of funding for preparedness resources for wildland fire response and mitigation projects to prevent/reduce impacts; and a lack of infrastructure to utilize biomass.

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- ✓ A broader challenge is whether we actually see statistical improvements. It seems like nationally we are missing the mark on what needs to be done, but continue to repackage existing programs with new names or add something to an already overloaded system.
- ✓ Continue to have State Foresters work with communities to improve defensibility, emphasizing CWPP. Expand and continue to use CWPP's to plan for work in WUI and farther out, "middle country." Take a holistic view; value ecosystems and natural resources. Reassess CWPP's on a regular schedule to accommodate land status changes and development patterns.
- ✓ We have two problems in creating fire-adapted communities. 1) New construction based on improved building codes, city/county ordinances, etc. (new developments) and, 2) retooling the existing urban/suburban environment (existing developments). The second is a huge problem with no apparent solution if property owners choose not to participate.

2.6.4 *Ecosystem Services*

Comments regarding ecosystems were limited, but offer useful perspectives on the effects of fire on carbon sequestration and other values or services. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ Resolution to questions regarding carbon stocks and fuels treatments will become necessary as federal lands are identified as significant carbon reserves. Are well-managed mixed conifer forests (fewer trees, larger diameter, and greater spatial heterogeneity), for example, more effective at sequestering carbon than densely stocked stands?
- ✓ There also has to be an understanding that undeveloped lands are not sacrifice lands in fire situations. Allowing these lands to burn in order to protect structures is not acceptable since the open space lands are water sources, carbon storage areas, wildlife habitat, and recreation areas; they also have scenic values for local tourism.
- ✓ There are concerns about retaining functioning TES habitat versus vegetation treatments for fire management; we risk losing entire non-fire tolerant habitat zones, and removing TES habitat by returning the vegetation to a fire-resilient condition.

2.6.5 *Smoke Management*

It's nothing new that many communities do not want to be impacted by smoke - either from prescribed fire or wildfire. We seem to have some teaching opportunities soon after a smoke-filled August but the public's attention span is short, generally speaking. The goal of creating fire adapted communities has as much to do with attitude of the community itself as it does with any planning and implementation of a 'defensive strategy' we can accomplish with the surrounding vegetation.

Many of those who commented supporting wildland fire use for resource benefit view smoke as natural and beneficial. Some suggested that this smoke output be considered differently than other air pollution point sources under the Clean Air Act regulations.

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Others state that air basins cannot accept the amount of fire that will need to be implemented – a thousand acres here and there will not get the job done; and that “suppression fires” (back burning) waste money and needlessly produce black forest and health destroying smoke. Some define ineffective fire suppression as unjustified smoke.

2.6.6 Monitoring

Although the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Strategy is predicated on an adaptive management system, relatively few comments were received on this topic. Comments received focused on definitions and metrics (cost, reduced risk, etc.). The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ Whose and what definition of "resiliency" are we using? This is a common buzzword in today's world of vegetative management but what does it mean? A clear definition that discusses the ecological integrity of the forests is necessary, along with a vision that incorporates some sort of monitoring program that would ensure that goals are being met for the long-term "health" of our forest.
- ✓ Right now the metric to gauge our success is acres treated. This leads us to get the "easy" acres instead of the right acres.
- ✓ When we “restore and maintain landscapes,” at what level is the risk diminished? What are the current risks to the ecosystems? These need to have clear, accepted answers to ensure that this goal can be met (measured).
- ✓ There have been countless reviews on cost and loss due to fire. Only a few reports have shown the dollar and resource savings from fuels reduction efforts, communities built to withstand fire and local efforts such as Cal Fire Safe Community Councils. In other words the effect of these efforts needs more emphasis.

2.6.7 Education

There was strong recognition and support for either continuing or expanding public education programs such as Firewise. The recommended actions are summarized under three key components-

- Key messages to communicate,
- Ideas on how to be more effective with communications, and
- How to best organize at the community level.

In addition there are several action listed under other recommendations.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity. Recommendations for key messages include:

Personal Responsibility

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- Teach personal responsibility to those people who elect to live within the WUI. The homeowner is the single most important factor, and responsible party, in determining if a home will survive a wildfire.
- Reinforce with landowners that if they have not made efforts to mitigate hazardous fuels around their structures, that it is not reasonable to ask firefighters to defend the structures. Reinforce to all that firefighter and public safety continue to be the highest priority.
- Ensure that the education program outlines the consequences of inaction on the part of the homeowner and that when a person is sold a property within any area that does not have a protection system in place, they need to be informed of such including the consequences in the event of fire.
- Increase awareness of homeowners, communities and the broader public of their stake in the costs of fighting wildfire. Fighting wildfire is seen too much as an entitlement and too little as an activity in which the public should participate, especially before it happens.
- Government should not and cannot protect individuals from the consequences of their own actions or inaction. Government can conduct the research and disseminate the results. It should stop there.

Defensible Space

- Make communities less vulnerable to wildland fires through prevention and preparation, construction and retrofitting with fire resistant building materials, fire-resistant landscaping, and WUI fuel modification as a result of informed construction and development planning.
- Review and adapt the messages, plans, building codes etc. to fit geographic, climatic, and other local needs.
- Develop a cultural grass roots understanding and standard/expectation of successful living strategies for living in fire-prone environments. For example in Central Oregon we expect to use cold-resistant domestic water systems, adequate heating systems, snow tires, etc. Why should appropriate vegetation management around our structures be any different. Increase public awareness of what to plant not only for fire abatement but also for low water usage.
- Increase understanding of how prescriptive pre-fire actions can help reduce the risks to homeowners.
- Stress wildland fire solutions by educating them in wildland fire preparation, prevention and evacuation and what to do if trapped.

Fire Behavior/Ecology

- Increase public knowledge (and therefore acceptance) of what is natural, what should be happening in our forests and plains landscapes. Identify the winners and losers in wildlife & habitat because of our century of suppression.
- Change the public perception of wildland fire from being an unnatural, "bad" element to being a natural part of fire-prone landscapes. The ecological role of fire in maintaining healthy ecosystems and providing ecosystem services should be one of the key features of

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- creating fire-adapted communities Stop using the word catastrophic. High intensity fire on average only encompasses <10% of a fire area. Snag forests create diverse and biologically rich habitat.
- Increase awareness/understanding of what a resilient landscape looks like and explain the ecological dynamics of the system and how it changes over time.
 - Educate the public on what's natural, especially with regard to smoke levels. Having clean air all the time is just not natural.
 - Affirm the need for fire use responses to accomplish beneficial social, economic, and ecological outcomes of fire. Increase public understanding or acceptance of prescribed fire or other managed fire.
 - Expand Smokey's message to include fire ecology and the benefits of wildfire.
 - Expand the messages beyond just defensible space. Many rural property owners know about defensible space, but most do not know about fire behavior, embers/the home ignition zone, forest conditions, and the realities of a fire engine in every driveway.

Other key messages

- Increase public understanding and support for active landscape management on federal lands.
- Educate community in forest practices and about the timber industry.
- Increase awareness, understanding and acceptance of the Cohesive Strategy and the role it will play.
- Ability to restore resilient landscapes will be difficult to achieve given scale and financial limitations, therefore need to be realistic and strategic in what can be accomplished and what is communicated to the public.

Recommended communication methods

- ✓ Clear information regarding what direct benefits can be achieved through completing defensible space work, switching to more fire-safe materials in their homes, and the utility and feasibility of new technologies such as sprinklers needs to be conveyed in a non-threatening, non-mandated way.
- ✓ The Strategy should include a structure by which education of residents is achieved through example. If the Strategy encouraged the simple imposition of new rules and regulations, compliance will likely be low in certain communities. If it is presented in a non-confrontational way with the stated end-goal of protecting communities, acceptance could be much higher.
- ✓ Avoid buzzword and technical jargon that detract from good messages. Explain treatments without using fear, provide risk reduction outcomes by treatment type and level of treatment, and use unbiased language.

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- ✓ Recommend that non-federal communications consultants design the program. The team should be from many backgrounds: people who know people, statistics, how to communicate effectively, wildfire, natural resources, and the differences between the various regions of our country.
- ✓ Move toward interagency enterprise systems and databases, the use of mobile solutions, the engagement of crowd sourcing and social media...a designed system (complete with appropriate security and controls) that promotes and provides common operating pictures and timely information exchange.
- ✓ Consistent approaches between the federal, state and local agencies and supporting this campaign in the field every day will increase effectiveness. From the unified policy create talking points – sound bites for everyone visiting the Hill and get people saying the same things.
- ✓ Develop programs/workshops/learning environments for learning collaborative decisionmaking.
- ✓ Increase emphasis on Firewise as the primary national WUI program. Deemphasize other programs with similar or overlapping messages so that individuals, homeowners, and communities get a single consistent message. Expand Firewise, FireSafe, to include the full role of a private landowner and how they fit into and help make a fire-adapted community. Retool programs like Firewise to use the recent large fires as examples to help demonstrate the effectiveness of fuels treatment. For example, use the Wallow fire to show how areas looked that had prescribed fire versus areas that didn't have prescribed fire.
- ✓ Develop the 5e's (NFA/ USFA community education prevention model) for community acceptance/ education on a national basis that supports or incentivizes participation in the efforts.
- ✓ “Seeing is believing “- being able to visit landscapes that have been properly treated will go a long way. Invest in demonstration projects to display techniques/activities to prepare properties to withstand a wildfire. Use high use/visibility public lands to be living classrooms for what resilient landscapes and state of the art wildland urban interface management look like. Use demonstrations of what happens in the event of a fire, including private homeowners or others who have suffered from losses in an un-protected or un-insured area.
- ✓ Cohesive Strategy added to the confusion by now advocating that homeowners understand concepts like fire adapted ecosystems, and fire adapted communities. The public is hard pressed to understand the simplest messaging like what are they, forest fires, bush fires, wildfires, wildland fires, wildland urban interface fires, not to mention new terms like siege or mega fires. The public is told now some fires are good, fire for resource benefits, prescribed fire, prescribed natural fire, appropriate management response fires, wilderness fires, this confusion needs to be addressed. Again all the programs are good, yet are not very well tied together. This is a

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critical point in the Cohesive Strategy and especially moving into the concept of a Fire Adapted Community and one of the biggest challenges to deal with besides funding.

- ✓ Use "Back of the Napkin" techniques - i.e., use a) clear, concise, visuals. b) Show the social, ecological, and economic relationships associated with the three goals. c) Use models to provide possible outcomes/ scenarios. For example, use models to show the outcome to the individual and community if only 10% of the owners treat their property, versus 25%, versus 75%, versus 100%.
- ✓ Complete a public survey to determine knowledge and understanding of resilient landscapes.
- ✓ Engage public with post fire monitoring of recent fires to learn lessons about effectiveness of public education, prevention, and mitigation. Share results in media with ties to local prevention and mitigation efforts.
- ✓ Begin a cohesive education program for kids age 6-12 that tells more than the Smokey Bear story. Use retirees to help send this message. Focus on key spots in the US where kids can be reached in large numbers and make it free for the kids. Find ways to encourage parents to engage the kids. Improve connections between young people and the natural environment, through environmental education, internships and use of social media to connect urban populations to parks and other wildlands.
- ✓ Distribute educational videos through community meetings and television, public meetings hosted by fire experts.
- ✓ Increase use of local fire departments and State Forester organizations. Enlist environmental groups and other non-profits to help communicate key messages.
- ✓ Develop place-based relationship building and planning outside the "heat of the moment" associated with a wildfire. Pre-season sandbox exercises with local community leaders build understanding, realistic expectations and support.
- ✓ Use television, radio, newspaper and social media to tell the story of wildland fire, how to minimize risk, prepare for the unknown and to do this on an annual basis, the rest will follow. The story opportunities abound for all from fall and spring clean up, to various homeowner associations that are doing projects in conjunction with federal, state and local bodies in an effort to keep fire danger down, to when you have a fire telling about homes that were saved and people that were ready for an evacuation. All those things reinforce the need to take action. Increase public service campaigns nationally.
- ✓ Time sensitive and new PSA's would be helpful. Gearing up for fire season, working on defensible space, things to think about during fire season, and after fire season before the snow

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flies, some things to do to get you ready for spring. The battle against wildland fire never stops and if you get people to realize that they will always be ready to take action on a year round basis.

