

REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE 1995 FEDERAL WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY

JANUARY 2001

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Geological Survey
Bureau of Reclamation

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
U.S. Forest Service

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration/National
Weather Service

**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AGENCY**

**FEDERAL EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE
FORESTERS**



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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

JAN 18 2001

Mr. Mike Dombeck
Chief
USDA Forest
2014th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mike:

I have received the Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. I concur with the recommendations of the Review Report, and specifically concur with the 2001 Federal Fire Policy and the Implementation Actions.

Begin implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy by taking the following actions as soon as feasible:

1. Update manuals, directives, handbooks, and other appropriate documents to reflect the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.
2. Take appropriate and timely steps to address the Implementation Actions, especially the completion of appropriate fire management plans.
3. Work with other departments and agencies to include them in the full range of policy, planning, and operation aspects of fire management programs, as appropriate and consistent with their programs and activities.
4. Work with state, tribal and other non-Federal organizations to implement the 2001 Federal Fire Policy on an intergovernmental basis.

A key finding of the Review Report was that the 1995 Policy was generally sound but that its implementation was incomplete, particularly in the quality of planning and in interagency and interdisciplinary matters. Oversight and leadership at senior levels is critical for successful implementation of the 2001 Policy.

The Review Report recommends establishing an interagency mechanism for coordinated interagency and interdisciplinary oversight of implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

Mr. Mike Dombek

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Consistent with this recommendation, you are directed to work with your counterpart agencies in the Department of the Interior to develop such an oversight mechanism. The Secretary of the Interior is sending a similar letter to agency heads in that Department.

Sincerely,



DAN GLICKMAN
Secretary



January 2001

To: Secretary of the Interior
Secretary of Agriculture
Secretary of Energy
Secretary of Defense
Secretary of Commerce
Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency

From: Interagency Federal Wildland Fire Policy Review Working Group

We are pleased to transmit to you our Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (Review and Update). This Review and Update was prepared in response to a request from the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture on June 27, 2000, to review the 1995 Federal Fire Policy and its implementation.

We strongly recommend that each of you accept the Guiding Principles and 2001 Federal Fire Policy contained in this Review and Update and move forward quickly with the Implementation Actions.

Our review and subsequent recommendations took place in the context of, and with full consideration of, the September 8, 2000 report to the President from the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, ***Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment: A Report to the President in Response to the Wildfires of 2000*** and the subsequent appropriations and guidance in the Fiscal Year 2001 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The findings and recommendations contained in the report support and endorse those made in the Report to the President and are consistent with the subsequent National Fire Plan. However, our findings and recommendations address a broader set of topics and can best be viewed as the philosophical and policy foundation for activities such as the National Fire Plan.

The June 27, 2000, memorandum identified five specific tasks for the review. In addressing these tasks we concentrated on broad scale, strategic issues. Detailed, operational aspects of policy implementation and agency procedures are best addressed at the program management level in each of the agencies.

In summary, our Review and Update addresses each of the five tasks as follows:

1. ***Review the status of the implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy and provide recommendations to the Secretaries for completing full implementation of the policy (including closing out items no longer necessary or appropriate).***

We reviewed the 1995 Federal Fire Policy and found it to be generally sound. The Review and Update contains minor changes to some of the specific 1995 policy statements and the addition of five statements to place additional emphasis on ecosystem sustainability, restoration, science, education and communication, and program evaluation. The set of revised and new policy statements are presented as the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

In addition, we reviewed each of the 83 specific action items in the ***1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy & Program Review***. The review found no fundamental flaws in the 1995 Federal Fire Policy. Experience with implementation of the policy in the past five years has demonstrated, however, that some aspects are unclear or unrealistic. Some issues were not explicitly addressed in 1995. Some items are no longer appropriate for action and should be dropped. A full accounting is contained in Appendix E of the Review and Update.

- 2. Address specific issues raised in the Cerro Grande Prescribed Fire Investigation Report and the subsequent Independent Review Board Report and provide recommendations to the Secretaries for resolving these issues.***

The recommendations in these investigations and reports address operational procedures and implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy that are best implemented through program management changes. The Departments of the Interior and Agriculture are each taking internal actions to address these recommendations. We expect that additional federal agencies that adopt the 2001 Federal Fire Policy will incorporate the changed procedures and implementation measures as appropriate.

- 3. Provide recommendations to the Secretaries for strengthening the organizational aspects of the wildland fire management programs in the two Departments to ensure effective implementation of wildland fire policy.***

This Review and Update contains Findings and Implementation Actions to greatly expand the set of agencies that work together on fire management to include those with land management responsibilities (such as the Departments of Energy and Defense), those with supporting programs in science, information, and technology, and those with regulatory activities that directly affect fire management. In addition, we strongly recommend the creation of an interagency, interdisciplinary mechanism at the senior level to ensure that fire policy is implemented effectively, efficiently, and in a timely manner throughout the federal government.

- 4. Provide any other recommendations to the Secretaries that would improve the wildland fire management programs in the two Departments.***

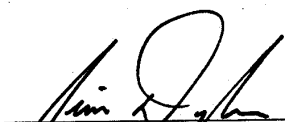
The Review and Update recommends a series of strategic Implementation Actions essential for wildland fire management. We recommend that all federal agencies with fire management responsibilities or related programs adopt these as appropriate within their organizations.


- 5. Recommend a management structure for completing implementation of the recommendations.***

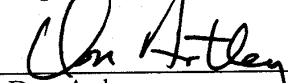
Successful implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy requires coordination, consistency, and agreement among five traditional fire management operating agencies in two Departments, requires fire managers to forge new working relationships with other disciplines within those agencies, and requires the inclusion of agencies not traditionally integrated into wildland fire management activities. Although some interagency groups and committees exist to help facilitate coordination, they do not include the full range of affected programs and often lack authority to resolve differences. We recommend establishing a new mechanism for ensuring coordinated interagency and interdisciplinary implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy at the senior level.

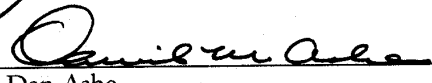
Your actions to implement the 2001 Federal Fire Policy are essential. We have identified Implementation Actions that are critical for ensuring the long-term success of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. Appropriate implementation will vary by agency, depending on the nature of its programs and activities. Agencies with land management responsibilities should ensure that appropriate plans are in place, that personnel are trained and available, and that each agency fully participates in interagency fire operations. Agencies with supporting or related programs should implement the 2001 Federal Fire Policy as appropriate in the context of their specific programs and activities.

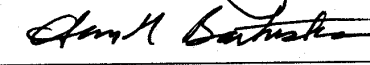
Regardless of whether agencies have operational fire and land management responsibilities, or have supporting or complementary programs, we urge that the fire management aspects of each of the agencies participating in this review be integrated on an ongoing basis – not only through operational coordinating groups, but also at the senior management or policy level. We urge you to appoint a group to develop a specific plan to implement a senior level interagency coordination and leadership mechanism for integrated program management.

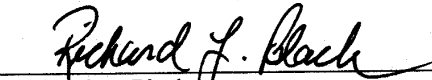

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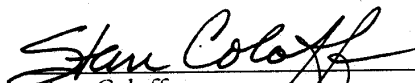

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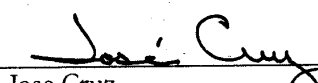

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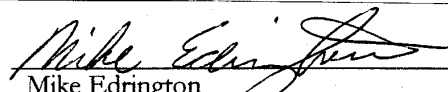

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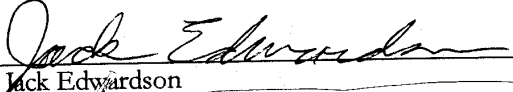

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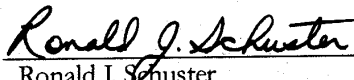

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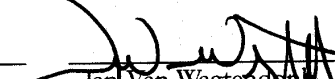

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U.S. Geological Survey

To: Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, National Park Service
Director, Fish and Wildlife Service
Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Director, Geological Survey
Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation
Director, Office of the Wildland Fire Coordinator

From: Secretary

Subject: 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy

I have received the *Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* and concur with the 2001 Federal Fire Policy and Implementation Actions. A copy is enclosed for your reference.

Each of you is to undertake the following actions:

1. Update manuals, directives, handbooks, and other appropriate documents to reflect the 2001 Federal Fire Policy as soon as feasible.
2. Take appropriate, timely steps to address the Implementation Actions in coordination with other federal departments and agencies.
3. Work with the Departments of Energy, Defense, and Commerce, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to include them in the full range of policy, planning, and operational aspects of wildland fire management programs, as appropriate and consistent with their programs and activities.
4. Work with state, tribal, and other non-federal organizations to implement the 2001 Federal Fire Policy on an intergovernmental basis.

The Director, Office of the Wildland Fire Coordinator is to provide Department-wide leadership, direction, and coordination to ensure that the 2001 Federal Fire Policy is implemented in a consistent, timely fashion within the Department and with other Departments and agencies and to ensure that implementation is coordinated with the National Fire Plan and other wildland fire management activities and initiatives.

Working with appropriate personnel in other Departments and agencies, the Director, Office of the Wildland Fire Coordinator is to develop options and recommendations for an interagency mechanism for coordinated interagency and interdisciplinary oversight of

implementation of the 2001 Federal Policy, as presented in Implementation Action 9(a). A number of potential options exist for such a mechanism. These options and recommendations are to be prepared and delivered to the appropriate Secretaries and other agency heads no later than June 1, 2001.

Enclosure

cc: Secretary of Agriculture
Secretary of Commerce
Secretary of Defense
Secretary of Energy
Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency
Chief, U.S. Forest Service
Deputy Secretary
Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget
Assistant Secretary – Land and Minerals Management
Assistant Secretary – Fish and Wildlife and Parks
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs
Assistant Secretary – Energy and Water

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The Interagency Federal Wildland Fire Policy Review Working Group (Working Group), at the direction of the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, reviewed the **1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy & Program Review** (1995 Report) and its implementation. The Working Group found that the policy is generally sound and continues to provide a solid foundation for wildland fire management activities and for natural resources management activities of the federal government.

In this Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (Review and Update), the Working Group recommends selected changes and additions to the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (1995 Federal Fire Policy) to clarify purpose and intent and to address issues not fully covered in 1995.

The Working Group further found that implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy remains incomplete in many areas, especially those that involve collaboration, coordination, and integration across agency jurisdictions and across different disciplines. The Working Group recommends a number of strategic implementation actions to ensure that federal wildland fire management policy is successfully implemented in all applicable federal agencies on a collaborative, coordinated, and integrated fashion as quickly as possible. The revisions, additions and implementation actions recommended in this report are presented in Chapter 3 as the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

In summary, the Working Group finds and recommends that federal fire management activities and programs are to provide for firefighter and public safety, protect and enhance land management objectives and human welfare, integrate programs and disciplines, require interagency collaboration, emphasize the natural ecological role of fire, and contribute to ecosystem sustainability.

The 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2001 Federal Fire Policy) contained in this report replaces the 1995 Federal Fire Policy. It should be adopted by all federal agencies with fire-management-related programs and activities as appropriate through directives, manuals, handbooks, and other documents.

Subsequent to the initiation of this review and update of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy, the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture prepared a report, ***Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment: A Report to the President in Response to the Wildfires of 2000*** and the Congress provided substantial new appropriations and guidance in the Fiscal Year 2001 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The activities resulting from the Secretaries' report and the Congressional action are generally known as the National Fire Plan. While this Review and Update supports and complements the National Fire Plan, the two efforts are different. This Review and Update, with its findings and recommendations, provides a broad philosophical and policy foundation for federal agency fire management programs and activities, including those conducted under

the National Fire Plan. In contrast, the National Fire Plan and similar interagency activities, focus on operational and implementation activities. A major feature of the National Fire Plan is the interagency (especially between federal and non-federal entities) aspect of risk reduction planning and implementation. In summary, the 2001 Federal Fire Policy contained in this report is focused on internal federal agency strategic direction for a broad range of fire management related activities while the National Fire Plan is a more narrowly focused and tactical undertaking involving both federal and non-federal entities.

BACKGROUND

The 1995 Report produced the first single comprehensive federal fire policy for the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture. That review was stimulated by the 1994 fire season with its 34 fatalities and growing recognition of fire problems caused by fuel accumulation. The resulting 1995 Federal Fire Policy recognized, for the first time, the essential role of fire in maintaining natural systems.

In the aftermath of the escape of the Cerro Grande Prescribed Fire in May of 2000, the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture requested a review of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy and its implementation. Their charge to the Working Group included:

- Review the implementation status of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy.
- Address specific issues related to interagency coordination, cooperation, availability, and use of contingency resources.
- Provide recommendations to the Secretaries for strengthening the organizational structure of wildland fire management programs to ensure effective implementation of a cohesive federal wildland fire policy.
- Provide any other recommendations that would improve federal wildland fire management programs.
- Recommend a management structure for completing implementation of the recommendations.

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

The Working Group reached the following principal conclusions:

- The 1995 Federal Fire Policy is still generally sound and appropriate.
- As a result of fire exclusion, the condition of fire-adapted ecosystems continues to deteriorate; the fire hazard situation in these areas is worse than previously understood.
- The fire hazard situation in the Wildland Urban Interface is more complex and extensive than understood in 1995.
- Changes and additions to the 1995 Federal Fire Policy are needed to address important issues of ecosystem sustainability, science, education, communication, and to provide for adequate program evaluation.

- Implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy has been incomplete, particularly in the quality of planning and in interagency and interdisciplinary matters.
- Emphasis on program management, implementation, oversight, leadership, and evaluation at senior levels of all federal agencies is critical for successful implementation of the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2001 Federal Fire Policy).

IMPLEMENTATION

Each of the departments or agencies participating in the review should adopt the Guiding Principles, 2001 Federal Fire Policy statements, and Implementation Actions found in Chapter 3 of this Review and Update. All federal fire program activities should take place in cooperation and partnership with State and other organizations.

Full implementation of many specific Action Items from the 1995 Federal Fire Policy remains critical for the successful implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. The Review and Update contains a detailed listing of the status of those Action Items, along with appropriate future actions based on the 2001 Federal Fire Policy and associated Implementation Actions.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The 2001 Federal Fire Policy and its implementation are founded on the following Guiding Principles:

1. Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.
2. The role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent will be incorporated into the planning process.
3. Fire management plans, programs, and activities support land and resource management plans and their implementation.
4. Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities.
5. Fire management programs and activities are economically viable, based upon values to be protected, costs, and land and resource management objectives.
6. Fire management plans and activities are based upon the best available science.
7. Fire management plans and activities incorporate public health and environmental quality considerations.
8. Federal, State, tribal, local, interagency, and international coordination and cooperation are essential.
9. Standardization of policies and procedures among federal agencies is an ongoing objective.

KEY THEMES OF THE REVIEW AND UPDATE

- **Ecosystem Sustainability:** The 1995 Federal Fire Policy recognized the role fire plays as a critical natural process. This Review and Update builds on the 1995 Report to include policies recognizing the role of fire in sustaining healthy ecosystems, the restoration and rehabilitation of burned lands, and the importance of sound science in fire management activities.
- **Fire Planning:** The 1995 Federal Fire Policy requires Fire Management Plans for all areas with burnable vegetation. Significant work remains to complete these plans for many areas. Many plans need updating and integration with underlying land management plans. Agencies such as the Departments of Defense and Energy need to coordinate their planning efforts based on the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. Fire Management Plans that address all aspects of fire management activities remain the foundation for implementing the 2001 Federal Fire Policy and must be completed as promptly as possible.
- **Fire Operations:** The 1995 Federal Fire Policy statements on operational aspects of fire management including safety, protection priorities, preparedness, suppression, use of wildland fire, prevention, and Wildland Urban Interface roles and responsibilities, are carried forward in the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. The 2001 Federal Fire Policy clearly states that response to wildland fire is based on the Fire Management Plan, not the ignition source or location of the fire. The Review and Update recognizes the need to reach agreement on the requirements for weather products and services, and the best means to meet those requirements.
- **Interagency Coordination and Cooperation:** A key theme of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy is the importance of standardization and interagency cooperation and coordination among federal agencies and between federal agencies and non-federal organizations. The Review and Update recognizes the importance of including additional federal land managing agencies (e.g. Department of Defense and Department of Energy) and agencies with supporting or related programs (e.g. National Weather Service, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, Federal Emergency Management Agency) as full partners in wildland fire management activities and programs. The Review and Update also adds a specific policy on communication and education to ensure that the 2001 Federal Fire Policy is well understood inside the fire management agencies and by the public.
- **Program Management and Oversight:** The Working Group found that there is no effective means of overseeing and evaluating implementation of fire policy, especially across agency and program lines. A new policy on evaluation is therefore included in the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. The need for a mechanism for coordinated interagency and interdisciplinary fire management program leadership and oversight is included in the Implementation Actions. Other actions to improve program management include analyses of workforce requirements and of fire management and suppression organizational structures.

