

National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy



The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy) started as a collaborative process with active involvement of all levels of government and non-governmental organizations, but primarily the public, to seek all-lands solutions to wildland fire management issues. The Cohesive Strategy serves as a daily reminder to encourage everyone to work together using best management practices and the best available science to combat a 'new normal' of megafires and conflagrations negatively impacting private and public lands.

In 2009, Congress enacted the Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act (FLAME), which directed the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the

Department of Interior (DOI) to develop a national cohesive wildland fire management strategy to comprehensively address wildland fire management across all lands in the United States. In 2010, the intergovernmental Wildland Fire Leadership Council initiated the Cohesive Strategy effort, which focuses on achieving three essential goals: 1) restore and maintain landscapes so that landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances; 2) create fire-adapted communities so that human populations and

infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property; and 3) ensure a safe, effective and efficient risk-based wildfire response across all jurisdictions.

The effort to write a national fire strategy in 2010 was not the first time national agencies developed such a document. However, by building on expertise from several federal staffers involved in previous strategies and adding non-federal agencies, tribes and local

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Willing to serve in the fight against wildfire

We experienced another devastating wildfire season in 2020, consuming more than 10 million acres in the West at an estimated cost of close to \$20 billion in damages. Worse, lives were lost, and countless others were displaced from their homes. It's personal to many of us; here in the state of Washington, wildfire has impacted my friends and neighbors.

If there is a positive to take from this past year, it's that the megafires brought attention to the need for measures to combat climate change and improve forest conditions.

Conservation districts in my state are leaders in assisting homeowners with defensible space and post-fire recovery efforts. Throughout the country, conservation districts educate community leaders about wildfire, plan fuel breaks, and help to replant burn areas. There are so many success stories, and yet there is so much more work to be done.

This special report is intended to educate conservation districts about national and regional coordinated planning to combat wild-

fire, and how districts may contribute to the objectives set within the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.

Battling wildfire requires coordination at all levels and partners willing to serve however they are equipped. Count on conservation districts to serve.



Michael Crowder
NACD President

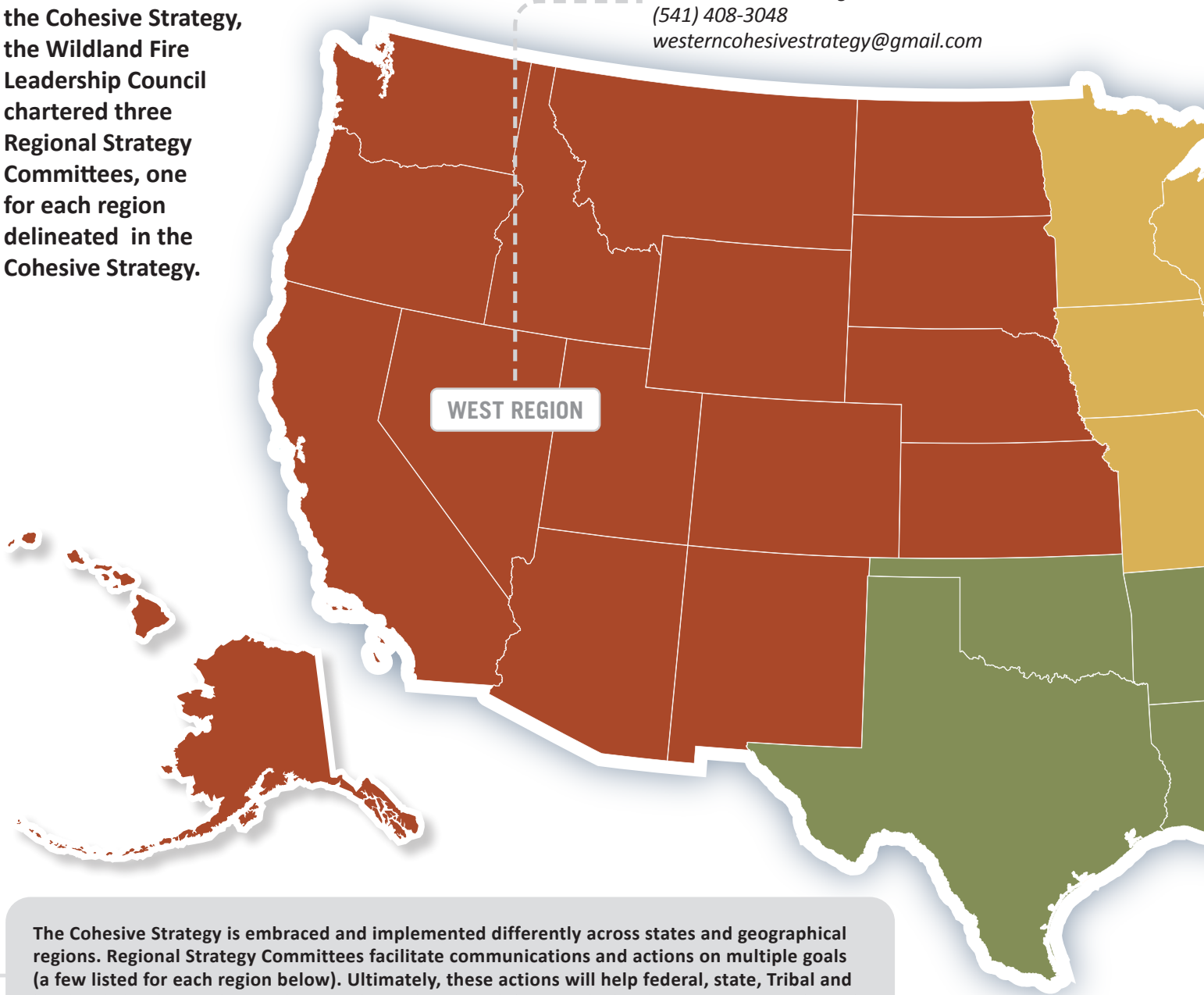
To help implement the Cohesive Strategy, the Wildland Fire Leadership Council chartered three Regional Strategy Committees, one for each region delineated in the Cohesive Strategy.

