



Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy
National Goals; Collective Solutions

Response to Wildfire
Fire Adapted Communities
Resilient Landscapes
Supported by Science

Western Regional Assessment and Strategy

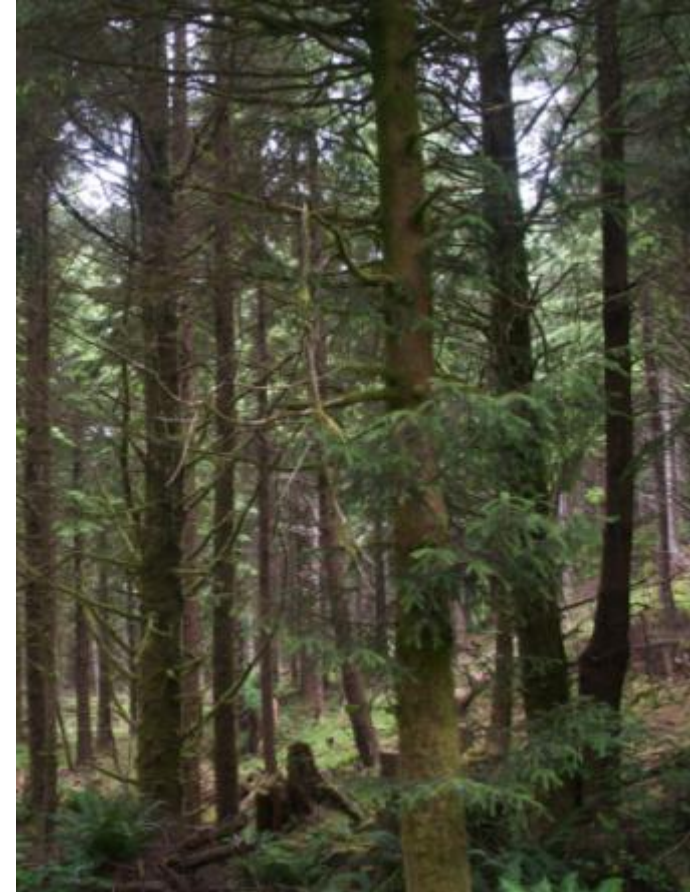
**Presentation by
Joe Stutler, WRSC Chair
to the WFEC**

October 12, 2011



Presentation Outline

- Process Overview
- Policies and Regulations
- Values, Trends, and Risks
- Goals and Objectives
- Management Scenarios
- WRSC and Working Group Members





Western Regional Strategy Committee and Working Group Composition

WRSC (16 members)

- 4 USFS (2 Agency Administrators, 1 Liaison and 1 writer/editor)
- 1 FWS Agency Administrator
- 1 BLM Agency Administrator
- 1 NPS Agency Administrator
- 1 BIA Agency Administrator
- 2 IAFC members (1 County Forester and 1 Liaison)
- 1 County Commissioner
- 1 State Forester
- 1 Tribal Agency Administrator
- 1 WGA
- 1 Science Team Liaison
- 1 USGS

Western Working Group (13 members)

- 2 NGOs
- 2 State Government
- 1 Tribal
- 1 BIA
- 1 NPS
- 1 BLM
- 5 FS



Process Overview



WRSC and Working Group Meetings

- The WRSC conducted face to face meetings twice (May and August – joint with WG) and held conference calls every two weeks May through September.
- The Working Group met face to face twice (June and August – joint with WRSC) and held weekly conference calls June through September.



Process Overview



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What worked well:

- Communication between WRSC and the Working Group (WG)
- Relationship with METI (contractor)
- Following the communications plan
- Hard work!
- Deciding how to decide prior to conflict
- Detailed work plan for both WRSC and WG (focus and outcomes)
- WG leadership from Joe Freeland
- Writer/editor skills from Dana Coelho
- Support from CSSC and WFEC Liaisons, Alan Quan and Doug MacDonald
- Engagement of our many stakeholders
- Use of CRAFT to facilitate interactions and maintain a consistent approach

What didn't work well:

- Under the time constraints, we simply did the best we could.
- Travel restrictions limited participation and VTC was a poor substitute.
- Long delay in communication to stakeholders between Phase I and II.
- Communication to rank and file employees is still lacking.



Process Overview



Outreach and Collaboration

- **Relationships**—WRSC, WG, and METI members are well connected throughout the west; we used those relationships to organize forums, webinars, and mailing lists to distribute information and gather input for the assessment.
- **Information**—Building on these relationships, we drew upon many regional, state, agency, and other assessments. We also used handbooks, foundational documents, existing strategies, and other relevant information for context.
- **Previous work**—WRSC and WG members worked to create many of the assessments, the National Fire Plan, Phase I of the Cohesive Strategy, and foundational documents; they added valuable information and context.



Outreach and Collaboration

- Success began with the decision to contract the development of a communications plan and outreach effort. Time constraints and the need for a neutral skill set that was not available from within the WRSC or WG drove this approach.
- Success continued as we followed the communications plan, which was developed to include target audiences, key messages, and a schedule for outreach and updates.
- Two websites supported our efforts, a western outreach website - <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/> - and www.forestsandrangelands.gov.
- A third, internal website, supported the collection and sharing of documents and drafts among the WRSC and Working Group.



