

**Western Governors' Association
Forest Health Summit
Consensus Recommendations**

June 19, 2003
Missoula MT

Prevention and Suppression

Manage Public Expectations: Some fires just can't be put out!

Encourage cross-jurisdictional fire management planning and interagency coordination. Include local government and local resources.

Create the necessary public lands debate to accelerate fuels management treatments.

Establish a performance-based qualification system for wildland firefighters. Include all levels of government.

Look critically at fire workforce management -- out-sourcing and regulatory issues

Fuels Reduction

Monitoring:

Commit to fund and implement long-term multi-party monitoring that includes:

- mechanisms for adaptive management and information-sharing;
- ecological, socio-economic and accountability components;
- development of scientific principles.

Incentives: Create incentives for:

- fuels management standards for home insurers;
- private landowners to reduce fuels;
- market development for utilization;
- workforce development;
- maintenance of treated areas

Prioritization: There is an urgent need to reach consensus on the prioritization of fuels reduction projects. A subset of the group recommends that WGA lead a collaborative process to achieve consensus as outlined in the 10-year strategy.

Landscape Level Planning:

Create mechanisms for collaborative planning and implementation to reduce fuels across political and ecological boundaries with respect for private property rights and responsibilities.

Funding: None of the above will work without a commitment to adequate long-term funding.

Restoration

Adopt a consistent set of working definitions based on existing collaborative products. What is meant by: “Restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems”?

Lead multi-scale regional planning processes.

Lead education efforts to promote broader understanding, in particular among homeowners in the wildland/urban interface, of the role of fire in ecosystems.

Employ adaptive management strategies with bias for action.

Commit the resources necessary to monitor outcomes and adjust plans.

Collaboration (see notes from breakout session in Appendix A)

Governors should create (inclusive) statewide and local forest health councils.

WGA should create an advisory committee to identify and promote best practices for collaboration and fire management. Examples regarding the California Fire Safe Council, and Oregon’s Applegate Partnership should be closely considered.

WGA and the Administration should support experimental pilot projects.

WGA should seek more funding from the Administration and the Congress for the community assistance program and to promote collaboration.

WGA and the Administration should be clear and consistent regarding when collaboration is/is not appropriate.

Community Stability

Maintain and enhance existing timber processing infrastructure.

Ensure sustainable product supply.

Support increased and sustained federal and state funding for rural community assistance.

Seek funding for local access to and acquisition of technology.

Foster fair, sustainable, cooperative government business practices.

Governors should encourage local governments to incorporate the National Fire Plan into local and regional land-use planning.

Appendix A

COLLABORATION BREAK-OUT SESSION NOTES

Preface: [Overriding principles]

- We did the best that we could given time constraints and deep-seated historical conflicts.
- Policy-makers should support and build-on leadership from the bottom-up.
- Empower local people ---local solutions/locally driven
- Start with citizens!

1. Governors should create (inclusive) statewide and local forest health councils.

- Build on existing community-based organizations (e.g. COG's, CD's, RC&D's)
- Develop model fire plans
- Create web-sites
- Provide user-friendly data to serve as the foundation of decision-making
- Invest in GIS and other technology
- Use science data to establish risks and priorities
- Share resources/avoid duplication
- Employ adaptive management within the collaborative process
- Identify opportunities for state money
- Focus on areas diverse people can agree on—around homes.

Examples: [*look at fire-safecouncil.org --- firesafenetwork.net --- or California Fire Alliance*]

2. WGA should create an Advisory Committee to identify and promote best practices for collaboration and fire management.

- Document and evaluate examples/monitor
- Clarify terminology
- Identify best practices
- Recommit to and build on ENLIBRA
- Identify barriers ...develop options—reduce endless gridlock.
- Provide information and an education clearinghouse
- Develop *community* fire plans

3 WGA and the Administration should support experimental pilot projects.

- Integrate the Region 7 proposal into Forest Health Bill
- Create space for local people to have more influence over decisions that affect them.

4. WGA and the Administration should seek more funding for the community assistance program.

- Provide public education (particularly to urban people)—especially regarding science and technology in a comprehensive way.

- Provide training on CPS skills for agency personnel
 - Foster local leadership provide a system of accountability
 - Tie money to projects in strategic plan
 - Provide one stop process to improve administrative efficiency and intergovernmental coordination—encourage agencies to work together, share resources and technology
 - Conduct more social science research
5. **WGA and Administration should be clear and consistent regarding when collaboration is/is not appropriate.**
- Recognize that it is not a panacea.
 - Build trust by demonstrating ***your*** interest and commitment.