

Memorandum of Understanding Wildland Fire Leadership Council

This Memorandum of Understanding by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture authorizes continuation of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, an intergovernmental committee supporting the implementation and coordination of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

Mission

The Wildland Fire Leadership Council is an intergovernmental committee of federal, tribal, state, county and municipal government officials convened by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture dedicated to consistent implementation of wildland fire policies, goals and management activities. The Council provides strategic oversight to ensure policy coordination, accountability and effective implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and related long-term strategies to address wildfire suppression, assistance to communities, hazardous fuels reduction, habitat restoration and rehabilitation of the Nation's forests and rangelands.

Goals

The Council, through its members, and pursuant to relevant statutory authority, works strategically to review, update, and monitor implementation of:

- Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy;
 - *A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment, 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy* through application of the *10-Year Strategy Implementation Plan*;
 - the Healthy Forests Restoration Act;
 - *Protecting People And Natural Resources, A Cohesive Fuels Treatment Strategy*; and,
 - other policies, procedures, and program management activities designed to protect communities and natural resources from wildfires, reduce hazardous fuels, restore fire-adapted ecosystems, and assist communities in their efforts to reduce losses from wildfires.
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Organization and Operations

Membership on the Council includes the following federal officials or their designated representatives: U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary and Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and the Environment; Chief of the Forest Service; U.S. Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary for Policy Management and Budget and the Assistant Secretary for Lands and Minerals Management; the U.S. Department of the Interior Directors of the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of

Indian Affairs, and the U.S. Geological Survey; and a representative of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency.

In addition to the federal officials, the Council includes five (5) members who are elected officers of tribal, state, county and municipal governments or their designated employees with authority to act on their behalf. These elected officers are invited to participate because of their interest in and statutory responsibility for wildland fire management. After receiving the advice and approval of the Council, the Chair will invite new members to fill vacancies.

Responsibility for chairing the Council will alternate between the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture annually. The Council will meet regularly to monitor progress on implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. Additional business protocols may be adopted by the Council to facilitate its efficient operation.

The actions and obligations of the agencies and bureaus under this Memorandum of Understanding are subject to the availability of appropriations. Each party will carry out its activities in a coordinated and mutually beneficial manner. Both the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior will manage their own activities and utilize their own resources including the expenditure of their own funds, in pursuing these objectives.

This Memorandum of Understanding takes effect upon the signature of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Department of the Interior and shall remain in effect for five (5) years from the date of execution. This Memorandum of Understanding may be extended or amended upon written request of either Secretary and the subsequent written concurrence of the other. Either Secretary may terminate this Memorandum of Understanding with a 60-day written notice to the other.

Collaboration

The Administration and Congress have directed the federal agencies to work collaboratively with tribal, state and local governments and with citizens to develop and implement strategies for dealing with wildfire suppression, assistance to communities, hazardous fuels reduction, habitat restoration and rehabilitation of the Nation's forests and rangelands. There are numerous important examples of this direction, including the Conference Report on the 2001 Appropriations Act (Public Law 106-291) and the 2003 Healthy Forests Restoration Act. The Collaborative Framework among federal, tribal, state and local governments along with communities, scientists and citizens is integral to the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy and Implementation Plan.

In the collaborative spirit of this direction, and pursuant to provisions of law, including the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act exemption to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Council is an intergovernmental committee established to exchange views, information and advice relating to the management and implementation of federal programs in wildland fire management, fuels hazard reduction and natural resource management, and to integrate these activities with other federal, state, local and tribal programs.

Public Participation

The Council Chair will provide at least 30 days written notice to Council members of meeting dates, location and preliminary agenda items. Meetings may be open to the public and exchange with individual members of the public in attendance may be encouraged through designation of “public comment” time on the agenda or by other informal means. Council members are encouraged to bring strategic topics requiring intergovernmental coordination before the Council and to invite interested individuals to present information to help inform the Council’s deliberations.

The Council Chair, with the consent of the members present, may declare a portion of the meeting as an “executive session.” An executive session may include routine administrative duties, ministerial tasks, or discussion of highly sensitive or confidential matters. The Council will strive to keep its meeting open to the public to the fullest extent possible.

Approval

The undersigned approve this Memorandum of Understanding.

Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior
Date:

Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Date: