

# Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review: Implementation Action Plan Report

U.S. Department of the Interior/U.S. Department of Agriculture

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Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review

Implementation Action Plan Report

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Executive Summary

The Federal Wildland Fire Policy Review (Policy Review) directly affects only Department of Agriculture and Interior agencies. However, it significantly, although indirectly, affects local, State, and Tribal governments as well as other Federal partners. Every effort has been and will be made to consider both the direct and indirect effects of Policy Review implementation .

The Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council (Leadership Council) established an Action Plan Development Team, which provided a report of the requirements outlined in the Implementation Strategy. The Leadership Council conducted independent reviews of the Action Plan Development Team's report to refine recommendations based on review by internal staff, the Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council, and Federal Geographical Area Coordinating Group representatives. These reviews culminated in a finalized draft Action Plan Report.

In addition to the March 1996 Leadership Council meeting, the first national interagency meeting of Regional/State/Area-level fire program management personnel from all the Federal wildland management agencies was held. At this meeting, the group began an employee education process, initiated an implementation strategy, validated findings of the draft Action Plan, and began to develop ownership of the Policy Review at this level of the organizations.

Action items were organized as follows:

Action items to be implemented immediately at the Geographic Area Coordinating Group level. These action items were reviewed by Federal fire program management personnel in a Federal interagency, intergeographical mix, resulting in draft implementation strategies. It was noted that there may be action items Federal agencies could implement but which may adversely affect State agencies due to legal or budgetary constraints. Whether all the identified action items are immediately implementable will not be known until the Federal representatives meet with their Geographic Area Coordinating Group partners to finalize the implementation plans.

Action items that will require a long-term commitment. There are several action items that can be partially implemented, but further work is required for complete implementation; others will require long-term agency commitment in terms of funding and FTE. The approaches range from having two or three specialists involved to assigning larger task groups to do further analysis and develop actions. A few action items are dependent on others being completed.

Action items that relate to the Interagency Management Review Team. Several action items are closely related to items that are being completed under the Interagency Management Review Team effort. These and related Interagency Management Review Team actions have been identified in the section titled "Fire Policy Action Items that Relate to the Interagency Management Review Team."

Agency Administrator and Geographic Area Coordinating Group involvement is essential for successful Policy Review implementation. Agency Administrators must be involved in the development of implementation strategies and plans in order to provide reality checks and develop ownership. They are also responsible for institutionalizing the Policy Review's action items into agency operations; they must make it happen. The Geographic Area Coordinating Groups must be involved in order to ensure that plan development and implementation is a coordinated effort and there is mutual understanding and ownership among all partners.

#### Management Oversight Team Implementation Direction

The following implementation actions apply only to Department of Agriculture and Interior agencies and are based on input from the Action Plan Development Team, the Leadership Council review/discussions, and outputs from the national Federal interagency fire meeting involving the Regional/State Office/Area-level fire personnel who will be responsible for implementation. However, implementation must be accomplished through coordinated partnerships with affected stakeholders.

#### Action Items to be Implemented Immediately at the Geographic Area Coordinating Group Level

The Management Oversight Team directs Federal agencies to work with their Tribal and State partners in the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups to develop a coordinated interagency implementation plan for addressing those action items identified at the National Interagency Fire Center March 27-28, 1996. The following considerations should be made:

Responsibility for completion should be assigned to the Regional/State Office/Area Office-level Agency Administrators. In order to have Director and Agency Administrator

involvement, strong consideration should be given to assigning Agency Administrators specific responsibility for action-item implementation.

Due date for completion of the Geographic Area Coordinating Group implementation plans is 12/30/96. Action items already in process or ongoing should continue, and implementation of others will begin upon adoption of the plans.

#### Action Items that Will Require a Long-Term Commitment

The Management Oversight Team will issue agency direction to the Leadership Council to

The Management Oversight Team will issue agency direction to the Leadership Council to establish teams to begin work on the action items identified.

The Management Oversight Team will issue agency direction to the Leadership Council to establish a plan for completing the Interagency Management Review Team report and the related Fire Policy action items.

#### Other Actions for the Management Oversight Team

Establish requirements for tracking action items and getting feedback.

- The Management Oversight Team, using the Leadership Council as staff, is responsible for monitoring.

Brief Directorate and Regional/State/Area Office-level Agency Administrators.

- All direction will be formal within each agency to ensure Agency Administrators at all levels are aware of work to be performed and to illustrate agency commitment to implementation.

Direct that appropriate agency manuals be revised.

#### Summary of Items

by Implementation Category

1. Action Items to be Implemented Immediately at

the Geographic Area Coordinating Group Level

2. Action Items That Will Require a Long-Term

Commitment

3. Action Items that Relate to the Interagency

Management Review Team

Action Items to be Implemented Immediately at

the Geographic Area Coordinating Group Level

A partnership at the Geographic Area Coordinating Group level will be the most effective method of implementing the Policy Review. The Geographic Area Coordinating Groups are comprised of Federal and State agency representatives from the fire programs of those agencies. The geographic areas follow, for the most part, the regional breakdown for USDA Forest Service regions and cover the lower 48 States and Alaska. These areas were established as logical breakdowns of fire suppression workload and all agencies' lands are included. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups were established to foster cooperation, ensure efficiency, and solve mutual problems. The Geographic Area Coordinating Groups have the unique ability to address landscape fire management issues and coordinate those

issues throughout the fire management community.

The Federal Geographic Area Coordinating Group representatives met at the National Interagency Fire Center on March 27-28, 1996, to review the action items and identify those that are implementable now within existing budgets and staffing levels. The Federal representatives from each Geographic Area Coordinating Group developed a draft implementation strategy plan for those action items they felt could be implemented. All implementation strategies developed by the Federal Geographic Area Coordinating Group representatives are considered draft because State cooperators were not present to provide input. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups were very pointed about the fact that they could not produce a final product without the involvement of their State partners. This is within the intent and spirit of the Secretaries' memorandum and the Guiding Principles of the Policy Review. Two other observations that evolved out of this meeting and the work produced:

Implementation strategies will require further time for development in order to get cooperator input and ownership.

There may be action items which the Federal agencies could implement, but State agencies may be constrained by legal or budgetary limitations.

The Federal representatives of the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups should present the draft implementation strategies to their home group, with all members participating in the development of a local plan that meets their needs. It should be recognized that the best plan is one where informed consent is conferred by all partners. The italics material in the following action items provides further clarification or explanation for each individual action item.

#### Summary by Topic Area of Action Items for Implementation

##### Role of Wildland Fire in Resource Management

02 develop Fire Management Plans for all areas subject to wildland fires. These plans will: use information about fire regimes, current conditions, and land management objectives as a basis to develop fire management goals and objectives; address all potential wildland fire occurrences and include a full range of fire management actions; use new knowledge and monitoring results to revise fire management goals, objectives, and actions; and be linked closely to land and resource management plans. Individual field units are responsible for Fire Management Plan development. They must involve their fire management partners and the public. Private lands may not have land or resource management plans for Federal agencies to link to, and another method of documentation or linkage may need to be devised. See page(s) 32.

03 develop research programs that provide a sound scientific basis for the integration of wildland fire into land-use and resource management. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and field units are responsible for defining research needs. The Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council Science Team is responsible for communicating with the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and coordinating the research program. See page(s) 11, 31.

08 conduct a collaborative fire research program to improve the predictive understanding of wildland fire and its relationship to ecosystem dynamics and to strengthen the technological capabilities and organizational framework necessary to sustain the role of fire in natural ecosystems. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and field units are responsible for defining research needs. The Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council Science Team is responsible for communicating with the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and coordinating the research program. Conducting that research program is the responsibility of USDA Forest Service Research units, National Biological Service, etc. Field units should implement some form of adaptive management program to evaluate ongoing management activities. See page(s) 31.

#### Use of Wildland Fire

13 require appropriate treatment of fuel hazards created by resource-management and land-use activities. This action item applies primarily to Federal lands. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups have no authority to require fuel treatments on private lands. Some States have hazard reduction laws, but enforcement lies appropriately with the State agencies.

14 conduct all prescribed fire projects consistent with land and resource management plans, public health considerations, and approved prescribed burn plans.

15 implement the National Wildfire Coordinating Group interagency prescribed fire qualification and certification standards.

18 conduct research and development on fuel treatment alternatives and techniques. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and field units are responsible for defining research needs. The Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council Science Team is responsible for communicating with the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and coordinating the research program. Conducting that research program is the responsibility of USDA Forest Service Research units, National Biological Service, etc. Field units should implement some form of adaptive management program to evaluate ongoing management activities. See page(s) 31.

