



## **The Science of Informed Risk: Science Team and Regional Strategy Committee**

### **Science Team Meets with Regional Strategy Committee**

The Western Region Strategy Committee (WRSC) met with the National Science and Analysis Team (NSAT) in Salt Lake City July 17th and 18th to review the information that the NSAT has gathered since May and to continue to fine tune the alternatives and performance measures that will be used in the Western Region Risk Analysis Report, which will be completed later this fall.

The group discussed a wide variety of topics critical to the outcome of the Cohesive Strategy (CS), like:

- Extent of the wildfire problem, looking at a wide variety of data sources
- Social issues related to local planning consideration
- Funding issues
- Fire response administrative and support capacity
- Where is it possible to use prescribed fire?
- What areas are available for mechanical treatments?
- How would the CS help identify priority areas needing priority for treatments?
- What is the role of science in the CS implementation phase?
- Alternatives and feedback from stakeholders (e.g., "recognize the importance of all 3 goals")
- Performance measures and feedback from stakeholders (e.g., "good performance measure are SMART – specific, measureable, action, realistic, time component")
- The need to support continued stakeholder involvement

The Risk Analysis Report will include the significant findings, recommendations, and conclusions of Phase III of the Western Region Cohesive Strategy effort. The regional risk analysis will be told as a series of stories and will discuss the unique wildland fire issues



in the West. A description of the data and modeling used will be interwoven in the stories. Graphics and charts will be used to illustrate the use of science in the planning and decision making process.

The report will also describe how decision-makers at various levels can use the alternatives and supporting information across the West to select the best investment options to meet the goals of the CS. It will discuss the strategic investment options available to meet priority actions and the tradeoffs that may be involved. More details of the report will be included in the September WRSC update.

### **Success Stories**

In August we feature wins and tips from the Northern California Prescribed Fire Council and Spring Mountains Natural Recreation Area Projects. As usual you can find this month's success stories at: <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/about-you/>

See our national Partner Perspectives and Success Stories at: <http://forestsandrangelands.gov>

Fire Adapted Communities <http://www.fireadapted.org>



## Western Regional Strategy Committee (WRSC) Update **August 2012**

### Western Governors Support Completion of CS

In a letter to the House and Senate leadership, the Western Governors' Association (WGA) outlined steps Congress should take to support wildfire suppression, post-fire recovery, and improving forest health to reduce the threat of "extreme" wildfires, including ensuring the completion of the Cohesive Strategy (CS).

WGA specifically asked that Congress provide supplemental funding for federal, state, and local firefighters battling wildfires this season, stating, "The West has been unusually hot and dry this spring and early summer. Additional extreme wildfires are very likely to continue throughout the end of this year."

And in keeping with the spirit of the CS, WGA also said "early response to wildfires posing a threat to communities is essential to ensuring public safety, keeping costs down, and reducing natural resource damage. Collaborative wildfire planning and response is effective and necessary given the interdependence of the entities with these responsibilities."

The complete letter from WGA to Congress may be found at: [http://www.westgov.org/component/joomdoc/doc\\_down-load/1618-wildfire-policy-and-funding-2012](http://www.westgov.org/component/joomdoc/doc_down-load/1618-wildfire-policy-and-funding-2012)

### Western Community Fire Management Assessment

As noted in last month's update, the WRSC is assessing strategies that communities, agencies and partners are pursuing to achieve the Cohesive Strategy's three goals. On July 16, The Watershed Center in Hayfork, CA sent an assessment to 1,097 contacts through existing networks. Those networks include:

- The Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition
- The National Forest Foundation
- Forest Guild
- California Firesafe Council
- Fire Adapted Communities Coalition (Firewise USA; Ready, Set, Go!)
- Fire Learning Network

The WRSC expects to reach an additional 1,000 contacts as a result of this assessment effort, reinforcing its commitment to a collaboratively developing the Western CS. As of July 20, 186 assessments had been initiated and 107 completed, with the majority of respondents to date agency employees.

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### Comment Period Complete

Stakeholders evaluated and commented until July 10th on the Western Regional Strategy's preliminary alternatives and performance measures being developed for implementation. This latest outreach period garnered Forty comments from individuals or groups.

The comments reflected the degree of stakeholder satisfaction with these two components of the Regional Strategy, and also provided details for improving the alternatives and adequacy and feasibility of the preliminary performance measures.

Participants were also to "provide crucial considerations to consider as we move toward implementation." For example: *"We must mobilize a nation. The cohesive strategy is about collaboration at the national and regional level, but the key is collaboration at the local level, supported by regional and national actors. We must consider how to build that capacity over time."*

General observations and recommendations in the draft Content Analysis report include:

1. Increase clarity on how the primary goals are addressed in each alternative
2. Clearly identify elements common to all alternatives
3. Improve descriptions of the alternatives rather than creating a new "blended" alternative
4. Reassess performance measures
5. More clearly describe program budget relationships
6. Continue to aggressively pursue expanded stakeholder engagement
7. Don't leave good stakeholder implementation ideas behind

For more details, please see the Content Analysis Report available soon at: <http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/updates/>