- ✓ Initiate a TV public relations campaign similar to the "Only You" campaign of the 90s. *"You live in a fire environment. Only you can choose to reduce risk to your home."*
- ✓ Keep funding the Prevention/Conservation Education positions as they are dedicated to information sharing. Make sure they have fireline experience so that the words in the messages are shared appropriately.
- ✓ Teachable moments need to be capitalized upon. Often communities only pay attention when there is fire on the ground. Coordinated education efforts could be enhanced as part of an IMT response.

Recommendations for community level organizations.

- ✓ Build county teams, city teams, and neighborhood teams in a system for awareness for response, threat, and risk and build a local plan coordinated with through district, USFS, and State.
- ✓ Organize local communities with fire prevention officers to share Firewise technology in and around homes in the WUI. These are very successful and well received. Assist in annual burn pile days to clean up communities.
- ✓ The states, cities, towns and all affected stakeholders, both regulators and the regulated, including building, fire, plumbing code officials and inspectors, architects, engineers, building owners and managers, labor, consumers and others participate in the national model code development process.
- ✓ Provide funding in the form of grants to state level educational organizations such as the Oregon Forest Resources Institute to develop and deliver educational advertising to educate the public.
- ✓ Establish an effective National, State, Local communication network of organizations committed to the effort. Example: IAFC, State Chief's and Regional and/or County Chief's assn. There could be web links, standing committees or work groups at each level. Link the various web sites, create a Blog and perhaps a best practices website. Have an effective National, State and Local outreach strategy. Capitalize on opportunities when fires occur to make the point!!
- ✓ Many programs are available to the public e.g. ready-set-go, Firewise, FireSafe, etc. None of them alone do comprehensive work for communities. We need to integrate and strengthen this combination of programs without losing momentum in any one. Also, to avoid duplication between programs by identifying gaps in achieving fire adapted communities.

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Other Action Items

- ✓ A lack of trust of the federal government agencies is a serious impediment to success. The federal agencies need to first work on the trust factor: fully delineate the what, why, how, who and when of the national Cohesive Strategy to the states, local governments and the American public, so that there is open trust.
- ✓ Increase education/awareness of federal and state firefighters regarding the value of a responsible, prepared and active community.
- ✓ Politicians need to be educated so that we don't have 3 separate problems (landscapes, communities, response)...we have one huge problem.
- ✓ What are we restoring to? Most scientists don't have a good answer to this question. E.g. CA Desert ecosystems (Joshua Tree, Death Valley, etc.) are getting lots of fire in areas that aren't used to fire. A new "Leopold Report" is needed to consider changes that are happening.

2.6.8 Regulatory Review

The long time frames and excessive costs for planning projects as well as the difficulty of sustaining projects through the appeals and litigation process was recognized as a significant barrier to helping restore resilient landscapes on Federal land. Given the scale of the needed work on Federal land, and the urgency related to forest health and fuel conditions, many believe that to achieve significant progress, legislative or administrative remedies will be necessary.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

Legislative Recommendations:

- ✓ Repeal or amend the Equal Access to Justice Act as some believe it provides an incentive to litigation in the form of reimbursed attorney fees. They believe the law increases the occurrence of lawsuits that slow the time it takes to get a project planned and implemented, perpetuating the hazardous fuel conditions. Furthermore, agencies use scarce funds to pay for the increased number of cases and to pay for staff expenses to deal with the cases, taking funds away from project preparation and implementation.
- ✓ Need legislation that declares all national forest vegetation activities that are for improvement of forest health and/or fuels reduction to be categorically excluded from NEPA. These are maintenance activities and should be categorically determined to NOT be major federal actions under NEPA. Simply give notice of project proposed action; other administrative remedy would be available. The only other option would be a complaint filed in Court and complaints should be legislatively limited to the Administrative Procedures Act only (i.e. have to prove the decision maker was arbitrary and capricious)

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- ✓ Reform the National Environmental Policy Act or Agency appeal rules so that the right to litigate would only apply to concerned citizens who live in an area where a proposed project would take place, and who have participated in/commented upon the project during development. Federal legislation must place a higher priority on public safety and cutting through bureaucratic processes and cumbersome environmental analysis that have supported environmental appeals and lawsuits - contributing to the severity of the current fuel load problem. It must support a systematic approach to treatment in areas where human life and property is at greatest risk.
- ✓ Re-examination and reworking, as appropriate, of relevant laws and policies (NEPA, NFMA, ESA, etc.) to better address matters which (as a result their lack of clarity of intent and/or because of changed circumstances or new information gained since the time the laws or policies were put in place) are now subject to widely varying interpretations (too often resolved in court) or are no longer realistic/appropriate.
- ✓ Need to address the continued legislative tightening of air quality regulations and how they apply to smoke from natural sources.
- ✓ The Threatened and Endangered Species Act is the tool being used by environmentalists to halt land management.
- ✓ There is a lack of capacity in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service to accomplish their consultation responsibility within the time frames required by law.
- ✓ Inability to actively manage fuels in wilderness and other federal roadless areas adjacent to private land and resources due to legal and/or political constraints.
- ✓ Legislation/revised policy may be necessary to address the increasing risk of liability among firefighters that seemed to discourage many capable and upcoming managers from wanting to continue to climb that ladder in their profession.

Other Recommendations:

- ✓ Federal land agencies unfairly fail to accept fiscal liability for federal-origin wildfires that damage non-federal neighboring property. USFS has been successful on multiple occasions in suing private entities for suppression, damage, salvage and reforestation costs. Yet, there has never been a successful claim against USFS for a national forest-origin fire that damages private property and assets.
- ✓ State laws that limit or prohibit use of unplanned fires to meet land management objectives need to be addressed.

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- ✓ Regulatory processes get more burdensome every year, increasing the level of complexity. How do we get the regulatory agencies on board to help (e.g. air pollution control districts, California Fish and Game, etc.)?
- ✓ Conduct a review as to why distinct barriers exist between treated private lands and untreated Federal lands. Is it a funding issue; an environmental compliance issue; an authority issue?

2.6.9 Cost Management

Comments cost management included: (1) general comments on cost management and cost control, (2) prevention, and (3) suppression and protection. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

Cost Management and Control

- ✓ Invest in promoting the understanding of the cost of protection and the relationship to individual and community benefits/values; understanding promotes action.
- ✓ The biggest issues are 1) who pays and 2) when someone changes something, we all have to react. Top down directives from the Federal agencies cause a huge ripple effect. We need a California filter within the western strategy that allows our partners time to find tactics to make them successful given new direction/policy.
- ✓ Encourage all federal land management agencies with fire entities to create a universal fee structure as well as a list of what fire-fighting activities they are willing to perform and pay for so that state and local fire entities who are also involved in the response are clear ahead of time what federal responders will and won't do during the fire itself.
- ✓ The total cost of fires should be made known. This includes the loss of business opportunity, wealth reduction, insurance losses, etc. It's more than just loss of life and property.
- ✓ Cost accountability – We need an objective, third party assessment of the cost difference between using private versus agency personnel and equipment (a true best value analysis).
- ✓ Continue questioning spending on large fires; keep challenging Incident Management Teams to be more effective managers.
- ✓ It may be time for a centralized fire service. Some of high cost may be charges to fire accounts that are not related to on the ground fire action. Specifically, some are charging preparation or prevention activities to fire accounts under the label of suppression, because they only get funding for suppression.

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- ✓ On large fires threatening communities, 95% of the cost is to protect structures. Spending more for fire suppression takes away funding from other priority prevention and risk reduction actions. The Federal agencies are investing most of their fire budgets on fire response actions and very little on prevention, mitigation, planning, etc.
- ✓ Create a requirement for local government to be completely responsible for suppression costs when they have not implemented Resilient Landscapes and Fire Adapted Communities.

Prevention

- ✓ Fire preventions should be internalized as an investment, not a cost. Model cost of fire prevention efforts versus fire response activities for the Phase III evaluation.

Suppression and Protection

- ✓ Promote the concept that protection is a shared responsibility beginning with the individual and moving up the political ladder, which will help address the expectation that the government will step in and protect you; relate the cost of protection to the cost of prevention and preparedness.
- ✓ Work with cooperators to prepare a viable long-term federal plan to replace the aerial tanker fleet.

2.6.10 Administrative Procedures

Numerous comments were received regarding administrative procedures that address: (1) grant assistance, (2) workforce, (3) fiscal/contracting, and (4) other areas of concern. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

Grant Assistance

- ✓ Fire Assistance/Rural Fire Assistance Funding: These two grant programs are an effective mechanism to use federal funds to increase the response capacity of local government fire departments. RFA funding is routinely seen as redundant by OMB and zeroed out in the president's budget. The CS should reinforce the role that each grant program plays in increasing LG capacity across the landscape, adjacent to both USFS and DOI ownership/protection --- and support full funding of both programs.
- ✓ The Strategy should consider changing the limitations placed on grant monies flowing to local governments and community fire prevention groups. Currently, fire related grants to the local level from federal agencies are subject to strict limitations regarding for what those funds can be used. By seeking ways of expanding the range of projects for which those grant funds can be used, such as to assist individuals in completing defensible space or installing interior sprinklers

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(neither are currently eligible to be funded through federal grants), individuals in low-income communities or those physically unable to complete fire-prevention work themselves around their homes and businesses could have access to funding to assist with those in-community projects.

- ✓ The Strategy should encourage the broadening of grant eligibility to include pre-fire planning. Currently, some federal grants to locals can be spent for the creation of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), but not usually for a less formal process or plan. While CWPPs are important tools for protecting communities from wildfire, they do not focus on how a community will respond and react to a fire disaster and who will be responsible for the various elements of ensuring the safety of a community and its residents, which is a key issue in pre-planning for catastrophic fire.
- ✓ Secure Rural Schools funding from Congress has not been adequate to even maintain roads and schools in the County. Revenue from timber production has multiple benefits. It creates jobs and qualified work force, it creates revenue to not only support resilient western communities but also district USFS offices, it creates a healthy forest, and it allows America added funds for WR.
- ✓ Cost share programs (grants) should have a provision for the removal of commercial trees. Bring NRCS into the discussions. Federal funding programs that go to private forests are working well e.g. NRCS Equip grants, FS state and private grants, etc.

Workforce

- ✓ Maintain and expand existing resources/infrastructure and/or create new resources/infrastructure where they are needed but no longer exist. One avenue is through ecosystem workforce development and industry restructuring to meet current needs -- workers who can perform both environmental restoration and fire prevention/response functions, and who receive wages adequate to support their families; processing and manufacturing facilities which can profitably use the products generated from restoration/maintenance.
- ✓ Hire hot shot crews for year round positions to avoid unemployment pay, build restoration crews, and provide full time, family wage jobs. We pay them either way (working or unemployed), let's get some productive work done with this underutilized workforce.
- ✓ Explore using the huge unemployed workforce in a CCC-like program to lower unemployment, deal with wildfire, and do restoration work.
- ✓ Allow jail work crews and convict camps to be trained to provide defensible space clearing on private property to create shaded fuel breaks around communities; along settlement common ingress/egress and along roadsides.

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- ✓ Build wildland fire response into every Federal employee job description (militia concept).

Fiscal/Contracting

- ✓ Best value contract requirements can prohibit/complicate use of local resources (e.g., local industry equipment). The process to sign is getting more onerous and they are used less each year. For example, the number of experienced timber fallers is decreasing so a Timber Faller Module was created.
- ✓ National mobilization of resources works well but fiscal issues exist. New procedures that require billing to be sent to local Federal offices, rather than a central location, will complicate payments. Also, billing for backfilling of resources sent outside the home unit.
- ✓ Administrative hurdles (purchasing & payment processes, fire billing, security for facilities and computer systems, agreements, etc.) need to be removed so that responses to shared jurisdiction wildfires are efficient and effective
- ✓ Reauthorize stewardship authority and allow longer term contracts to reduce cost, increase efficiency, and build capacity and skills like the White Mountain Apache Tribe is doing in AZ. Take steps to make stewardship contracting more flexible.

