

Intertribal Dialogue Series, Session 2 Wildfire Crisis Strategy Implementation

Workforce Assessments and Regional Considerations

Thursday, March 9, 2023, 9-10:30 am AK/ 10am-11:30am PT/
11am-12:30pm MT/12pm-1:30pm CT/1-2:30 pm ET

Discussion Guide

Objectives:

1. Identify Workforce needs and current opportunities to address Wildfire Crisis Strategy Implementation.
2. Discuss additional workforce capacity and development considerations
3. Identify opportunities to address workforce capacity and development obstacles
4. Identify regional considerations

What we know and what we've heard:

- Tribes and Federal Agencies are both experiencing strains on maintaining Wildland Fire workforce capacity and workforce development
- Workforce needs are also interdisciplinary (see categories below)
- Workforce capacity and development are integrated into Recruitment and Retention considerations.
- Retention of institutional knowledge and sharing of that knowledge is needed.
- Federal Agencies and Tribes are assessing workforce needs and support. Based on work to date, the following are commonalities and categories outlined in previous dialogues and assessments.

Position-based Skillsets Needed to Support Wildfire Risk Strategy Implementation

The following are taken from summaries of skills outlined in previous discussions, assessments, and dialogue but are not an exhaustive list.

- Fire Suppression crews, including without limitation: Burn bosses, hand crews, engine crews, Helitack crews, rappel, fire jumpers, equipment operators/heavy machinery, chainsaw crews, Medical support
- Incidence command management, public engagement, communications,
- Fuels Reduction crews, including, without limitation: Burn bosses, hand crews, chainsaw crews, etc.
- Cultural Resource Monitors
- Forest Management planners, fuels planners, watershed managers, NEPA specialists, Geographic Information System (GIS) specialists
- Scientists – Fire ecologists, meteorologists, biologists, Indigenous Knowledge holders, modelers, Silviculturists, arboriculturists, sociologists, soil and plant specialists,
- Collaborative Partnership and coordination, tribal liaisons, public engagement specialists, facilitators, social scientists, and economists.
- Operations and Administration, contracting and grants managers, workload assessment, budget managers, staff managers,

Recommendations and Considerations for Increased Workforce Development

- Consistency of Standards, certifications, and/or qualifications (including job series quals)
- Availability of training opportunities to obtain certifications

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- Workforce development for qualifications (e.g., training and opportunities to complete coursework for promotion)
- Clarity of the coursework required to fill and qualify for positions.
- Addressing Red Card processing delays and identifying increased opportunities for fire line experience
- Travel funding for certification courses

Opportunities to Improve Workforce Capacity

- Are there other areas of qualified Workforce to utilize?
- What are restrictions that can be waived to increase certification for positions?
- What is the role of timber/agriculture/other industries?
- Increased availability of compatible coursework to meet position qualifications.
- National Strike Team of 3-5 people highly experienced to help local teams to get community-based partnership projects launched
- Government liaison and coordination coordinators to work with Tribal, state, and local governments. Likewise, working with local community leaders, private landowners, and others for workforce and work needs.
- Create a stand-alone prescribed fire and fuels reduction workforce separate from suppression.
- Local Forest capacity for dedicated pre/post-burn monitoring
 - Interdisciplinary teams to coordinate monitoring work with planners and public engagement staff.
- Incentivized pay for fuels reduction work (compatible with fire suppression)

Possible Workforce planning questions

1. How are Tribal priorities identified and addressed?
 - a. Are Tribal Workforce needs being met?
 - b. Will these workforces support tribal priorities (tribal forest plans, tribal priorities in National Forest or other federal lands?)
 - c. Are Tribal members getting work?
2. What are the Workforce enabling conditions required for success?
3. What are the local and regional positions needed to support the implementation of the Wildfire Crisis Strategy?
 - a. Is there qualified staff available? Are there cross-certification considerations for personnel from other governing bodies (agencies, Tribes, States)
 - b. What mechanisms are needed to mobilize the available personnel (funding, contracts, agreement managers, etc.)?
 - c. Are there opportunities to utilize these efforts to build future, longer-lasting capacity?
4. Who are the partners with workforces that can support existing skills needs?
 - a. What is needed to partner with them?
5. What are the workforce development and training needs of personnel?
 - a. Ensuring promotion and maintaining institutional knowledge and advancement

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- b. When do recruitment and development begin (sciences, fieldwork, traditional knowledge, etc.)
6. What are opportunities to build and maintain workforces? For example, stand-alone fuel reduction staff and suppression staff combined? What are the pros and cons of seasonal labor?