



Forest Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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**WILDFIRE CRISIS**

Implementation Plan

# CONFRONTING THE WILDFIRE CRISIS

A 10-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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Wildfires in the West have been growing in size and severity, placing homes, communities, infrastructure, and natural resources at grave and growing risk. Growing wildfire risk is due to past fire exclusion and accumulating fuels, a warming climate, and expanding development in the wildland-urban interface. Impacts have far-reaching effects on human health, the economy, community well-being, and the environment, including to areas important for water, carbon, and wildlife. This is a national emergency, and it calls for decisive action.

In response, at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service, we have released a 10-year strategy, and are now developing a comprehensive implementation plan for working with partners across jurisdictions to reduce wildfire risk to people, communities, and natural resources while sustaining and restoring healthy, resilient fire-adapted forests. **This implementation plan will focus on changing the trajectory of risk by:**

- **Identifying the right locations and tools for fuels and forest health treatments that are science-based and equitable.**
- **Developing needed workforce capacity and investing in the enabling conditions required for success.**
- **Working with partners across jurisdictions to develop and implement projects that are landscape scale, outcome-driven, and community ready.**
- **Supporting planning and investments in fire-adapted communities and on partnerships to restore and reforest areas already impacted by fire and mitigate risks associated with postfire disaster events.**

The **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided an essential down payment on the resources we need to perform this work.** Funds will help accomplish the hazardous fuels and forest health, ecosystem restoration, community preparedness, and postfire recovery and reforestation work called for in the 10-year strategy and described in this implementation plan. **We will coordinate with the U.S. Department of the Interior and other Federal agencies** as we engage partners and work together to implement this historic legislation.

This implementation plan is grounded in the recognition that this is shared work that will take cooperation and coordination across jurisdictions and with many partners. This includes continued close coordination and work with our sister land management agencies at the U.S. Department of the Interior and with other Federal partners to **bring an all-of-Government approach to this challenge**, especially as we work together to implement the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. It includes close coordination and work with States, Tribes, local communities, private landowners and partners in the public and private sector, including conservation organizations, forest industry, utilities, and academia. It will also require continued focus and **work with partners to ensure equity and environmental justice are built into the design and implementation of this plan.**

**This is intended to be a living document: it will be informed by engagement and will be updated periodically based on coordination with other Federal agencies; consultation with Tribes; engagement with States, communities, and public and private sector partners; new information about values at risk; and new information about available resources. We look forward to engaging with partners to meet this challenge together.**





# NATIONAL STRATEGY TO REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK

This implementation plan builds on a national strategy for confronting the wildfire crisis facing the Nation. The strategy calls for an unprecedented paradigm shift in land management to increase fuels and forest health treatments across jurisdictions to match the actual scale of wildfire risk to people, communities, and natural resources, especially in the Western United States.

Over a period of 10 years, the proposed strategy calls for:

- (1) Treating up to an additional 20 million acres on the National Forest System in the West, over and above current treatment levels;
- (2) Treating up to an additional 30 million acres on other Federal, State, Tribal, and private lands in the West; and
- (3) Developing a plan for long-term maintenance beyond the 10 years.

In recent years, at the Forest Service, we have treated 2-3 million acres per year for fuels and forest health across the Nation. Treatments typically involve thinning fuels and removing vegetation to reduce heavy fuel loads that can increase the risk of extreme wildfire events and using a risk-based approach to restore healthy fire to fire-adapted ecosystems. We will work with partners using a science-based approach to determine where to prioritize treatments and identify the appropriate tools, including prescribed fire and mechanical thinning to reduce hazardous fuels, change fire behavior, accomplish restoration objectives, and create healthier and more fire-resilient forests. These treatments work in concert with community, infrastructure, watershed, and other investments to protect values at risk

Under the 10-year strategy, we will fully sustain—and slightly increase—current treatment levels in the South, Midwest, and Northeast. But most additional investments will be in the West, where the wildfire risk to homes and communities is highest.