Other

- ✓ Greater use of disaster declarations at the state and federal level would greatly facilitate timely accomplishment of critical actions...because, in many areas, it is a natural disaster.
- ✓ Need uniformity among BLM and USFS programs, what is allowed in terms of land management prescriptions. Also differing internal perspectives exist between USFS timber and fuels program personnel about what needs to be done and how to do it.
- ✓ We need a mechanism whereby private landowners who treat their lands, can also treat adjacent, untreated Federal lands to better protect their treatment investment. Private treatments often need to expand on to Fed lands to be effective and efficient (e.g. effective placement of Rx fire control lines).
- ✓ Develop a funding mechanism for fire prevention and fuels modification work through a fire cost recovery program where funds would be collected from those responsible for causing fires. Monies could be used for all sorts of pre-suppression work and projects.

2.6.11 Fire Reporting

The following excerpt represents the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

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- ✓ Accurate fire reporting by all fire protection entities is needed to ensure an accurate understanding of the fire risk and response workload across the country. The CS should identify and advocate for a combination of incentives/accountability measures (and protocols) for comprehensive reporting of all wildland fires across the country.

2.6.12 Infrastructure

Comments on infrastructure addressed (1) loss of and need for infrastructure, (2) biomass use, and (3) other areas of concern. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

Loss of/Need for Infrastructure

- ✓ Relying solely on naturally-occurring fire to shape the landscape is expensive, non-productive and has the risk of burning too much unnecessary acreage. On the other hand using timber production to shape the resilient landscapes creates jobs, creates revenue for both county roads and schools, and USFS funds, helps restore and maintain critical industry machinery and personnel, and also helps restore and maintain resilient communities.
- ✓ In some parts of the West, the forest products industry can facilitate restoration work. To the extent that active management provides commercial forest products, time is of the essence to capture economic value from these treatments and to reduce risk of catastrophic losses in the future.
- ✓ The loss of wood products industry infrastructure in most forest areas is a huge barrier to overcome. Subsidies may be needed to jump start this industry.
- ✓ Consider investment in R&D on a technical solution to the stable operation of mechanical harvesters (like feller bunchers) on steep slopes.
- ✓ Fund Fire Safe Council Grants for heavy duty chippers and support of crews to haul and operate.

Biomass Use

- ✓ Increase Woody Biomass Utilization to support national energy policies and assist in hazardous fuel reduction. Provide better price supports for biomass energy.
- ✓ There will also be a significant amount of small diameter material that will be generated from forest and range health treatments. These materials are becoming an increasingly important source of energy for electricity and fuels, while also providing economic development opportunities for rural communities.
- ✓ Continue to provide Brownfields grants to bring former mill sites up to current standards suitable for CHP (Combined heat and power) or other wood products.

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- ✓ Provide technical expertise for design, permitting, financing and marketing of value-added enterprise to utilize biomass. Work on portable units for combined heat and power to overcome the "Golden Hour" cost limitations of transporting biomass.
- ✓ Invest in sorting yards where some value can be added to overcome transportation cost limitations. Subsidize landing to sorting yard transport.
- ✓ Ease EPA boiler MACT restrictions on emissions, taking into consideration the diversion of the waste stream from potential wildfire smoke emissions or release of CO₂ from rotting.
- ✓ Encourage the use of local biomass heat in ultra efficient furnace units (such as produced in Austria) for residential, institutional and commercial heating needs. Support district heating such as the use of hot water pipes in St. Paul's downtown area.

Infrastructure Focus

- ✓ In relation to the response above, there may well be examples of areas where development has occurred in the interface that was not at the same level of risk that exists today. Proactive management of the landscape around these areas is the (shared) responsibility of the landowner or agency to not allow a low to moderate fire risk area to grow into a high risk area from a lack of management. Impacts from policy decisions made on federal lands will eventually impact local fire agencies and jurisdiction either directly or indirectly. This needs to be accounted for in the discussion that is occurring here.
- ✓ This objective should include the dead fuels component known as structures. See California Strategic Fire Plan for a better, more integrated description.

2.6.13 Incentives

Numerous comments were received regarding incentives related to Goal 2 – Fire Adaptive Communities and include: (1) insurance, (2) zoning/land use planning, (3) tax credits/financial incentives, and (4) other incentives. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

Insurance

- ✓ State insurance commissioners should work to provide incentives for private property owners to become responsible for their own fire protection in zones on the fringe of urban areas and adjacent to wildlands. Stronger legislation and credits for insurance for those who have enacted defensible space around their property or structures.
- ✓ Insurance companies play a key role with coverage and premiums for homes in fire prone areas. If insurance is refused or has a much higher premium because of fire danger, people will be more apt to take action to reduce the fire hazards on their place. Maybe the insurance

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companies could come up with a point system that gives credits to owners who have cleared firebreaks and are prepared for a fire. Work with the insurance underwriters to require or provide incentives for similar building/landscape requirements. Vehicle insurance companies have base premiums on the likely involvement in an accident (vehicle type/make, age of driver, etc.) and the cost of repair. Similar premium grids could be developed for structures.

- ✓ Insurance companies must play a key role in ensuring their customers not only have education about what is expected, but also are aware of their fiscal responsibility. This will require a significant investment from local, state & federal governments. Federal government and insurance companies should do fire risk evaluations on grounds surrounding homes/buildings and charging accordingly.

Zoning/Land Use

- ✓ Through zoning/land use regulations, limit expansion of residential use into forests unless the owner/developer agrees to 1) allow protection agencies to prioritize protection of forest resources over protection of the development, and 2) to develop and maintain the property in a FireSafe condition over time. States and counties need to have incentives to limit growth into the WUI and/or to have building/landscape codes that enhance structures' fire resistance and promote vegetation management that restricts the spread of wildfire.
- ✓ If local & state governments are going to allow building in fire prone areas, they must take responsibility for the education of their homeowners and enforcement of laws necessary to keep the public safe. All too often the federal government picks up the tab and we all see where that has gotten us.
- ✓ Only when it gets expensive do members of the public begin to react and perform tasks needed for their own protection. Pressure local zoning authorities to require fire safe properties in new construction or major renovation. Have strong accountability measures in place in prevention compliance.
- ✓ Privatize the inspection process for defensible space compliance and provide financial incentives to comply.
- ✓ Regulations, which admittedly are not widely accepted in today's political environment, are vitally important. Protecting public safety is a linchpin to zoning. Requiring landowners / subdivisions to be Firewise is a necessity.
- ✓ Encourage states to change liability laws to recognize homeowner and community responsibilities for protecting themselves (i.e. reduced liability "eligibility" for homeowners that do not take FireSafe-type actions pre-fire).

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- ✓ Explore opportunities to incentivize treatments in communities. Define and produce a national education campaign that places fire preparation as an individual responsibility, not the government. Provide firm definition within programmatic language, Incentivize planning efforts with individual communities.
- ✓ Incentives need to be a part of the package. Solar power is a great example. Who would make the investment (low return on investment) if there wasn't some incentive to participate. Tradeoffs need to be offered in the building codes to enable developers and individuals to realize a net expense of mitigation efforts.
- ✓ Compliance will only work if it is financially incentive-based. Data on compliance and status of properties must be shared with fire agencies (GIS for example) for pre planning purposes for communities.

Tax credits/financial incentives

- ✓ Develop financial and other incentives to motivate private property owners to take action (such as certification that the property is regularly maintained in a FireSafe condition with adequate access for protection resources that results in lower insurance premiums, reduced fire tax assessments, and prioritization of the property for protection over uncertified properties, federal grants for Firewise projects) .
- ✓ The FireSafe communities program is the best fire loss prevention program going. It needs to be supplemented with rewards from state/federal programs for good work, and local governments penalized for not supporting the program in moderate and high risk areas.
- ✓ Establish two types of incentives through appropriate vehicles: 1. Provide funds or remuneration, some financial benefit to being compliant in managing fire risk; provide free inspection services through fire departments or municipal governments, and 2. Establish teeth for non-compliance through NFPA and the insurance industry. One cannot exist without the other.
- ✓ Transfer responsibility of fire preparedness to private landowners with some financial cost-share assistance for a limited period; say 5 years, to aid in reducing fuels.
- ✓ Maintain a well-supported, broad based, fuels management program to provide incentives to property owners to actively manage fuel loads especially within the designated wildland urban interface areas. Provide tax breaks for implementing fuel mitigation.
- ✓ Given the economic situation, planning for and including grants and incentives for states , local communities and even homeowner's associations to assist in becoming fire-adapted should be part of the bigger Cohesive Strategy implementation plan. We give incentives and tax credits for installing an energy-efficient window system, so why not for a fire-resistant roof?

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- ✓ Make homeowners and communities located in fire prone areas pay for a large fraction of the cost of protecting them, and reward communities for taking proactive steps to protect lives and property including evacuation planning and fuel treatments in the home ignition zone. Tax homeowners in the WUI for firefighting costs; perhaps at the federal level.
- ✓ Make funds available from those with protection responsibilities (state & local government) so that community assistance grants can be competed for and used to make their community more fire safe.
- ✓ Local Fire Safe Councils and active Native Tribes should be funded for fire risk reduction work and outreach. Government agencies must stop using the fear of fire and focus their message on the positive effects of fire especially in fire dependent areas. Planning and decision making, concerning water and forest resource management, must be done equitably between Native Tribes and other agencies. Native Tribes and a local community liaison should be present during strategic planning for fire events.

Other

- ✓ The aging WUI resident situation is something that presents multiple challenges. Perhaps as communities become fire-adapted and are working together in all aspects of this mission, they can also include the needs of their aging vulnerable populations on the to-do list.
- ✓ Some large tracts of dead and dying federal forests often include in-holdings of private commercial forest. What incentive exists to clean up the private forest when nothing is being done on the federal forest that surrounds it?
- ✓ When fire fees are collected set aside a portion for prevention/education/mitigation programs for fuels/ matching grant monies.
- ✓ Legislated changes to tort/civil litigation system.
- ✓ Western state governors should consult with Australian officials to learn if their model can work (in part) for the US western states.
- ✓ Many rural owners do have fire-fighting resources and some may have training. The building of a protection system could start with a few informed individuals that could bring to bear the needed starting block to build the system. This may help others to join in.

2.6.14 Coordinated Response

The challenge to the Strategy in creating a goal to ensure the participation of all jurisdictions in making decisions about wildfire management is that each will have different goals, objectives, missions, and ideals to uphold throughout the disaster. While locals may be most focused on

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community protection, a federal land manager may believe it is in the best interest of the land or the firefighters to let the fire go unchecked for a period of time. In some areas, these balances have been reached over years of working together and finding a status quo that protects each entity's core needs, without causing significant detriment to the others.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases they have been edited for clarity.

Recommendations about a National Fire Organization

- ✓ A National Response Framework is needed that has some teeth and commitment to merge all of the firefighting efforts into one team, not the fractured effort we have today. A national program, administered by one of the federal agencies (US Fire Administration?) can provide the leadership and standardization that will result in improved performance, increased effectiveness, and reduced costs.
- ✓ Interagency cooperation has improved over the years, but there is still a lot of distrust and lack of interest between and even within agencies. The NWCG is responsible for a lot of improvement here, but when it comes down to the nitty-gritty, differing agency policies dictate what will be done.
- ✓ A comprehensive national program for incident response is needed. Response to wildland fire is adversely affected by a diminishing work force at the state and federal level, limited availability of local fire service resources to respond beyond their jurisdiction, a disjointed system of training and qualifications, and turf battles about who's in charge and who pays. These both increase the costs and decrease the effectiveness of wildland fire response.
- ✓ Points of contention still exist in some areas over issues such as differences between structure and wildland firefighting systems and policies and the reimbursements of costs between firefighting jurisdictions. Resolution would come much easier if all firefighting jurisdictions came under the single umbrella of a national fire agency.

Recommendations to Integrate and Empower Local Fire Services

- ✓ Local fire services host the majority of the nation's firefighting resources and they respond to emergencies daily throughout the year, not just seasonally. The most obvious solution is to get local fire services more integrated into the national fire response system. However, volunteer and municipal fire departments financially struggle to just meet their immediate jurisdictional emergency needs. Perhaps if we could combine the seemingly unlimited Federal suppression funds with expanded wildland fire roles and responsibilities for local fire service agencies, we could have the best of both worlds.
- ✓ Every state and every county in the West is different in their jurisdictional makeup, their constituency, their WUI and their hazards and risks so there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Working out a solution will take time and thorough assessment and communication in order to

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continually improve response agreements. Developing county or area-wide, all agency wildland fire working groups to facilitate common training, qualification system, agreements, etc. will help to build the relationship between partners from which local solutions will come.

