



National Fire Plan

Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment

Cohesive Strategy

Topic: The USDA Forest Service and DOI are developing a common strategy for reducing fuels and restoring land health in fire-prone areas

Background: The DOI and USDA Forest Service have prepared 2 Documents outlining strategies for protecting people and the environment by restoring and sustaining land health; *Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-adapted Ecosystems - A Cohesive Strategy* (USDA Forest Service, 2000) and *Integrating Fire and Natural Resource Management - A Cohesive Strategy For Protecting People By Restoring Land Health* (DOI, in draft). The Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review (1995) and the 10-year comprehensive strategy *A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment* (2001), both recommend a collaborative, interagency approach to addressing wildland fire problems.

In Addition, the July 31, 2001 GAO testimony *The National Fire Plan - Federal Agencies Are Not Organized to Effectively and Efficiently Implement the Plan* suggests that in order to be successful, federal fire managers must forge new working relationships with other disciplines within the agencies, and also improve coordination, consistency, and agreement among the federal land management agencies in the two departments.

The effort will be a step forward in fulfilling these expectations. It is anticipated that the strategy will be completed in the next few weeks.

Key Points and Issues:

The purpose of the strategy is to:

1. Establish national priorities for fuel treatment; ensuring funding is targeted to the highest risk communities and ecosystems.
2. Evaluate the tradeoffs between programs that emphasize wildland urban interface and those that emphasize ecosystem restoration and maintenance.
3. Measure the effectiveness of strategic program options at different funding levels.
4. Recommend a strategic program to best achieve national fuel treatment objectives for community protection and ecosystem restoration and maintenance.

5. Emphasize landscape-scale, cross-boundary treatments that reduce hazards while providing benefits to other ecosystem values.

The strategy will emphasize improved working relationships between federal land managers, as well as with multiple key disciplines inside the various land management and regulatory agencies and bureaus across geographic scales.

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