

Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan

July 2002



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I History

A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment A 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan

Background: In August 2000, the Administration directed the Secretaries of Agriculture and of the Interior to prepare a report that would recommend how best to respond to the year's severe wildland fires, reduce the impacts of such wildland fires on rural communities, and ensure sufficient firefighting resources in the future.

The report, titled *Managing the Impacts of Wildfire on Communities and the Environment: A Report to the President In Response to the Wildfires of 2000 – The National Fire Plan* for short - was approved in September 2000.

The Congress also directed the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to engage the Governors in a collaborative structure to cooperatively develop a coordinated, National ten-year comprehensive strategy with the States as full partners in the planning, decision-making, and implementation of the National Fire Plan for the long-term. The comprehensive strategy was officially released on August 12, 2001.

Completion of the "Implementation Plan" is the final piece to bring together all stakeholders, Federal, State, Tribal and local, for a common purpose. The Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Governors of Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, and Oregon, and the Director of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) signed the Plan in Idaho City on May 23, 2002.

Key points:

- The 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy (the strategy) emphasizes measures **to reduce the risk to communities and the environment from wildland fires.**
- The Implementation Plan prescribes **twenty-two actions** that will meet the four goals of the strategy.
- The primary goals of the strategy and focus of the implementation plan are:
 - Improve prevention and suppression
 - Reduce hazardous fuels
 - Restore fire adapted ecosystems
 - Promote community assistance

- The plan **emphasizes a collaborative, community-based approach** to address wildland fire issues.
- **Interagency, interdepartmental, performance measures** are included in the plan. A set of core principles, including **collaboration, priority setting, and accountability** will guide the major themes of the plan.
- The strategy and the implementation plan recognize that key **decisions** should be made **at the local level.**
- The strategy and the implementation plan were **developed by a broad cross-section of interests.**
- An interagency group with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in attendance meets June 5 & 6 in Boise to add definition and protocols to the interagency, interdepartmental performance measures listed in the Plan. A thorough internal review of any and all products will be afforded before final approval by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC).
- The **Wildland Fire leadership Council** will provide most of the leadership for the Plan. The WFLC **will decide at their June 4th meeting on other membership in the WFLC.** National Association of State Foresters, National Association of Counties, Intertribal Timber Council, and the National Governor's Association are the organizations most likely to become members without invoking Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA) regulations.

- The **Undersecretary** for Natural Resources and the Environment (NRE) has placed a **very high priority** on implementing this plan and will **actively monitor accomplishments**.

A copy of the entire Implementation Plan has been included in this package. (Appendix A)

II Overview - Implementation Strategy for Idaho

This Strategy has been adopted by the State of Idaho to provide a framework for an organized and coordinated approach to the implementation of the National Fire Plan, specifically the national “10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan”.

Emphasis is on a collaborative approach at the following levels:

- County
- State

Within the State of Idaho, the Counties, with the assistance of State and Federal agencies and local expert advice, will develop a risk assessment and mitigation plan to identify local vulnerabilities to wildland fire.

A Statewide group will provide oversight and prioritization as needed on a statewide scale.

The strategy also provides for:

- A single web based information system

This strategy is not intended to circumvent any work done to date and individual Counties should not delay implementing any National Fire Plan projects to develop this county plan. **Rather, Counties are encouraged to identify priority needs quickly and begin whatever actions necessary to mitigate those vulnerabilities.**

It is recognized that implementation activities such as; hazardous fuel treatment, equipment purchases, training, home owner education, community wildland fire mitigation planning, and other activities, will be occurring concurrently with this County wide planning effort.

III County Wildland Fire Interagency Group

Each County within the state will be requested to write a simple Wildand Fire Mitigation Plan. These plans should contain at least the following five elements:

- 1) Documentation of the process used to develop the mitigation plan. How the plan was developed, who was involved and how the public was involved.
- 2) A risk assessment to identify vulnerabilities to wildfire in the wildland urban interface (WUI).
- 3) A prioritized mitigation strategy that addresses each of the risks. Examples of these strategies could be: training for fire departments, public education, hazardous fuel treatments, equipment, communications, additional planning, new facilities, infrastructure improvements, code and/or ordinance revision, volunteer efforts, evacuation plans, etc.
- 4) A process for maintenance of the plan which will include monitoring and evaluation of mitigation activities
- 5) Documentation that the plan has been formally adopted by the involved agencies. Basically a signature page of all involved officials.