23 jointly develop an assessment process for determining the probability of success and/or failure associated with the use of prescribed fire and evaluating potential positive and negative consequences. As a part of this process, the effects of not conducting the project will also be evaluated. Field units should implement some form of adaptive management program to evaluate ongoing management activities. The development of such a program must involve local partners. See page(s) 28.

24 jointly develop tools to identify, assess, and mitigate risks from prescribed fires. Field units should work cooperatively with their partners to develop a risk assessment process that meets their local needs. The development of such a program must involve local partners. See page(s) 28.

25 create an organizational climate that supports employees who implement a properly planned prescribed fire program. Everyone's responsibility. See page(s) 28.

#### Preparedness and Suppression

28 develop appropriate tools (training, handbooks, job performance guidelines, planning documents) necessary to assist administrators and fire management personnel to develop and manage a safe and effective fire management program. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups work with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group Training Working Team to identify and develop the tools. See page(s) 18, 19.

29 through training, job details, or other methods, increase experience and fire qualifications of agency administrators and fire management personnel.

31 establish partnerships with contractors, cooperators such as rural and volunteer fire departments, and others, which encourage and assist them to adopt and implement Federal standards for training, qualifications, firefighting equipment, personal protective equipment, etc. The proper partnership instrument to be used depends on the specific relationship (i.e., contract: purchaser-user or purchaser-donor; cooperative agreement: financial supporter and participant partner; grant: financial supporter-patron; memorandum of understanding: partner or recipient).

34 develop interagency preparedness planning based on established interagency wildland fire management objectives. See page(s) 32.

35 develop interagency strategies to implement preparedness plans. These strategies must consider both initial attack and extended attack capability and should include the full range of available cooperator and contractor resources. See pages(s) 32.

37 work together and with other affected cooperators, groups, and individuals to develop and implement fire prevention plans to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fire.

See page(s) 32.

38 provide first for firefighter and public safety. Once people are committed to an incident, those resources become the highest value to be protected and receive the highest management considerations. See page(s) 13.

40 base the second protection priority on the relative values of property and natural/cultural resources when firefighting personnel and equipment are limited. This is the new Federal protection policy and may be different from the protection policy of State and local government protection agencies. Individual Geographic Area Coordinating Groups must address these differences as they develop their individual implementation plans. See page(s) 13, 29.

42 examine and identify, on an interagency basis, employee availability at each organizational level, based on fire qualifications and other necessary skills, to provide needed suppression and support. This will include planning for both initial attack and extended attack at the local level. See page(s) 28.

43 develop and utilize, to the maximum extent possible, the concept of closest initial attack forces and interagency staffing for wildland fire suppression and support, optimizing the use of the Federal and non-Federal work force. Qualified contractors are a component to be considered in suppression and support planning.

45 develop interagency severity plans to provide increased fire suppression capability in emergency situations, including accessing additional resources, pre-positioning resources, and training emergency firefighters. See page(s) 30, 32.

#### Wildland/Urban Interface Protection

49 lead by example in utilizing fire-safe standards at Federal facilities.

50 ensure that all wildland/urban interface areas are covered by Fire Protection Agreements; renegotiate existing agreements as needed to reflect a Federal responsibility that is compatible with Federal policy and to ensure that State and local responsibilities are apportioned appropriately. Agreements will address all partners in these areas. See page(s) 27.

51 incorporate wildland/urban interface considerations into agreements, operating plans, land management plans, and agency Fire Management Plans. See page(s) 27.

54 educate agency personnel on Federal cost-share and grant programs, Fire Protection Agreements, and other related Federal programs so the full array of assistance available to States and local agencies is understood. See page(s) 28.

55 participate in the development and execution of a national wildland/urban interface fire hazard mapping scoping study in cooperation with Tribal, State, and local governments and the private sector. Field units will be asked and should be involved in this study. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group Wildland/Urban Interface Advisory Group and U.S. Fire Administration will coordinate the study as part of action item 83. See page(s) 27.

56 increase communication with wildland/urban interface property owners, planners, elected officials, and others through education and awareness messages about the role of fire in wildland ecosystem health, inherent risks in wildland/urban interface areas, available prevention/protection measures, and Federal disaster assistance programs. Field units will be asked and should be involved in this effort. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Wildland/Urban Interface Advisory Group and Prescribed Fire and Fire Effects Working Team and the U.S. Fire Administration will coordinate educational efforts. See page(s) 29.

58 support and participate in public education efforts in cooperation with the Insurance Institute for Property Loss Reduction (IIPLR) and fire and building code organizations.

See page(s) 29.

59 utilize the recently rechartered National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Program, which includes the Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, FEMA's U.S. Fire Administration, National Association of State Foresters, National Association of State Fire Marshals, and National Fire Protection Association, to focus on wildland/urban interface fire protection issues and actions. The National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Program referred to is correctly titled the NWCG National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Advisory Group. This group has been tasked in the Implementation Action Plan Report with several action items (see pages 14 and 17). Therefore, the above action could be considered as fully or at least partially implemented. See page(s) 27.

60 utilize the Western Governors' Association as a catalyst for involving State agencies on

60 utilize the Western Governors' Association as a catalyst for involving State agencies, as well as local and private stakeholders, with the objective of developing an implementation plan to achieve a uniform, integrated national approach to hazard and risk assessment and fire prevention and protection in the wildland/urban interface. The National Association of State Foresters has accepted the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the action items in the Western Governors' Association report. See page(s) 27.

#### Coordinated Program Management

63 establish job performance standards for agency administrators and fire managers that clearly reflect the complexity and scope of fire management responsibilities. Interagency Management Review Team report implementation will provide additional guidance. See page(s) 19.

64 provide consistent and adequate training for agency administrators commensurate with their roles and responsibilities in fire management. Interagency Management Review Team report implementation will provide additional guidance. See page(s) 19, 28.

65 ensure that agency administrators and fire program managers are held accountable for conducting the fire program in accordance with established policies, procedures, standards, and direction. Interagency Management Review Team report implementation will provide additional guidance. See page(s) 19.

66 ensure that trained and certified employees participate in the wildland fire program as the situation demands; employees with operational, administrative, or other skills support the wildland fire program as needed; and administrators are responsible, accountable, and make employees available.

73 early in the process, involve public health and environmental regulators in developing the most workable application of policies and regulations. Federal, State, Tribal, and local public health, air quality, and environmental quality regulators should be involved in all planning efforts either as partners, consultants, or interested parties. See page(s) 32.

81 cooperate with Tribal, State, and local governments to establish a data-collection mechanism to better assess the nature and scope of the wildland/urban interface fire problem. See page(s) 15, 27, 30.

#### Summary by Topic Area of Action Items for Partial Implementation

Within existing budgets and policies, agencies may be able to implement part or most of the following action items, but additional work may need to be done for total implementation. These items are also listed as action items that will require a long-term commitment for total implementation.

#### Use of Wildland Fire

11 jointly develop programs to plan, fund, and implement an expanded program of prescribed fire in fire-dependent ecosystems. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups should integrate the planning of an expanded program. Individual agencies will work to address issues through the agency process. See page(s) 16, 32.

12 facilitate the planning and implementation of landscape-scale prescribed burns across agency boundaries. Seek opportunities to enter into partnerships with Tribal, State, and private land managers to achieve this objective where appropriate. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups begin to plan for and strengthen their partnerships in order to conduct landscape-scale prescribed burns. Individual agencies may proceed within existing budget and policy guidelines if appropriate. See page(s) 32.

17 jointly develop simple, consistent hiring and contracting procedures for prescribed fire activities. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups should coordinate implementation of National Wildfire Coordinating Group National Incident Business Management Working Team recommendations. Individual agencies may proceed within existing budget and policy guidelines if appropriate. See page(s) 16, 28.

20 seek authority or provide administrative direction to eliminate barriers to carrying over from one year to the next all funds designated for prescribed fire. Agencies within Geographic Area Coordinating Groups should be aware of administrative changes and work within current agency policy to facilitate prescribed fire funding. The Geographic Area Coordinating Groups can facilitate the multi-agency coordination effort. See page(s) 16, 29.

26 reevaluate prescribed burn planning and execution requirements to ensure adequacy of direction without unnecessary constraint. Utilize Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council Prescribed Fire Team guidance when completed. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups should coordinate and facilitate prescribed burn planning and execution. Individual agencies may proceed within existing budget and policy guidelines if appropriate. See page(s) 16, 29.