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The Cohesive Strategy is embraced and implemented differently across states and geographical regions. Regional Strategy Committees facilitate communications and actions on multiple goals (a few listed for each region below). Ultimately, these actions will help federal, state, Tribal and local stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities and who their partners are through strategic engagement at all levels.

WEST REGION

- Extinguish fires when needed. Where wildfires are unwanted or threaten lives, communities and homes, actively utilize all available strategies and tools to suppress fires and its growth.
- Use fire where allowable. Utilize prescribed fire and managed wildfire for landscape and ecosystem benefit in the right place, at the right time, under the right conditions.
- Manage our natural resources. Use and expand cross-boundary fuels treatments to increase landscape and community resiliency.

NORTHEAST REGION

- Improve the quality and quantity of LANDFIRE data to develop an accurate portrayal of the landscape in the northeast.
- Increase prescribed fire opportunities and training available to agencies, cooperators, and landowners.
- Encourage implementation of all-hazard state and community plans, including Ready Set Go! and Community Wildfire Protection Plans with increased fire department involvement.

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NORTHEAST REGION

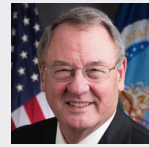
SOUTHEAST REGION

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SOUTHEAST REGION

- Increase firefighter and public safety, defensible space, community planning, and fire-resistant construction to decrease potential for dangerous conditions.
- Identify and enhance marketable products, recognizing ecological services from forests, recreation areas, habitat for wildlife, and protection from like hurricanes and flooding.
- Honor cultural values and traditions to maintain culturally, economically, and socially important plant and wildlife communities that depend on frequent fires to grow.



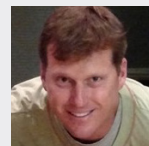
Working together, cross-boundary, to share stewardship, really makes a difference on the land in your neighborhoods, but it will require stepping outside your normal networks. Conservation districts are strategically placed at the local level and can provide their local knowledge and influence to lead the change and ensure successful outcomes.

James Hubbard
former Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment
U.S. Department of Agriculture



As we continue to address the wildland fire challenges across the U.S., conservation districts can play a key role at the grass roots level in mitigating wildfire danger on private farm and forest lands. Conservation districts are in a unique position to assist and encourage landowners to conduct prescribed fire and other active land management activities that can reduce the risk of wildfires on their property.

Dan Smith
Fire Director
National Association of State Foresters



Through their connections on the ground and throughout their communities, conservation districts are uniquely positioned to facilitate all three goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. Implementation of all three goals of the Cohesive Strategy also helps reach the mission of local conservation districts by being good stewards and conserving the land we love through locally-driven solutions.

Mike Zupko
Executive Director
Wildland Fire Leadership Council

government representatives, all stakeholders were now at the table; the new Cohesive Strategy was developed like none before it.

There was consensus during the development of a 'Call to Action' document, which focused on building awareness across the country. The exercise was not without conflicts and differences of opinion, but the commitment of all involved to create a ho-

listic approach and to find common ground allowed for the creation of Guiding Principles, which helped shape the framework of the Cohesive Strategy.

The Cohesive Strategy established a national vision "to safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and as a Nation, live with wildland fire." In order to achieve this vision, decisionmakers must address all three goals of the Cohesive Strategy and work together, collaboratively, at unprecedented levels. Recommendations and action plans were developed based on scientific data from the National Science and Analysis Team, which developed a national characterization and with input from the regional strategy committees, identified challenges and opportunities, which were then applied to community clusters and landscape classes' data layers.

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The National Association of Conservation Districts is organizing a series of regional wildfire discussions this spring. Please look for updates in NACD's weekly e-newsletter, eResource, or email NACD Forestry Specialist Mike Beacom if you would like to participate in your region's meeting.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS RELATED TO THIS SPECIAL REPORT



National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

The Cohesive Strategy website provides links to newsletters, success stories and several national and regional contacts.

<https://forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy/index.shtml>



National Association of Conservation Districts

Forest Health and Wildfires: The Role of Conservation Districts

This report provided key takeaways from a series of wildfire listening sessions organized by NACD.

<https://www.nacdnet.org/membership-resources/nacd-reports/>



Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network

The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network helps connect and support people and communities who are striving to live more safely with wildfire. The Network is a catalyst for spreading best practices and innovations in fire adaptation concepts nationwide.

<https://fireadaptednetwork.org/>



FEMA

Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool

The Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool is a free GIS web map that allows federal, state, local, tribal and territorial emergency managers and other community leaders to examine the interplay of census data, infrastructure locations, and hazards, including real-time weather forecasts, historic disasters and projected hazard risk.

<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/resilience-analysis-and-planning-tool>



NFPA Firewise

Firewise USA® has a variety of resources to assist homeowners, program participants, and other wildfire stakeholders as they travel down the path to wildfire risk reduction.

<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>