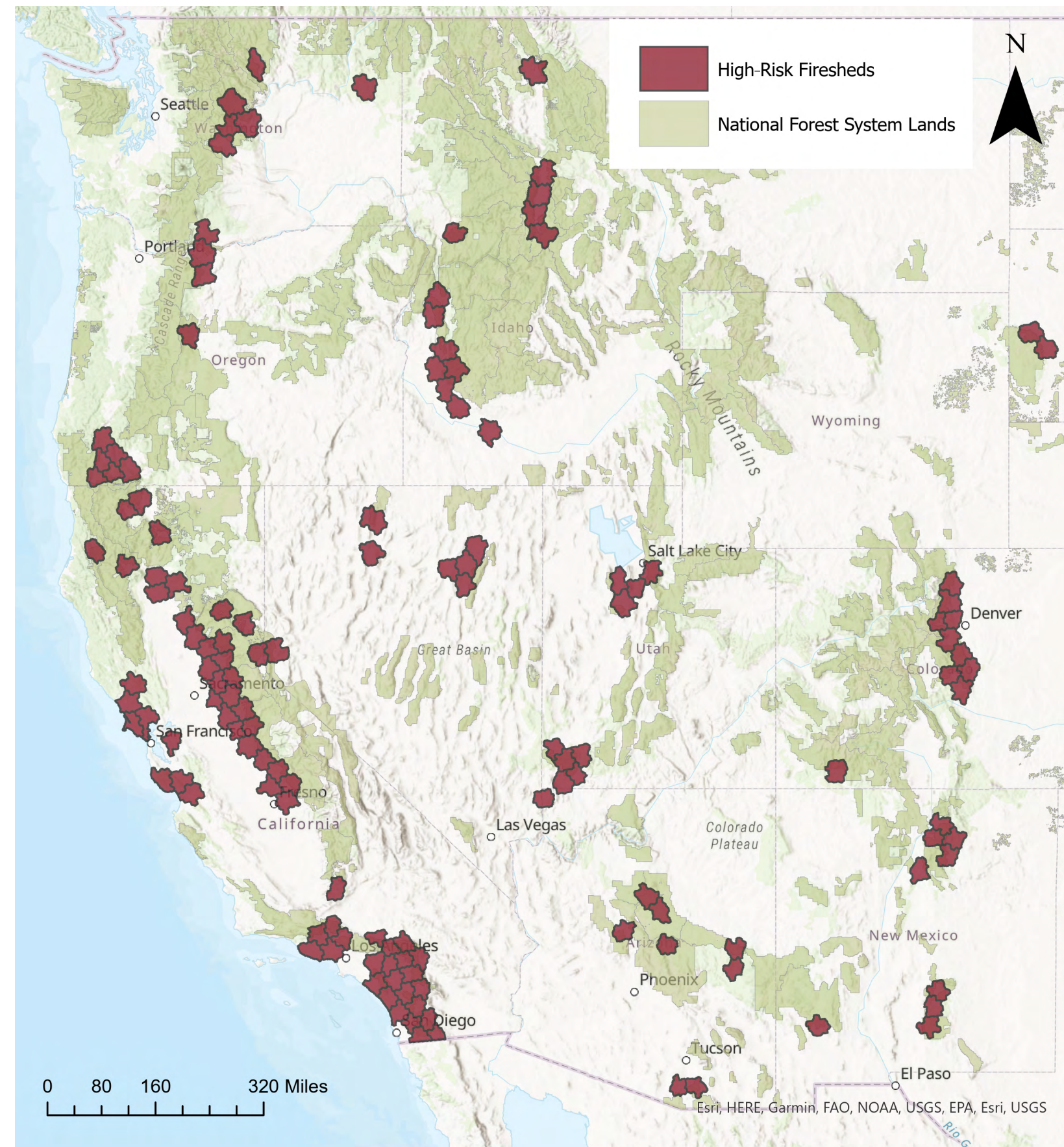
The map on the following page shows the firesheds with the highest risk of community exposure to wildfire from ignitions on all lands. It shows that a small number of firesheds present the largest risk to communities, based on historic fire behavior: in fact, less than 10 percent of fire-prone forests in the West account for roughly 80 percent of the fire risk to communities. Using this map, we can engage with Tribes, States, local communities, private landowners, and other partners to identify shared priorities for hazardous fuels treatments within these firesheds so that we can meaningfully reduce risk to communities. We can also work together to identify priorities for treatments in additional firesheds based on other values at risk and maintain prior investments in fuels and forest health.