#### Wildland/Urban Interface

47 adopt an operational role in the wildland/urban interface that includes wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups should utilize National Wildfire Coordinating Group Wildland/Urban Interface Advisory Group guidance to adopt an operational role that meets their special circumstances. Individual agencies may proceed within existing budget and policy guidelines if appropriate. See page(s) 17, 27, 28.

48 identify and fund, on a cost-share basis, high-priority fuels management activities on Federal lands adjacent to wildland/urban interface areas identified through a fire protection assessment process that considers relative values to be protected. These activities may involve adjacent non-Federal lands. Geographic Area Coordinating Groups are responsible for identifying and prioritizing these areas. See page(s) 17, 27.

#### Action Items That Will Require

##### a Long-Term Commitment

The action items listed cannot be implemented without commitment of resources to perform work. Timeframes range from two to several years of work and in some cases, all work has and will be ongoing in nature such as research and planning activities. In each of these directions, it is the intent of the Management Oversight Team that Agency Administrators and other program managers be involved in order to provide input and a reality check.

## Summary by Topic Area of Action Items For Implementation

### Role of Wildland Fire in Resource Management

#### Preparedness and Suppression

#### Coordinated Program Management

Instruct the Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council's Fire Management Planning Team to review fire management planning, standard criteria to assess overall suppression and support requirements, and standard interagency planning, budgeting, and staffing and to develop a process for implementing the following action items. Team to report to The Leadership Council by 9/30/96.

01 use a compatible fire management planning system that recognizes both fire use and fire protection as inherent parts of natural resource management; this system will ensure adequate fire suppression capabilities and support fire reintroduction efforts.

33 develop long-range interagency wildland fire management objectives, based on values to be protected, across geographic and agency boundaries.

41 use standard criteria to assess overall suppression and support requirements. See page(s) 18.

46 develop a standard interagency planning, budgeting, and staffing process.

68 jointly develop a standard methodology for measuring and reporting fire management efficiency that includes commodity, non-commodity, and social values. This methodology should specifically address, among other considerations, the costs and benefits of large-fire suppression. See page(s) 31.

### Role of Wildland Fire in Resource Management

#### Coordinated Program Management

Instruct the Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council's Fire Science Team to develop a request for proposals and coordinate activities. Request for proposal due to the Leadership Council by 3/30/97.

03 develop research programs that provide a sound scientific basis for the integration of wildland fire into land-use and resource management. See page(s) 6, 31.

71 jointly identify the legal context for reintroducing fire into wildlands and develop options for accomplishment. Options may include modifying regulations to address ecological processes where appropriate; exercising broader interpretations of policy; or resolving obstacles at regional and local levels, including those on non-Federal lands. Based on this interpretation, develop standardized agreements or new agreements that permit these activities.

See page(s) 29.

## Use of Wildland Fire and Coordinated Program Management

Instruct the Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council's Prescribed Fire Team to develop a long-term work force strategy. This team to report to The Leadership Council by 12/30/96.

16 train and maintain a qualified and adequate work force to plan and implement interagency prescribed fire projects safely and effectively, and make these personnel available when needed. See page(s) 28, 32.

67 jointly manage fire use and suppression resources and activities to achieve accomplishment of both programs concurrently. See page(s) 30, 32.

## Role of Wildland Fire in Resource Management

Request the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Prescribed Fire and Fire Effects Working Team to take the lead and coordinate with the Prevention, Education and Communications Working Team to develop an education strategy to address these action items. This team to report to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group by 5/1/97.

09 establish an interdisciplinary team that includes all agencies, regulators, and other partners to design a consistent fire-role and -use message for decision makers and the public. This message will: describe and clearly explain issues such as ecosystem condition, risks, consequences (including public health impacts), and costs in open dialogue with internal and external constituents and be designed to maximize open communications and reduce polarization among conflicting interests regarding the use of fire. See page(s) 29.

10 build on existing interagency efforts to develop and implement a strategic plan that educates the general public and agency personnel about the role of fire. As part of this effort, agencies will develop and widely transmit a clear message about the important role of fire as a natural process and the risks and consequences of its use and exclusion; integrate this message into existing agency communication systems, agency and partner initiatives (such as forest health, ecosystem management, etc.), and all external outreach efforts, including television, magazines, newspapers, and public meetings; encourage, create, and coordinate partnerships to achieve consistency in messages, build public trust, and obtain public opinion; and develop mandatory national and regional interagency training programs to instill in all employees an understanding of the role of fire in natural systems. See page(s) 29.

## Use of Wildland Fire

Instruct the Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council's Prescribed Fire Team to conduct a technical review of hazard pay issue and give to Gary Wilson (USFS Personnel) for transmittal to Office of Personnel Management by 9/30/96.

21 work with the Office of Personnel Management to acquire authority for hazard pay to compensate employees exposed to hazards while engaged in prescribed burning activities. See page(s) 28, 29.

Request the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's National Incident Business Management Working Team to develop a strategy to include prescribed fire positions under special firefighting retirement. Include prescribed fire secondary/administrative positions. Resolution by 12/30/96.

22 clarify that prescribed fire positions qualify for primary coverage under special firefighter retirement and issue appropriate guidance to field offices. See page(s) 28, 29.

Instruct Tom Patten (USFS WO F&AM) to work with Jim Douglas (Department of the Interior) to develop legislation with similar language for the Department of the Interior. Douglas to guide Department of the Interior legislation proposal through Secretary's Office. DOI legislation proposal due 8/30/96.

26a Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will seek legislation providing for prompt reimbursement to private landowners for damages resulting from escaped prescribed fires.

### Preparedness and Suppression

Instruct Harry Croft (USFS WO F&AM) to develop a position paper regarding budget language to compare with Department of the Interior language by 9/30/96.

36 develop consistent language to be included in budget appropriations, enabling the full spectrum of fire management actions on wildland fires. See page(s) 30.

Instruct John Roberts (USFS-NARTC) to establish interagency team to develop process for implementation. Proposal due to The Leadership Council by 12/30/96.

32 define values to be protected, working in cooperation with State, local, and Tribal governments; permittees; and public users. Criteria will include environmental, commodity, social, economic, political, public health, and other values.

38 provide first for firefighter and public safety. Once people are committed to an incident, those resources become the highest value to be protected and receive the highest management considerations. See page(s) 7.

39 protect property and natural/cultural resources secondary to firefighter and public safety. See page(s) 29.

40 base the second protection priority on the relative values of property and natural/cultural resources when firefighting personnel and equipment are limited. See page(s) 7, 29.

### Wildland/Urban Interface Protection

Request the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Incident Operations Standards Working Team to develop a report identifying the skills and training needed by 3/30/97.

52a identify specialized skills and training that are needed by both wildland and structural fire agencies in the interface and incorporate those requirements into the Wildland Fire Qualification System to provide for safe and efficient operations in the wildland/urban

interface.

Request the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Training Working Team to develop the curricula as outlined in the action item by 9/30/98.

52b develop operational curricula, in cooperation with the National Fire Academy, for protection in the wildland/urban interface.

Request the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Training Working Team to monitor implementation on a continuing basis.

52c implement training through interagency systems and joint training activities, and augment fire training not available at the State and local levels.

Request the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Fire Equipment Working Team to develop a report that identifies equipment standards by 9/30/97 and monitor implementation.

52d identify and implement equipment standards for wildland/urban interface operation.

Request the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Wildland/Urban Interface Advisory Group to address the following action items. NWCG to establish timeframes for completion.

53 increase emphasis on cost-share program assistance in the wildland/urban interface through the Forest Service State and Private Cooperative Fire Program, including training and equipping of State and local agencies. Assess and revise, as needed, other mechanisms to ensure funding is directed to agencies with wildland/urban interface responsibilities. See page(s) 30.

57 expand programs, curricula, and distribution systems for wildland/urban interface educational materials in cooperation with structural protection agencies. See page(s) 29.

61 work with the States to develop viable and comprehensive wildland fire hazard mitigation plans and performance-based partnerships. See page(s) 27.

#### Coordinated Program Management

Instruct Jim Douglas (Department of the Interior) to coordinate request to the Office of the General Counsel and Solicitor's Office. Request to be completed by 7/30/96.

72 clarify and differentiate between agency liability and personal liability resulting from prescribed fire, based on legal review and interpretation of tort law. See page(s) 28, 29.

