



Wildfire Risk Reduction Infrastructure Team

Current Efforts, Progress, and Plans

Intertribal Timber Council

Dec. 1, 2021

Team Assignment and Principles

The Wildfire Risk Reduction Infrastructure Team (WRRIT) has been assigned by the Chief of the Forest Service to facilitate development of a strategic implementation plan for the 10-year framework (Combating the Wildfire Crisis). ELT has asked WRRIT to work with and through all Deputy Areas as well as alongside partners and Tribes to develop this plan.

- Deliberate engagement and collaboration both within and outside the agency
- Proactive and innovative communication products
- Adaptive learning environment
- Anchored in science

Forest Service work under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION TEAM – Hazardous Fuels

NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM –
Recreation
Restoration
Reclamation
Roads/Trails

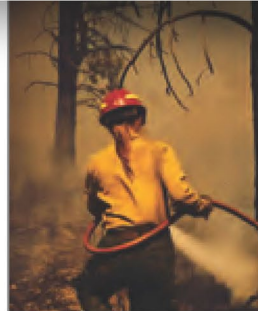
STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY –
Grants and Agreements
Firefighter Pay
Community Wildfire Protection Plans

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT – Supporting all efforts with up-to-date science

Milestones

HISTORIC FIRE YEAR

More than **7.4 million acres burned**—more than twice the average annual area burned for the previous 17 years.

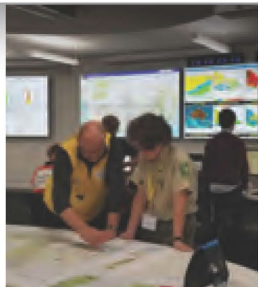


WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS

A study published by the Rocky Mountain Research Station estimated that **73 million acres** on the National Forest System were at **moderate to high risk of catastrophic wildfire**.

EMMITSBURG 13 MEETING

Partners in the wildland fire community met to **discuss a common strategy** for coping with rising fire year severity and growing wildfire risk.



2000 ◀ NATIONAL FIRE PLAN

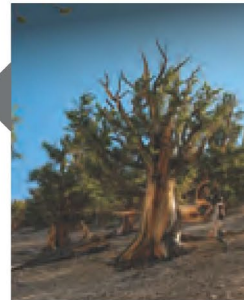
A **national plan is created** with five goals, including reducing hazardous fuels on the Nation's forests and grasslands.

2001 ◀ 10-YEAR STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A **strategy is adopted** for reducing wildfire risk, followed by an **implementation plan** for preventing and suppressing wildland fires, restoring ecosystems, and helping communities protect themselves from wildfire.

2002

2003



HEALTHY FORESTS RESTORATION ACT

Congress **passed legislation** to reduce wildfire risk by adding new categorical exclusions to extend the area of fuels and forest health treatments on Federal lands in the West.

2008

2010 ◀ COLLABORATIVE FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PROGRAM

The program will **fund more than 20 large-scale projects nationwide** with goals to restore forest health and reduce wildfire risk across shared landscapes.

INCREASING THE PACE OF RESTORATION AND JOB CREATION ON OUR NATIONAL FORESTS PUBLISHED ▶ 2012

The Forest Service **renewed its commitment** to restoring forests on a landscape scale by **expanding** collaborative partnerships, **improving** and **accelerating** stewardship contracting, and other means.

OMNIBUS BILL/“FIRE FUNDING FIX” ▶ 2018

Congress **passed legislation** providing a long-term funding fix that established 2015 as the baseline for firefighter appropriations and off-budget funding that reduced the need to borrow funding from nonfire programs.

JOHN PHIPPS TESTIMONY

The Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry called for changing the trajectory of fuel buildups by **scaling up fuels and forest health treatments** by at least two to three times.



OMNIBUS BILL ▶

The **Consolidated Appropriations Act** directed the Forest Service and U.S. Department of the Interior to provide “**an estimate of the Federal investment required to treat and restore all acres classified as being at high or very high risk** on the 2018 Wildfire Hazard Potential Map.”

INFRASTRUCTURE BILL ▶

The **Senate passed a bipartisan bill investing** about \$5.5 billion in natural-resources-related infrastructure, including a 5-year investment of about \$3 billion in restoring ecosystems and reducing wildfire risk.



NATIONAL COHESIVE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

A **national strategy is adopted** with three central goals: restoring fire-adapted ecosystems on a landscape scale, building fire-adapted human communities, and responding safely and effectively to wildland fire.