We are currently working to develop additional information about risks to water, carbon, and wildlife, including old-growth forests, as well as risks to socially disadvantaged and underserved communities. Work with partners to identify risks to critical infrastructure, social, cultural, and economic values, and the incorporation of Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge will be important to inform shared priorities and project design.

Building on the 10-year strategy, this implementation plan outlines a blueprint for developing and carrying out this work through partnerships and collaboration. The Forest Service, the U.S. Department of the Interior, other Federal agencies, Tribes, States, local communities, landowners, and other partners have an unprecedented opportunity for investment in this work through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Those investments help to provide the resources needed to implement this plan at scale and truly change the trajectory of risk to people, communities, and natural resources at this pivotal time.

## HIGH-RISK FIRESHEDS

Community exposure is a central factor in the strategy to confront the wildfire crisis. Other factors include Tribal and State plans, watersheds, equity, climate forecasts, and partner priorities.





# STRATEGIC PLANNING GUIDELINES

The strategy and implementation plan are based on peer-reviewed research and a framework for collaboration established over the past 20 years with other Federal, State, Tribal, local, and private partners. The following guidelines will support how we, at the Forest Service, approach this work:

- **SCIENCE.** Decisions about priority areas for fuels treatment and the design of fuels treatments will be grounded in the best available science, including science that incorporates traditional and Indigenous ecological knowledge and recognizes the value of projects based on traditional knowledge in consultation with local Tribes. Land managers will incorporate emerging data and technology into project design, along with a knowledge of historical stand conditions and structure. Other scientific tools, like potential operational delineations (PODs), fire behavior models, and information on ecological integrity for specific forest types will guide treatment placement and design. New information about changing climate conditions, drought, and other weather behavior that impacts fire risk will also be incorporated to inform work during the implementation period.
- **EQUITY AND INCLUSION.** We will make investments to increase equity and inclusivity, reflecting the need to reach underserved communities, build community capacity, and overcome barriers through informed consent from those affected. Opportunities for co-management and co-stewardship with Tribes will also be a priority.
- **CROSS-BOUNDARY PARTNERSHIPS.** No one entity can accomplish the work alone: to achieve the collective impact that our forests and communities need, we must build a multijurisdictional coalition to work across

land management jurisdictions, leverage diverse capacities, and build broad public and community support for the work at the scale necessary to make a difference. This includes work across Federal, Tribal, State, local, and private lands. Partnerships, including those beyond existing contracts and agreements, will help identify barriers to success and ways to overcome them.

- **OUTCOME-BASED PRIORITIZATION.** We are focused on outcome-based work to achieve mutually desired priorities, including reducing risk to people, communities, natural resources, and other values at the scale of wildfire risk. While accomplishing this work with and through partners, we will use prioritization tools including PODs when looking at project layout and design. We will also develop outcome-based performance measures to track accomplishments and effectiveness and inform continued work.
- **COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT.** We will need broad public agreement, including support from lawmakers and local communities, to place fuels and forest health treatments in the right places at the right scale. Achieving consensus will require effective and transparent public communication with diverse audiences and cooperation with trusted community partners using a wide range of strategies. Through partner and community engagement and collective action, we will strive to build the mutual trust needed to achieve shared goals and build the social license needed to work at the actual scale of wildfire risk.
- **MAINTAINING IMPROVED CONDITIONS.** Reducing fire hazard and maintaining desired conditions often requires repeated treatments over time; therefore, investments in priority landscapes will be made over appropriate timeframes.



The El Dorado National Forest after the [Caldor Fire](#) occurred, showing an area that was treated for fuels near South Lake Tahoe, CA. USDA Forest Service photo by Cecilio Ricardo.