Instruct Agency Directors to consult their legal counsel with respect to current legal authorities for fire management as well as mechanisms to avoid tort liability.

74 The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will direct the Office of the Solicitor and the Office of the General Counsel, in coordination with the Department of Justice and other appropriate Federal agencies, to conduct and publish a comprehensive legal review on wildland/urban interface fire protection to provide the legal foundation for Federal actions. This review will address current authority under Federal laws such as the Organic Act.

...the review will address common agency issues. Federal laws such as the Endangered Species Act, National Forest Management Act, Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. See page(s) 29.

75 The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will direct the Office of the Solicitor and the Office of the General Counsel, in coordination with the Department of Justice and other appropriate Federal agencies, to conduct and publish a comprehensive legal review on wildland/urban interface fire protection to provide the legal foundation for Federal actions. This review will address the subjects of tort liability, budget authorities, cooperative agreements, mitigation activities, and natural resource protection/environmental laws. See page(s) 29.

Request the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's National Fire Weather Advisory Group to develop an evaluation of alternatives based on report from Geographic Area Coordinating Group to National Wildfire Coordinating Group by 12/30/96.

76 The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, together with the Secretary of Commerce, will assess current and projected requirements for fire weather products necessary to support total wildland fire management program needs. See page(s) 27.

77 The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, together with the Secretary of Commerce, will evaluate alternative methods, including non-Federal sources, to provide weather service to the agencies' fire management programs. See page(s) 27.

78 The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will seek commitment from the Secretary of Commerce to research and develop technology to provide accurate, long-range weather forecasts. See page(s) 27.

Instruct the Interagency Fire Statistics Group to develop a status report due to the Leadership Council by 3/03/97.

79 standardize fire statistics and develop an easily accessible common database. See page(s) 30.

Request the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Information Resources Management Working Team to develop a schedule and timetables for action item implementation and submit to National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

80 jointly identify, develop, and use tools needed for ecosystem-based fire management programs with mechanisms to integrate fire-related databases with other systems. These tools will include the collection of ecosystem-related data such as disturbance regimes, historical fire patterns, response to management actions, and others; consistent methods to track and access fire-use statistics and administrative costs; and mechanisms to transfer and exchange fire management systems information. See page(s) 30.

81 cooperate with Tribal, State, and local governments to establish a data-collection mechanism to better assess the nature and scope of the wildland/urban interface fire problem. See page(s) 9, 27, 30.

Request the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Wildland/Urban Interface Advisory Group and U.S. Fire Administration to develop annual status reports for National Wildfire

Coordinating Group at spring meeting each year.

82 take a lead role in the adoption of the National Fire Incident Reporting System standards for all fire agencies that operate in the wildland/urban interface and modify existing reports to reflect wildland/urban interface fire protection data. See page(s) 30.

83 complete a national wildland/urban interface fire hazard scoping and mapping study in partnership with the Western Governors' Association; Tribal, State, and local governments; and the private sector. See page(s) 27.

#### Summary by Topic Area of Action Items for Partial Implementation

(Additional Action Required to Fully Implement)

#### Use of Wildland Fire

Instruct Jim Turner (USFS WO Fiscal) and Wally Josephson (Department of the Interior) to develop a position paper based on current Department of the Interior position and draft Croft position paper to analyze alternatives. Due to the Leadership Council by 3/30/97.

11 jointly develop programs to plan, fund, and implement an expanded program of prescribed fire in fire-dependent ecosystems. See page(s) 10, 32.

Request the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Incident Business Management Working Team propose consistent, simple contracting and hiring procedures for prescribed fire activities. Due to National Wildfire Coordinating Group by 9/30/96.

17 jointly develop simple, consistent hiring and contracting procedures for prescribed fire activities. See page(s) 10, 28.

Instruct Jim Douglas (Department of the Interior) to verify if still a problem and if so, recommend resolution. Due to The Leadership Council by 8/30/96.

20 seek authority or provide administrative direction to eliminate barriers to carrying over from one year to the next all funds designated for prescribed fire. See page(s) 10, 29.

Instruct the Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council's Prescribed Fire Team to draft uniform, agency specific directives to implement recommendations contained in the report by 6/30/96.

26 reevaluate prescribed burn planning and execution requirements to ensure adequacy of direction without unnecessary constraint. See page(s) 10, 29.

#### Wildland/Urban Interface

Request the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Wildland/Urban Interface Advisory Group to provide a report that outlines the steps, along with budgetary needs, that should be taken to implement action items. This will include a sample comprehensive MOU/Cooperative agreement that may be used to facilitate efforts in the interface. Due to National Wildfire Coordinating Group by 3/30/97.

47 adopt an operational role in the wildland/urban interface that includes wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. See page(s) 10, 27, 28.

48 identify and fund, on a cost-share basis, high-priority fuels management activities on Federal lands adjacent to wildland/urban interface areas identified through a fire protection assessment process that considers relative values to be protected. These activities may involve adjacent non-Federal lands. See page(s) 10, 27.

## Summary by Topic Area of Action Items for Future Implementation

### Pending Completion of Prerequisite Action Items

Work on the following action items will be delayed. These items are not considered low priority but are dependent upon other action items having some level of work done or being implemented. It is proposed that the action items be reconsidered in the timeframes identified to determine whether or not work can logically begin.

### Implementation Detail to Be Reconsidered in April 1997

#### Role of Fire in Resource Management

04 create a system for coordination and cooperation among land managers and regulators that explores options within existing laws to allow for the use of fire to achieve goals of ecosystem health while at the same time protecting individual components of the environment, human health, and safety. This system will allow for early collaboration during the process of developing new land management plans and provide a mechanism for incorporating input as existing plans are implemented or revised. It will encourage land managers and regulators to enter into agreements that set forth the actions each will take before and during the time fire is reintroduced in their area of responsibility. See page(s) 29, 32.

05 continue ongoing efforts to jointly develop compatible, ecosystem-based, multiple-scale, interagency land management plans that involve all interested parties and facilitate adaptive management. This process will fully integrate ecological concepts that consider long-term dynamics and cross agency boundaries; effectively incorporate current fire-related information, including scientific knowledge, risk assessment, social and economic concerns, and public health considerations; and ensure that existing land management plans are revised or updated to address the above actions. See page(s) 32.

06 expedite the decision-making process by jointly developing criteria for evaluating ecosystem condition by ecosystem type and for prioritizing areas for the reintroduction of fire to meet resource objectives and reduce hazards. This process will identify those ecosystems where fire does not need to be reintroduced (fire is not a significant natural component or the fire regime has not been altered); where fire is unlikely to succeed (fire would be adverse, such as areas significantly altered by fuel accumulations and species changes) – determine appropriate, ecologically sound alternatives for these areas; and where treatment with fire is essential or potentially effective (fire is needed to improve resource conditions or reduce risk and hazard). See page(s) 32.

07 jointly implement ecosystem-based fire management programs to accomplish resource or landscape management objectives when consistent with land management plans. These programs will strive to maintain the long-term integrity of the natural resources and minimize the undesirable effects of fire; address the highest-priority needs in ecosystem assessment, monitoring, and management and determine the appropriate scope of fire use, consistent with historical fire regimes, including extent, timing, and risks and consequences; use existing tools and develop new ones to address today's more fragmented landscapes and to enhance our ability to manage wildland fires of varying size and intensity; and illustrate the management actions and their results by establishing or expanding fire management demonstration areas. See page(s) 32.

#### Use of Wildland Fire

19 seek authority to eliminate internal barriers to the transfer and use of funds for prescribed fire on non-Federal lands and among Federal agencies. See page(s) 29.

#### Implementation Detail to Be Reconsidered Based on

The Leadership Council Proposal for Action Items 27, 28 & 62

#### Preparedness and Suppression

30 enforce a system of accountability to manage a safe and efficient fire management program based on standard job performance requirements. These requirements should include items specifically related to safety and will recognize and reward success and provide disciplinary action for failure.

#### Coordinated Program Management

Implementation Detail to Be Reconsidered Pending Outcome of Action Item 41 -

To Be Reviewed April 1998

69 develop criteria to be used in evaluating alternative fire management organizations. Some examples of criteria include meeting land management objectives, reintroducing fire in the ecosystem, ensuring cost effectiveness, effectively dealing with wildland/urban interface fire protection, and using partnerships and cooperative relationships. See page(s) 31.