- ✓ Emphasize local agency coordination. Even though agencies might not share the same mission, they can respect each other's mission and come to agreement on the best course of action.
- ✓ Expect federal wildland fire managers to integrate local government and rural fire departments responsible for structure protection into Incident Management, and support those resources to the extent possible. Local available resources should receive equal consideration for mobilization as regional, national resources.

Recommendations about Agreements and Pre-fire Planning

- ✓ More "upfront" processes are needed including multi-jurisdictional agreements about how fires will be managed differently in different areas. More scenario-planning (practical, implementable, supportable esp. in light of budget reductions) is needed.
- ✓ Develop resource sharing processes that occur prior to fire season each year for high risk areas. Increase pre-fire disaster planning between jurisdictions, with maximum flexibility for the entities to determine for themselves how best to accomplish this as there is little funding available for this type of preliminary planning. Through state to state compacts and coordination with the military, additional resources for emergency response can be made available to neighboring states, provinces, and federal agencies. Improve state and community capacity to plan and prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from natural hazard incidents.
- ✓ Preplanned response across jurisdictions needs to be agreed upon and followed for cost effective protection of assets and management of resources. Clear financial responsibility and management actions across all jurisdictions needs to be decided before fires occur, not during
- ✓ How the agencies work with communities/local and State agencies on the planning process will make or break acceptance of fire management decisions.
- ✓ Response to wildland fire is too fractured. Federal, state and local agencies should be required to have effective response agreements in place and in many areas they just don't. State and federal mobilization systems aren't functioning effectively together. Newer agreements may be getting in the way and need evaluation.

Recommendations about Roles and Responsibilities

- ✓ Local initial attack is working well but a concern exists that the CS will result in changed roles and responsibilities. This 'fear of the unknown' is growing and trust issues are developing between local partners. As budgets get lean, partners get worried. The solution needs sufficient

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flexibility, and roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, need to be clear and understood across all jurisdictions before fires occur.

- ✓ Much of the public believes that the responsibility for wildland fire management is solely or even mostly Federal. The roles and responsibilities of private, local, state, federal and Tribal firefighting organizations should be further clarified and reinforced by the CS, particularly in the dispatch of resources and utilization for initial and extended attack, including the need to maintain national mobilization capacity.

Other Recommendations

- ✓ Lack of a viable long-term federal plan to replace the large air tanker fleet has created compliance and coordination issues between partner agencies. More assets and resource values will be lost to controllable fires, as tankers become scarce during peak demand periods. Work with cooperators and Congress to prepare a viable long-term federal plan to replace the aging large air tanker fleet. Integrate federal and state aviation equipment and standards. The Western Governors support full implementation of the recommendations of the National Interagency Aviation Strategy.
- ✓ There are a lot of different “response guides” (red book, blue book, etc.) out there depending on if it is Federal, Tribal, State, or local and they are not always consistent which could result in different behaviors and actions by partners during the same fire situation.
- ✓ The public also needs to know how they should respond to wildland fire. How to respond to evacuation orders, what their rights are to stay and protect, etc. Educate them on what needs to happen in case of a wildland fire, and then to make sure they are prepared if they are threatened by wildland fire.

2.6.15 Decision Support

Comments received supported an expanded set of decision support systems and tools to support wildland fire and resource decision making. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ We need a better way of identifying the consequences of our suppression actions and lack of actions, and of demonstrating positive economic benefits resulting from active management of resilient landscapes. Our modeling must demonstrate benefits such as the improvement in quality of clean water flowing from managed resilient landscapes versus results from unmanaged landscapes. There has to be more aggressive training in how to mitigate situations rather than just avoid them.
- ✓ We must move beyond traditional preplanning to better assessment of risk and exposure. We continue to see fatalities, operations that aren't effective in the overall outcome, or taking stands in areas of high risk and marginal resource values. Many current incidents remain highly politically charged, under scrutiny for cost and unreasonable expectations from affected public. In many recent cases the lack of timely information has negatively affected outcomes.

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- ✓ When estimating wildfire costs, federal agencies wrongly focus only on suppression costs to the detriment of and discrimination against all the various property values and assets lost due to a wildfire. The broader losses include not only those natural resources (e.g. wildlife, habitat, air quality), but also timber, net present value of young forests, irrigation water, recreation business, highway access and commerce, community evacuation, private citizen and business costs, and so forth.
- ✓ We must better utilize technology; especially GIS platforms for information sharing and sharing the results of analysis with response agencies. The gap between what could be done and what is done with available technology is just huge - and because there is no direct profit motive, the only time systems are funded is when events are happening and that's too late. Funding and training programs BEFORE the fires should be committed to develop capabilities, not just buy software.
- ✓ Embrace and expand the use of information technology - from line officers, program managers, field personnel, stakeholders, partners, etc. Collaborative planning and execution are imperative. The universality of "interagency cooperation" and ICS was borne from the fire community. Despite having access to information technology there remain significant challenges to seamless and scalable accessible data and integrated solutions, particularly spatial information (GIS).
- ✓ We need to develop a common understanding of the problem and a shared expectation and general consensus of what the outcomes can be. There are many stakeholders with different expectations and opinions on what should be done and how it should be done. These opinions are important and need due consideration. By agreement on what the problem is, where it is most critical and the individual factors that contribute to it, alternative solutions can be developed and tested.
- ✓ There's a concern that modeling may not catch the reality on the ground, and that we miss a lot of the situation as we rely more and more on models. Models should be used to help us understand the problem and not be used to make decisions, which is how some people view them.
- ✓ We need good science, and the right data and information, for good decisions when fires occur. Often time we just take the easiest or least risky course of action with little analysis of other alternatives and expected outcomes. All applicable disciplines should be involved including political and social science.
- ✓ Federal agencies are mandated to use WFDSS but no other agencies in CA use it. Cooperators haven't been trained and it's a high-skill system with a steep learning curve. This is a train wreck that hasn't happened yet.

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- ✓ Unified and consistent national maps of priority fuels treatments areas across the country are needed...each agency has their own version and they don't match up.

2.6.16 Response Options

Comments on this topic are sorted into three broad categories: 1) recommendations for suppression of all wildfire, 2) recommendations for a combination of both suppression and increased wildfire use, and 3) recommendations for increased use of prescribed fire in lieu of using wildland fire.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

Recommendations Supporting Suppression of All Wildfires

- ✓ Immediate, aggressive suppression is the safest way to deal with wildland fire. Developing strategies that call for observing fires, rather than safely suppressing, results in more burned acres, greater debris flows and lessened clean water. Many state laws limit or prohibit use of unplanned fires to meet land management objectives. We should allow state and private fire fighting organizations to take immediate, direct action under state approved policies on wildfires on federal land, regardless of federal management objectives, that are an imminent threat to the neighboring state or private lands.
- ✓ Use of natural ignition wildfire as a management tool is too risky and not acceptable in all but the very most remote locations. Aggressive initial attack on ALL fires is the only acceptable policy. Fire "managers" generally overestimate their ability to manage wildland fire, the public will not accept many more mistakes in the use of wildland fire for resource benefits that result in damage to private property, excessive damage to public property, risk to human life and excessive suppression costs after the fact.
- ✓ Recently, there has been an over-emphasis on point protection. Federal land agencies manage public lands and resources, not people's homes or municipalities. The point protection strategy negatively impacts Tribes and other landowners that place value on their forest resources. Last year on a reservation a fire was herded into wilderness, but these fires are getting so big they are disasters (due to smoke and fallout) rather than helpful in regenerating forests. The Hoopa reservation had to be evacuated – the Yurok are also at risk for air quality issues due to fire size.
- ✓ On jurisdictional boundary fires with risk to private lands we need hit them hard on both sides of the boundary to minimize habitat loss, impact to air and water quality. The greatest risk is allowing unmanaged fires to grow out of control, becoming a threat to surrounding communities and ownerships. Initial attack response times in the west have been delayed by the attitude "let nature take its course." Nature will take its course, but at what cost?
- ✓ Initiate an aggressive federal suppression response on federal lands adjacent to neighboring private (non-federal) property. The federal government should assume some level of liability for losses to neighboring non-federal landowners caused by fires coming off federal lands, due to the increased risk caused by federal forest policies. Also, the federal government should assume a majority of suppression costs incurred by adjacent neighboring non-federal jurisdictions. The

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blatant federal shift of risk to non-federal neighbors is inappropriate, divisive and not cohesive. Consider implementing and maintaining fuel breaks along the federal ownership boundary (including sufficient appropriated funds).

Recommendations Supporting Both Suppression and Increased Fire Use

- ✓ Allow most if not all naturally caused fires to burn in roadless and other federal lands not dedicated to active forest management where risk to adjacent land ownerships is not imminent. Where suppression is the preferred action, use containment strategies rather than direct attack unless structural or adjacent land ownership is imminent. This plan must consider the end game of continued fire suppression on lands not dedicated to active forest management. For managed portions of the federal forests, lack of thinning and lack of other management has led to sterile, unproductive second growth. There is little value to protect once these stands have stagnated, therefore fire on even these landscapes will likely result in more productive landscapes. This plan should emphasize forest diversity thru default to no action on naturally-occurring fires unless extraordinary values are at risk. Emphasize active forest management on lands adjacent to private or other land ownerships or where facilities or other valuable improvements would be at risk.
- ✓ A continuation of current fire suppression policy on public lands will continue to lead to greater loss of vegetative diversity, further reduced wildlife diversity, more displacement of animals to private lands, greater loss of riparian health and diversity, larger than normal range of patch sizes, and even hotter crown fires. Before any action is taken on a naturally occurring fire, assessment of the ecological impact of continued fire suppression on the landscape must be part of the fire management assessment. On fire dependent landscapes, what is the end game of continued fire suppression that ultimately leads to higher fuel loading, hotter crown fires, larger than normal patch sizes, lack of vegetative diversity?
- ✓ The greatest challenge is the firefighting bureaucracy that is now doing more damage to wildlands and creating greater threats to the health and safety of forest communities than the actual wildfires. These folks are out of control. We can't get to resilient landscapes when these folks fail to allow fires to burn under the right conditions. What we need is a policy of active suppression in the front country (near communities) and "loose herding" of fires in the backcountry. That will save lots of \$ too!
- ✓ Recognize that on the largest fires, throwing more money at the fire will not put it out. In those cases, focus on structure or point defense, and "herding" the fire around communities and structures as feasible.
- ✓ We need to support aggressive initial attack where immediate threats exist but in many remote areas, fire is the only tool and we need to keep burning fuels as they accumulate.

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- ✓ To continue to say “structures threatened” on 209s will not reduce the cost of fire suppression. If a fire is approaching a community that has completed all preparations, the fire should be allowed to burn to accomplish needed work.
- ✓ The risk of wildfire is highly overblown. If wildland fire is in roadless, wilderness, or any backcountry that is not a threat to a community it should be allowed to burn. This is what is best for the forest and it would solve long term ecosystem problems.

Recommendations Supporting Increased Use of Prescribed Fire

- ✓ Prescribed fire is a much better means to introduce fire back into the landscape. We have enough problems doing Rx fire well and I’m concerned with trying to emulate the historic burn rate (fire return interval) under today’s fuel conditions and the fact that we now have over 3 million people scattered about in the U.S.
- ✓ Not enough prescribed fire is being utilized, despite increased emphasis on letting wildfires perform resource benefit. We are only burning a near fraction of the acres that need to be burned.
- ✓ Monitoring natural starts is a waste of money. If prescribed fire will have a positive effect on an area it should be planned and burned. This includes wilderness areas.
- ✓ Limit the use of forest health burns to occur only out-of fire season (spring, late fall).

Other Comments

- ✓ Educate the public to change their perception of wildland fire from being an unnatural, "bad" element to being a natural part of fire-prone landscapes.
- ✓ Consider smoke impacts, air quality approval, and some sort of smoke management program when a federal management decision is made for less-than-full-suppression on a wildfire regardless of ignition source.
- ✓ Managers seem to be more than willing to take suppression action because of some slight level of risk of spread to adjacent lands or improvements. There should be at least commensurate consideration of ecological impact of fire suppression on vegetative diversity, promoting larger hotter fires, and the adverse effect on many disturbance dependent wildlife species.
- ✓ With so many differing (opposing) land management objectives, drawing a line in the sand is becoming increasingly difficult. The Big Brother Feds always seem to get their way when a tug-of-war exists on how to manage a fire.