## CREATING CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Meaningfully changing the trajectory of wildfire risk by ramping up fuels and forest health treatments and investing in fire-adapted communities at the scale of actual wildfire risk will require recognizing and investing in the most critical enabling conditions needed for long-term success. In addition to moving forward with early projects, we will focus during years 1 and 2 on working with partners to identify and invest in the enabling conditions necessary for shared success, including the conditions described below. In years 3 to 10 and beyond, we will work to create and sustain the conditions needed to reduce wildfire risk by restoring and maintaining healthy, resilient fire-adapted forests and investing in communities across the West. Critical enabling conditions for this work at scale include:

- **WORKFORCE CAPACITY.** Over the last 20 years, the number of agency permanent employees dedicated to fire suppression has significantly increased, while the number of employees in other fields has decreased: we need to rebuild skills and workforce capacity to accomplish fuels and forest health treatments and fully engage with communities at the necessary pace and scale. This will require building and sustaining an inclusive workforce in Federal and State agencies as well as in local, Tribal, nongovernmental, and other organizations. We need processes for sharing resources across organizations for fuels and forest health treatments just as we share resources for wildland fire suppression.



Together, we will need to develop and train the shared workforce needed to plan, design, and evaluate projects; accomplish treatments at the needed scale; collaborate and communicate well with partners and communities; and support business operations like grants, agreements, and contracting. We will work to **create new approaches to training and workforce development, including through the Civilian Climate Corps** and other partners, sharing skills in short supply across jurisdictions. We will also work to improve the use of all existing authorities, for example by offering training on the use of the Tribal Forest Protection Act, Good Neighbor Authority, and the Tribal Biomass Demonstration Project. **Indigenous people using fire in their communities and working together on Federal lands will be critical, and we need policies that enable inclusive practices and permit the appropriate use of fire.**

- **CULTURE.** A paradigm shift in land management to treat landscapes for fuels and forest health at the actual scale of wildfire risk **will require shifts in agency and partner culture away from business as usual.** We will need to clearly communicate leadership intent, mobilize sufficient financial and technical support, offer adequate skills development and training, and establish performance measures that reflect both the outcomes we want and the relationships we need to achieve them. We will also need to continue close coordination with the U.S. Department of the Interior and work with other Federal agencies to **truly deliver an all-of-Federal Government response to this crisis, and to support investments in fire-adapted communities.**
- **PLANNING.** **Projects under the 10-year strategy will need to be carefully planned and analyzed, which will require new investments in Forest Service capacity for planning and environmental analysis.** We will take a new approach to the landscape-scale planning and analysis required to support project implementation at the scale needed and will work closely with the U.S. Department of the Interior and the White House Council on Environmental Quality to support planning and consultation needs.

- **COLLABORATION.** **The 10-year strategy will require new investments in collaborative capacity, both within the Forest Service and other Federal agencies and for Tribes, States, partners, and communities.** The strategy builds on an already robust network of relationships requiring a sustained commitment, but we will also need new relationships for equitable access to investments in reducing wildfire risk, repairing wildfire damage, increasing community resilience, and rehabilitating postfire landscapes.
- **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.** We will continually incorporate the best available science into project decision making, design, and implementation. That includes acknowledging and incorporating Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge. We will continue to invest in risk mapping to identify areas of high wildfire risk to underserved communities; to ecologic values and ecosystem services, including water, carbon, wildlife and old-growth; and to social, cultural, and economic values including areas important for community access and recreation. **We will need to develop additional gap analysis and decision support tools to inform project prioritization, design, and financing. Our projects will use all applicable emerging tools and technologies to reduce wildfire risk and increase community and landscape resilience following a wildfire.**
- **MONITORING AND EVALUATION.** We will need the capacity to monitor progress and **evaluate project success in terms of outcome-based performance measures.** We will also monitor changing conditions, including, but not limited to, fire behavior and activity that might occur, changing drought, and weather patterns.
- **COMMUNICATION OF OUTCOMES.** To build community trust and support for fuels and forest health treatments at scale, we will need to communicate the process for project development and to quantify the project outcomes, both expected and achieved. The outcomes will need to reflect the viewpoints and values of everyone involved, including partners and stakeholders across shared landscapes.

