



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

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OWF POLICY MEMORANDUM 2015-004

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: Resilient Landscapes Pilot Program Guidance

Purpose:

This memorandum provides policy for the wildland fire Resilient Landscapes pilot program in the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Wildland Fire Management program. This memorandum supersedes and replaces OWF Policy Memorandum 2015-004, dated March 20, 2015.

Background:

The Department of the Interior supports the implementation of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy), including ensuring that "*Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with management objectives.*" The FY 2015 President's Budget proposed establishment of a Resilient Landscapes (RL) program within the wildland fire management program to address broad land-health outcomes in fire-adapted ecosystems by conducting treatments across specific landscapes that improve the integrity and resilience of forests and rangelands. In the FY 2015 appropriations bill, Congress provided \$10 million in the Fuels Management program to fund Resilient Landscapes activities. The Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) will use this funding to implement that Resilient Landscapes program on a pilot scale. The pilot program uses an approach developed by the Executive Committee comprised of executive level managers representing both fire and resource management programs from each land management bureau and the Resilient Landscapes Project Design Team comprised of senior staff managing similar landscape oriented programs. Secretarial Order (SO) 3336, *Rangeland Fire Prevention, Management and Restoration*, January 5, 2015, establishes "protecting, conserving, and restoring the health of the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem and, in particular, greater sage-grouse habitat, while maintaining safe and efficient operations, is a critical fire management priority for the Department. Allocation of fire management resources and assets, before, during, and after wildland fire incidents will reflect this priority, as will investments related to restoration activities." Implementation of the wildland fire Resilient Landscapes pilot program will reflect the provisions of SO 3336.

Scope:

This Policy Memorandum establishes a wildland fire Resilient Landscapes pilot program for the Department of the Interior to be implemented in partnership with non-fire DOI land and resource management programs as well as non-DOI partners

Time Frame: This Policy Memorandum is effective immediately and remains in effect until rescinded or modified. This memorandum supersedes and replaces OWF Policy Memorandum 2015-004, dated March 20, 2015.

Policy:

This Policy Memorandum is the primary guidance for the wildland fire Resilient Landscapes pilot program. The Resilient Landscapes program strengthens the Wildland Fire Management program's ability to contribute to the Cohesive Strategy goal of restoring and maintaining landscapes across all jurisdictions that are resilient to fire related disturbances in accordance with management objectives. The wildland fire approach to Resilient Landscapes uses an integrated, place-based approach of partnerships among programs, activities, and organizations to increase resilience to fire. Fire resiliency is the ability of a landscape to absorb the effects of fire by regaining, maintaining, or attaining the desired characteristic structural, compositional, and functional attributes. The amount of resilience a landscape possesses is proportional to the magnitude of fire effects required to fundamentally change the system.

The Resilient Landscapes program embraces the adaptive management principles defined in the Department of the Interior Adaptive Management policy, 522 DM 1.

Funding is Place-Based through Collaboration and Partnerships – The Resilient Landscapes program supports creating landscape characteristics that are resilient to wildfire and to accelerate treatments that reduce wildfire risks and support the ecological role of fire in fire-adapted ecosystems through a place-based approach, i.e., a discrete landscape, regardless of ownership. Funding will be provided to Resilient Landscapes Collaboratives comprised of Federal, tribal, state, non-governmental organization, and other stakeholder partners through a lead DOI land management agency.

Investments for Long-Term Benefits – Resilient Landscapes Collaboratives will be funded at a scale to provide results in five to ten years that will significantly contribute to long-term outcomes. Priority will be given to proposals that demonstrate ability to start implementation in FY 2015.

Matching Contribution and Cost Sharing – Each Resilient Landscapes-funded project will include a matching contribution in the form of funding or in-kind contribution from non-fire programs or activities in a DOI land managing bureau. Additional funding or in-kind matching contributions from other Federal, state, or local agencies, from tribes, and from non-governmental organizations are encouraged. No minimum match is required; however, similar proposals with a higher match or contributions will be more competitive.

Proposal Evaluations – Criteria for evaluation of proposals will include consistency with and contribution to the goals of the Resilient Landscapes program, Secretarial Order 3336, the Cohesive Strategy, and reduction of wildfire risk.

Management of Resilient Landscapes Program

The Resilient Landscapes program is administered by the OWF with support from two interagency, interdisciplinary teams.

Resilient Landscapes Executive Committee (RLEC) – The RLEC provides advice and recommendations to Director, OWF, on Resilient Landscapes program management and recommends proposals for funding. The RLEC provides executive level oversight of the implementation of the Resilient Landscapes program. Membership of the RLEC is comprised of an executive level representative from wildland fire and resource management programs of the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. *Ex officio* members from other organizations may be added by the OWF Director. The OWF Deputy Director for Policy and Budget provides principal support to the RLEC.

Resilient Landscapes Resource Team (RLRT) – The RLRT provides technical support and recommendations to the RLEC and OWF Director on Resilient Landscapes program guidance, proposal evaluation, and oversight. Membership of the RLRT is comprised of interagency, interdisciplinary technical experts designated by the RLEC. The OWF Program Lead for Fuels Management provides principal support to the RLRT.

The OWF will coordinate Resilient Landscapes program implementation with wildland fire management governance groups (e.g., Interior Fire Executive Council), the Forest Service, other Federal agencies, other partners, and stakeholders.

The Resilient Landscapes program will be managed as a pilot during FY 2015. OWF, with the support of the RLEC and the RLRT, will evaluate the pilot program and its implementation to inform development of permanent program guidelines and procedures for FY 2016 and beyond.

Prior to implementation of a permanent Resilient Landscapes program, OWF will engage in government-to-government tribal consultation in accordance with OWF, Departmental, and federal policy.

FY 2015 Proposal Process

A request for collaborative proposals for FY 2015 will be sent to bureau directors by the Director, OWF. The request will include Resilient Landscapes program guidelines, a proposal template, this Policy Memorandum, contacts for assistance (including OWF, RLEC and RLRT members), and documentation of workflow and funding request template. Proposals will be place based (with a discrete landscape boundary) and include the DOI bureaus and tribes, and other participating Federal, state, and non-governmental organizations.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria - Proposals will be evaluated and recommended for funding using the following criteria:

- Magnitude of benefit to improve fire resiliency and other ecosystem benefits, supports Cohesive Strategy, other DOI priorities, Secretarial and Executive Orders
- Achievable and sustainable work plan
- Extent of collaboration
- Outcome is achievable, affordable, and efficient
- Clear definition of short-term outputs, long-term outcomes, and expected results across the landscape
- Demonstrable measures
- Probability of success
- Level of funding commitment by partners
- Extent of wildfire risk for landscape

Funded Proposals – proposals that are selected for funding will be referred to as “*landscape name* Resilient Landscape Collaborative”. Subsequent funding for Resilient Landscape Collaboratives will be allocated annually, subject to satisfactory accomplishment and available funding. All selected and funded proposals will be required to provide additional information and progress reports as requested.

Additional detail and explanation of guidance is included in the attached Resilient Landscape Program FY 2015 Guidelines.

Contacts:

Any questions can be directed to Paul Steblein, Deputy Director, Policy and Budget, OWF at paul_steblein@ios.doi.gov or (202) 606-5053.

cc: Interior Fire Executives
Interior Fire Directors

Attachment