

¹Wyoming Interagency Fire Plan

Introduction

This plan for interagency implementation of the National Fire Plan in Wyoming is based on a series of documents, beginning with a report to the President on September 8, 2000 titled "Managing the Impacts of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment." The concepts outlined in that report were further refined in an August 2001 document called "A Collaborative Approach to Reducing Wildland Fire Risk to Communities and the Environment, 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy," developed by a group of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. The final source document is the Implementation Plan for the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy, of May 2002, approved by the federal Departments of Agriculture and Interior and the Western Governors Association.

The Conference Report for the Fiscal Year 2001 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (Public Law 106-291) includes the following language:

"The Secretaries should also work with the Governors on a long-term strategy to deal with the wildland fire and hazardous fuels situation, as well as the needs for habitat restoration and rehabilitation in the Nation. The managers expect that a collaborative structure, with the States and local governments as full partners, will be the most efficient and effective way of implementing a long-term program.

The managers are very concerned that the agencies need to work closely with the affected States, including Governors, county officials, and other citizens. Successful implementation of this program will require close collaboration among citizens and governments at all levels... The managers direct the Secretaries to engage Governors in a collaborative structure to cooperatively develop a coordinated, National ten-year comprehensive strategy with the States as full partners in the planning, decision-making and implementation of the plan.

Key decisions should be made at local levels."

Need for a Wyoming Wildland Fire Plan

The need for an integrated, interagency plan for Wyoming is the result of continued growth in wildland-urban interface throughout the state, which places more citizens and property at risk of wildland fire, the result of increasing forest health problems across the landscape because of fuels accumulations from past suppression success and other land use activities, and the result of increasing awareness that traditional approaches to land and wildland fire management pioneered in the 20th century have contributed to increased wildland fire severity and widespread threats to communities and ecosystems. Current drought conditions, long-term recovery and the cyclical nature of these conditions add to the severity of the above issues.

Guiding Principles

¹ First DRAFT 9/19/2002

1. Priority setting that emphasizes protection of communities and high-priority watersheds at risk. Long-term emphasis is to maintain and restore fire prone ecosystems at a landscape scale.
2. Collaboration among governments and broadly representative stakeholders. The Wyoming National Fire Plan Implementation Organization Charter (Appendix I) identifies select teams and responsibilities summarized below.

Wyoming National Fire Plan Executive Team is composed of:

The Governor of Wyoming
Regional Representatives of the following Federal Agencies:

USDA Forest Service,
National Park Service,
Bureau of Land Management,
US Fish and Wildlife Service,
Bureau of Indian Affairs,

- Provide statewide coordination at the executive level
- Provide political support to Wyoming's interagency, multi-level, collaborative implementation process.
- Resolve any conflicts should they occur.

Wyoming National Fire Plan Action Team is composed of agency representatives and other technical experts as needed to implement the tasks identified within this document.

- Provide state level interagency coordination
- Establish time lines to meet federal deadlines for various tasks
- Coordinate the listing of Wyoming "Interface Communities"
- Coordinate federal, state, and local ownership mitigation projects
- Coordinate use of NFP funding to meet Wyoming's greatest needs in fire suppression capacity, restoration, fuel treatment, hazard mitigation, and information & education.
- Provide a coordinated public information message pertaining to NFP implementation.
- Provide State level reports as required
- Charter "Task Forces" to complete specific duties or assist as requested
- (The chair of the "Action Team" will be rotated on a calendar year basis)

Local Project Implementation Teams - Successful implementation will include stakeholder groups with broad representation including Federal, State, and local agencies, tribes and the public, collaborating with local line officers on decision making to establish priorities, cooperate on activities, and increase public awareness and participation to reduce the risks to communities and environments. Key decisions in setting restoration and fire and hazardous fuel management project priorities should be made by local land managers and stakeholders through collaborative processes.

Each local team may complete a wildland fire management plan for their area. The plan may include a risk assessment of vulnerable areas, and a prioritized

plan that addresses each of the risks. The strategies may include training for fire departments, public education, fuels treatments, and evacuation plans etc.

- Provide local ownership of NFP implementation
- Provide project level interagency and local citizens coordination
- Establish time lines to meet state deadlines for various tasks
- Recommend communities for designation as "Interface Communities."
- Coordinate local federal, state, and private ownership mitigation projects
- Coordinate use of NFP funding to meet funded Project's greatest needs in fire suppression capacity, restoration, fuel treatment, hazard mitigation, and information & education.
- Provide project level reports as required
- Provide a coordinated local public information message pertaining to NFP implementation.