- **REGULATORY OR LEGISLATIVE NEEDS.** Congress has provided extensive tools and programs for partnerships and landscape-scale work, such as the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Program, the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, the Tribal Forest Protection Act, and the Good Neighbor Authority. Depending on conversations with partners and the bills being considered by Congress, **we will work with Congress and partners on any additional regulatory or legislative changes to facilitate multijurisdictional work at the right scale.**
- **FOREST PRODUCTS.** The **wood products industry has been and will remain an important partner for helping achieve restoration outcomes and reduce wildfire risk.** New and innovative uses of wood, such as **cross-laminated timber, can**

- **SMALLWOOD AND BIOMASS UTILIZATION.** **The Nation needs to supplement public investments in fuels and forest health treatments through markets for biomass and small-diameter materials removed during mechanical thinning.** Support for wood products innovation, **biochar,** and other options for transporting and using the material will be important.
- **FIRE-ADAPTED COMMUNITIES.** Fuels and forest health treatments need to be matched with equal investment in fire-adapted communities, as envisioned by the National Cohesive Strategy developed jointly by USDA, the U.S. Department

The Santa Fe National Forest has worked with the Pueblo of Jemez on the Southwest Jemez (SWJM) Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program project to increase the landscape's resilience to severe wildfire and other large-scale disturbances through collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forests and watersheds. The landscape area includes 210,000 acres on the Santa Fe National Forest, the Valles Caldera National Preserve, the Pueblo of Jemez Pueblo, and additional parcels of State, private, and Tribal lands.

The SWJM project was designed to meet four primary purposes: restore the forest's resilience to wildfire and other disturbances by using low-intensity fire to return fire to the landscape; protect cultural resources; improve wildlife habitat, watershed and riparian conditions, vegetation diversity, and water quality; and create local economic development opportunities. As shown in this image, timber from the restoration project will go to the Tribe's nearby Walatowa Timber Industries mill to produce wood pellets, poles for utilities, beams and vigas for conventional and traditional home building, ties for railroads, posts for fences, milled lumber, mulch, and firewood. USDA photo by Lance Cheung with permission of the Pueblo of Jemez.





of the Interior, and several other Federal agencies. We will need to work with partners and communities to support equitable access to technical and financial assistance for community-based investments and continue learning and outreach about defensible spaces, planning, zoning, and other community actions that support living in fire-adapted landscapes.

- REFORESTATION AND RESTORATION. We will need to invest in reforestation and restoration businesses and capacity, including nursery capacity. Support

from Rural Development programs could be an important part of helping to create resilience and restoration jobs in rural communities.

- FINANCIAL MECHANISMS. We will need financial instruments and related authorities, such as green bonds, to support public/private partnerships and long-term investments in fuels and forest health treatments, including maintenance treatments over time. We might also need new kinds of agreements among Federal agencies or with non-Federal land managers to attract investments in restoration work at the needed scale.

## LAUNCHING PROJECTS

The first 2 years of the plan will start with a call to Forest Service regional foresters, followed by engaging with other Federal agencies, Tribes, States, and other partners, to list projects in high-risk firesheds that are ready to go, lacking only the necessary funding to begin. In particular, at the Forest Service, we will identify projects that are:

- LANDSCAPE SCALE. We will be looking for projects to treat fuels and restore forest health at the necessary scale and for smaller scale projects designed as part of a larger scale approach.
- OUTCOME DRIVEN. We will be looking for projects that are designed to reduce wildfire risk to communities, water supplies, or critical infrastructure (including utility lines, roads, and national security sites); critical ecological values (including watersheds, wildlife habitat, and old-growth stands) and ecosystem services (including carbon storage); economic values (including outdoor recreation, timber, and grazing areas); areas of cultural and historic significance (including areas important to Tribes); and areas of social importance to communities (including for access and subsistence use). Catastrophic wildfire is the largest threat to these values in the Western United States. This strategy and implementation plan will help protect and conserve these values.

- COMMUNITY READY. We will be looking for projects that have been collaboratively developed with others and reflect shared priorities. Projects should also have completed relevant public comment and required environmental analysis, at least for the parts of the project intended to be initiated in years 1 and 2.

At the Forest Service, we will also be looking for projects with the following opportunities:

- INVESTING IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES. We will look for equitability in project design and implementation and for the potential to reduce wildfire risk to underserved communities or Tribes. The analysis will pinpoint any financial, technical, or other capacity barriers that prevent communities from being served. As appropriate, we will work with partners to meet community needs, including developing capacity within Tribal and other underserved communities.
- ATTRACTING AND COMPLEMENTING PARTNER INVESTMENTS. We will look for projects on National Forest System lands that attract partner and other Federal, Tribal, and State and private investments, including on adjacent jurisdictions. We will also look for opportunities to coordinate with U.S. Department of the Interior agencies across Federal land jurisdictions, complement

community investments in fire-adapted communities, invest in partner and community capacity, and meet the goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.