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- ✓ Fire suppression decisions are incompletely evaluated. They are infrastructure heavy with insufficient value and consideration given to natural resources. A long-term, total cost approach is needed.
- ✓ Minimize risks adjacent to non-federal lands by maximizing the federal suppression response within 1-2 miles of neighboring non-federal lands.
- ✓ The equipment deployed on fires should take advantage of CAFS and other efficiency gaining technology.

2.6.17 Training

Most comments received on this topic address training standards and the integration of training across participating agencies and organizations. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ A national training standard is needed that all agencies and fire departments recognize, accept and use.
- ✓ As agency budgets tighten, the number of professional fire fighters will be reduced and there will be increased reliance on volunteer fire response—it is critical to making any response strategy work. However, most fire departments and fire protection districts are trained and equipped to respond to and fight structural fires and get very little wildland fire training or equipment even though in many communities the occurrence and threat of wildland fire is much higher than fires originating in structures. Also, State and local government lack fitness and experience standards for wildland fire fighting on the fireline. How can we maximize and make the best use of this resource? Greater focus on their training and integration with professional fire fighters is needed.
- ✓ The “crosswalk” and “credit for prior learning” programs have been poorly managed or ignored. Fire fighters trained by rural and municipal fire districts are generally not accepted as being “qualified” by the Feds/States outside their “home” units.
- ✓ The NWCG 310-1 qualification system is not uniformly applied, even between the Federal agencies that created it and are managing it. We need one national fire qualifications system for structure and wildland fire that all firefighting agencies and departments adhere to. A fully integrated qualifications system exists in California, based partly on the NWCG 310-1. This model should be considered as an example for all states.
- ✓ More integrated, interagency (city, county, state, Fed, tribal) training exercises are needed, supported by policies and funding that encourage it.

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- ✓ Consider a west-based prescribed fire academy that will not only teach from fed to local levels how to use this tool, but it will also be a good education tool for media, political leaders and the public.

2.6.18 Post-Fire Response

Few comments were received on this topic, but did stress that post-fire effects often extend beyond the area directly affected by wildland fire.

The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who commented on this topic. In some cases, they have been edited for clarity.

- ✓ After the fire is out, even if the flames never reached a community, there's damage to watersheds, recreation, etc. Post fire effects need to be addressed as they affect community well-being.
- ✓ Current fire rehab strategies in rangelands aren't working. Planting non-native grasses after fire so grazing can return quicker only perpetuates the problem. We need to revamp current strategies for managing land after a fire. Building natural resilience by using native vegetation through passive restoration takes longer but is more sustainable. Stop the continued disturbance (fire, planting grass, grazing, OHV use, etc.) and allow the land to recover.
- ✓ Give equal consideration for damage liability (as situations may warrant) when fires burn across ownerships.

2.6.19 Other Actions and Activities

Comments that could not be assigned to one of the action categories were coded as "Other" and are included in this section. The following excerpts represent the perspectives of those who provided comments on these topics. In some cases they have been edited for clarity.

"One-Size Fits All" Concerns

- ✓ Recommend a very broad national strategy with emphasis on more local and area-wide (multi-county) strategies tailored to the local environment. National and even the Regional strategies are pretty high level and other than general direction will not fit all situations. For example, the Western Region has a wide variety of environments – how does North Dakota relate to Southern California? We have big differences within California. Every USFS Region if not the forests within these Regions think that their problem is different than the others. The key will be to get good alliances at the lower levels if anything is going to be accomplished. The report indicates that this is the intent, but overall it is very much oriented a National and Regional scope.
- ✓ What would work to bring one community together to increase its fire resiliency, will not work in another community. Moreover, the acceptance of responsibility for the threat and consequences for wildfire will vary even more. For example, a community abutting land managed by a federal agency that has fallen behind on appropriate levels of treatment to prevent fire disaster may be very united in ensuring that the community and all of its residents

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are as prepared as possible for fire disaster and have done a complete job of fire prevention work; however, this community may find it difficult to accept the responsibility from the consequences of a fire that has started or been made much worse on the poorly managed federal land. By contrast, a community who has not previously focused heavily on fire prevention may be motivated to better prevention activities by an acceptance of the threat due to damage done during a fire disaster there or in a neighboring community. Because the impetus and actions of each community are going to be different from one another, the methods and tactics used in each must be different as well.

Science and Science Application

- ✓ Phase 1 could have been more precise with science. State and local governments have different objectives than Federal agencies...what does scientific evaluation say?
- ✓ Improve research and getting the research out in a timely manner that the public and stakeholders can understand. Bring all the stakeholders to the table to participate; if this concept is to work, you need to have everyone working together.
- ✓ More support for fire science and research is needed.
- ✓ Social scientists need to be taken more seriously by the federal land management/wildfire agencies and those who lead them. We have data and studies on what the American WUI resident knows and is doing, how they feel about issues and personal responsibility around wildfire. Why aren't we using it? Public opinion survey results conducted by a local university here in SW Oregon this spring re-iterate what we've heard from past studies: WUI residents know they have a responsibility to take care of their properties for hazardous fuels, they are doing so, and they are maintaining the work. They have no issues with smoke from prescribed fires because they know the work is necessary to maintain fuel loads on federal lands; they know about and are concerned about insects & diseases that are killing our forests; they worry about clean water supplies. Why can't the federal agencies work with this knowledge and get a serious campaign going to engage and further educate the WUI public about where we need to go and why?
- ✓ A major concern I have is that the national strategy may be too enamored with models that were never meant to replace more accurate burn data, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, etc. I think more definitive information needs to be developed about whether high mortality in trees w/ insect and disease reduces or increases fire resilience.

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Adaptive Planning for Dynamic Systems

- ✓ Dynamic, constant change will make any plan out of date before implemented. These plans take a lot of care and tending to keep up to date. Need to build in flexibility and develop a vehicle (process) to manage that change.

Inter-relationships between Goals

- ✓ Landscapes (Goal 1) and Communities (Goal 2) need to be in the same sentence. More often than not these overlap.
- ✓ Success in goal 1 increases success in goal 2.
- ✓ These actions protect watersheds too.

Communication Issues/Next Steps

- ✓ What is the vision for the Cohesive Strategy process? Where is it going? What is the commander's intent?
- ✓ FPA has fallen flat. Federal agencies are finding other ways to allocate funds. How do the models that drive budgets affect our partners? How will the Phase 3 trade-off analysis affect fund allocation?
- ✓ Synthesizing regional assessments between Phases II and III should be part of the process.
- ✓ Use the organizations FWFS (Casey), this WLF Forum and the union to lobby Congress hard. Create more education, cohesiveness for a mission should follow, then do what we can afford.
- ✓ How do we influence "normality bias", when people keep acting the same way even when they know better? It will keep us from doing those things that need doing, because we're not used to doing them.

Weariness and Wariness

- ✓ Many stakeholders don't see value in participating...they don't see the relevance.
- ✓ This effort needs to result in improvement on the ground...it's not just another planning effort.

3.0 Comment Evaluation

This section is designed to provide a different perspective on comments provided during the outreach effort, and to evaluate the distribution of comment categories across different affiliations and forums. The information displayed only represents whether comments were provided by different Affiliations or during forums, not the number of comments. As stated in the introduction of Section 2.0, because those who elected to participate and provide comments were self-selected, they do not represent a statistically valid sample. Therefore, numbers of comments are not presented in these tables.

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3.1 Objectives

Objectives addressed during the forums are influenced by (1) the time available for discussion and (2) the dynamics of the conversation (i.e. building on other comments vs. raising a new point). Therefore, this may have affected the distribution of comments across the objectives categories.

Objectives addressed in the comment forms and letters tend to overlap or repeat those identified in the forums. However, a greater range of objectives were addressed because individuals commenting using these processes were not constrained by time limits and cover a broader range of goals. Objectives with the most comments across the entire spectrum of forums and Affiliations include:

Vegetation Manipulation – Although all affiliation groups provided comments regarding vegetation manipulation, most comments were from Federal, State and Local government representatives, NGOs and industry.

Local Economies – Comments on local economies followed a similar pattern, which is logical because of the connection between vegetation management practices and economic uses of the wood products from these activities.

Interagency Coordination – Most comments regarding this issue were raised during the Forums, where a variety of interests were represented and had an opportunity to build on one another's concerns. Comments via the web form also addressed this concern as well, with most comments coming from Federal and State government representatives.

Education/Incentives – Comments on this objective were evenly distributed between the Forums and Affiliation Groups. Comments were not provided on this objective by Tribal representatives or home and landowners.

Policies/Procedures –The bulk of comments on this objective were provided during the Forums. Few comments were received on this issue from those using the web-based form. This may be a reflection of the ability to build on comments made by others during the Forums.

WUI/Intermix Zone – Comments on reduction of hazardous fuels were most often raised by Federal government, NGO, and industry representatives.

Coordination/Planning – This objective was not discussed during any of the forums, but was the focus of comment from Federal, State, and local, fire department, NGO, and industry representatives.

Fire Response Effectiveness – All Forums and Affiliation groups provided comments regarding this objective category.

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Table 3-1. Distribution of Comments Related to Objectives Supporting National Wildland Fire Cohesive Strategy Western Assessment Goals

Goal 1 – Resilient Landscapes														
Objectives	Geographic Area Forum					Comment Form - Affiliation								
	GB	SW RM	CA	NR PNW	BIA/ Tribes	Federal Govt.	State Govt.	Local Govt.	Tribal	Fire Dept	NGO	Home/ Land	Industry	Other
Vegetation Manipulation	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Local Economies		X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
T&E/Water/Air	X	X			X	X							X	
Strategic Planning	X	X				X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Interagency Coordination	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
Professional Capacity		X		X		X	X			X				
Policies/Procedures	X	X	X	X	X		X		X					
Education/Incentives	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	X
Mitigate Other Stressors														
Other						X	X	X			X			X
Goal 2 – Fire Adapted Communities														
Objectives	Geographic Area Forum					Comment Form - Affiliation								
	GB	SW RM	CA	NR PNW	BIA/ Tribes	Federal Govt.	State Govt.	Local Govt.	Tribal	Fire Dept	NGO	Home/ Land	Industry	Other
Prevention				X		X	X	X		X		X	X	X
WUI/Intermix Zone			X			X	X				X		X	X
Structural Ignition Potential	X		X										X	
Improved Emergency Resp.														
Public Health/Safety	X						X				X	X	X	X
Coordination/Planning						X	X	X		X	X		X	X
Post Fire Recovery		X									X			
Other								X				X		
Goal 3 – Wildfire Response														
Objectives	Geographic Area Forum					Comment Form - Affiliation								
	GB	SW RM	CA	NR PNW	BIA/ Tribes	Federal Govt.	State Govt.	Local Govt.	Tribal	Fire Dept	NGO	Home/ Land	Industry	Other
Responder Health/Safety				X	X		X				X			
Fire Response Effectiveness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Response Objectives/Values	X				X									
Other														

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Comments that did not fit into a Goal/Objectives category (coded as “Other”) are important to examine. They include the following, which are extracted from the comment forms:

Mischaracterization of Issues

- ✓ Well, I don't think you hit the high priority area at all; dynamic processes, not physical outcomes. That should be the priority.
- ✓ In California all 3 goals overlap and are “compressed” in the same location. Infrastructure is part of most landscapes. There are no large, expansive landscapes devoid of structures, power lines, etc. Communities and infrastructure are just part of our landscapes, not separate from them.