CHAPTER 1 — BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

EVOLUTION OF FEDERAL WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The first national fire policy came after several years of severe fires between 1910 and 1935. In the context of the ecological theory of the time, fire exclusion was believed to promote ecological stability. In addition, fire exclusion could also reduce commodity damages and economic losses. In 1935, the USDA Forest Service instituted the “10 AM Policy,” wherein the objective was to prevent all human-caused fires and contain any fire that started by 10 a.m. the following day.

By the 1960s, fire management costs were increasing exponentially. The 1964 Wilderness Act, Tall Timbers Research Conferences, and Southern Forest Fire Lab research demonstrated the positive benefits derived from natural and prescribed fire. As a result, national fire policy began to evolve to address both the economic and ecological benefits of not aggressively controlling, and even using, fire. In February 1967, the USDA Forest Service permitted leeway for early- and late-season fires. In 1968, the National Park Service changed its policy to recognize the natural role of fire, allow natural ignitions to run their course under prescribed conditions, and use prescribed fires to meet management objectives. In 1971, the USDA Forest Service 10-Acre Policy was added, which set a pre-suppression objective of containing all fires within 10 acres.

In 1977 a new fire policy was selected by the USDA Forest Service that replaced both the 10 AM and 10-Acre policies. The new policy encouraged a pluralistic approach — fire by prescription. Even for suppression, once initial attack failed, alternatives to full suppression were to be considered. Fire suppression became fire management.

The 1989 review of the 1988 Yellowstone fires continued fire policy evolution. The review report affirmed the positive benefits of fire, but also identified the inherent risks and liabilities of using fire and recommended greater planning, preparation, cooperation, and management oversight.

The 1994 fire season with its 34 fatalities (14 at South Canyon, Colorado) precipitated the **1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy & Program Review** (1995 Report). This review again affirmed the positive benefits of fire. It recognized that fire was part of a larger problem, one of several symptoms of natural ecosystems becoming increasingly unstable due to altered ecological regimes. It talked about the needs for landscape-level resource management, the integration of fire into land management planning and implementation, and the involvement of all affected landowners and stakeholders.

In light of the extensive fires in the summer of 2000, President Clinton asked the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to prepare an analysis of actions and requirements. Their report, *Management the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment: A Report to the President in Response to the Wildfires of 2000* focused on several key points: restoring landscapes and rebuilding communities, undertaking projects to reduce risks, working directly with communities, and establishing accountability. The Congress expressed its support with substantial new financial resources in the two Departments' Fiscal Year 2001 appropriations, along with direction for aggressive planning and implementation to reduce risks of wildland fire in Wildland Urban Interface areas.

1995 FIRE POLICY AND PROGRAM REVIEW

The 1995 Report resulted in the first comprehensive statement of wildland fire policy coordinated between the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture. In addition to the two Departments joining together in unified policy, the 1995 Report articulated clear direction on important issues of safety, the role of fire in natural resource management, and the relative roles of federal and non-federal agencies in the Wildland Urban Interface. The 1995 Report also contained significant background narrative and documentation on the importance of these policy positions.

This Review and Update builds on the 1995 background and rationale for the underlying body of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. In particular, the following ideas from the 1995 Report remain valid:

1. Protection of human life is the first priority in wildland fire management.
2. Every firefighter, every fireline supervisor, every fire manager, and every agency administrator takes positive action to ensure compliance with established safe firefighting practices.
3. Fire exclusion efforts, combined with other land-use practices, have in many places dramatically altered fire regimes so that today's fires tend to be larger and more severe. It is no longer a matter of slow accumulation of fuels; today's conditions confront us with the likelihood of more rapid, extensive ecological changes beyond any we have experienced in the past. To address these changes and the challenge they present, we must first understand and accept the role of wildland fire, and adopt land management practices that integrate fire as an essential ecosystem process.
4. The task before us – reintroducing fire – is both urgent and enormous. Conditions on millions of acres of wildlands increase the probability of large, intense fires beyond any scale yet witnessed. These severe fires will in turn increase the risk to humans, to property, and to the land upon which our social and economic well being is so intimately intertwined.

5. Agencies must create an organizational climate that supports employees who implement a properly planned program to reintroduce wildland fires.
6. Where wildland fire cannot be safely reintroduced because of hazardous fuel build-ups, some form of pretreatment must be considered, particularly in Wildland Urban Interface areas.
7. The Wildland Urban Interface is defined as the line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels.
8. The Wildland Urban Interface has become a major fire problem that will escalate as the nation moves into the 21st Century. People continue to move from urban to wildland areas. They give little thought to the wildfire hazard, and bring with them their expectations for continuation of urban emergency services. Further, property owners believe that insurance companies or disaster assistance will always be there to cover losses. There is a widespread misconception by elected officials, agency managers, and the public that Wildland Urban Interface protection is solely a federal concern.
9. Fire protection problems in the Wildland Urban Interface are complex. Complicated barriers must be overcome to address them. These barriers include legal mandates, zoning regulations, fire and building codes, basic fire protection infrastructure, insurance and fire protection grading and rating systems, environmental concerns, and Fire Protection Agreements. Political, social, and psychological factors further complicate the problems. There is no one simple solution. Leadership and cooperation are essential.
10. The problem is not one of finding new solutions to an old problem, but of implementing known solutions. Deferred decision making is as much a problem as the fires themselves. If history is to serve us in the resolution of the Wildland Urban Interface problem, we must take action on these issues now. To do anything less is to guarantee another review process in the aftermath of future severe fires.

CHARGE FROM THE SECRETARIES OF THE INTERIOR AND AGRICULTURE

Following the investigation, and subsequent report by the Independent Review Board, of the May 2000 Cerro Grande Prescribed Fire in New Mexico, the Secretary of the Interior announced that he and the Secretary of Agriculture would reconvene the Working Group that developed the 1995 Federal Fire Policy to assess the status of the policy and its implementation.

In a June 27, 2000, memorandum the two Secretaries outlined their direction for reviewing the 1995 Policy and its implementation. This memorandum identified five specific review tasks:

1. Review the status of the implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy and provide recommendations to the Secretaries for completing full implementation of the policy.
2. Address specific issues raised in the Cerro Grande Prescribed Fire Investigation Report and the subsequent Independent Review Board Report, and provide recommendations to the Secretaries for resolving these issues.
3. Provide recommendations to the Secretaries for strengthening the organizational aspects of the wildland fire management programs in the two Departments to ensure effective implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.
4. Provide any other recommendations to the Secretaries that would improve the wildland fire management programs in the two Departments.
5. Recommend a management structure for completing implementation of the recommendations.

HOW THE REVIEW WAS DONE

The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture asked that the Working Group that developed the 1995 Federal Fire Policy be reconvened. To honor this request, the structure and membership of the earlier group was replicated as nearly as possible, using as many of the same individuals as available. In some cases, individuals had retired or moved to other positions, so their successors or individuals in similar positions or with similar backgrounds were asked to serve. As in 1994-95, the Working Group was co-chaired by the USDA Forest Service and the Department of the Interior.

In recognition of the importance of wildland fire in other agencies, the Departments of Energy and Defense and the Bureau of Reclamation were invited to join the Working Group. In addition, the National Association of State Foresters was invited to join the group to represent the important perspectives of non-federal wildland fire agencies. The resulting group included a broad mix of fire and resource managers, line managers, and program managers from programs closely associated with fire management. Professional staff from all of the participating agencies supported the Working Group.

To respond to the tasks in the memorandum from the Secretaries, the Working Group used the following principal sources of information:

- ***Status of the implementation of the specific Action Items in the 1995 Report*** – each of the five bureaus with fire management programs (USFS, BLM, NPS, BIA, FWS) was asked to report on the status of the Action Items. Their responses were tabulated and reviewed.
- ***Survey of Employees*** – the Brookings Institution was commissioned to survey a random sample of fire managers, resource

managers, and agency administrators in each bureau around the country regarding their views on adequacy and implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy.