◀ OMNIBUS BILL/“CASE FOR CHANGE”

Due to rising wildfire risk, Congress asked the Trump administration to “review and update the National Fire Plan, as needed.” In response, the Forest Service launched “The Case for Change,” which led to **creation of a year-round workforce for wildfire response**.

2020

◀ “THOUGHT PIECE”

At the request of Congress, the Forest Service **delivered a “thought piece” paper on how to greatly scale up fuels treatments** and the projected costs of doing so.

◀ PARTNER ENGAGEMENTS

Forest Service leadership met with member of the National Association of State Foresters, American Forest Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, American Forests, and other organizations to **agree on a common vision for the future of America’s forests**.



“NATIONAL FIRE PLAN 2.0” VISIONING

The Forest Service **engaged** National Forest System directors and others in **analyzing** the Nation’s wildfire crisis in the West and **planning** for reducing wildfire risk.

Strategic Implementation Plan, FY 2022-2031

- **FY 22-23: Plan Development and Early Implementation**

- Hosting internal and external engagement, including formal Tribal consultation
- Identifying and implementing shovel ready projects (**early successes**)
 - New science-based approach to work, strategic in nature, including Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge
 - Collaborative cross-boundary design and implementation, including Tribal co-stewardship
 - Reduce exposure to critical infrastructure
- Capacity solutions (two phases)
 - Phase 1–Potential redesign of internal support systems (such as hiring and contracting processes), initial engagement with partners around leveraging capacity
 - Phase 2–Alignment of skill and capacity needs to be successful in implementing the 10-year strategy and more in-depth conversation with partners around leveraging opportunities
- Design a programmatic planning frame that assists at getting to scale; including consultation
- Establishing sub-teams
- Initiate planning for following years, analyze, and adjustments

Strategic Implementation Plan, FY 2022-2031 (Cont.)

- **FY 24-26, Ramp Up**

- Incorporating lessons learned from early implementation into new projects
- Developing new business processes, different way to engage cross-boundary treatments in an all-lands approach with partners
- Building capacity—both within agency, with partners, and Tribes
- Identifying and making possible policy and regulation shifts
- Incorporating additional prioritization layers (e.g., equal justice, ecological values)
- Making a significant increase in project selection and work
- Farm Bill coordination

- **FY 27-31, Sustainment (New Norm)**

- Continuing to select and implement projects
- Continuing effectiveness monitoring
- Building a case for continued investment

FY 2031 and Beyond (End State)

The Forest Service will have:

- Treated up to 20 million acres on NFS lands with partners, States and Tribes, in a cross-boundary approach to reduce wildfire exposure and increase landscape resiliency.
- Worked across boundaries with our partners and Tribes to assist them in treatment of up to 30 million acres beyond NFS lands.
- Developed internal systems that function well in helping us deliver our work (e.g. hiring, contracting).
- Developed processes to be systematically operating at scale using science as the under-pinning of all work.
- Shown that, as an agency, the Forest Service continues to be a good investment.