70 use these criteria to analyze, with cooperators, a broad range of organizational alternatives on a national, regional, and local basis. Examples of alternatives include a single Federal fire organization; contracts with States, private sector, Tribal governments, military, or combinations thereof; and status quo. See page(s) 31.

#### Action Items That Relate to the

#### Interagency Management Review Team

Several action items from the Fire Policy Review and Interagency Management Review Team are very closely related. The following actions are recommended which will complete

these actions.

## Preparedness and Suppression

The following action items will be combined with Interagency Management Review Team action item 3.6 and be handled as part of Interagency Management Review Team completion:

27 establish fire management qualifications based on program complexity, and staff existing and future Agency Administrator and fire management vacancies with individuals who meet these qualifications and who are committed to accomplishing the total fire management program. See page(s) 18.

28 develop appropriate tools (training, handbooks, job performance guidelines, planning documents) necessary to assist administrators and fire management personnel to develop and manage a safe and effective fire management program. See page(s) 7, 18.

62 develop and utilize consistent fire management qualification standards and specific selection criteria for fire program managers. See page(s) 18.

63 establish job performance standards for Agency Administrators and fire managers that clearly reflect the complexity and scope of fire management responsibilities.

See page(s) 9.

64 provide consistent and adequate training for Agency Administrators commensurate with their roles and responsibilities in fire management. See page(s) 9, 28.

65 ensure that Agency Administrators and fire program managers are held accountable for conducting the fire program in accordance with established policies, procedures, standards, and direction. See page(s) 9.

Action Item 44 will include Interagency Management Review Team action 3.7. Final proposal due 7/30/96.

44 use an analysis and decision-making process that considers, on an interagency basis, existing and potential fire severity; suppression resource commitment and availability; prescribed fire activity; environmental, social, and political concerns; and other pertinent factors. See page(s) 30, 32.

## Appendix I

### Implementation Strategy

#### Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review

##### A.Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to implement the direction contained in the Final Federal

The purpose of this strategy is to implement the direction contained in the Final Federal

Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review, dated December 18, 1995. Implementation will address those specific items highlighted by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior in their December 20, 1995, decision Memorandum.

In response, the strategy establishes a process to ensure that implementation will:

Be consistent with the nine Guiding Principles in the Final Policy report.

Occur on a joint, interagency basis whenever possible to ensure the consistent application of policy.

Involve a broad spectrum of program areas, including resource managers, Agency Administrators, scientists, and planners, as well as wildland fire management staffs.

Address local, interagency, integrated planning as a critical means of ensuring that on-the-ground implementation is as effective as possible.

Coordinate with other Federal agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Weather Service, and Department of Defense.

Ensure the participation of Tribal, State, and local partners.

Recognize the results of the wildland-urban interface project sponsored by the Western Governors' Association.

The Policy Review represents an evolutionary stage in the development of wildland fire policies. Priority will be placed on educating and informing employees about the philosophies and policies put forth in the Review and on examining how quickly and efficiently we can review and update land management plans to ensure their conformance with (or incorporate) wildland fire considerations included in the Review.

Successful implementation within the five Federal land management agencies will require:

major involvement and commitment by Agency Administrators from all levels in all implementation phases.

commitment by Agency Administrators from all levels to ensure employees are aware of these policies, implementation actions, and implementation decisions.

the Federal Fire community to externalize beyond its traditional borders.

## B. Leadership

A Management Oversight Team will guide implementation of the strategy and ensure that progress is made toward effecting the change articulated in the Policy Review. This Team will include membership as follows:

BIA - Terry Virden - Acting Director of Trust Responsibilities

BLM - Les Rosenkrance - Director, Fire & Aviation

FWS - Carolyn Bohan - Deputy Asst. Director, Refuges and Wildlife

NASF - Don Artley, Montana State Forester

NBS - Denny Fenn - Deputy Director

NPS - Maureen Finnerty - Associate Director, Park Operations and Education

USFS - Joan Comanor, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry

The Team will utilize the Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council for staff and implementation support:

Al Dunton, Associate Director, Office of Fire and Aviation, Bureau of Land Management, Boise, Idaho.

Roger Erb, Chief, Fire Management Branch, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Boise, Idaho.

Rick Gale, Deputy Chief Ranger, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

Steve Haglund, Chief, Branch of Fire Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Boise, Idaho.

Dr. Mary Jo Lavin, Director, Fire and Aviation Management, USDA Forest Service, Washington, D.C.

### C.Roles and Responsibilities

The Management Oversight Team will:

Approve an Implementation Strategy.

Oversee the completion of the Implementation Action Plan with particular attention to:

- \* ensuring interagency and interdisciplinary participation.
- \* ensuring the availability of personnel within their agencies to participate in action planning and implementation teams.
- \* ensuring appropriate involvement by "other" Federal and non-Federal agencies, cooperators, partners, and Tribes.
- \* ensuring Action Plan tasks are completed by assigned target dates.

Provide periodic progress reports to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture.

The Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council will:

Provide advice on process or technical matters to the Management Oversight Team to ensure successful implementation of Policy Review recommendations.

Oversee completion of staff work to support the Management Oversight Team.

Provide guidance and appropriate logistical support to implementation work teams to ensure their success.

Recommend formation of Task Groups and group memberships.

Track implementation progress.

#### D.Process

An Action Plan Development Team was established to ensure an interagency, interdisciplinary approach to implementing the policies, goals, and action items in the Final Policy Report. This team came together only for the purpose of developing a report that outlines a process and strategy for implementing the goals and actions contained in the Policy Review report. The team ceased to function upon completion of this specific task. The team included Agency Administrators, fire program managers, field-level Fire Management Officers, resource technical specialists, and fire ecologists.

Membership included:

BIA - Eric LaPointe, Superintendent, Blackfoot Reservation

BIA - Edwin Lewis, Forester, Yakima Reservation

BLM - Carl Gossard, State Fire Management Officer, Colorado

BLM - Mike Green, District Manager, Burns, Oregon

FWS - Bill Leenhouts, Service Fire Ecologist

Intertribal Timber Council - Don Motanic

NPS - Scott Erikson, Deputy Superintendent, Santa Monica Mtns. National Recreation Area

NPS - Meg Weesner, Resource Management Specialist, Saguaro National Park

USFS - Jerry Williams, Assistant Director, Fire Operations

USFS - Jim Lawrence, Deputy Regional Forester, Pacific Southwest Region

The team met the week of 2/26 - 3/1/96 and provided the Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council with a report that provided recommendations on how to best organize for implementation of the goals, actions, and other recommendations contained in the Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review report. In developing their product, the team analyzed the 83 action items contained in the Policy report. The Team operated

within the following parameters:

Do not solve issues, but provide recommendations on how to plan/organize/staff for issue resolution.

Implementation is not only a fire community concern; it requires the involvement of other

disciplines, other agencies, and other organizations.

Consider real-world constraints such as human and fiscal resources.

Remember that NWCG is not a panacea; it may be an effective organization/process for long-term issues, but its internal organizational process is not well suited to short-term solutions.

The team provided a report that outlined a process for meeting the Secretaries' expectations as outlined in Section I, Purpose, including:

A process for implementing goals/actions and resolving issues.

Grouping of similar goals or action items needing a common solution.

Who should be involved (internal/external, skills/expertise, leadership, non-Federal representation)?

Who should be tasked to lead Topic Area Task Groups (person, skill, type of expertise, affiliation)?

Membership on Topic Area Task Groups (by name, expertise, affiliation).

Broad timelines for each Topic Area Task Group.

Relative priorities for implementation within each of the five Wildland Fire Policy Review topic areas.

Other ongoing reviews or projects where interface is needed to ensure compatibility, minimize duplication of effort, and maximize efficiency.

Priorities for action, keeping in mind that a long-term project may have much more ultimate payoff than a series of relatively easy fixes.

A process for monitoring Policy Review implementation and ensuring accountability for action and follow-up.

The Action Plan identifies those issues that, by virtue of governing legal mandates, agencies must accomplish independently of one another. In these situations, the Action Plan outlines the means to coordinate actions among various agencies at the field level.

In addition, this Action Plan:

Continues to build, in the involvement process, on the key focuses of the Interagency Management Review Team:

- \* Creating a passion for safety.
- \* Emphasizing the importance of Agency Administrator duties and responsibilities.
- \* Monitoring performance and accountability.
- \* Expanding interagency fire management.

Determines who the other Federal and non-Federal agencies are (for all revised statements).

Utilizes existing fire organizations and groups as a means of involving others, and determine if membership/representation is available to all.