- **Employee Input**— employees were invited to provide their views on the 1995 Federal Fire Policy and its implementation through a Web site.
- **Non-governmental Input**— letters were sent to non-governmental organizations requesting their views on the 1995 Federal Fire Policy and its implementation.
- **Reports, Reviews, Studies**— a variety of internal and external reports, reviews, studies, and investigations of various aspects of wildland fire were reviewed.
- **Program Data**— statistical and other descriptive sources of information about wildland fire scope and activity were compiled and reviewed.
- **Issue-specific Analyses**— a number of short papers or oral presentations on specific issues were developed by professional staff.

The 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2001 Federal Fire Policy) contained in this Review and Update replaces the 1995 Federal Fire Policy. It should be adopted by all federal agencies with fire-management-related programs and activities as appropriate through directives, manuals, handbooks, and other documents.

The Working Group focused its efforts on “strategic” issues surrounding the 1995 Federal Fire Policy and its implementation. More specific implementation issues are best addressed at the program management level. Thus, a number of important but specific operational or policy implementation issues were raised in the course of the Working Group’s discussions, but not addressed in this Review and Update.

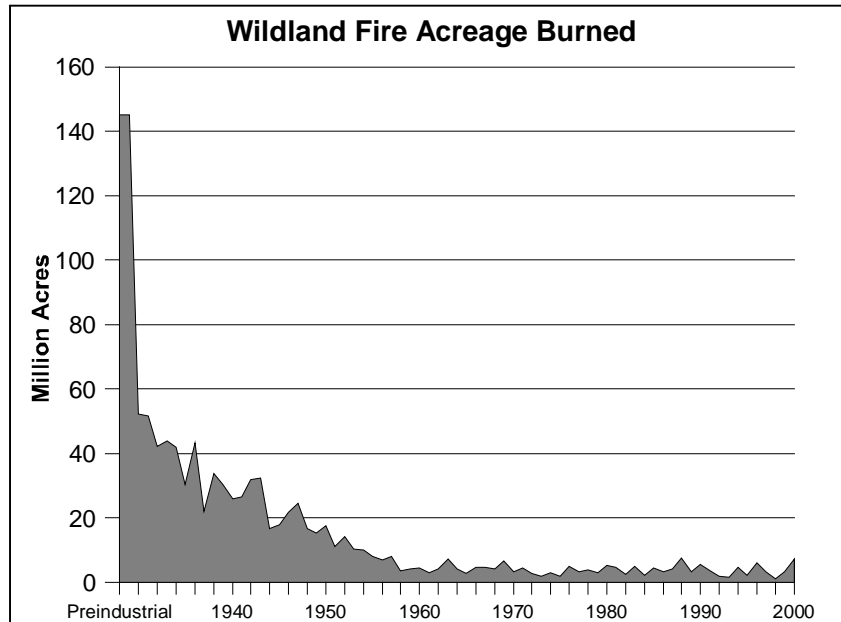
IMPORTANT FIRE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

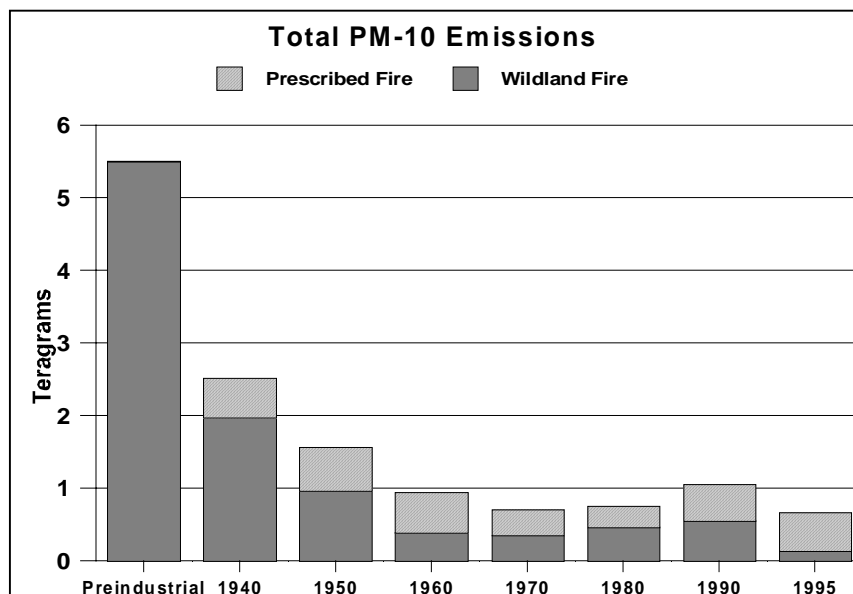
Historically, fire has been a frequent and major ecological factor in North America. In the conterminous United States during the preindustrial period (1500-1800), an average of 145 million acres burned annually. Today only 14 million acres (federal and non-federal) are burned annually by wildland fire from all ignition sources. Land use changes such as agriculture and urbanization are responsible for 50 percent of this 10-fold decrease. Land management actions including land fragmentation and fire suppression are responsible for the remaining 50 percent.

This decrease in wildland fire has been a destabilizing influence in many fire-adapted ecosystems such as ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, pinyon/juniper woodlands, southern pinelands, whitebark pine, oak savanna, pitch pine, aspen, and

tallgrass prairie. Fuels increased and understory vegetation became more dense. As a result, those wildland fires that did occur were larger and more severe than historical fires. Eliminating fire also affected individual plant species. For example, Hessel and Spackman (1995) found that, of the 146 threatened, endangered, and rare plant species found in the conterminous U. S. for which there is conclusive information on fire effects, 135 species benefit from wildland fire or are found in fire-adapted ecosystems.



This decrease in wildland fire has also provided positive human health and welfare benefits by significantly decreasing natural air pollution (e.g., particulate matter less than 10 microns in size: PM-10.).



CURRENT CONDITION OF FEDERAL LANDS

In 1999, Hardy et al. published a preliminary course-scale analysis of current fire regimes and land condition classes in the conterminous U. S. This analysis, for the first time, provided a complete fuels management assessment of all federally managed lands, and a picture of the magnitude of the ecological effects of the exclusion of landscape-scale fire. Refinement of this preliminary data (e.g., chaparral) is currently underway and will eventually provide greater resolution and improved usefulness.

The federal government has management responsibility for approximately 415 million acres of fire-adapted land in the conterminous United States. Approximately 200 million of these acres were historically subject to *frequent* fire regimes with fire return intervals of less than 35 years. Included in these lands are ponderosa pine forests, southern pinelands, and prairie grasslands. Another 215 million acres were historically subject to *infrequent* fire regimes with fire return intervals greater than 35 years. Examples include lodgepole pine, northern hardwoods, and desert shrublands.

The federal lands in these two fire regimes have been further classified into three condition classes (Hardy et al. 1999):

| Condition Class | Frequent | Infrequent | Total |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------|-------|
|Millions of Acres..... | | | |
| 1 | 69 | 135 | 204 |
| 2 | 93 | 48 | 141 |
| 3 | 38 | 32 | 70 |
| Total | 200 | 215 | 415 |

Over 200 million acres of federal land are in Condition Class 1, where human activity has not significantly altered historical fire regimes, or adequate land management activities have successfully maintained ecological integrity. These areas usually pose relatively low public safety and ecological risks, and need little corrective management. However, current maintenance management actions such as prescribed fire need to continue.

On the 141 million acres of Condition Class 2 land, human activity has moderately altered historical fire regimes, and/or land management actions have been ineffective, partially compromising ecological integrity. One or more fire return intervals have been missed, resulting in moderate increases in fuel load and fire size, intensity, and severity. These areas pose a moderate public safety and ecological risk from severe fire, and need moderate levels of restoration treatments (e.g., mechanical fuel removal, prescribed fire). Without any management action, these lands will degrade to Condition Class 3. Continued maintenance treatments following restoration are also needed to prevent severe fires and sustain ecological integrity.

Ecological integrity has been significantly compromised on 70 million acres of Condition Class 3 lands, and fires are a high risk factor because of their potential risk to human values (public safety and health, property, economies) and natural resource values (watersheds, species composition). Several fire return intervals have been missed, resulting in considerable accumulation of live and dead fuels, and increasing the potential of high-severity fires. These lands pose the greatest risk to public safety and are in most danger of ecological decline. They require extensive restoration and diligent maintenance.