- MAXIMIZING USE OF EXISTING AUTHORITIES. We will look for opportunities to use all available congressional authorities and programs for fuels and forest health treatments, including the Tribal Forest Protection Act, Good Neighbor Authority, Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership Program, Shared Stewardship agreements, and other authorities.

At the Forest Service, we will group projects submitted for years 1 and 2 by landscapes as follows:

- (1) High-risk firesheds treatable in fiscal year 2022.
- (2) Other firesheds treatable in fiscal year 2022 based on local priorities.

- (3) High-risk firesheds, and other firesheds treatable based on local priorities, in fiscal year 2023.
- (4) High-risk firesheds needing capacity investment for implementation in fiscal year 2024 and beyond.

Lupine regenerates after the Robertson Draw Fire near Red Lodge, MT. USDA Forest Service photo.





# POSTFIRE RISK REDUCTION, RECOVERY, AND REFORESTATION

Postfire work is a critical and growing need and will be a priority for the Forest Service to work with communities to mitigate risk and support recovery. At the Forest Service, we have a lot of work to do to restore functioning ecosystems following the 2020 and 2021 wildfires.

For example, wildfires create more than 80 percent of reforestation needs, including approximately 1 million acres that burned with high severity in 2020 alone. We currently addresses only 6 percent of post-wildfire replanting needs per year, resulting in a rapidly expanding list of reforestation needs. We have plans for the reforestation of more than 1.3 million acres of National Forest System land. However, these plans

only address one-third of National Forest System reforestation needs, estimated to be 4 million acres and growing. As we work to recover from wildfire, we are emphasizing planting the right species, in the right place, under the right conditions, so forests will remain healthy and resilient over time.

As with fuels and forest health treatments to reduce fire risk, we will work with Tribes, States, local communities, U.S. Department of the Interior and other Federal agencies, and partners to work across jurisdictions and build partnerships to address postfire risks to people, communities, and natural resources and to address the growing need for restoration and reforestation.

USDA Forest Service staff and partners, including Blue Forest Conservation, the State of California, the Yuba Water Agency, and the National Forest Foundation, discuss the Yuba Project. Working together, partners are piloting using a [Forest Resilience Bond](#) to pay for landscape-scale ecological restoration treatments on 15,000 acres of the Tahoe National Forest within the Yuba River Watershed. Collaboration has also laid the groundwork for a new regional partnership to support forest management activities. USDA Forest Service photo by Paul Wade.



# INITIATING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In years 1 and 2, at the Forest Service, we will work with other Federal agencies, Tribes, State and local agencies, communities, collaborative groups, nongovernmental organizations, private landowners, and other partners and stakeholders to **develop this implementation plan in a way that is transparent and built on relationships.** The USDA and Forest Service leadership team will lead some engagements at the national level, whereas others will be led by the agency and partners at the regional and forest level. The process will include:

- Coordinating with the U.S. Department of the Interior and other Federal agencies and Departments to **support a whole-of-Government approach, including through the Federal Wildfire Resilience Interagency Working Group.**
- Coordinating with other agencies within USDA, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service on existing partnership work with the Forest Service, and connecting this work with the priorities of other USDA agencies, especially those in the Rural Development and Research, Education, and Economics mission areas
- Consulting with Tribes to meet Government-to-Government responsibilities and ensure Indigenous knowledge, rights, priorities, and interests are reflected in fuels and forest health treatments under the 10-year strategy.
- **Working with the Wildland Fire Leadership Council** to coordinate with States, Tribes, and local governments in carrying out the Cohesive Strategy, and engaging with States, counties, and local communities to identify shared priorities.
- Reaching out to communities at risk from wildfire to build understanding and support for fuels and forest health treatments, including the increased use of prescribed fire. That includes working with communities at risk to increase their readiness for wildfire and to encourage them to become more fire adapted.
- Reaching out to minority and underserved communities to ensure the equitability of fuels and forest health treatments under the 10-year strategy, along with equitable access to postfire

damage repair and landscape rehabilitation. Ensuring equitability includes removing systemic barriers and giving minority and underserved communities access to the financial, technical, and collaborative resources and capacity they need to reduce wildfire risk and to recover following a wildfire.