Definitions and terminology

- ✓ Potentially Ambiguous Definition of Restoration - There is a challenge in finding the appropriate definition of “restoration” as envisioned by the goal of the Cohesive Strategy. The Strategy seeks to “restore” the landscape. What final product of restoration is sought? Should the landscape be restored to its state from a previous era, and if so, which? Is the goal to restore the landscape to good health? Is the benchmark of good health being sought, that of fire resiliency or a definition of health utilizing other variables? The Strategy lists the performance measure for this goal as “Risk to landscapes is diminished.” Is this to be read strictly as a risk of fire, or should it be read to include risks of things that increase fire danger, such as an increased risk of disease or pest infestation? Or could it be read a different way entirely, a risk to a landscape could include risks to a varied ecosystem or a certain habitat? Diminishing the risks to one could increase the risks to the other.
- ✓ More clearly articulate what resilient landscapes mean, and insure federal and state agency people understand and can support, and that local, state and federal messaging is all the same.
- ✓ WUI criteria allow national comparison. How else can you do it?
- ✓ Satisfactorily define resilient landscapes and fire-adapted communities.
- ✓ Wording is very Federal-centric (“management objectives”). It doesn’t resonate with landowners and appears to leave out their consensus.
- ✓ Don’t make up any new terminology!!! The public can’t keep up or understand what’s going on. Semantics eat up lots of time and cause confusion.

3.2 Values

Comments regarding values made during the field and virtual forums, in letters to the Chair of the RSC, and via the web-based comment form were often included in comments regarding barriers, objectives or actions. Therefore, the information in Table 3-2 regarding distribution of comments related to values by Geographic Area Forum and Affiliation should not be over extended in its use.

Given that values are often embedded in other comments, those instances where values are addressed directly point to strongly held beliefs or concerns regarding those values. Given this caveat, there are some notable patterns regarding values:

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Tribal Heritage and Traditional Uses – Most comments on these values were made by Tribal representatives and BIA staff during the virtual forum. No comments were identified as related to these values in the comment forms or letters.

Social Justice – Comments were most often raised by local government officials and homeowners/landowners. This is not surprising in that these are the groups who are most often affected by concerns over disproportionate or unreal expectations regarding standards and capacity (funding and resources).

Western Landscapes and Western Lifestyles – These topics were also directly addressed during the forums and in written comments. There is no specific pattern, but these values did surface in comments from a variety of affiliations and in different forums.

3.3 Barriers

Those who provided written comments and commented on barriers during the Forums did so because a specific question was asked about barriers to implementation as part of the Forum discussion (see Appendix B) or on the web-form (see Appendix C). As a result, a significant number of comments addressed barriers directly.

What are striking about the pattern of these comments are the barriers identified by nearly every stakeholder affiliation and during the Forums:

Budgets and Funding – This barrier was raised by every affiliation and in all of the Forums. The highest number of comments was received on barriers regarding some aspect of budgets or funding. The magnitude of funding needs and concern over how to get work done to protect communities and resources was often the focus of concern (see Section 2.5 for a more detailed description). Clearly the major obstacle to successful progress in implementing the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Strategy is related to budgets and funding (see Section 2.5 for comments on funding procedures and cost-sharing and cost management).

Regulatory Environment – Comments regarding the complexity of the regulatory environment were raised by all affiliation groups with the exception of those identifying themselves as being affiliated with Tribes. The number of comments received on this barrier is evenly distributed across all affiliations and most of the Forums. Again, there is considerable concern about the regulatory environment, with most comments focusing on the amount of process as a barrier to accomplishing restoration/protection activities or in wildfire response (see Section 2.5 regarding actions related to regulatory review and administrative procedures).

Jurisdictional Environment – Within the Western Region, the complexity of the jurisdictional environment coupled with fire's role on the landscape were often cited by those commenting on this barrier (see Section 2.5 regarding actions and suggestions related to collaborative planning, integrated treatments, community protection, coordinated response, training, and other actions related to this barrier). As with the regulatory environment, comments were evenly distributed across all affiliations and were identified during the Forums.

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Table 3-2. Distribution of Comments Related to Values

Values	Geographic Area Forum					Comment Form - Affiliation								
	GB	SW RM	CA	NR PNW	BIA/ Tribes	Federal Govt.	State Govt.	Local Govt.	Tribal	Fire Dept	NGO	Home/ Land	Industry	Other
Tribal Heritage/Uses		X		X	X									
Social Justice				X				X			X	X	X	
Western Lifestyle	X		X											X
Water														
Western Landscapes			X			X		X			X			
Air														
Other														

Table 3-3. Distribution of Comments Related to Barriers

Barriers	Geographic Area Forum					Comment Form - Affiliation								
	GB	SW RM	CA	NR PNW	BIA/ Tribes	Federal Govt.	State Govt.	Local Govt.	Tribal	Fire Dept	NGO	Home/ Land	Industry	Other
Litigation	X	X	X			X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Regulatory Environment	X		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Jurisdictional Environment	X		X	X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X
Budgets/Funding	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Climate Change/Invasives		X				X		X			X			X
Administrative Procedures			X			X								X
Other														

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Litigation – Comments regarding litigation and administrative review (appeals) were also the focus of written comments and during several Forums. Most concerns were voiced by those affiliated with local government, homeowners/landowners, and industry. These concerns were often phrased in the context of how litigation/appeals thwarted efforts to accomplish community and infrastructure protection (see Section 2.4 for discussion of comments and suggestions on regulatory review and administrative procedures).

Comments on other barriers are often associated with those groups most directly affected by those barriers. These include:

Climate Change/Invasive Species – Ecological stressors such as climate change and invasive species were identified as barriers by those affiliated with Federal agencies or non-governmental organizations.

Administrative Procedures – Most comments on this issue identified actions to address these barriers, rather than the barriers themselves, so comments on these issues are most likely underrepresented in the summary table (see Section 2.4 regarding actions associated with regulatory review and administrative procedures).

3.4 Actions

Most comments received related to actions or activities. Comments on actions and activities across all affiliations and geographic areas most frequently focused on the following, which represent 50% of the action categories:

Collaborative Planning, Integrated Treatment, Administrative Procedures, Community Protection, Education, Incentives, Regulatory Review, Coordinated Response, and Response Options.

Across affiliation groups, there was comment on all other action categories, with the following exceptions, which received comment by only one or two affiliation groups:

Ecosystem Services, Monitoring, Fire Reporting, and Post-Fire Treatment.

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Table 3-4. Distribution of Comments Related to Actions and Activities

Actions and Activities	Geographic Area Forum					Comment Form - Affiliation								
	GB	SW RM	CA	NR PNW	BIA/ Tribes	Federal Govt.	State Govt.	Local Govt.	Tribal	Fire Dept	NGO	Home/Land	Industry	Other
Collaborative Planning	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Integrated Treatment	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Community Protection	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Ecosystem Services		X				X				X	X			X
Smoke Management				X		X	X	X			X	X	X	
Monitoring	X	X				X					X			
Education	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Regulatory Review	X	X		X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Cost Management	X		X	X		X					X		X	X
Administrative Procedures	X	X	X	X			X	X			X	X	XX	
Fire Reporting							X							
Infrastructure	X					X	X	X			X		X	X
Incentives						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Coordinated Response	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Decision Support	X		X			X					X		X	X
Response Options	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Training	X	X	X			X	X			X			X	X
Post-Fire Treatment	X													
Other	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X

4.0 Observations

The following observations were generated by the Outreach Team based on their review of comments, participation in the outreach Forums and their collective experience dealing with wildland fire management issues in the west.

4.2 Keys to Success

Based on the perspectives of those who participated in the Forums and those who provided written comments, the Outreach Team identified the following points that are key considerations in developing the western strategy assessment and its implementation:

1. Build trust - Many groups expressed a lack of trust regarding involvement, adequate future funding, or fair distribution of funding. For example, given the scope of the problem throughout the west, and the relatively modest budget and accomplishments, the Forest Service is perceived by many who commented that more planning gets done than doing. Development of regional strategies is seen as just another planning effort, with little expectation that actions will reach the ground. All interactions with groups and individuals must contribute to a foundation of trust and on-the-ground results are needed to foster a participatory and true collaborative planning and doing environment.
2. Enable more active management – Many who commented recognize Goal One is the foundational goal upon which progress on the other goals depends. To accomplish this will require transformation of the regulatory and litigation environment and better use of existing authorities, promoting investments in forest industry infrastructure, longer term stewardship contracts, market incentives that favor the removal and use of biomass, and in general more skilled use of economic principles to achieve environmental goals. One comment summarizes this dilemma - *“What’s the point if they continue this downward spiral?”* Any strategy means little if the Forest Service and other agencies managing large tracts of the western landscape continue on the path of virtually no active management (treatment of acres by all methods).
3. Build on what’s working well – Community, local, tribal, and state planning and collaborative action efforts must be leveraged and improved as part of strategy implementation. Comments provided cited numerous examples of successful collaborative groups throughout the west that have transcended the regulatory and political natural resources management gridlock. They are currently the best thing going – some fear these efforts may be compromised by new procedures and requirements that evolve from this effort and plead for a “do no harm” solution. Effective collaboration must become the standard for public land management.
4. Expand the concept of Community Wildfire Protection Plans – The concepts of the CWPP must be expanded to include the larger landscape and multiple jurisdictions. Numerous comments support the use of multi-jurisdictional planning where partners integrate treatments and response to wildland fire across larger landscapes to accomplish desired

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- outcomes. In their view CWPPs must include the adjacent landscape and capture community desires so they do not end up as an oasis of structures in a sea of black.
5. Pursue an integrated fire response system – All players should be compliant to a single set of standards and protocols from the RFD’s through city, county, state, federal, and tribal agencies. Again, comments from a variety of stakeholders support reaching agreement on using the same qualifications, training, equipment and procedural standards and multijurisdictional acceptance of agency/fire department personnel.

4.2 Essential Ingredients

The following observations were compiled by the Outreach Team and are considered as “key ingredients” to accomplishing the goals of the National Wildland Fire Cohesive Strategy. These observations have broad support from those who commented in the judgment of the Outreach Team.

1. Collaborative multi-jurisdiction planning – Planning must be based on effective collaboration, not just input from stakeholders. The best work occurring now in the west is through local collaborative efforts. Ensure the Cohesive Strategy helps rather than hurts them. Fire planning efforts need to be accomplished locally between all fire protection agencies, organizations, community leaders, industry, and other stakeholders. Local issues are understood better by people who live, work, and play in those areas.
2. Improve on-the-ground results – don’t create more process – The strategy should do little to impose additional planning requirements but provide tools and assistance to make getting work done on the ground a reality. Implementation support (funding and resources) should be directed to those entities that have a strong collaborative foundation and have decisions ready for implementation.
3. Use the full range of authorities available – Work has got to get done on the ground, especially in the WUI/Intermix zone in the view of many who commented. The Forest Service and BLM are not using the full range of authorities available under HFRA and are making NEPA analysis more complex by adding project work that is not essential to community protection goals. Federal agency proposals should be guided by community, State and Tribal CWPP and other plans developed in collaboration with affected stakeholders.
4. Use economic principles to achieve ecological objectives – It is essential to better use the principles of market economics to meet environmental objectives. The following statement sums up the situation *“There is not enough money in the Treasury to do all the work that is needed but there is enough money in the economy.”*

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5. Maximize return on investments – The overarching concern about funding/budget trends and implications regarding the ability to achieve the three national goals pervades many comments. Those who commented on this issue stressed the development of new markets for biomass and the revitalization of industrial capacity to process timber products as part of the solution. The value of these resources is seen as a key element to supporting both active management and local economies. In their view the Western strategy needs to reflect this reality in terms of expectations, laser like focus on priorities, cost effective investments and treatments, and a strong reliance on local economies as essential components.
6. Strengthen Federal agency abilities to be effective partners – A common refrain from those whose comments focused on the ability of federal land managers to fully engage as partners, particularly at the larger landscape scale and with regard to the limitations caused by administrative procedures. Greater use of the authorities and pre-decisional review and litigation processes of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act is an example cited by many who commented.
7. One size fits all – The western region is too big to create detailed solutions that apply to the entire region in the eyes of some who commented. Examples: coming up with a detailed strategy for fire adapted communities that apply to Montana and California is not seen as a reasonable approach. The same is true for wildfire response. These comments encouraged providing the ability for sub-regions (states or landscapes) to develop solutions and implement them instead of prescribing solutions where “one size fits all”.
8. Strengthen education programs and landowner assistance – There needs to be increased emphasis on the education of landowners and more assistance available to help them manage their lands. Firewise and FireSafe programs were often cited as programs that should be maintained and expanded. Good stewardship of private lands will assist fire protection agencies in achieving the needed increased protection of those values at risk.
9. Fire resistant development guidelines and model building codes – Firewise and FireSafe programs provide guidelines for defensible space and structural protection that are being successfully used by communities and landowners. The development and use of model codes or ordinances is another tool that can be helpful at many levels and should be promoted from some of those who commented. Some who commented suggested sharing these guidelines with the insurance industry and promoting their use.

