



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

AUG 17 2016

Memorandum

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: Bryan Rice, Director – Office of Wildland Fire

Subject: Announcement of the Fiscal Year 2017 Wildland Fire Resilient Landscapes Activities
Request for Proposals – Due November 17, 2016

The Department of the Interior's Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) is pleased to announce the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Wildland Fire Resilient Landscapes (WFRL) Activities Request for Proposals. The application period will be open for 90 days. Bureaus and partners are encouraged to submit new proposal requests that meet the WFRL key principles listed below. Proposals will be submitted, evaluated, and selected using the process and criteria outlined in the OWF Policy Memorandum 2016-012. The OWF annually reviews results of selected WFRL proposals.

Background

The WFRL activities seek to improve the integrity and resilience of forests and rangelands across broad landscapes by restoring fire-adapted ecosystems. Landscape resilience is the ability of an area to absorb and maintain integrity following the effects of wildfires. The WFRL collaboratives can implement various treatments to remove or modify vegetation to mitigate the potential for severe wildfire behavior, lessen post-fire damage, enhance threatened and endangered species habitat, and limit the spread or proliferation of invasive species and diseases.

The WFRL activities received \$10 million per year in FY 2015 and FY 2016 to support implementation of ten collaboratives. The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives appropriation bills for FY 2017 indicate a funding increase for the WFRL activities of up to \$30 million, as requested in the President's FY 2017 Budget.

In April 2016, the OWF issued OWF Policy Memorandum 2016-10 requesting bureaus submit pre-proposals for the FY 2017 WFRL activities. There was strong interest in the program from across the Department. OWF received over 70 pre-proposals totaling in excess of \$75 million.

The Department wants to express our appreciation to your bureau for the interest in the WFRL activities and the thoughtful development of pre-proposals. Depending on available funding in FY 2017 and considering the Department's continued commitment to support the original ten collaboratives, OWF anticipates funding 5 to 10 new WFRL collaboratives in FY 2017.

The WFRL activities support the implementation of the goals of the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy* to restore and maintain fire-resilient landscapes, to create communities that can withstand the effects of wildfire without the loss of life or property, and efficiently, effectively respond to wildfire. In addition, WFRL activities support the implementation of Secretarial Order (SO) 3336, *Rangeland Fire Prevention, Management, and Restoration*, signed January 5, 2015, which established "protecting, conserving, and restoring the health of the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem and, in particular, greater sage-grouse habitat, while maintaining safe and efficient operations, as a critical fire management priority for the Department."

Key Principles

Key principles of the program include the following:

Funding is through Collaboration and Partnerships

The WFRL collaboratives represent distinct geographic areas and demonstrate strong collaboration with multiple partners including tribes, local, state, and Federal governments, non-governmental organizations, and other interested stakeholders. Partnerships with tribes are encouraged to ensure that the Federal Government meets and upholds their trust responsibilities.

Investments for Long-Term Benefits

Successful WFRL collaboratives may receive up to 10 years of funding, when the results of activities improve wildfire resilience of forest and rangeland ecosystems across broad landscapes.

The Department will evaluate proposals based on criteria that include consistency with the goals of the WFRL activities, the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, and SO 3336. Goals of the WFRL program include:

- Reduce the likelihood of high severity wildfires;
- Reduce the likelihood of large wildfires;
- Re-establish wildfires' natural ecological role; and,
- Enhance or protect critical natural resources.

Program Administration

The OWF administers the WFRL activities, with support from two advisory interagency, interdisciplinary teams.

Fire and Resource Executive Committee (FREC)

The FREC provides executive level oversight for the implementation of the WFRL activities and recommends proposals for funding to the Director of OWF, after

consultation with the WFRL Resource Team. Membership of the FREC is comprised of executive-level representatives from the Department's wildland fire and resource management programs.

Wildland Fire Resilient Landscapes Resource Team (Resource Team)

The Resource Team provides technical support and recommendations to the FREC on WFRL activities guidance and proposal evaluation. Membership of the Resource Team is comprised of interagency, interdisciplinary technical experts.

Please submit your WFRL proposals through your respective bureau fire director to OWF. Direct any WFRL FY 2017 proposal related questions to either Paul Steblein, Deputy Director, Policy and Budget, OWF at paul_steblein@ios.doi.gov or to your respective bureau representatives on the Resource Team. Find additional information on WFRL and the current 10 WFRL collaboratives at <https://www.doi.gov/wildlandfire/wildland-fire-resilient-landscapes-program>.

cc: Fire and Resource Executive Committee
Interior Fire Executives
Interior Fire Directors

Attachment