3. Accountability through performance measures and monitoring for results as detailed in the Comprehensive Strategy.

The four goals of the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy are listed below with objectives and specific tasks identified for implementation in Wyoming.

Goal 1. Improve Fire Prevention and Suppression

Implementation Outcome: Losses of life are eliminated, and firefighter injuries and damage to communities and the environment from severe, unplanned and unwanted fire are reduced.

Objective: Improve Federal, State, and local firefighting resource capability and readiness to protect communities and the environment from wildland fires.

Task 1: State Forester will review existing and establish new interagency cooperative fire agreements and annual operating agreements to facilitate and enhance (as feasible) protection capabilities.

Appendix II: Five Year Wyoming Interagency Cooperative Fire Management Agreement

Task 2: Action Team will periodically assess training, equipment, safety needs at the local level and establish integrated system to prioritize projects to meet these needs.

Task 3: Action Team will assist all Wyoming wildland firefighters to meet National Wildfire Coordination Group/National Fire Protection Association standards for training, fitness, qualifications and personal protective equipment by 2010.

Task 4: State Forester will facilitate efficient and integrated interagency wildland fire dispatch operations, through working agreements and relationships between the federal interagency dispatch system and dispatch offices for volunteer departments.

Task 5: State Forester is responsible for providing a daily Wyoming Situation Report based on information received through the NIFC structure and other contacts through the state, including volunteer fire departments.

Task 6: Action Team agencies will ensure interagency involvement occurs in the wildland fire situation analysis process as needed.

Goal 2: Reduce Hazardous Fuels

Implementation Outcome: Hazardous fuels are treated, using appropriate tools, to reduce the risk of unplanned and unwanted wildland fire to communities and to the environment.

Task 1: The Action Team will establish a process to prioritize projects recommended for National Fire Plan funding within the state and communicate that process to the Local Project Implementation Teams.

Task 2: Local Project Implementation Teams develop and implement a process for all partners to collaborate on the annual selection of fuel treatment projects within their respective jurisdictions or planning areas. These projects will be forwarded to the Action Team and agencies.

Task 3: The Action Team will coordinate needs for on-going assistance and support for local project teams.

Task 4: The Action Team will establish a process to maintain and update a statewide risk assessment displayed in Geographic Information System layers by November 2003.

Task 5: The Action Team will update the list of "Interface Communities" in Wyoming as needed and will provide updated information to other entities.

Goal 3: Restore Fire-Adapted Ecosystems

Implementation Outcome: Fire-adapted ecosystems are restored, rehabilitated and maintained, using appropriate tools, in a manner that will provide sustainable environmental, social and economic benefits.

Objective 1: Support opportunities to restore fire-affected ecosystems.

Task: Local Project Implementation Teams develop and implement a process for all partners to collaborate on the annual selection of restoration projects within their respective jurisdictions or planning areas.

Objective 2: Improve coordination of restoration and rehabilitation activities in Wyoming.

Task: The Action Team will evaluate the feasibility of developing a plan and proposed organization by June 1, 2004 for the Wyoming Multi-Agency Restoration and Rehabilitation Team. This team will be chartered to assist agency restoration and rehabilitation coordinators develop project proposals and recommend funding in an integrated manner for multiple-agency projects. Charter will address need for assessment of economic issues involving FEMA, SBA, NRCS and others.

Goal 4: Promote Community Assistance

Implementation Outcome: Communities at risk have increased capacity to prevent losses from wildland fire and the potential to seek economic opportunities resulting from treatments and services.

Objective: Federal, state, and local agencies evaluate fire occurrence, land management goals, and firefighting needs on local levels. Promote local government initiatives to implement fire-sensitive land use planning.

Task 1: Action Team will encourage local fire management planning at county or multi-county level.

Task 2: Action Team will provide tools for local fire planning teams to assess their risks and mitigation needs on a local level by November 2003.

Task 3: The State Forester will assist to develop markets for small diameter material utilization.

Task 4: Wyoming State Forestry and the Association of County Governments take the lead to encourage counties to incorporate either International Conference of Building Officials Urban Wildland Interface Code or National Fire Protection Association 299 "Standard for Protection of Life and Property from Wildfire" into countywide planning ordinances.

Objective: Establish an efficient and effective means for communities to share information and resources for improved community protection. Promote public knowledge and understanding of wildland fire, including risks and the role of fire in natural ecosystem processes.

Task 1: State Forester will expand outreach and education to homeowners and communities about fire prevention and mitigation through use of programs such as FIREWISE.

Task 2: Action Team will establish an interagency fire education sub-committee to coordinate education and information at a statewide level for use at key events.