Utilizes natural resource organizations and groups as a means of involving others such as the National Association of State Foresters, Society for Range Management, Society of American Foresters, Intertribal Timber Council, and Intertribal Agriculture Council.

Utilizes the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups as primary levels for involving all players in specific locales. Ensure all groups are invited as participants.

Utilizes individual agency organizations as a focal point to reach out to partners and cooperators.

Successful implementation will depend upon input and screening of issues by the Federal land managing agencies and bureaus before work or Task Group assignments are given and when the Task Groups have completed a draft product, prior to submission of a final report to the Leadership Council. These steps will ensure that a Task Group is directed to look at those areas each agency has identified as a process, procedure, legal, budget, or other barrier to implementing the goals or action items articulated in the Policy Review report and that solutions to a problem are directed toward the right areas in individual agencies. This will also ensure agency commitment to both the implementation process and identified solutions.

#### E.Immediate Implementation Activities

There are three actions that can begin immediately. Two of these were mandated by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture. The third becomes the cornerstone for all future implementation action. Specific implementation action will be developed no later than 4/15/96.

Immediately begin to involve and inform employees about the philosophy, principles, and policies contained in the report to stress the intent of the Policy Review that fire is a tool for land and resource management objectives. Agency Administrators should take the lead in this effort.

The review of existing land and resource management plans can begin in order to ensure that wildland fire considerations are incorporated therein, both to use fire to achieve land/resource management objectives and to ensure that land/resource management objectives consider the impacts of fire exclusion.

A review of laws, regulations, and policy can begin – in that order – to ensure they are not in conflict with the intent of the Fire Policy Review. Where legal constraints prohibit the implementation of recommendations, a strategy will be developed to determine any corrective legislation/regulation necessary. Where policy constraints impede the implementation of recommendations, a strategy will be developed to determine needed changes in policy on an interagency basis insofar as possible.

Agency Administrators will implement the revised policy on protection priorities, which are: (1) human life and (2) property and natural/cultural resources. Once people have been committed to an incident, they become the highest value to be protected.

#### F. Other Issues, Concerns, and Considerations

##### Interagency Management Review Team - South Canyon Fire

There are several issues from the Interagency Management Review Team that may be overlapping or are on the periphery of action items identified in the Policy Review. These should be noted to avoid duplication of work. There are several issues from the Interagency Management Review Team that have not been brought to closure and which may impact work under the implementation phase of the Policy Review. The Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council is responsible for these items and should review them to determine future plans for completion or inclusion in this effort. A final report is required.

##### Director and Agency Administrator Involvement

A major concern as expressed in various levels and groups is the "externalization" of Wildland Fire Policy Review goals and action items. The fire community finds itself talking with itself about issues that are beyond their control and require external groups to take the lead role in implementation or to make time available to illustrate priority of various action items. The focus usually comes back to Directorate levels and Agency Administrators. Within each agency this group must lead the way in order to demonstrate the seriousness of these efforts.

#### G. Federal Wildland Fire Policy Implementation Schedule

02/06/96 Establish Action Plan Task Group.

02/21/96 Management Oversight Team Review Strategic Plan.

02/26/96 Leadership Council meet with Action Plan Task Group and Policy Review Team Leaders.

03/01/96 Draft Action Plan Completed.

03/04/96 Draft Action Plan Delivered to Management Oversight Team.

03/11/96 Management Oversight Team comments on Draft Action Plan to Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council.

03/15/96 Conference call among Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council to finalize Draft Action Plan.

03/16/96 Leadership Council delivers Draft Action Plan to Management Oversight Team for approval.

03/19/96 Management Oversight Team approves Final Draft Action Plan via conference call.

03/26-27/96 Interagency Fire Management Officers' meeting for input to Draft Action Plan.

04/15/96 Draft Action Plan Completed.

04/24/96 Draft Action Plan discussed by Management Oversight Team.

05/03/96 Agency comments due to Draft Action Plan.

05/10/96 Final Draft Action Plan prepared and distributed.

05/20/96 Management Oversight Team Action Plan approval/implementation order.

## Appendix II

Action Items, Subject-Matter Experts, External Contacts,

and Ongoing Initiatives by Subject Area

The Action Plan Development Team identified several subject areas that crossed Topic Areas. For each of those subject areas, subject-matter experts and external key contacts were identified. On-going initiatives were also identified. This information should be used where developing implementation strategies and implementing specific action items.

### 1. Subject Area: Wildland Urban Interface

Action Items: 47, 48, 50, 51, 55, 59, 60, 61, 81, 83

Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:

NWCG WUI Advisory Group

Full Regional Governors' Representative

Western Governors' Association,

Southern Governors' Association Representatives

National Fire Protection Association

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Insurance Institute for Property Loss Reduction

National Association of State Foresters

Existing Ongoing Initiatives:

Western Governors' Association

National Wildfire Coordinating Group

Orange, California, and Summit, Colorado, Counties

Background:

Interagency Management Review Team 3.15

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2. Subject Area: Weather

Action Items: 76, 77, 78

Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:

National Weather Service

Secretaries of Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce

Existing Ongoing Initiatives:

Interagency Management Review Team 3.2

3. Subject Area: Risk Assessment

Action Items: 23, 24, 25

Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:

Agency Administrators/Science/Fire Management

Western Governors' Association

Existing Ongoing Initiatives:

USFS Ongoing Risk Assessment Efforts (See Jerry Williams)

4. Subject Area: Business Management Practices

Action Items: 17, 21, 22,

Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:

NWCG Incident Business Management Working Group

Interagency Administration Team

Bill Bradshaw

Office of Personnel Management

## 5. Subject Area: Staffing, Training and Certification

Action Items: 16, 42, 47, 54, 64, 72

Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:

NWCG Training Working Team

Contract Training Specialists

Existing Ongoing Initiatives:

NWCG Training Working Team

Interagency Management Review Team 3.41, 3.42, 3.43

## 6. Subject Area: Education

Action Items: 09, 10, 56, 57, 58

Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:

Interior Fire Coordination Committee Education Initiative Group

NWCG Prevention, Education & Communications Working Team

NWCG Prescribed Fire and Fire Effects Working Team

Western Air Resources Council (WESTAR)

Western Governors' Association

Southern Governors' Association

National Advertising Council

National Association of State Foresters

Existing Ongoing Initiatives:

IFCC Curriculum Initiative

Western Air Resources Council (WESTAR)

## 7. Subject Area: Legal

Action Items: 04, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 39, 40, 71, 72, 74, 75

Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:

Agency Administrators

Fire Program Managers

Legislative Affairs

Solicitor's Office

Office of General Counsel

Western Governors' Association

Department of Justice

Existing Ongoing Initiatives:

Western Governors' Association

## 8. Subject Area: Coordinated Systems/Data Management

Action Items: 79, 80, 81, 82

Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:

Fire Program Managers

Agency Administrators

Information Resources Management Systems

Western Governors' Association

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Western Air Resources Council (WESTAR)

Existing Ongoing Initiatives:

NWCG Information Resources Management Working Team

Shared Applications Computer System

Northern Great Plains Ecosystem Initiative

Rockwell existing contracts

President's Northwest Forest Plan

Western Air Resources Council (WESTAR) Emissions Tracking Systems

National Biological Service National Biological Information Infrastructure

9. Subject Area: Budget

Action Items: 36, 44, 45, 53, 67

Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:

Fiscal Specialists

Agency Administrators

Fire Program Management

Office of Management and Budget

Appropriations Subcommittees

10. Subject Area: Research, Science, and Technology Transfer

Action Items: 03, 08, 18, 68

Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:

Interior Fire Coordination Committee Research Working Team

Forest Service Forest Fire and Atmospheric Research

Universities

National Biological Service

Forest Service Research

Nature Conservancy

Western Timber Association

Tall Timbers Research Station

Prescribed Fire and Fire Effects Working Team Tech Transfer Work Group

Forest Service Tech Transfer Specialists

Existing Ongoing Initiatives:

Interior Fire Coordination Committee Research Working Team

Forest Service Forest Fire and Atmospheric Research

## Forest Service Fire Economics Project

Phil Omi - Colorado State University (3 Interior Fire Coordination Committee-Funded Projects)

### 11. Subject Area: Organizational Alternatives

Action Items: 69, 70

Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:

Agency Fire Directors - develop contract specifications for an external consultant

Congressional delegation

State Foresters

Partnership Councils

Existing Ongoing Initiatives:

National Workforce Assessment Task Force

Forest Service/Bureau of Land Management Fire Organization, Oregon/Washington

National Performance Review

### 12. Subject Area: Planning

Action Items:

Integrated Resource Management Plans: 04, 05, 06, 11, 12, 16, 73

Fire Management Plans: 02, 07, 67

Operational: Preparedness: 34, 35

Severity: 44, 45

Prevention: 37

Recommended Potential Subject-Matter Experts and External Key Contacts:

Multidisciplinary, including managers

Planners

Fire managers

Resource specialists

Scientist

Regulatory agencies

External databases for public involvement

Existing Ongoing Initiatives:

Council on Environmental Quality

National Performance Review

Interagency Management Review Team 3.12

Appendix III

## NUMERICAL SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS (AI's)

This numerical listing of all action items contained in the Federal Wildland Fire Policy and Program Review Report is provided for convenience in locating them throughout this document.