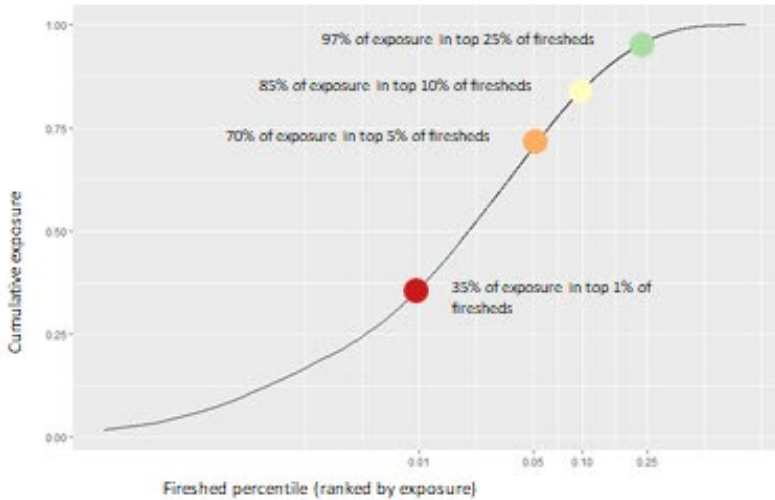
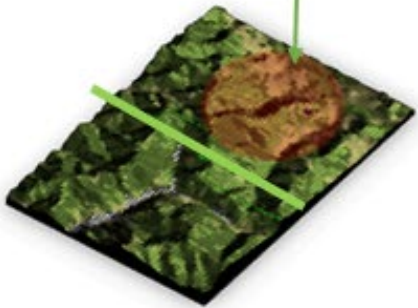
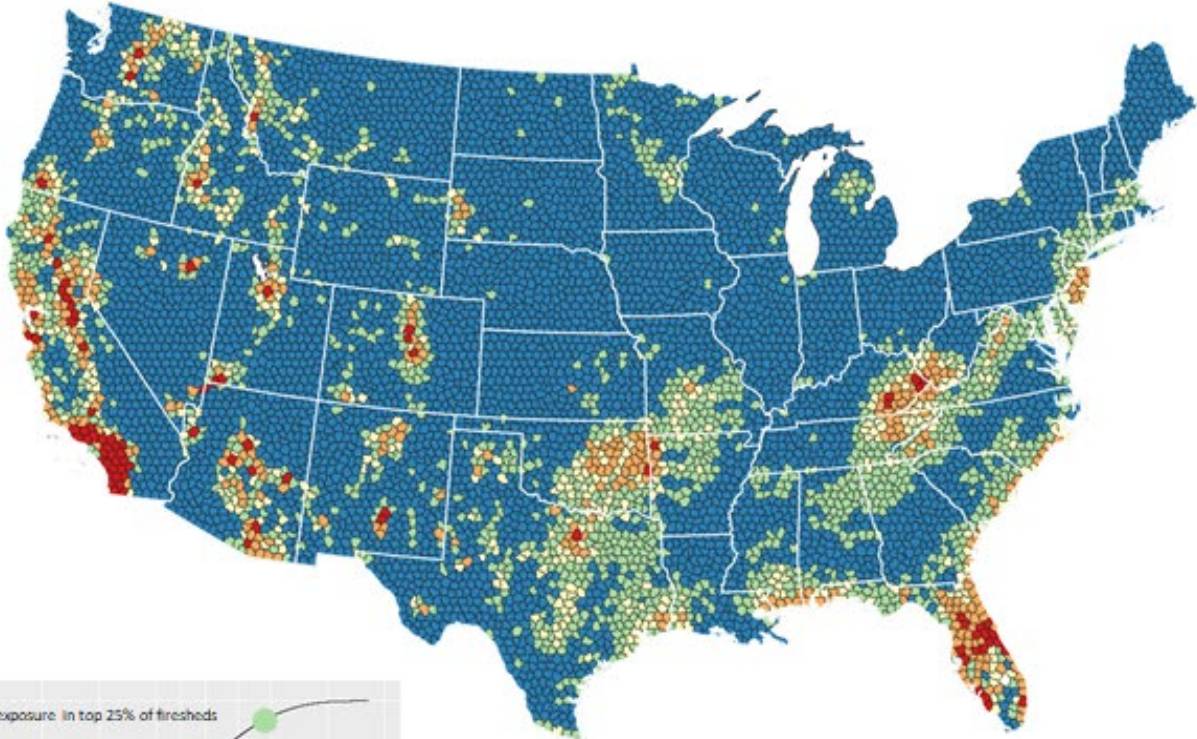
Determining Priority Landscapes

Science (including Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge) will underpin how we determine priority landscapes for investment

- Alignment with high-priority fireshed exposures
- Critical watersheds and community readiness
- Scenario planning based on exposure to infrastructure
- Other values will come into play years 3-10 based on feedback and engagements

Firesheds: ID Action Areas

“Hotspots”



- Top 1% = 35% of exposure
- Top 5% = 70% of exposure
- Top 10% = 85% of exposure
- Top 25% = 97% of exposure
- Bottom 75% = 3% of exposure

All Lands Zoned - Option 3



- Conifer only on FS
- All ownerships
- All hazardous vegetation

Ownership	Area treated		Exposure treated	
	(acres)	(%)	(buildings)	(%)
BLM	3,549,715	9.3	681.4	5.7
DOD/DOE	15,200	0.0	3.2	0.0
	205	0.0	0.1	0.0
Local	327,786	0.9	310.4	2.6
NPS	21,165	0.1	1.1	0.0
Other Federal	48,844	0.1	18.4	0.2
Private	15,259,455	39.9	6129.4	51.1
State	1,159,320	3.0	324.5	2.7
Tribal	1,632,604	4.3	502.4	4.2
USFS	16,262,877	42.5	1227.1	10.2

Non-FS = ~22 million acres

Reminder: map represents a landscape planning tool – exposure is defined in terms of where fires ignite and spread to adjacent communities