THE 2000 FIRES

More acres burned in 2000 than in any other year in the last half-century. By mid-December, approximately 4.8 million acres had been burned by wildland fires and 1.0 million acres by prescribed fires on federal lands alone.

With a better understanding of the magnitude of the fire management problem, the federal land management agencies are now planning aggressive actions to mitigate the situation. The USDA Forest Service has proposed fuels management treatments (prescribed fire and mechanical) of up to 3 million acres annually. Department of the Interior bureaus and the Department of Defense have also proposed similar activities. Fiscal Year 2001 fire management appropriations for the Department of the Interior and the USDA Forest Service have been increased to begin to address these landscape stewardship responsibilities.

CHAPTER 2 — FINDINGS OF THE WORKING GROUP

INTRODUCTION

After reviewing the various materials and information described in Chapter 1, the Working Group reached several Findings regarding the overall fire management situation, the adequacy and appropriateness of federal wildland fire policies, and the implementation of those policies. This chapter presents those Findings. The 2001 Policy and a series of Implementation Actions follow later in this Review and Update.

The 2001 Policy and Implementation Actions are based on these Findings. Some Findings may result in more than one Implementation Action, and some Implementation Actions may be based on more than one Finding. The objective of this chapter is to identify the major areas of concern regarding fire management, fire management policy, and implementation of fire management policy.

FINDINGS

The following Findings must be read as an integrated set. The first two Findings present a summary or overview of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy and its implementation. The remaining findings address specific aspects of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy and its implementation.

1. ADEQUACY OF 1995 FEDERAL FIRE POLICY – SUMMARY FINDING

- a. **The 1995 Federal Fire Policy is generally sound; however, some aspects lack clarity and there are elements missing that would make the policy stronger and more complete.**

The review found no fundamental flaws in the 1995 Federal Fire Policy. Experience with implementation of the policy in the past five years has demonstrated, however, that some aspects are unclear or unrealistic. Some issues, such as science, ecosystem sustainability, ecosystem restoration, education and communication, and program evaluation, were not explicitly addressed in 1995.

- b. **There is increasing recognition that the fire hazard situation is worse than previously thought and fuels continue to accumulate.**

Fuel conditions are outside the range of historical patterns on 211 million acres (70 million acres of condition Class 3, and 141 million acres of condition Class 2 federally managed lands). The acreage burned in fuel treatments and wildfires continues to be materially less than the historical acreage of wildfires.

2. ADEQUACY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF 1995 FEDERAL FIRE POLICY – SUMMARY FINDING

a. When there was organizational will and commitment about an element of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy, that element was successfully implemented.

The policy emphasis on firefighter safety was implemented primarily because of organizational will and commitment to the issue, rather than an integrated, interagency mechanism to drive implementation of the firefighter safety policy. An outcome of this commitment was the creation of the Safety Awareness in the Fire Environment (SAFE Initiative) program, an interagency collaborative mechanism to implement firefighter safety policy.

b. Incomplete implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy has hindered its success.

The 1995 Report contained over 80 specific Action Items deemed important for implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy. Inconsistent and incomplete implementation of some items has resulted in less than successful implementation of the overall policy. Those most successfully implemented were those exclusively in the domain of the traditional fire management organizations. Implementation was least successful in areas requiring coordination and agreement among agencies or across disciplines within agencies. Some items, in retrospect, could not or should not be implemented as originally written. Planning remains one of the most critical items to be implemented. A summary of the status of the Action Items from the 1995 Report is found in Appendix E.

c. Adequate reviews have not been conducted to determine if all agencies are implementing recommendations.

Agencies have implemented the policy recommendations unevenly, and there is little evidence that managers have been held accountable for implementation.

3. SAFETY

a. Safety awareness and commitment to firefighter and public safety continues to be the first priority in all aspects of the wildland fire management program.

The increased emphasis on safety is one of the most successful aspects of the implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy. Most of that emphasis has occurred in the traditional fire management activities of fire suppression and directly associated activities. Similar commitment and awareness in related programs of fuels treatment and rehabilitation and restoration are essential. Safety awareness must continue to be an inherent value in fire management, not a response to mistakes or accidents on specific incidents.

b. The increased emphasis on firefighter and public safety has been effective.

Implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy and the Wildland Firefighter Safety Awareness Study has led to increased recognition of the need for safety through better firefighting training, awareness, and a strong safety ethic. Public safety awareness has been raised by such programs as FIREWISE. However, there are still too many instances of strategies and tactics which, by their selection, put people at risk.

4. ECOSYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY

The use of wildland fire and other treatment of fuels has increased significantly since 1995. This increase, while significant, is far short of the level of treatment needed to ensure sustainability of ecosystems.

Fire is an important component of ecosystem sustainability, including its interrelated ecological, economic, and social components. Agencies have recognized that fuels management is an important aspect of vegetation management and is integral to restoring and maintaining ecosystems. Carefully planned and executed fuels treatments have reduced the risk of wildland fire while improving ecosystem conditions and providing economic benefits to communities. Desired future conditions sought in land management plans are sometimes not achievable because the role and influence of fire have not been adequately considered in the planning process. In several instances, agencies have treated fuels in some areas to achieve the greatest land management benefits at the lowest cost per acre. These may not be areas of greatest risk, such as the Wildland Urban Interface.

5. WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

a. The scope of the fire hazard problem in the Wildland Urban Interface is more complex and extensive than envisioned in 1995. Explosive growth in the Wildland Urban Interface now puts entire communities and associated infrastructure, and the socioeconomic fabric that holds communities together, at risk from wildland fire.

The public has greater recognition of the problem in Wildland Urban Interface areas, but communities and homeowners are still not taking sufficient actions to mitigate fire risks. Programs such as FIREWISE, adoption of the Urban-Wildland Uniform Building Code, and Insurance Services Organization (ISO) pilot grading schedule for Wildland Urban Interface are examples of successes since the 1995 Federal Fire Policy was initiated.

The potential for fire starts is also greater in the Wildland Urban Interface, which increases risk to natural resources.

b. Federal, State, tribal, and local fire protection agencies are unclear on their roles and responsibilities for structural fire protection and suppression within the Wildland Urban Interface.

The 1995 Federal Fire Policy addresses roles and responsibilities for structure protection in the Wildland Urban Interface. However, the 1995 Federal Fire Policy has been inconsistently implemented and there are conflicts in manual direction, guidelines, and procedures. Large areas of Wildland Urban Interface remain with no structural fire protection organization. In some cases, this has resulted in federal agencies responding to structural fires despite the direction provided in the 1995 Federal Fire Policy.

6. PLANNING

a. Fire Management Plans, based on land management plans and supported by operational plans, are essential for implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

Fire Management Plans are fundamental strategic documents, based on land management plans, to guide the full range of fire-management-related activities in a unit or area. Fire Management Plans are supplemented by operational plans such as preparedness plans, dispatch plans, prescribed fire plans, and prevention plans. Fire Management Plans include discussion of resource management objectives and activities, such as restoring and sustaining ecosystems and protecting communities and public safety. Fire Management Plans also address public health and environmental issues such as air and water quality and endangered species. Finally, Fire Management Plans should be developed and implemented across agency boundaries to ensure consistent approaches to similar conditions. Thus, successful implementation of 2001 Federal Fire Policy depends on the development and implementation of high-quality Fire Management Plans by all land managing agencies.

b. Many areas do not have Fire Management Plans that meet the requirements of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy.

Generally, the scope and completeness of Fire Management Plans completed under the 1995 Federal Fire Policy have improved, including additional consideration of the environmental impacts of fire management options and strategies. However, many plans remain incomplete. Some have not been updated since 1995, some are not based on the current approved land management plan, and some do not address the full range of issues required. Plans must be based on underlying land management plans to integrate fire with natural resource objectives if the desired future conditions identified in these plans are to be achieved.

Preparation of Fire Management Plans is hindered by inconsistent or incomplete guidance on how public health and environmental impacts are to be considered. Recent efforts by the National Park Service and the USDA Forest Service to address air quality and smoke management issues represent progress, but much work remains.

7. RESPONSE TO WILDLAND FIRE

Multiple terms for various management options to respond to wildland fires have confused agency managers and employees, cooperators, partners, and the public, and have perpetuated multiple fire management program elements.