AI#

Action Item

Action Plan Reference Page

### Role of Fire in Resource Management

01

use a compatible fire management planning system that recognizes both fire use and fire protection as inherent parts of natural resource management; this system will ensure adequate fire suppression capabilities and support fire reintroduction efforts.

11

02

develop Fire Management Plans for all areas subject to wildland fires. These plans will use information about fire regimes, current conditions, and land management objectives as a basis to develop fire management goals and objectives; address all potential wildland fire occurrences and include a full range of fire management actions; use new knowledge and monitoring results to revise fire management goals, objectives, and actions; and be linked closely to land and resource management plans.

5, 32

03

develop research programs that provide a sound scientific basis for the integration of wildland fire into land-use and resource management.

6, 11,

31

04

create a system for coordination and cooperation among land managers and regulators that explores options within existing laws to allow for the use of fire to achieve goals of ecosystem health while at the same time protecting individual components of the environment, human health, and safety. This system will allow for early collaboration during the process of developing new land management plans and provide a mechanism for incorporating input as existing plans are implemented or revised; and encourage land managers and regulators to enter into agreements that set forth the actions each will take before and during the time fire is reintroduced in their area of responsibility.

17, 29,

32

05

continue ongoing efforts to jointly develop compatible, ecosystem-based, multiple scale, interagency land management plans that involve all interested parties and facilitate adaptive management. This process will fully integrate ecological concepts that consider long-term dynamics and cross agency boundaries; effectively incorporate current fire-related information, including scientific knowledge, risk assessment, social and economic concerns, and public health considerations; and ensure that existing land management plans are revised or updated to address the above actions.

17, 32

06

expedite the decision-making process by jointly developing criteria for evaluating ecosystem condition by ecosystem type and for prioritizing areas for the reintroduction of fire to meet resource objectives and reduce hazards. This process will identify those ecosystems where fire does not need to be reintroduced (fire is not a significant natural component, or the fire regime has not been altered); where fire is unlikely to succeed (fire would be adverse, such as areas significantly altered by fuel accumulations and species changes) - determine appropriate, ecologically sound alternatives for these areas; and where treatment with fire is essential or potentially effective (fire is needed to improve resource conditions or reduce risk and hazard).

17, 32

07

jointly implement ecosystem-based fire management programs to accomplish resource or landscape management objectives when consistent with land management plans. These programs will strive to maintain the long-term integrity of the natural resources and minimize the undesirable effects of fire; address the highest-priority needs in ecosystem assessment, monitoring, and management and determine the appropriate scope of fire use, consistent with historical fire regimes, including extent, timing, and risks and consequences; use existing tools and develop new ones to address today's more fragmented landscapes and to enhance our ability to manage wildland fires of varying size and intensity; and illustrate the management actions and their results by establishing or expanding fire management demonstration areas.

18, 32

08

conduct a collaborative fire research program to improve the predictive understanding of wildland fire and its relationship to ecosystem dynamics and to strengthen the technological capabilities and organizational framework necessary to sustain the role of fire in natural ecosystems.

6, 31

09

establish an interdisciplinary team that includes all agencies, regulators, and other partners to design a consistent fire-role and -use message for decision makers and the public. This message will describe and clearly explain issues such as ecosystem condition, risks, consequences (including public health impacts), and costs in open dialogue with internal and external constituents and be designed to maximize open communications and reduce polarization among conflicting interests regarding the use of fire.

12, 29

10

build on existing interagency efforts to develop and implement a strategic plan that educates the general public and agency personnel about the role of fire. As part of this effort, agencies will develop and widely transmit a clear message about the important role of fire as a natural process and the risks and consequences of its use and exclusion; integrate this message into existing agency communication systems, agency and partner initiatives (such as forest health, ecosystem management, etc.), and all external outreach efforts, including television, magazines, newspapers, and public meetings; encourage, create, and coordinate partnerships to achieve consistency in messages, build public trust, and obtain public opinion; and develop mandatory national and regional interagency training programs to instill in all employees an understanding of the role of fire in natural systems.

12, 29

## Use of Wildland Fire

11

jointly develop programs to plan, fund, and implement an expanded program of prescribed fire in fire-dependent ecosystems.

10, 16,

32

12

facilitate the planning and implementation of landscape-scale prescribed burns across agency boundaries. Seek opportunities to enter into partnerships with Tribal, State and private land managers to achieve this objective where appropriate.

10, 32

13

require appropriate treatment of fuel hazards created by resource-management and land-use activities.

6

14

conduct all prescribed fire projects consistent with land and resource management plans, public health considerations, and approved prescribed burn plans.

6

15

implement the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) interagency prescribed fire qualification and certification standards.

6

16

train and maintain a qualified and adequate work force to plan and implement interagency prescribed fire projects safely and effectively, and make these personnel available when needed.

12, 28,

32

17

jointly develop simple, consistent hiring and contracting procedures for prescribed fire activities.

10, 16,

28

18

conduct research and development on fuel treatment alternatives and techniques.

6, 31

19

seek authority to eliminate internal barriers to the transfer and use of funds for prescribed fire on non-Federal lands and among Federal agencies.

18, 29

20

seek authority or provide administrative direction to eliminate barriers to carrying over from one year to the next all funds designated for prescribed fire.

10, 16,

29

21

Work with the Office of Personnel Management to acquire authority for hazard pay to compensate employees exposed to hazards while engaged in prescribed burning activities.

13, 28,

29

22

clarify that prescribed fire positions qualify for primary coverage under special firefighter retirement, and issue appropriate guidance to field offices.

13, 28,

29

23

jointly develop an assessment process for determining the probability of success and/or failure associated with the use of prescribed fire and evaluating potential positive and negative consequences. As a part of this process, the effects of not conducting the project will also be evaluated.

6, 28

24

jointly develop tools to identify, assess, and mitigate risks from prescribed fires.

7, 28

25

create an organizational climate that supports employees who implement a properly planned prescribed fire program.

7, 28

26

reevaluate prescribed burn planning and execution requirements to ensure adequacy of direction without unnecessary constraint.

10, 16,

29

26a

The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will seek legislation providing for prompt reimbursement to private landowners for damages resulting from escaped prescribed fires originating on Federal lands.

13

Preparedness and Suppression

27

establish fire management qualifications based on program complexity, and staff existing and future agency administrator and fire management vacancies with individuals who meet these qualifications and who are committed to accomplishing the total fire management program.

18, 19

28

develop appropriate tools (training, handbooks, job performance guidelines, planning documents) necessary to assist administrators and fire management personnel to develop and manage a safe and effective fire management program.

7, 18,

19

29

through training, job details, or other methods, increase experience and fire qualifications of agency administrators and fire management personnel.

7

30

enforce a system of accountability to manage a safe and efficient fire management program based on standard job performance requirements. These requirements should include items specifically related to safety and will recognize and reward success and provide disciplinary action for failure.

18

31

establish partnerships with contractors; cooperators, such as rural and volunteer fire departments; and others, which encourage and assist them to adopt and implement Federal standards for training, qualifications, firefighting equipment, personal protective equipment, etc.

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define values to be protected, working in cooperation with State, local, and Tribal governments; permittees; and public users. Criteria will include environmental, commodity, social, economic, political, public health, and other values.

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develop long-range interagency wildland fire management objectives, based on values to be protected, across geographic and agency boundaries.

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develop interagency preparedness planning based on established interagency wildland fire management objectives.

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develop interagency strategies to implement preparedness plans. These strategies must consider both initial attack and extended attack capability and should include the full range of available cooperator and contractor resources.