Appendix A – Western Region Phase II Outreach Communication Plan

Communication Plan for the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

Western Regional Strategy Committee and Working Group



Goals

The goal of this communication plan is to structure interactions and the flow of information during development of the western United States' Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. This communication plan guides active collaboration between stakeholders and appointed strategy makers in the Western Regional Strategy Committee (WRSC) and Working Group. Public outreach conducted under the plan continues a decade's worth of dialogue between stakeholders and managers, unified by interest in the effects of wildland fire on Western communities and landscapes. A long-term goal of the communication plan is to continue and strengthen this dialogue with Western stakeholders to shape strategy for the West. This goal fulfills responsibility handed down to WRSC by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council under the FLAME Act.

Objectives

6. Engage people affected by this strategy in its development in the proposed timeframe.
7. Follow a collaborative, rigorous, transparent development path.
8. Collect data representing interests and opinions of stakeholders.
9. Use local, regional, and traditional knowledge and insights to frame the strategy.
10. Disseminate clear, current information to stakeholders.

Audiences

Audiences receiving the messages put forth under this communication plan include but are not limited to Western residents, individuals, governments including tribal, state, county and municipal governments, Federal agencies, elected officials, non-governmental organizations

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(NGOs), conservation organizations, industry organizations, and parties not represented in the WRSC Working Group.

Key Messages

- The National Cohesive Strategy has three goals:
 - 1) **Restore and Maintain Resilient Landscapes** - Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with management objectives.
 - 2) **Fire Adapted Communities** - Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.
 - 3) **Wildfire Response** - All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.

In addition to the three goals of the National Cohesive Strategy, the Western Regional Strategy Committee Working Group decided on a critical area of emphasis:

Collaborative Foundation – People and communities in the West contribute to and are actively involved in shaping the western components of the national strategy. To succeed strategically the West will need to continue collaboration with the people affected by this strategy.

Revised National Message Points

- The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy is an ongoing effort by federal, tribal, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations to address growing wildfire challenges in the U.S.
- The Strategy is being developed in response to the Federal Land Management and Enhancement (FLAME) Act. Congress passed FLAME in 2009, directing the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to develop and implement a cohesive wildland fire management strategy.
- The Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) is directing development of the Strategy. WFLC is intergovernmental – a committee of federal, tribal, state, county and municipal government officials.
- The Strategy’s intent is to establish a direction for wildland fire management, representing the needs and capabilities of all cooperators and including the public.
- The Strategy is about more than fire suppression. It also emphasizes restoring resilient landscapes and promoting fire adapted communities.
- The Strategy is designed to better align national level decision-making with regional and local interests.

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- Currently we are developing three separate regional assessments of goals and objectives for managing fire in each region, to determine potential actions to be taken. This is being done by the Regional Strategy Committees: Western, Northeastern, and Southeastern.
- Once the regional assessments are complete they will be used to develop a National Risk Tradeoff Analysis, weighing the benefits and costs of various management scenarios.

Western Region Message Points

- The Western partners have been working together with stakeholders for 10 years to involve community in efforts and interactions surrounding this initiative.
- We are assembling the body of information collected from these interactions as a starting point for dialogue.
- Across the West, previous efforts ranging from community wildland fire protection plans to statewide risk assessments have helped us identify specific areas that should be addressed in the Regional Strategy. These include:

Restore and Maintain Resilient Landscapes

- Native biodiversity (Habitats, plants, animals, magnitude)
 - o Dryer and more fire-prone landscapes in West than in some other regions
- Vast sections of unhealthy landscapes
- Economic (wood, grazing, sustainable use, healthy working forest, healthy working range, energy production, recreation)
- Watersheds; water quality and quantity
 - o Water shortages in West
- Vast, wild, fire resilient landscape
 - o Smoke (scenic vistas)
 - o High visual values
 - o Large tracts of public land / high proportion of Federal land ownership
- Tribal values- ceremonial, subsistence, cultural, utilitarian resources
 - o Ethnic and indigenous populations and traditional and cultural land values and uses.
- Climate change; importance of recognizing potential longer-term effects
 - o Climate change is playing out first and worst here especially in the intermountain west.
- Capacity and interest for vegetation landscape change using ecosystem management, fire use and active forest, woodland and range management.

Fire Adapted Communities

- Value of life
- Value of property and infrastructure
 - o Many structures in the WUI heightening the stakes of wildland fire
 - o Sheer amount of WUI in fire-prone landscapes
- Value of lifestyle – outdoor lifestyle, retirement and amenity migration
- Economic viability, jobs

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- The dependency of populations and their economies on natural resources, i.e. forest products, tourism, industry, water etc.
- Social justice-
 - o Social & economic equity (e.g. every home is treated equal regardless of appraised value)
- Community ownership & responsibility of the wildland fire issue
 - o Inclusive of individual ownership in fire adapted communities
- Capacity for integrated resource management implementation (fuel hazard mitigation) & scaled response (communities are prepared)
- Isolated communities with associated fire use (multiple objective management and point source protection strategy) impacts and consequences.

Wildland Fire Response

- Responder safety/public safety
 - o Includes human health as effected by smoke
 - Cooperation & coordination in planning, training and response
 - o Overwhelming majority of the large fire costs come from the west.
 - o Fragmented ownership patterns.
 - o State and Tribal Trust Land holdings and fire impacts to sovereignty, reserved rights, and government self-determination.
 - o Tribal government is significant in the west and tribes are key partners
 - Cost effective response-
 - o Response is consistent with values protected
 - o Private, public, natural resources and facilities
 - Wildland in the West is less roaded and has much more severe topography making resource mgt., use of prescribed fire, and fire fighting more difficult and costly
- At the conclusion of Phase II, a report containing regional goals, objectives and a portfolio of associated actions and activities will be delivered to the WFEC by September 30, 2011. Recommendations for the Western Region will be evaluated along with recommendations from the Northeast and Southwest Regions during Phase III. A key component of this evaluation is the consideration of science and its application in the combined strategy.
 - Additional information can be obtained on the Western Region website located at: <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/>

Background

The Cohesive Strategy development has three phases, allowing stakeholders to both systematically and thoroughly develop a dynamic approach to planning for, responding to, and recovering from a wildland fire incident. The three phases include:

Phase I: National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (complete)

Phase II: Development of Regional Assessments and Strategies (in progress)

Phase III: National Trade-Off Analysis and Execution (future)

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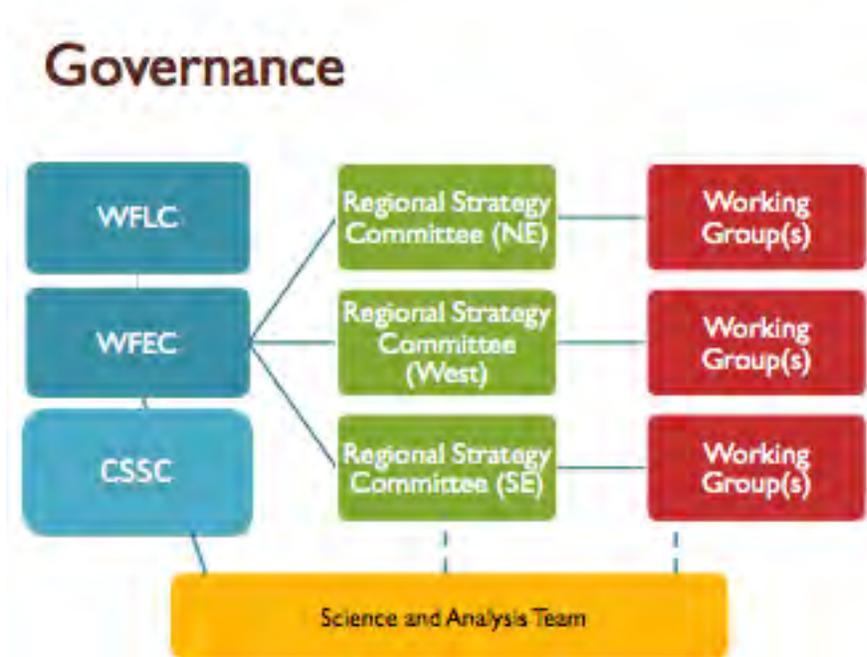
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Additional information, including the reports from Phase I, is available at:

<http://forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy/index.shtml>

Organizational Structure During Development of the National Cohesive Strategy

Under the decision authority of the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior, the following organizational governance exists:



The Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) oversees the entire Cohesive Strategy effort. In Phase I the Leadership Council appointed the Wildland Fire Executive Committee (WFEC) to support Phases II and III. The Executive Committee has membership reflecting that of the Leadership Council, and is chartered by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

Regional Strategy Committees (RSCs) are sub-chartered groups of the Executive Committee, and report to the Executive Committee throughout Phase II. The Executive Committee formally chartered the Western Regional Strategy Committee and Western Regional Strategy Working Group. The Working Group supports development of regional goals, objectives and portfolios of actions and activities, which you are here today to help develop.

A National Science and Analysis Team will support the RSCs during the trade-off and science analyses that comprise Phase III of the effort.

Role of the Regional Strategy Committee

There are three geographic regions established for the Cohesive Strategy effort – the West, the Northeast and the Southeast. There is one RSC for each region, for a total of three

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committees nationally. The Western Regional Strategy Committee is comprised of representatives from Idaho, Colorado, Montana, Arizona, New Mexico, California, Oregon, Washington, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Arkansas, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Hawaii and Alaska. The WRSC is working toward the goals of the National Cohesive Strategy while incorporating values important to west.

Each Committee will provide executive leadership, oversight and guidance on the development of regional goals, objectives and portfolios of activities and actions that support the focus areas of the Cohesive Strategy.

Members of the Regional Strategy Committee and Working Group should be familiar with the Cohesive Strategy Reports - *A National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy* and the *Report to Congress: The Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement Act of 2009* – as well as foundational documents for this effort, available at www.forestsandrangelands.gov.

Questions and Answers

Q: Why do we need a Cohesive Strategy?

A: Wildland fire management challenges are growing throughout the country. Currently, many different agencies and organizations prevent and respond to wildland fire. Although there is a great deal of cooperation, an overall strategy in which all the players have a part will help us develop fire adapted communities and restore resilient landscapes across all jurisdictions.

Q: Who are the participants?

A: While the FLAME Act directs USDA and DOI to develop the Strategy, the Departments quickly realized that a successful strategy must be truly collaborative and involve more than federal partners. The Departments tasked the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) to oversee the effort. The WFLC is an intergovernmental committee of federal, tribal, state, county and municipal government officials appointed by the Secretaries of Agriculture, Interior and Homeland Security.

Q: So, is this another federal project?

A: No. All members of the wildland fire community have an equal voice. This is a key tenet of the Strategy. The needs and perspectives of states, tribes, local governments and non-governmental partners are equally important.

Q: What makes this Strategy different from past efforts?

A: This Strategy goes beyond previous efforts to coordinate Wildland fire response. It recognizes regional differences and delves more deeply into the tough questions and

tradeoffs that need to be addressed by using science in the decision making process to reduce risks to communities, firefighters and landscapes.

Q: What is the scientific method for analyzing regional assessments results in trade-off analysis?

A: The Strategy is using a comparative risk assessment framework tool (CRAFT) to directly examine potential risks by focusing on measurable values, being more inclusive of tradeoffs, and understanding associated uncertainties. The four stages are:

- Specifying Objectives—*What is the problem?*
- Designing Alternatives—*What to do?*
- Modeling Effects—*What could happen?*
- Synthesis—*What to communicate?*

All information generated in these steps is compiled, providing an enhanced understanding of the interplay among scenarios, uncertain outcomes, and diverse values.

Q: Where will the Strategy be used?

A: This is a national strategy but its application will be informed by input at the regional level. Because wildland fire knows no boundaries, all lands, regardless of jurisdiction, are part of the Strategy.

Q: Will the Strategy make it safer to manage wildland fire?

A: Reducing risk to firefighters and the public is the first priority in every fire management activity. It is envisioned that through shared decision-making and communication, the Cohesive Strategy process will reduce risk to firefighters and the public by restoring landscape resilience and promoting fire adapted communities.

