



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

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OWF POLICY MEMORANDUM 2014-002

To: Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, National Park Service
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation
Director, U.S. Geological Survey

From: Jim Douglas, Director Office of Wildland Fire

Subject: Sharing Educational and Outreach Community Assistance Products

Purpose: This memorandum provides Wildland Fire Management Program direction to support the Fire-Adapted Communities goal of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy) by sharing community assistance information with internal and external partners and collaborators.

Background: The nature of community assistance in the Department of the Interior (Department) has evolved between the National Fire Plan in 2000 and the 2014 National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. Many early efforts focused on residences within the wildland-urban interface; however, communities and agencies have recognized that infrastructure, socio-economic factors, cultural-historic values, watersheds, and other components on the landscape are also important to community health and well-being. Hence, community assistance is not limited solely to the wildland-urban interface. Community efforts to become "fire-adapted" have become more deliberate as the risk of wildland fire has increased.

The Cohesive Strategy is based on three goals:

Restore and Maintain Landscapes: Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with management objectives.

Fire-Adapted Communities: Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.

Wildfire Response: All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, and efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.

Each of these three goals requires collaboration by the Department and bureaus at the state, tribal, local, and community level. Community assistance efforts within the Department are an important component of the Department's implementation of goals.

The Cohesive Strategy emphasizes an “all-hands, all-lands” approach, focuses on developing and growing partnerships, and describes partners’ roles and responsibilities. This inclusive approach allows the Department and the bureaus to focus on the primacy of our missions related to healthy and resilient landscapes, while working to support local and state governments and our shared mission of encouraging and supporting Fire-Adapted Communities. Collaboration is the key to the implementation of the Cohesive Strategy.

Departmental and bureau efforts to assist communities to become fire-adapted are functions with the following features: 1) To assist tribes, local governments, and communities to take responsibility and ownership of wildfire risk by building and sustaining Fire-Adapted Communities; 2) To reduce the risk and impact of wildfire to communities and tribes; 3) To train, assist, and partner with communities and tribes to live safely and compatibly with wildland fire.

Scope: This Policy Memorandum provides Wildland Fire Management Program direction to support the Fire-Adapted Communities goal of the Cohesive Strategy by sharing information to internal and external partners and collaborators through community assistance efforts.

Time Frame: This Policy Memorandum is effective immediately and remains in effect until rescinded, modified, or incorporated into future direction.

Policy: The Department strongly supports the Fire-Adapted Communities goal of the Cohesive Strategy, wherein “Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.” The three goals of the Cohesive Strategy are often inter-related, and Department efforts to support attainment of Fire-Adapted Communities does not exclude efforts that may help support the other goals of the Cohesive Strategy as well. Community assistance efforts within the Department support each of the goals of the Cohesive Strategy.

Wildland fire management in support of Fire-Adapted Communities will be framed as community assistance actions that address wildfire prevention, resident safety, homes, neighborhoods, businesses and infrastructure, forests, parks, open spaces, and other community assets on or near federal lands.

Each bureau will retain a national community assistance coordinator with responsibility for coordinating and documenting community assistance activities in that bureau. The Department coordinator for community assistance programs is the OWF Fuels Management Program Lead who will coordinate and document activities throughout the Department.

Bureaus will submit bureau-produced or bureau-sponsored community assistance materials (such as success stories, tools, initiatives and other materials) to the Department’s community assistance coordinator for posting to the interagency Cohesive Strategy webpage, www.forestandrangelands.gov, in order to make them available to the other bureaus as well as to other Federal, tribal, state, and local entities, and to the public. Materials are to be submitted as they are completed and/or implemented. Bureau community assistance coordinators are expected to work closely with their external communications staffs to gather or develop these materials.

The Submitted material should be ready for public viewing (e.g., 508 compliant). Materials should be high quality and may include, but are not limited to:

- Fire education and outreach products;
- Tools, guides, techniques, or handbooks;
- Success stories, accounts, educational or outreach efforts;
- Templates for agreements, MOUs or contracts;
- Photographs or graphics;
- Statistics, fact sheets, or research findings;
- Prevention materials or brochures;
- Community Wildfire Protection Plans and related documents and tools;
- Risk assessments and mitigation plans; and,
- FirewiseTM, Fire Safe and related tools, products, and literature.

The material should inform other bureaus, agencies, and external partners in the development of community assistance products. Links to other bureau websites, and especially to bureau specific efforts, are highly encouraged.

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