



Press Release

Western Forestry Leadership Coalition

Delivering Resources, Partnerships, and Solutions for Western Forestry Challenges

Western Forestry Leadership Coalition Endorses National Cohesive Wildland Fire Strategy

Contact: Diane Denenberg
ddenenberg@wflcweb.org, 303.445.4365

April 18, 2014, 2014 (Denver, CO) -

Earlier this month, the final phase of the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy* was released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Department of Interior. The Cohesive Strategy is a collaborative effort by Federal, state, local, and tribal governments, non-governmental partners, and public stakeholders. In 2010, Congress required the development of this Strategy. The Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) has played an integral role in its development and believes the implementation of this strategy will aid in reducing wildfire risks as well as associated costs while restoring western forests.

In the *2010 True Costs of Wildfire in the Western U. S.* (<http://wflccenter.org/info-materials/reports/>) the WFLC listed the development of the Cohesive Strategy as one of eight recommendations to help provide the tools needed to address the devastating effect of increased wildland fires in the west. In order to explore beyond the costs of suppression and give a more accurate account of the cost to communities and the environment, the report analyzed data from six large western wildland fires. The report reveals that while the reported cost of suppression is large, it is merely a fraction of the true cost to society, which can be anywhere from 2 to 30 times higher than the more commonly reported suppression costs. Since 2000, annual fire suppression reported costs for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Interior have exceeded \$1 billion.

“We formed the WFLC over a decade ago,” comments WFLC State Co-Chair and Idaho State Forester, David Groeschl. “We knew we needed to collaborate across agencies to manage our lands and protect our communities”, he continues. WFLC Federal Co-chair and USFS Pacific SW Regional Forester, Randy Moore, agrees, “We have a strong Federal and State government partnership in the West and now with the completion of the Cohesive Strategy, the collaborative effort is broader and more inclusive than ever.”

The strategy is national in scope, includes all lands, is grounded in a science-based risk analysis and built with an emphasis on the field level perspective. In conjunction with scientific data analysis to set broad, strategic national-level direction, the Strategy will lay the foundation for implementing programs and activities across the nation.

Read more on the Wildfire Strategy in action in the Blue Mountains of Oregon/Washington at www.wflcweb.org. More information on the Strategy is at www.forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy/

The WFLC comprises 34 members from across the West: 23 western State and Pacific Island forestry agency directors, and 11 U.S. Forest Service members, which include 7 western USFS Regional Foresters, 3 western USFS Research Station Directors, and the USFS Forest Products Laboratory Director. A four-member staff based in Denver helps to deliver the goals and objectives of the Coalition. The mission of the WFLC is to promote science-based forest management that serves the values of society and ensures the health and sustainability of western forests.