Q: Will local governments, states, tribes and agencies retain their decision space?

A: Yes. This Strategy intends to provide collectively determined goals and objectives that can help all members of the wildland fire management community make better decisions that contribute to restoring resilient landscapes, promoting fire adapted communities and strengthening wildland fire response.

Q: When will all of this happen?

A: Regionals goals and objectives will be developed by Fall 2011. This regional input will be used to inform the national Strategy, which will be completed by Fall 2012. The Strategy will be updated every five years.

Q: Will this Strategy affect who pays for what in wildland fire management?

A: The Strategy will inform but not direct how all partners can contribute human and financial resources to reducing wildfire risks and costs. The Strategy will facilitate

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better outcomes for everyone through improved wildland fire management decisions at every level of the fire management community. By providing collectively defined goals, the Strategy will help inform how to get the greatest impact from investments to restore resilient landscapes, promote fire-adapted communities and respond to fire.

Q: Managing wildfire is expensive. Will implementation of the Strategy result in cost-savings?

A: The Strategy aims to better define the most cost-effective ways to manage the wildland fire workload. The findings of the Strategy will inform Congress and others making funding decisions on the best approaches for fire management. The Strategy will also guide fire managers at all levels across the country.

Q: Will there be changes on the ground for fire managers as a result of this Strategy?

A: Decision making capacity will still rest with those who have always had it. The Strategy is not designed to take away fire management responsibilities. The process is designed to include input from local, state, federal, tribal and other fire management entities in all phases of Strategy development. On the ground it is hoped this process will lead to increased collaboration among fire managers, better delineation of roles and responsibilities, and a more seamless and cost-effective approach to fire management before, during and after wildland fire events.

Q: How does this relate to Fire Planning Analysis (FPA)?

A: FPA provides mechanism for DOI and USDA budget formulation for firefighting activities at the national level. What we learn from the Strategy will enhance the capabilities of FPA by providing information on non-federal fire management capability.

Q: Where can I get more information?

A: Updates on the National Cohesive Strategy are available on the web at www.forestsandrangelands.gov. Updates on the Western Regional Strategy initiative can be found at <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/>.

Action Plan

The following action plan addresses Phase II activities and will be updated as Phase II progresses and more details are worked out for Phase III.

A primary communication resource will be the Western Regional Strategy webpage located at: <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/>. This page will be updated regularly while stakeholders provide input and help shape the Western Region Strategy.

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Due Date	Activity	Purpose	Who is Responsible	Completed
6/17/11	Designate regional representatives from Working Group to conduct outreach	As in the charter, working group contacts all stakeholders about Strategy outreach roll-out to encourage collaboration	Working Group	6/17/11
Ongoing	Weekly conference calls with RSC Coordinators	Inform RSC leads on latest developments	Working Group leads	ongoing
6/24/11 with ongoing updates	WRSC Communication Plan	Inform and guide Working Group members on outreach responsibilities, processes and timelines	Steve Solem, Mark Beighley, Julie Woldow	6/24/11, continually updated
Ongoing	State and Congressional Briefings	Ensure elected officials are informed of the Phase II effort and purpose	WRSC and WRSWG Members	Ongoing
TBD	News Release	Description of the Phase II effort and how stakeholders may participate	WRSC Co-Chairs	N/A
6/25/11	WRSC Internet Website with Comment Form (UNC supported)	General informational webpage. Inform stakeholders of current developments and collect local knowledge and insights on Strategy	Karin Lichtenstein (UNC), Julie Woldow	6/21/11
6/25/11	Design outreach forum invitations (virtual and live forums)	Tool for regional leads to encourage participation in forums	Joe Freeland Steve Solem, Julie Woldow	6/25/11
6/28/11	Design outreach forum discussion content w/ talking points (virtual and live forums)	Tool for forum moderators and facilitators to engage stakeholders and collect usable data	Steve Solem, Mark Beighley, Julie Woldow	6/28/11
6/28-7/11/11	Design forum note template	Standardize reporting of forum proceedings	Julie Woldow	7/1/11
6/29/11	Establish the web-based comment form and open for public comment	Provide a consistent method for stakeholders to help shape the components and priorities in the Western Strategy	Joe Freeland Steve Solem Julie Woldow	6/29/11
7/1/11	Communication Tools for Working Group	Provide Working Group concise information for interacting with	Mark Beighley Steve Solem Julie Woldow	7/1/11

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Due Date	Activity	Purpose	Who is Responsible	Completed
		stakeholders about their role in developing the Strategy		
7/1/11	Establish dates and times for virtual and field forums by Geographic Area	Define the scope of outreach efforts across the west.	Working Group Leads by Geog. Area Steve Solem	7/1/11
7/1/11	Invite participants to the Boise and Sacramento Field Forums, make logistical arrangements.	Involve interested parties in the collaborative process	Joe Freeland (Boise) Joe Stutler (Sacramento)	6/29/11
7/8/11	Invite interested parties to attend and participate in virtual forums.	Involve interested parties in the collaborative process.	Designated Working Group Leads by Geog. Area	7/8/11
7/10/11	RSVP due for parties attending virtual forums.	Finalize participant list for virtual forums	Designated Working Group Leads by Geog. Area	7/10/11
7/11-7/28/11	Conduct Outreach Forums (virtual and live)	Involve and Engage stakeholders and collect data for improving Strategy	METI teams	7/28/11
7/29/11	Working Group inputs comments on values, goals, objectives and actions into CRAFT	Complete Working Group discussion on regional emphases for Strategy development	Working Group	7/29/11
To be decided	WRSC Intranet Website	Internal Committee Discussion Tool?	To be determined	N/A

Communication Tools (Located on the WRSC Web Portal under Communications)

1. Western Region Strategy Development Timeline
2. Key messages summary
3. Virtual and Field Forum Agendas and Talking Points
 - a. Suggested content for invitation of interested parties to Virtual and Field Forums
 - b. Confirmation package, including: conference call and web forum access information and instructions
4. Western Region Strategy Comment Form

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Appendix B – Outreach Forum Invitation and Agenda

The Western Regional Strategy Committee Working Group, with METI facilitation, developed the following invitation example sent to selected stakeholders by Working Group geographic region representatives:



[Personal Greeting tailored to group or individual],

Do you know how are you affected by wildland fire?

With the reality of large fire on all types of land a pressing concern for US citizens, we are developing The National Cohesive Fire Management Strategy for the United States. The Strategy addresses our common need to manage wildland fire.

I am contacting you on behalf of this national, broad based effort – but as a representative of the Western Region – to invite you to participate in developing our regional portion of the Strategy. This is your chance to voice your ideas on the issues pertinent to you.

Below is brief information on the National Strategy, and what our region is doing now. For more general information on the national effort please visit:

<http://www.forestsandangelands.gov/>

And to learn about our Western Regional contribution visit:

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

The National Cohesive Strategy three goals are:

Restore and Maintain Resilient Landscapes

Goal: Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with management objectives.

Create Fire Adapted Communities

Goal: Human populations and infrastructure withstand wildfire without loss of life and property.

Respond to Wildfires

Goal: All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.

The Western Regional is emphasizing a collaborative foundation for developing the Strategy.

Western Regional Approach:

Collaborative Foundation

Vision: People and communities in the West contribute to and are actively involved in shaping the western components of the national strategy. To succeed

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strategically the West will need to continue collaboration with the people affected by this strategy, to update and improve it over time.

This outreach is being conducted by the Western Regional Strategy Committee. This group is made up of stakeholders in the west including the Western Governors Association, National Association of Counties, American League of Cities, State Foresters, Various Fire Chief's Associations, Federal Land Management Agencies, Native American Tribes, Local and State Governments, Homeowners Groups, and various Environmental and Commercial Organizations. To ensure that the values and objectives related to wildland fire management capture the broad extent of our perspectives we are conducting focus sessions throughout the west in the next five weeks.

There are three ways that you may participate. The first is to attend our face-to-face focus group session in Sacramento @ McClellan Air Force Base on July 14th. We will give a brief overview of the Strategy and provide an opportunity for stakeholders (you), to express your values, concerns, or suggestions related to the three goals of the developing national strategy (listed below).

A second way to participate is our website comment process, at <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/survey/>

The comment form tests your views on the matters of great importance to stakeholders over the past 10 years, and asks your open-ended input. This form will be ready for you on July 7th, 2011.

The third opportunity is to participate virtually in one of the upcoming regional teleconferences that are being scheduled as we communicate. I will forward you that schedule within the next 10 days. If you are interested in voicing your thoughts from the convenience of your own telephone, please respond to me by email or phone.

If you have any specific questions that are not answered by the two websites listed above, please feel free to contact me directly. Thank you for your help and interest.

[Your name and contact info here]

Outreach Forum Agenda and Discussion Outline

1) Introduction

- Roll Call
- Discussion Rules

2) Background

- The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy is an ongoing effort by federal, tribal, state and local governments and non-government organizations to address growing wildfire challenges in the U.S.
- The Strategy is being developed in response to the Federal Land Management and Enhancement (FLAME) Act. Congress passed FLAME in 2009, directing the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to develop and implement a cohesive wildland fire management strategy.
- There are three initial phases in developing the Cohesive Strategy.

- A) Where we are in the process
- B) Why we are holding the forums

3) Moderated Discussion:

- Discussion Guidelines

Goal 1: Restoring and Maintaining resilient landscapes

Goal 2: Creating Fire Adapted Communities



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Goal 3: Wildfire response

National Cohesive Strategy Goal:

Respond to Wildland Fires

Goal: All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.



National Wildland Fire Management
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General timeline: Regional Committees must compile a report containing regional goals, objectives and a portfolio of associated actions and activities by September 2011.

4) Wrap-up

For continued participation in this process, go to our website at <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/> and respond to a series of inquiries that will help us draft a Western Regional Strategy that includes objectives and activities that reflect our stakeholders.

For further background information you can go to: www.forestsandrangelands.gov

How to Comment

- Web Comment Form
<http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/comment-form/>
- Regional Working Group Representatives



National Wildland Fire Management
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Appendix C – Website Comment Form

The following is a screenshot of the Comment Form posted on the Western RSC Outreach website at: <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/>

National Wildland Fire Management Cohesive Strategy West RSC Outreach



Comment form

First Name (required):

Last Name (required):

Email Address (required):

The views I am expressing in these comments are intended to be oriented primarily toward my affiliation with:

Affiliation choices available included:

Affiliation Menu
Federal Government
Tribal
State Government
Local Government
Non-Governmental Organization
Industry
Fire Departments
Homeowner/Landowner
Other

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The Cohesive Strategy is focused around three key goals. Resilient Landscapes, Fire Adapted Communities and Response to Wildland Fire. What do you see as the three greatest risks or challenges related to each of these goals?

For each of the risks or challenges you have identified, please provide up to three actions that you think will help us best address them and why you feel they are important.

What methods or tactics would you recommend to align the efforts of individuals, homeowners, and communities in preparing for and responding to wildland fire risk, and accepting responsibilities for threats and consequences of wildland fire?

Are there other high priority areas or issues that you believe the Cohesive Strategy should address in the west?

Send

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Appendix D – METI Outreach and Content Analysis Team

Stephen J. Solem, Senior Advisor for Natural Resource Planning and Inventory and consultant to METI, Inc., Missoula, MT served as co-leader for the Outreach and Content Analysis Team.

Mark Beighley, Senior Advisor, Wildland Fire Management and consultant to METI, Inc., Boise, ID served as co-leader for the Outreach and Content Analysis Team.

Julie Ann Woldow, Communication Specialist and consultant to METI, Inc. Anchorage, AK

Joy Berg, Planning and Implementation Specialist and consultant to METI, Inc. Wisconsin Rapids, WI.

Larry Timchak, Natural Resource Management Specialist and consultant to METI, Inc. Kalispell, MT

Jack Troyer, Senior Advisor, Natural Resource Management Specialist and consultant to METI, Inc. North Ogden, UT

Richard Stem, Senior Advisor, Natural Resource Management Specialist and consultant to METI, Inc. Alder, MT

Jim Golden, Senior Advisor, Natural Resource Management Specialist and consultant to METI, Inc. Sonora, CA

Byron Bonney, Fire Management Specialist and consultant to METI, Inc., Florence, MT