This five-element plan is an abbreviated version of the FEMA mitigation plan and will begin to meet the requirements for that plan. (Appendix B)

To develop these plans each county should bring together the following individuals, as appropriate for each county, to make up the County Wildland Fire Interagency Group. It is important that this group has representation from agencies with wildland fire suppression responsibilities:

- ❑ County Commissioners (Lead)
- ❑ Local Fire Chiefs
- ❑ Idaho Department of Lands representative
- ❑ USDA Forest Service representative
- ❑ USDI Bureau of Land Management representative
- ❑ US Fish and Wildlife representative
- ❑ Bureau of Indian Affairs
- ❑ Local Tribal leaders
- ❑ Bureau of Disaster Services
- ❑ LEPC Chairperson
- ❑ Resource Conservation and Development representative
- ❑ State Fish and Game representative
- ❑ Interested citizens and community leaders as appropriate
- ❑ Other officials as appropriate

This group will determine where the risks and vulnerabilities to wildland fire are within the County and what mitigation actions are required.

County organizations that include most of the identified representatives are already in place in many areas.

Counties may already have a document that fulfills the above recommendations.

Counties may decide to contract for plan development. However, it is believed that in most cases local fire experts will easily be able to determine vulnerabilities to wildland fire and mitigation actions needed.

Role of Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D)

If requested by the County Commissioners, the local RC&D's may be available to assist the County Commissioners in evaluating each County within their council area to determine if there is a wildland fire mitigation plan in place, or if a plan is currently in the development phase.

If no plan is in place, the RC&D's, if requested, could be available to assist the Commissioners with the formation of the County Wildland Fire Interagency Group and/or to facilitate the development of wildland fire mitigation plan.

If a plan has been previously completed, the Commissioners will determine if the recommended five elements have been addressed. The Counties will provide a copy of the completed mitigation plan to the Idaho Department of Lands National Fire Plan Coordinator, which will include a contact list of individuals that developed the plan.

IV Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group

This group will disseminate information; provide oversight and prioritization; and accomplish additional tasks as the group deems necessary to facilitate the implementation of the National Fire Plan within Idaho. This group will also be available for advice and counsel to the County Wildland Fire Interagency Groups.

The core Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group will consist of:

- ❑ Idaho Department of Lands National Fire Plan Coordinator (Chair)
- ❑ Idaho Fire Chiefs Association Representative
- ❑ State Fire Marshall
- ❑ Idaho Association of Counties representative
- ❑ Forest Service National Fire Plan Idaho State Coordinator
- ❑ Bureau of Land Management Representative
- ❑ Bureau of Indian Affairs Regional Representative
- ❑ Idaho Department of Commerce representative
- ❑ US Fish and Wildlife Service

Ad Hoc members may include:

- ❑ Governor's Office representative
- ❑ Expert in small diameter material utilization
- ❑ Public Relations expert
- ❑ Bureau of Disaster Services
- ❑ Congressional Office representation
- ❑ National Marine Fisheries Service representative
- ❑ Environmental Protection Agency
- ❑ Department of Environmental Quality
- ❑ Federal Emergency Management Agency
- ❑ Resource Conservation and Development representative

V Web site

The Idaho Department of Lands, under direction of the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group, will host a web page that includes, at a minimum, the following:

- ❑ A listing of current National Fire Plan projects within the state and examples.
- ❑ A listing of all delivery systems for National Fire Plan funding including a brief description of grants available by all agencies, purpose of grants, timelines for grant applications and grant managers contact list. (Appendix C)
- ❑ Status of mitigation planning effort by county
- ❑ Useful examples and templates from throughout the state, such as:
 - Successful grant applications
 - Completed wildland fire mitigation plans
 - Contracting instruments
 - Contact lists
- ❑ A listing of links to other National Fire Plan web sites or other sites of interest.


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Dirk Kempthorne
Governor

26 July 2002
Date


David Rittenhouse
Boise National Forest - Capitol City Supervisor
on behalf of Idaho National Forest Supervisors


26 July 2002
Date


Winston Wiggins Director
Idaho Department of Lands

26 July 2002
Date


Mike Ferguson Acting State Director
Bureau of Land Management

26 July 2002
Date


Ben Estes President
Idaho Fire Chiefs Association

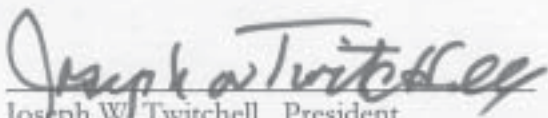
26 July 2002
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John Foard Commissioner
Boise County

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Jim Stires National Fire Director
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26 July 2002
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Joseph W. Twitchell President
South West Idaho RC&D Council

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