Policies, manuals, handbooks, procedures, and other aspects of implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy often use a variety of terms such as “wildland fire,” “wildfire,” “fire use,” “wildland fire for resource benefit,” and “prescribed fire” interchangeably. The proliferation of similar terms was frequently driven by concerns about the source of ignition of the fire, the land use designation where the fire was located, and administrative considerations such as funding sources. The use of these many similar terms has caused confusion and misunderstanding within the agencies and among cooperators, partners, and the public. In addition, different systems have been developed or perpetuated (based on the “type” of fire involved) for training, qualifications, dispatch, and other aspects of fire management.

8. SCIENCE

a. Although research and scientific activities have expanded to support fire management programs, there are gaps in scientific understanding, and integration of scientific disciplines is often lacking.

Research agreements across agency boundaries, such as the Joint Fire Sciences Program, have benefited fire management programs. However, scientific information on many aspects is either lacking or needs to be made available. For example, information on the relative effectiveness and consequences of different fuel treatment methods is being developed but is not yet available. In addition, little information exists on the effects of post-fire rehabilitation activities that fully integrate biological, hydrological, and geological disciplines. There is also a lack of information concerning the social science implications of fire management activities on firefighting personnel, decision makers, and the public.

b. Individual agencies generally collect adequate fire data, but no system exists for collecting and compiling consistent data among agencies.

No centralized database is universally available to users and scientists for long-term monitoring, research, and planning. Information about the use of fire cannot be aggregated because each agency uses a different system for data collection. This overall lack of a common system raises questions about the validity of actual accomplishments and cost data reporting.

No system exists for collecting and tracking data on air pollutant emissions produced by biomass burning, or for assessing the air quality impacts from wildland, prescribed, and agriculture fires on private, federal, tribal, and State lands. State air quality regulators do not have a national database that includes biomass-burning information. Federal land management agencies are working with the Western Regional Air Partnership to develop an air pollution emissions tracking system that will store federal fire data for the western region of the country. Currently there is

no proposal to track non-federal wildland and prescribed fire or agricultural burning data for the western region, or biomass burning data for the remainder of the country.

9. WORKFORCE AND ORGANIZATION

a. **The existing workforce and the skills mix of that workforce are insufficient to address changing fire management priorities and increased fire management complexities.**

Demographic trends such as an aging workforce, two-career families, changing career interests, and other factors have significantly reduced the numbers of personnel available for fire management activities, especially fire suppression and fuels management. The general downsizing of federal agencies with fire management activities has exacerbated this problem. Finding sufficient personnel within agencies to meet annual fire season staffing requirements has been increasingly difficult. The 2000 fire season necessitated the use of international wildland fire managers.

Land management and regulatory agencies have not been able to keep pace with the changing fire management priorities and complexities. New skills and additional capabilities will be required in the future.

In the Fiscal Year 2001 appropriations for the Department of the Interior and USDA Forest Service, Congress recognized that increased funding for current and future years is needed to achieve effective preparedness and hazardous fuels reduction capabilities.

b. **The structure of fire management and fire suppression organizations needs to be reviewed.**

As the federal fire management program continues to grow in size, scope, and complexity, new concepts in program management organizations, new approaches to fire suppression and prescribed fire organizations, and new mechanisms for increasing training in suppression, prescribed fire, decision-making, and support programs may be required.

10. FUNDING

a. **Lack of adequate funding has been a barrier to full implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy.**

Funding and budget structure for the four Interior agencies and the USDA Forest Service have significantly improved since adoption of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy. Budgets have increased for fire management preparedness. Changes in budget structure have increased the flexibility of fire program managers to implement fuels management and other activities. However, overall funding levels have not been sufficient to meet or address all of the fire management, fuels management, and other needed activities.

b. **Adequate funding for fire management and associated programs is essential for the future successful implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.**

The Fiscal Year 2001 appropriations for the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture contains additional funding for fire management preparedness, fuels management activities, scientific support, post-fire stabilization and rehabilitation, and support for State and local partners. This increase implements a strategic program outlined in a report from the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture in September of 2000. Continuing comparable funding to support all aspects of fire management, fuels management, and related activities will be required in Fiscal Year 2002 and beyond to ensure the implementation of the Report to the President and the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

Adequate funding for agencies not historically considered fire management agencies is also critical. The Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and the Bureau of Reclamation (all of which have land management responsibilities) do not have adequate stable funding sources to implement the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

Finally, stable federal support for non-federal organizations through programs such as the Cooperative Forestry Program of the USDA Forest Service ensures that cooperating fire organizations are able to implement the fire policy consistently.

11. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

a. Not all federal agencies with land-management or other fire-related responsibilities, and the lands under their jurisdiction, are fully integrated into federal fire management.

The USDA Forest Service and the four principal land-managing agencies of the Department of the Interior have traditionally been considered the “fire management” agencies of the federal government. However, the Departments of Defense and Energy both manage substantial acres with burnable vegetation. Other agencies, such as the Bureau of Reclamation, also manage smaller amounts of similar acres. These agencies have not been included under the 1995 Federal Fire Policy, nor do they generally participate in such fire management activities as training, qualification, and sharing of firefighting resources. In addition, other federal agencies have programs with significant consequences for the implementation of federal fire policy, including support services such as meteorology, scientific information and analysis, and regulation of air and water quality. Successful implementation of the concepts, as well as the letter, of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy depends on the complete integration of all federal agencies with programs affecting land management and fire management. Integration is required at the strategic, program planning level as well as at the tactical, program implementation level.

b. Failure to fully implement the 1995 Federal Fire Policy and the associated Action Items stems from the lack of a mechanism to integrate actions and activities across agency, program, and discipline boundaries.

The 1995 Federal Fire Policy presented unusual, if not unique, challenges to traditional organizational arrangements. It required coordination, consistency, and agreement among five operating agencies in two Departments, as well as requiring fire managers to forge new working relationships with other disciplines within those agencies. Implementation measures were required at the national, regional, and

operating unit level. Because no mechanism exists to provide leadership, coordination, conflict resolution, or oversight on a broad scale, however, most aspects of implementation requiring interagency or interdisciplinary solutions have been unsuccessful. Program managers outside of traditional fire management, such as endangered species, cultural resources, weather, and environmental protection, have no means of regular interaction with fire program managers. Further, there is no focal point or clearinghouse capability to provide a comprehensive picture of the full range of fire management activities including fuels management, restoration and rehabilitation, traditional fire management programs, and coordination with non-fire regulatory programs.

c. Collaboration, coordination, and integration of fire management planning and implementation between federal agencies and non-federal agencies are incomplete and inconsistent.

Successful implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy will require coordination, collaboration, and integration across governmental boundaries, as well as across federal agency and discipline boundaries. Fire management planning, operational planning, and operational activities should include collaboration, coordination, and integration among federal agencies and non-federal entities such as State, tribal, and local governments to ensure safety, efficiency, and healthy, sustainable ecosystems. Uneven collaboration, coordination, and integration have hindered successful implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy.

12. COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

a. The public, as well as some agency employees and managers, still do not adequately understand the role of fire in maintaining natural systems.

Since the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Program Review, agencies have increased their efforts to provide accurate, consistent information to the public and to employees about wildland fire. Media coverage of wildland fire incidents over the last few years has been increasingly sophisticated in describing the importance of fire in maintaining natural forest and range conditions, in describing the consequences of past fire suppression practices, and in explaining use of prescribed fire. However, many people continue to believe that fires can and should be immediately suppressed, and fail to recognize that fire is a natural event in most areas. Continued success in implementing federal fire policy depends on a well-educated public and agency workforce. Surveys commissioned for this review, as well as other surveys, indicate a lack of adequate understanding of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy among employees in key management and leadership positions.

b. The federal government lacks a standard, consistent message on the importance and role of fire in natural resources management.

Despite significant education and communications efforts on the part of most agencies, there is no integrated, consistent communication strategy. The use of different terminology and emphases among agencies results in mixed messages to the public and employees.

13. EVALUATION

- a. **Monitoring and oversight of overall implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy have not been adequate, and no effective interagency capability for such monitoring and oversight appears to exist.**

The little monitoring and oversight of implementation that has taken place over the last five years has been largely focused on discreet, agency-specific issues. An early effort at broader management oversight, the Management Oversight Team, was ineffective. At the beginning of this review there was no overall assessment available on the status of implementation of the 80-plus specific Action Items in the 1995 Report, nor were there any agreed upon performance measures or metrics for gauging status and adequacy of implementation. At best, there was general information about national level status of implementation, such as the existence of direction to field units to take certain actions. Detailed information about the status of implementation at the field level generally remains unavailable.