- Meeting with partners and stakeholders at the national, regional, and local levels to solicit insights and to assess partner capacity and needs for collective work.
- **Engaging environmental and conservation non-profit organizations, forest industry, utilities, water providers and other stakeholders to discuss values at risk and build shared understanding to support prioritization and design of projects, identify the necessary investments and enabling conditions for success, discuss opportunities for public/private investments, and develop monitoring and outcome measurements to support accountability.**
- Meeting with local collaborative groups and with partners who have been working on cross-boundary treatments through Cohesive Strategy projects, Shared Stewardship agreements, Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration projects, Tribal Forest Protection Act projects, and Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration projects to discuss shared priorities and capacities and build on collaborative land management planning processes already underway (such as Shared Stewardship agreements, State forest action plans, forest plan revisions, and cross-boundary projects), thereby capitalizing on their momentum and capacity and on the expectations they have raised.
- Holding conversations within the Forest Service to make sure that the views and needs of the agency's workforce are recognized and included.

By the end of year 1, at the Forest Service, we intend to have a shared all-lands fire-freshed prioritization planning framework in place that Forest Service regions and forests can use together with other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, local communities, and other partners to design projects for years 3 to 10.



# NEXT STEPS

- **BEGIN ENGAGEMENTS.** The announcement of the 10-year strategy kicks off an engagement strategy to strengthen alignment with and leverage the energy and innovation of others around this critical work. This will include close engagement with the U.S. Department of the Interior and other Federal agencies, Tribal consultation, national and regional roundtables with State and local partners, and engagement with the partners and stakeholders identified above. We will be developing information and additional engagement opportunities throughout the year, as well as implementation workshops that foster learning on tools, techniques, and policy application; the collaborative development of outcome-based measures; an exploration of multiparty monitoring strategies and reporting; the development of public-private partnership strategy; on-going peer learning opportunities; and coordinated policy improvements. Please visit [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us) for updated information on events and ways in which you can personally engage in this work.
- **CONTINUE SCIENCE AND PLANNING.** Science, data, and decision support tools will inform planning, prioritization, and decision making. This includes continuing work being done to reflect risk to additional values, such as updating the fire exposure map to include watersheds and equity layers; identifying areas of importance for ecologic values, including carbon, wildlife, and old-growth; and identifying other social, cultural, and economic values at risk. Work is ongoing to support science-based project design to appropriately use all of the tools for treatment in the right places and in the right way and to incorporate Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge into project design. Tools are being developed to support project planning and mapping funds from different sources to the work needed at the project level. The implementation plan will need to continue to incorporate information about changing risk scenarios with climate change and as fires happen in some of these locations on an annual basis.

Crews plant whitebark pine trees near Werner Peak on the Tally Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest, MT. USDA Forest Service photo by A. Drysdale.





- **APPLY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PRINCIPLES.** A key priority for advancing wildfire risk reduction is supporting investments that address equity across communities of place and interest, particularly those that have been historically marginalized, have not traditionally enjoyed the same opportunities for economic mobility, or conversely have been negatively impacted through discrimination or under-representation in key decisions. At the Forest Service, we are committed to the principles and direction set forth by Executive Order (E.O.) 13985, “On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government” and E.O. 14008, “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad” and efforts related to Justice40.
- **SEEK TRIBAL CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT.** We aim to seek strategic and ongoing engagement with Tribes to identify opportunities in codeveloping a strategic implementation plan for wildfire risk reduction. The future implementation plan will give us the opportunity to work together with Tribes to build long-term capacity and job opportunities, as well as incorporate Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge into planning and project design. Formal consultations in addition to informal conversations and roundtables are planned.
- **COORDINATE ACROSS GOVERNMENT.** In addition to close collaboration with the U.S. Department of the Interior throughout the implementation plan, we will support an all-of-Government approach to this crisis and will continue to participate in on-going and emerging interagency groups, including the emerging Wildfire Commission, the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, the Federal Wildfire Resilience Interagency Working Group, and other venues. We will also remain focused on critical USDA and Administration priorities, including Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry and direction under Executive orders.