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36

develop consistent language to be included in budget appropriations, enabling the full spectrum of fire management actions on wildland fires.

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37

work together and with other affected cooperators, groups, and individuals to develop and implement fire prevention plans to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fire.

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provide first for firefighter and public safety. Once people are committed to an incident, those resources become the highest value to be protected and receive the highest management considerations.

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protect property and natural/cultural resources secondary to firefighter and public safety.

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base the second protection priority on the relative values of property and natural/cultural resources when firefighting personnel and equipment are limited.

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use standard criteria to assess overall suppression and support requirements.

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examine and identify, on an interagency basis, employee availability at each organizational level, based on fire qualifications and other necessary skills to provide needed suppression and support. This will include planning for both initial attack and extended attack at the local level.

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develop and utilize, to the maximum extent possible, the concept of closest initial attack forces and interagency staffing for wildland fire suppression and support, optimizing the use of the Federal and non-Federal work force. Qualified contractors are a component to be considered in suppression and support planning.

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use an analysis and decision making process that considers, on an interagency basis, existing and potential fire severity; suppression resource commitment and availability; prescribed fire activity; environmental, social, and political concerns; and other pertinent factors.

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develop interagency severity plans to provide increased fire suppression capability in emergency situations, including accessing additional resources, pre-positioning resources, and training emergency firefighters.

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develop a standard interagency planning, budgeting, and staffing process.

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## Wildland/Urban Interface Protection

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adopt an operational role in the wildland/urban interface that includes wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance.

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identify and fund, on a cost-share basis, high-priority fuels management activities on Federal lands adjacent to wildland/urban interface areas identified through a fire protection assessment process that considers relative values to be protected. These activities may involve adjacent non-Federal lands.

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lead by example in utilizing fire-safe standards at Federal facilities.

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ensure that all wildland/urban interface areas are covered by Fire Protection Agreements; renegotiate existing agreements as needed to reflect a Federal responsibility that is compatible with Federal policy and to ensure that State and local responsibilities are apportioned appropriately. Agreements will address all partners in these areas.

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51

incorporate wildland/urban interface considerations into agreements, operating plans, land management plans, and agency Fire Management Plans.

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52

charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with identifying and establishing a data-collection mechanism in coordination with Tribal, State, and local governments, insurance

consultation mechanism, in coordination with Tribal, State, and local governments, insurance industry, National Fire Protection Association, and others, to better assess the nature and scope of the wildland/urban interface fire problem.

52a

charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with identifying specialized skills and training that are needed by both wildland and structural fire agencies in the interface and incorporating those requirements into the Wildland Fire Qualification System to provide for safe and efficient operations in the wildland/urban interface.

14

52b

charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with developing operational curricula, in cooperation with the National Fire Academy, for protection in the wildland/urban interface.

14

52c

charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with implementing training through interagency systems and joint training activities and augmenting fire training not available at the State and local levels.

14

52d

charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with identifying and implementing equipment standards for wildland/urban interface operation.

14

53

increase emphasis on cost-share program assistance in the wildland/urban interface through the Forest Service State and Private Cooperative Fire Program, including training and equipping of State and local agencies. Assess and revise, as needed, other mechanisms to ensure funding is directed to agencies with wildland/urban interface responsibilities.

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54

educate agency personnel on Federal cost-share and grant programs, Fire Protection Agreements, and other related Federal programs so the full array of assistance available to States and local agencies is understood.

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55

participate in the development and execution of a national wildland/urban interface fire hazard mapping scoping study in cooperation with Tribal, State, and local governments and the private sector.

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56

increase communication with wildland/urban interface property owners, planners, elected officials, and others through education and awareness messages about the role of fire in wildland ecosystem health, inherent risks in wildland/urban interface areas, available prevention/protection measures, and Federal disaster assistance programs.

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57

expand programs, curricula, and distribution systems for wildland/urban interface educational materials in cooperation with structural protection agencies.

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58

support and participate in public education efforts in cooperation with the Insurance Institute for Property Loss Reduction (IIPLR) and fire and building code organizations.

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59

utilize the recently rechartered National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Program, which includes the Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, FEMA's U.S. Fire Administration, National Association of State Foresters, National Association of State Fire Marshals, and National Fire Protection Association, to focus on wildland/urban interface fire protection issues and actions.

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utilize the Western Governors' Association (WGA) as a catalyst for involving State agencies, as well as local and private stakeholders, with the objective of developing an implementation plan to achieve a uniform, integrated national approach to hazard and risk assessment and fire prevention and protection in the wildland/urban interface.

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work with the States to develop viable and comprehensive wildland fire hazard mitigation plans and performance-based partnerships.

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#### Coordinated Program Management

62

develop and utilize consistent fire management qualification standards and specific selection criteria for fire program managers.

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establish job performance standards for Agency Administrators and fire managers that clearly reflect the complexity and scope of fire management responsibilities.

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provide consistent and adequate training for Agency Administrators commensurate with their roles and responsibilities in fire management.

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ensure that Agency Administrators and fire program managers are held accountable for conducting the fire program in accordance with established policies, procedures, standards, and direction.

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ensure that trained and certified employees participate in the wildland fire program as the situation demands; employees with operational, administrative, or other skills support the wildland fire program as needed; and administrators are responsible, accountable, and make employees available.

67

jointly manage fire use and suppression resources and activities to achieve accomplishment of both programs concurrently.

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68

jointly develop a standard methodology for measuring and reporting fire management efficiency that includes commodity, non-commodity, and social values. This methodology should specifically address, among other considerations, the costs and benefits of large-fire suppression.

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develop criteria to be used in evaluating alternative fire management organizations. Some examples of criteria include: meeting land management objectives, reintroducing fire in the ecosystem, ensuring cost effectiveness, effectively dealing with wildland urban interface fire protection, and using partnerships and cooperative relationships.

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use these criteria to analyze, with cooperators, a broad range of organizational alternatives on a national, regional, and local basis. Examples of alternatives include a single Federal fire organization; contracts with States, private sector, Tribal governments, military, or combinations thereof; and status quo.

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jointly identify the legal context for reintroducing fire into wildlands and develop options for accomplishment. Options may include modifying regulations to address ecological processes where appropriate; exercising broader interpretations of policy; or resolving obstacles at regional and local levels, including those on non-Federal lands. Based on this interpretation, develop standardized agreements or new agreements that permit these activities.

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clarify and differentiate between agency liability and personal liability resulting from prescribed fire, based on legal review and interpretation of tort law.

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early in the process, involve public health and environmental regulators in developing the most workable application of policies and regulations.

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74

The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will direct the Office of the Solicitor and the Office of the General Counsel, in coordination with the Department of Justice and other appropriate Federal agencies, to conduct and publish a comprehensive legal review on wildland/urban interface fire protection to provide the legal foundation for Federal actions. This review will address current authority under Federal laws such as the Organic Act, National Forest Management Act, Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

14, 29

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The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will direct the Office of the Solicitor and the Office of the General Counsel, in coordination with the Department of Justice and other appropriate Federal agencies, to conduct and publish a comprehensive legal review on wildland/urban interface fire protection to provide the legal foundation for Federal actions. This review will address the subjects of tort liability, budget authorities, cooperative agreements, mitigation activities, and natural resource protection/environmental laws.

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The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, together with the Secretary of Commerce, will assess current and projected requirements for fire weather products necessary to support total wildland fire management program needs.

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The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, together with the Secretary of Commerce, will evaluate alternative methods, including non-Federal sources, to provide weather service to the agencies' fire management programs.

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The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will seek commitment from the Secretary of Commerce to research and develop technology to provide accurate, long-range weather forecasts.

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standardize fire statistics and develop an easily accessible common database.

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jointly identify, develop, and use tools needed for ecosystem-based fire management programs with mechanisms to integrate fire-related databases with other systems. These tools will include the collection of ecosystem-related data such as disturbance regimes, historical fire patterns, response to management actions, and others; consistent methods to track and access fire-use statistics and administrative costs; and mechanisms to transfer and exchange fire management systems information.

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cooperate with Tribal, State, and local governments to establish a data-collection mechanism to better assess the nature and scope of the wildland/urban interface fire problem.

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take a lead role in the adoption of the National Fire Incident Reporting System standards for all fire agencies that operate in the wildland/urban interface and modify existing reports to reflect wildland/urban interface fire protection data.

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complete a national wildland/urban interface fire hazard scoping and mapping study in partnership with the Western Governors' Association; Tribal, State, and local governments; and the private sector.

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