- b. **There have been no meaningful consequences for failure by agency administrators at any organizational level to fully implement all aspects of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy, nor are there significant incentives or rewards for efforts at implementation.**

As noted elsewhere, implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy has been incomplete and inadequate, particularly in those areas requiring coordination and agreement across agency and discipline boundaries. There is no system of accountability for this failure, nor have there been significant consequences for agency administrators and program managers at any level. Major examples include the failure of most units to adopt Fire Management Plans that meet the requirements of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy, the failure of agency administrators to minimize costs of suppression on large project fires, and the failure of the five major fire management agencies to agree upon common program management tools and systems for resource planning and budgeting. Of particular concern is the lack of consequences for failure to resolve differences among agencies and disciplines, and for failing to ensure integration among disciplines. In general, agency management has not taken steps at either the unit level or the program management level to identify implementation problems or to resolve those problems. There have been no consequences for failure to take these steps. However, many individuals and some organizations have taken important steps to implement the 1995 Federal Fire Policy, but their efforts have largely been without incentives or rewards.

14. WEATHER SERVICES

- a. **Disagreement remains between the National Weather Service (NWS) and federal land management agencies involved in wildland fire management on the products, standards, and level of weather services required and how they are provided.**

Weather services required for fire management activities have increased since the 1995 Report, due to such factors as a continued increase in wildland fire severity, a threefold increase in fuel reduction projects, and increasing encroachment of development into the wildland environment. Since the implementation of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy, the NWS has implemented a modernization and associated restructuring using new technology and improved science. One result is that the forecast area coverage for each forecast office has been significantly reduced, but each forecaster now provides support to several program areas (Public, Aviation, Fire Weather, and Marine.) In addition, the number of available NWS Incident Meteorologists (IMETs) has been doubled to provide support for the increase in large fire events.

Fire management agencies believe they require additional weather services from the NWS to support the full range of fire management activities. Many fire managers view the loss of dedicated fire weather forecasters as a reduction in quality that is unacceptable. Fire managers also believe that most NWS forecasters do not have the experience in fire weather forecasting to deal with site-specific spot forecasts that dedicated fire weather forecasters have provided. The fire weather forecaster is seen as a full partner on the fire management team, often involved during the off season in training and coordination meetings.

The inability of NWS and the federal fire management agencies to agree on the products, standards, and level of weather services required to support fire management activities and the means of meeting these requirements continue to hamper full implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. Federal fire management agencies have identified a requirement for 20 additional fire weather meteorologists due to inadequacy of current weather services support. The Fiscal Year 2001 appropriations for the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture include funding for those meteorologists. This represents an ad hoc, piecemeal approach to addressing fire weather service issues and does not resolve the underlying disagreement.

b. The lack of NWS support for “non suppression” fire management activities by non-federal entities significantly hinders integrated interagency wildland fire management programs.

The NWS interprets statutory and related committee report language to prohibit them from providing support to non-federal organizations for wildland fires that are being managed for beneficial uses such as hazardous fuel reduction. The 2001 Federal Fire Policy requires agencies to plan and execute wildland fire and other fuels management treatments on a landscape basis and in partnership with State and private landowners. Lack of specialized wildland fire forecasts to State agencies is a barrier that increases costs and reduces overall quality of fire plans and wildland fire treatments, as well as increasing risk to public and firefighter safety. Through cooperative agreements, federal employees are often involved on these fires even though they are not on federal lands.

Any fire occurring on wildland is defined as a wildland fire. The type of ignition or wildland fire objective does not change the weather forecasting needs. Providing the full suite of weather products and services to support all wildland fire management actions is essential, and should not depend on the source of ignition or location of the fire.

The private meteorological industry has shown little interest in providing weather services to enhance NWS products to meet fire management requirements. State governments in Florida and Oregon have had to hire forecasters to meet their needs although their needs are not simply State in nature but apply across all landholders. This adds unnecessary complexity and cost.

PROPOSED CHANGES AND ACTIONS

To address the above Findings, the Working Group developed Guiding Principles, Policy Statements, and Implementation Actions that are presented in Chapter 3.

The Guiding Principles remain the same as those contained in the 1995 Report with the addition of the word “international” to the guiding principle on coordination and cooperation. This change recognizes the increasing role that other countries play in assisting the U.S. and in the increasing exchange of technology, training, skills, and knowledge of wildland fire issues between the U.S. and other countries.

As a result of experiences since 1995, as well as greater understanding of the complexity and seriousness of the wildland fire situation in this country, the 2001 Federal Fire Policy contains five additional policy statements along with revisions to several statements in the 1995 Federal Fire Policy. Chapter 3 also includes strategic Implementation Actions necessary for successful implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

The new policy statements complement and supplement the current set, and include:

- the role of fire in ensuring ecosystem sustainability;
- the need for restoration and rehabilitation of fire-damaged lands and ecosystems;
- the role of science in developing and implementing fire management programs;
- the importance of communication and education internally and externally; and
- the critical need for regular, ongoing evaluation of policies and procedures.

A number of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy statements were revised to reflect experiences since 1995 and to underscore the importance of key issues. These include:

- better recognition that Fire Management Plans identify and integrate all fire management and related activities within the context of approved land management plans;

- clearly stating that the management response to fire is based on the circumstances surrounding the fire, not the source of ignition or location of the fire;
- clarifying that, following protection of human life, suppression priority decisions include considerations of human health and consequences on communities rather than property; and
- clarifying the 1995 Federal Fire Policy on the Wildland Urban Interface to recognize the role of wildland fire agencies in protecting structures, but not suppressing fires in them.

Strategic Implementation Actions in Chapter 3 deal with:

- Fire Management and Ecosystem Sustainability
- Response to Wildland Fire
- Wildland Urban Interface
- Planning
- Science
- Workforce and Organization
- Funding
- Communication and Education
- Program Management and Coordination

Appendix C contains the detailed explanations for all of the new policy statements and the recommended changes to the 1995 Federal Fire Policy statements. Appendix D contains a side-by-side listing of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy and the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. The Guiding Principles, Policy Statements, and Implementation Actions can be found in their entirety in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3 — 2001 FEDERAL WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The 2001 Federal Fire Policy comprises the following Guiding Principles and discreet policies. As a whole these Guiding Principles and policy statements guide the philosophy, direction, and implementation of fire management planning, activities, and projects on federal lands. Many federal agencies conduct programs and activities not directly tied to management of lands, but which have programs or activities that support or otherwise affect federal wildland fire management activities. These Guiding Principles and policy statements guide the direction and implementation of those programs as well, to ensure consistency, coordination, and integration of wildland fire management programs and related activities throughout the federal government.

Each agency should adopt the 2001 Federal Fire Policy as agency policy through applicable directives, manuals, and other systems as appropriate. All handbooks, guides, workbooks, and other documents associated with wildland fire management are to reflect the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

Non-federal agencies are encouraged to adopt and use the 2001 Federal Fire Policy in planning and implementing their fire management activities to promote coordination, cooperation, and efficiency.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following Guiding Principles are fundamental to the successful implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy:

- 1. Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.***
- 2. The role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent will be incorporated into the planning process.*** Federal agency land and resource management plans set the objectives for the use and desired future condition of the various public lands.
- 3. Fire Management Plans, programs, and activities support land and resource management plans and their implementation.***

4. ***Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities.*** Risks and uncertainties relating to fire management activities must be understood, analyzed, communicated, and managed as they relate to the cost of either doing or not doing an activity. Net gains to the public benefit will be an important component of decisions.
5. ***Fire management programs and activities are economically viable, based upon values to be protected, costs, and land and resource management objectives.*** Federal agency administrators are adjusting and reorganizing programs to reduce costs and increase efficiencies. As part of this process, investments in fire management activities must be evaluated against other agency programs in order to effectively accomplish the overall mission, set short- and long-term priorities, and clarify management accountability.
6. ***Fire Management Plans and activities are based upon the best available science.*** Knowledge and experience are developed among all wildland fire management agencies. An active fire research program combined with interagency collaboration provides the means to make these tools available to all fire managers.
7. ***Fire Management Plans and activities incorporate public health and environmental quality considerations.***
8. ***Federal, State, tribal, local, interagency, and international coordination and cooperation are essential.*** Increasing costs and smaller work forces require that public agencies pool their human resources to successfully deal with the ever-increasing and more complex fire management tasks. Full collaboration among federal agencies and between the federal agencies and international, State, tribal, and local governments and private entities results in a mobile fire management work force available for the full range of public needs.
9. ***Standardization of policies and procedures among federal agencies is an ongoing objective.*** Consistency of plans and operations provides the fundamental platform upon which federal agencies can cooperate, integrate fire activities across agency boundaries, and provide leadership for cooperation with State, tribal, and local fire management organizations.