Outreach and Collaboration

- Two face-to-face focus group meetings (Boise and Sacramento)
- Four webinars, which covered every geographic region within the west as well as tribal interests.
- Over 1,400 comments collected through an online form.
- Using the results of the content analysis, a long list of “immediate successes” was developed, which will be shared through the western updates and are incorporated into the assessment.



Outreach and Collaboration

- About every 2-3 weeks since July, the WRSC has shared updates with western region stakeholders. The updates were sent via email, posted to the WRSC outreach site, and networked through numerous other channels.
- Additional updates will be provided for western stakeholders until a national communications and implementation strategy becomes available.





Opportunities for Reinterpretation

- Legislation has been used to promote agendas and philosophies that are not necessarily in harmony with the original intent.
- Examples:
 - Equal Access to Justice Act
 - Endangered Species Act
 - National Environmental Policy Act
- Legislative barriers that are impeding project implementation can be updated to create incentives for resolving conflict through collaboration rather than litigation.



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Need for Better Communication

In addition to barriers presented by existing regulations and policies, the articulation of new or revised policies and changes in agency terminology and/or goals create challenges related to communications and implementation at the Geographic Area level.



Policies and Regulations



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Honoring tribal heritages and land uses

Preserving and respecting traditional uses and practices is of vital importance. Wildland fire management policies and practices need to take into account cultural beliefs, related historic and spiritual sites and resources, and the relevant lessons to be gleaned from traditional ecological knowledge.



Values, Trends, and Risks



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Valuing people for who they are, and not what they have in the bank

Western communities and their individual residents differ widely in their technical, infrastructural, social, and economic capacity to address wildland fire management issues locally.

Management strategies need to be cognizant of those differences so that future responsibilities and resources can be allocated appropriately.



Values, Trends, and Risks



Living and respecting the western/ frontier culture

Among the key (and sometimes contradictory) elements of the culture in the West are a spirit of adventure and curiosity, concern for the preservation of individual liberties and private property rights, admiration of self-reliance (but quick response to neighbors needing help), and a strong sense of connection with the land. Management strategies seen as directive or imposed from afar are almost certain to be less well-received (and often prove less effective) than ones developed locally and through collaboration.



Enjoying vast, wild, open landscapes

People in the west count on the land to provide numerous ecological services, support a variety of land uses (hunting, fishing, recreation, farming, ranching, timber, mining, etc.), offer a desirable backdrop and physical setting for homes and communities, and support a plethora of historic, spiritual, cultural resources and dynamic/diverse habitats. The aesthetic appearance of the landscape is important, and management activities that are perceived as having a negative impact on that appearance are usually resisted.



Drinking good water and breathing clean air

There is universal agreement on the value of the clean, generally abundant water supplies that sustain human and animal life in the West, support healthy fisheries, generate electric power for homes and industries, and irrigate crops. Similarly, high air quality, good visibility, and low levels of smoke, smog, or other pollutants, or other respiratory health hazards also rank at near the top for amenity values in the West. Actions taken to maintain or restore the health of watersheds and to reduce the likelihood of diminished air quality are likely to be well received West-wide.

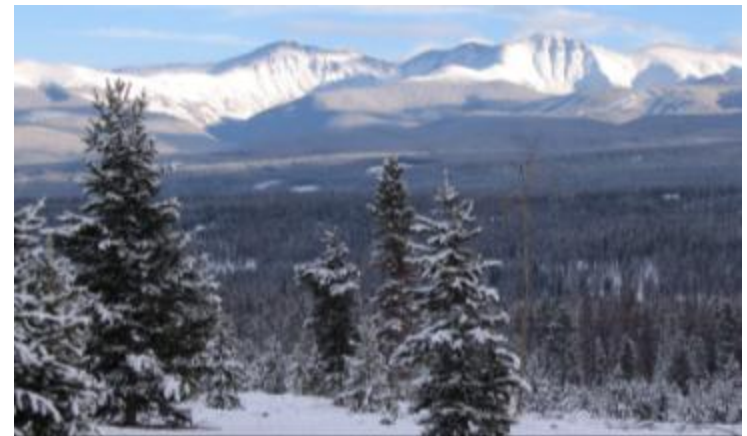


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Using and Stewarding public lands

Public lands comprise more than half the total land area of the West, and maintenance of public access to them for public recreation and a variety of other purposes has long been a treasured – and zealously guarded – western value.



Values, Trends, and Risks



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- Population growth and urban sprawl
- Millions of “unhealthy” acres resulting in explosive fuel conditions
- Changing climate conditions
- Invasive species
- Fluctuations in the economy
- Tightened federal and state government budgets
- WUI growth and distribution
- Evolving agency and public expectations with regard to fire response
- Increasing role of traditional wildland fire capability (equipment and personnel) in all-risk disaster support
- Wildland fire is rife for political fodder and is a growth industry
- **Risk management; conflict of perception between values to be protected and values at risk**

In the absence of implementing and communicating the Cohesive Strategy, these trends and risks are expected to increase, creating a more complex wildland fire management environment for all jurisdictions.