- **CONTINUE CAPACITY BUILDING.** We are still developing comprehensive staffing plans and will be increasing capacity in not only field personnel specializing in prescribed fire to complete the work but also key administrative positions like contracting officers, human resources professionals, collaboration and partnership coordinators, communications, and grants and agreements specialists who will assist us in connecting with partners around this work. These partners in turn will be force multipliers.

We also recognize that achieving the desired pace and scale of land treatments will require the support of State and local governments, Tribes, nongovernment organizations, and private contractors. We are identifying opportunities for expanding Civilian Conservation Corps, partners, and contractor support in key areas for a shared workforce. As part of the engagement strategy, agency personnel will discuss ideas for sharing skills in the context of multijurisdictional projects to avoid bottlenecks. We will also identify and address gaps in capacity that contribute to inequity.

- **ADDRESS KEY ENABLING CONDITIONS.** Addressing investments in key enabling conditions, in addition to workforce capacity, includes planning and consultation, collaborative capacity and community engagement, transportation and utilization of woody material from treatments, training needs, and more.
- **DEVELOP SYSTEMS AND MEASURES.** Developing systems and measures for tracking work and progress toward outcomes is critical. Tracking outcomes is a known challenge. The existing [FACTS system](#) will be our starting point for tracking progress in work accomplished. Through this first year, we will engage partners and our own researchers to develop models to compare fire growth in pretreatment and posttreatment landscapes. Understanding the optimal distribution of fuels mitigation work will help decision makers as they balance competing demands across multiple landscapes. The work

will be planned and tracked in accordance with the Program Management Improvement Accountability Act, taking a holistic perspective toward measuring success and using key performance indicators aligned with the strategy.

- **CONTINUE FIRE-ADAPTED COMMUNITY WORK.** We will continue working to support fire-adapted community work through planning, zoning, and wildfire defense grants. Investments in fire-adapted communities are a critical part of the Cohesive Strategy and are necessary to complement fuels and forest health work in order to mitigate risks to people, homes, communities and infrastructure and create resilient, fire-adapted communities.
- **ADDRESS POSTFIRE RISK REDUCTION, RECOVERY, AND REFORESTATION.** We will continue to work to address the need for postfire risk reduction, recovery, and reforestation, including mapping, engagement on priorities, and planning/workforce needs. Mitigating postfire risk and addressing reforestation and recovery is a growing need, and work will be ongoing with partners to identify priorities and implement projects of critical importance.
- **MAINTAIN IMPROVED CONDITIONS.** We will continue to focus on maintaining improved conditions over time and building long-term investment

partnerships. This work will take repeated and sustained investment. We are working now to identify the right timeframes for treatment and develop the relationships and sustained ability to invest during the 10-years and beyond to maintain reductions in risk and improved forest health and resilience.

- **IDENTIFY AND INVEST IN ENABLING CONDITIONS.** We will continue to focus on identifying and investing in enabling conditions and identifying any gaps that need to be addressed. As we engage with others, we will continue to refine our shared understanding of the enabling conditions necessary for sustained and meaningful success, and will work together to create solutions to barriers and build on opportunities for collective impact.
- **ACKNOWLEDGE UNKNOWNNS.** We are committed to learning and collaboration to advance our collective impact in a meaningful way. We know that there is much to learn, and we are committed to being open and transparent as we work together with others to implement this plan and meaningfully change the trajectory of risk to people, communities, and natural resources and restore fire-adapted and resilient landscapes.

For more information and for updated information on roundtables, please visit: [www.fs.usda.gov](http://www.fs.usda.gov)



The Kern Valley Hotshots assist with a prescribed fire in California. Bureau of Land Management photo by Michael Chiodini.





Mogollon Rim Ranger District on the Coconino National Forest. The Kaibab, Coconino, Apache-Sitgreaves, and Tonto National Forests are part of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative in Arizona. USDA Forest Service photo by Brady Smith.



# WILDFIRE CRISIS

## Implementation Plan

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