



Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy - Phase II

Western Regional Strategy Committee (WRSC) Update – 09/15/11

Purpose:

The *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy* (Cohesive Strategy) and *Report to Congress: The Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement Act of 2009* chart a critical new path forward in wildland fire management, one that represents the needs of all cooperators. Phase II of the Cohesive Strategy has engaged stakeholders in three regions (West, Northeast, and Southeast) to develop assessments outlining wildland fire management goals, objectives, and actions. The regional assessments are being used to complete a National Risk-Tradeoff Analysis (Phase III), which will illustrate the benefits and costs, monetary or otherwise, of various management options.



Cohesive Strategy Regions: West, Northeast, and Southeast

Stakeholder Engagement:

In the course of doing outreach to inform the Western Regional Assessment and Strategy, we heard several ideas that will be critical to developing and implementing a successful Cohesive Strategy, some of which can be acted on immediately. These “gems” include the following, are described in more detail in the “communications update”, and will be expanded upon in future WRSC updates:

- Effective communication
- Enhancing collaboration
- Thinking beyond the wildland-urban interface
- Fully utilizing existing authorities
- Community protection
- Using economic/market principles

Effective Communication:

We heard from a number of stakeholders that there is a pressing need to improve or extend collaboration and build on current success. Indeed, collaboration has served as a foundation to the development of the Cohesive Strategy: people and communities in each region contribute to and are actively involved in shaping the regional components of the national strategy. Many believe that increased collaborative efforts will improve on-the-ground results.

“We can continue to talk, strive for perfection, and work toward total agreement on every single point, OR we can act, in the realization that time is against us, and that bad things happen in the field while we chatter on the sidelines.” – Greater Flagstaff Forest Partnership

Follow this link to the “communications update” and more information and helpful hints on collaboration to meet the goals of the Cohesive Strategy: <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/>



Cross-cutting Actions:

In developing the Western Regional Assessment, it became clear that the three national goals are interrelated; success in one area affects the others. Several actions were developed that can contribute to achieving all three of the national goals: restore and maintain resilient landscapes, create fire-adapted communities, and respond to wildfires. These actions from the draft assessment include:

- Invest in collaborative efforts that have a track record of success in meeting community and landscape objectives.
- Design and implement vegetation treatments that reduce hazardous fuels, contribute to resilient landscapes, and contribute to social and economic goals.
- Collaboratively and proactively identify post-fire hazards to position for the most effective response to impacts on landscapes and communities.
- Use traditional and encourage new markets to achieve cost-effective land management that meets restoration objectives and spurs the local economy.
- Combine the best elements of existing education programs to create a west-wide education campaign with strong, visible, and memorable messages.

Moving Forward:

September – October 2011: The western regional assessment is completed, accepted by the WRSC, and brought together with the other regional assessments (Northeast and Southeast) to produce the final, national Phase II product. This report will then be vetted by the Wildland Fire Executive Council (WFEC).

September 2012: Between now and next September, the regional strategy committees, WFEC, and others will continue to work with stakeholders to inform the National Risk-Tradeoff Analysis (Phase III).

Points of Contact:

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For More Information:

On the Cohesive Strategy, please visit <http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/>

On the Western Regional Strategy Committee, please visit: <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/>