Values, Trends, and Risks



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

- Actively manage the land to achieve healthy forest and rangeland conditions.
- Protect landscapes and multiple values from the effects of unwanted fire.
- Improve interagency and stakeholder coordination and planning of actions that contribute to achieving landscape resiliency.
- Develop and maintain professional and industrial capacity to implement cost-effective and sustainable landscape treatments and support local economies.
- Fully use existing policies and procedures to provide the management flexibility needed to implement a mix of landscape treatments.
- Increase public awareness, acceptance, and active participation in achieving landscape objectives using all available tools.
- Identify and prepare for non-fire threats and disturbances that may increase susceptibility to wildfire and/or impair ecosystem function.



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

- Prevent unwanted human-caused wildfire fire ignitions within or in close proximity to communities.
- Reduce hazardous fuels within the wildland-urban interface and nearby areas containing community values to be protected.
- Continue to develop, support, and maintain CWPPs as one of the primary tools to achieve the goals of the Cohesive Strategy.
- Build a culture of self-sufficiency to prepare for and protect life and property from wildfire.
- Improve effectiveness and self-sufficiency of emergency response within each community.
- Improve post-fire recovery efforts that impact public health and safety, water sources, power transmission corridors, and other critical infrastructure.



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

- Provide for safety of wildfire responders and the public.
- Guide response using risk management principles and values to be protected, as determined by early and frequent involvement of all partners, before, during, and after a wildfire event.
- Improve effectiveness and efficiency of the wildland fire management organization.
- Improve administration and maximize the coordination and effectiveness of wildland fire management resources.
- Develop community-based strategies to deal with post-fire hazards on natural and cultural resources, responders, communities, and planned activities.
- Collect and use accurate and consistent fire information from all wildfire protection jurisdictions to improve understanding of the wildland fire and response workload and provide feedback to decision support systems.



- Purpose – explore potential outcomes and consequences of various futures
- Minimal set proposed – four
- Scenarios are not fully developed alternatives
- Each scenario emphasizes subset of objectives and actions so that all objectives are emphasized at least once
- All assume no increases in budget



Scenario One – Emphasize Landscape Resiliency:

- Greater emphasis on restoring landscapes – mechanical, Rx Fire, and wildfire as well as suppression where appropriate
- Characterize landscapes into categories as to whether wildland fire can/should be used to achieve objectives



Management Scenarios



Scenario Two – Emphasize Fuels Treatments to Create Fire-adapted Communities:

- Greater emphasis on fuels treatments within the WUI and areas identified in CWPPs
- Fuels treatments in areas that threaten communities and areas closely associated with the identity, structure, culture, organization and well being of the community



Management Scenarios



Scenario Three – Emphasize the Creation of Fire-adapted Communities through Collaboration and Self-Sufficiency:

- Greater emphasis on removing barriers and taking actions that result in landowners and managers protecting their values at risk

Scenario Four – Emphasize Effectiveness in Wildfire Response:

- Greater emphasis on increasing effectiveness and efficiency of firefighting organizations across all jurisdictions.



Assessing Implementation Likelihood - Actions within Scenarios

- Estimate likely support from 5 perspectives: Political, financial, organizational, social, and environmental
- Considering potential support and likelihood for implementation across ownerships estimate degree of change from current implementation levels
- Results - even without increased funding many of the proposed actions are likely to be implemented at levels above current



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| Name | Title/Organization |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Aden Seidlitz | BLM |
| Alan Quan (CSSC liaison) | USFS |
| Ann Walker | WGA |
| Bob Harrington | MT State Forester, NASF |
| Corbin Newman (co-chair) | Regional Forester, FS |
| Dana Coelho (writer/editor) | USFS/ WFLC |
| Doug MacDonald (WFEC liaison) | IAFC |
| Joe Stutler (co-chair; WWG liaison) | Deschutes County, OR - IAFC |
| John Philbin | BIA |
| Karen Taylor-Goodrich | NPS |
| Pam Ensley | FWS |
| Robert Cope | Lemhi County, ID - NACo |
| Sam Foster | Station Director, FS |
| Tony Harwood | Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes |
| Warren Day | USGS |



Working Group Members

| Name | Title/Organization |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Bill Avey | USFS |
| Bill Tripp | Inter-Tribal Council |
| Carol Daley (co-lead) | Flathead Economic Policy |
| Craig Glazier | Idaho Department of Lands |
| David Seesholtz | USFS |
| Eric Knapp | USFS |
| Gene Lonning | BIA |
| Jesse Duhnkrack | NPS |
| Joe Freeland (team lead) | BLM |
| Kevin Ryan | USFS |
| Laura McCarthy | TNC |
| Sue Stewart | USFS |
| Travis Medema | Oregon Department of Forestry |



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QUESTIONS?