2001 FEDERAL WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. SAFETY

Firefighter and public safety is the first priority. All Fire Management Plans and activities must reflect this commitment.

2. FIRE MANAGEMENT AND ECOSYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY

The full range of fire management activities will be used to help achieve ecosystem sustainability, including its interrelated ecological, economic, and social components.

3. RESPONSE TO WILDLAND FIRE

Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale, and across agency boundaries. Response to wildland fire is based on ecological, social, and legal consequences of the fire. The circumstances under which a fire occurs, and the likely consequences on firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and values to be protected dictate the appropriate management response to the fire.

4. USE OF WILDLAND FIRE

Wildland fire will be used to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and, as nearly as possible, be allowed to function in its natural ecological role. Use of fire will be based on approved Fire Management Plans and will follow specific prescriptions contained in operational plans.

5. REHABILITATION AND RESTORATION

Rehabilitation and restoration efforts will be undertaken to protect and sustain ecosystems, public health, and safety, and to help communities protect infrastructure.

6. PROTECTION PRIORITIES

The protection of human life is the single, overriding priority. Setting priorities among protecting human communities and community infrastructure, other property and improvements, and natural and cultural resources will be based on the values to be protected, human health and safety, and the costs of protection. Once people have been committed to an incident, these human resources become the highest value to be protected.

7. WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

The operational roles of federal agencies as partners in the Wildland Urban Interface are wildland firefighting, hazardous fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. Structural fire suppression is the responsibility of tribal, State, or local governments. Federal agencies may assist with exterior structural protection activities under formal Fire Protection Agreements that specify the mutual responsibilities of the partners, including funding. (Some federal agencies have full structural protection authority for their facilities on lands they administer, and may also enter into formal agreements to assist State and local governments with full structural protection.)

8. PLANNING

Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved Fire Management Plan. Fire Management Plans are strategic plans that define a program to manage

wildland and prescribed fires based on the area's approved land management plan. Fire Management Plans must provide for firefighter and public safety; include fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives; address values to be protected and public health issues; and be consistent with resource management objectives, activities of the area, and environmental laws and regulations.

9. SCIENCE

Fire Management Plans and programs will be based on a foundation of sound science. Research will support ongoing efforts to increase our scientific knowledge of biological, physical, and sociological factors. Information needed to support fire management will be developed through an integrated interagency fire science program. Scientific results must be made available to managers in a timely manner and must be used in the development of land management plans, Fire Management Plans, and implementation plans.

10. PREPAREDNESS

Agencies will ensure their capability to provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land and resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, equipment, and management oversight.

11. SUPPRESSION

Fires are suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected, consistent with resource objectives.

12. PREVENTION

Agencies will work together and with their partners and other affected groups and individuals to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fires.

13. STANDARDIZATION

Agencies will use compatible planning processes, funding mechanisms, training and qualification requirements, operational procedures, values-to-be-protected methodologies, and public education programs for all fire management activities.

14. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

Fire management planning, preparedness, prevention, suppression, fire use, restoration and rehabilitation, monitoring, research, and education will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of cooperators and partners.

15. COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

Agencies will enhance knowledge and understanding of wildland fire management policies and practices through internal and external communication and education programs. These programs will be continuously improved through the timely and effective exchange of information among all affected agencies and organizations.

16. AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR AND EMPLOYEE ROLES

Agency administrators will ensure that their employees are trained, certified, and made available to participate in the wildland fire program locally, regionally, and

nationally as the situation demands. Employees with operational, administrative, or other skills will support the wildland fire program as necessary. Agency administrators are responsible and will be held accountable for making employees available.

17. EVALUATION

Agencies will develop and implement a systematic method of evaluation to determine effectiveness of projects through implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. The evaluation will assure accountability, facilitate resolution of areas of conflict, and identify resource shortages and agency priorities.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The following strategic Implementation Actions are key for the effective implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. The bolded statements provide broad objectives or results for agency managers to accomplish. The narrative statement following each bolded statement is designed to explain and clarify, not provide specific additional tasks. Monitoring and evaluation of implementation should focus on accomplishment of the broad objectives or results over time. These Implementation Actions are the highest priority. This list is not intended to exclude other strategic and tactical actions necessary to implement the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

1. FIRE MANAGEMENT AND ECOSYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY

a. Develop a comprehensive, interagency strategy for fire management to help achieve ecosystem sustainability.

The relationship between fire management activities and other efforts to achieve ecosystem sustainability is unclear. The USDA Forest Service developed a cohesive strategy to accelerate fuels management on those public lands at high risk for significant negative impacts on ecological and human values. The Interior land management agencies have developed strategies to increase fuels management efforts. All of these efforts can be strengthened by the inclusion of other federal and State agencies involved in national fire management efforts (USGS, EPA, FEMA, NOAA, DOD, DOE) as we address long-term restoration of watersheds and landscapes. Implementation of these existing strategies must be emphasized to accelerate treatments. Further, these strategies must be coordinated with partners and other federal land management agencies.

b. Fire Management Plans and land management plans will appropriately incorporate mitigation, burned-area rehabilitation, and fuels reduction and restoration activities that contribute to ecosystem sustainability.

There is a need to more effectively and directly integrate fire management activities with other natural resource goals. For example, comprehensive restoration plans, addressing both short-term and long-term needs, should be designed for

implementation. Since noxious and invasive weeds are a significant problem in many fire-dominated ecosystems, rapid response strategies should be established.

2. RESPONSE TO WILDLAND FIRE

Base responses to wildland fires on approved Fire Management Plans and land management plans, regardless of ignition source or the location of the ignition.

The management response to fires, regardless of source, must be based on the approved Fire Management Plan. Fire Management Plans, based on the land management objectives of the area, guide the appropriate response through criteria and prescriptions. Determination of appropriate response will include an evaluation of such factors as risks to firefighter and public health and safety, weather, fuel conditions, threats, and values to be protected. Fires in areas without approved Fire Management Plans, or with Fire Management Plans that are not consistent with the 2001 Federal Fire Policy, must be suppressed. Guidance for the development of strategic and operational plans, workforce training and qualifications, resource allocation and dispatch protocols, and other activities necessary to prepare for and respond to wildland fires are to be consistent across agencies and not based on the ignition source or location of the fire. Agency directives, manuals, handbooks, guides, and similar documents should be revised as necessary. Since 1995 the budget structures for the Department of the Interior and USDA Forest Service fire management programs have been revised so that source of ignition is no longer a factor in response decisions. However, additional administrative or legal barriers may continue to make it difficult to implement a single response system. Agencies should act to eliminate or minimize these barriers to facilitate effective implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

A flow chart depicting what action will be taken after an ignition, regardless of source, is provided in Appendix F.

3. WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

a. Accelerate and expand ongoing efforts, such as the FIREWISE program, to increase public awareness of the risks of building and living in the Wildland Urban Interface.

Although public recognition and understanding of the Wildland Urban Interface has markedly improved since 1995, communities and homeowners are still falling short of taking sufficient action to mitigate fire risks.

b. Accelerate and expand efforts to identify Wildland Urban Interface areas that lack formal structural fire protection, and encourage States and local communities to form rural fire departments where none exist.

Federal agencies have no legal authority on private land. Therefore, this effort must be coordinated through State and local governments and with individual homeowners.

4. PLANNING

Complete, or update, Fire Management Plans for all areas with burnable vegetation.

Fire Management Plans, based on underlying land use or resource management plans, are the principal foundation for implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. High priority must be placed on completing Fire Management Plans. Agencies such as the Departments of Defense and Energy that previously did not endorse or follow the 1995 Federal Fire Policy should begin development of Fire Management Plans. In some cases agencies may need to update, amend, or otherwise revise underlying land management plans. However, the existence of obsolete land management plans should not be reason for failure to complete or update Fire Management Plans. The land managing agencies should continue to work with other agencies to ensure that Fire Management Plans consistently address the effects of fire management activities on public health and on environmental quality.

5. SCIENCE

- a. **Continue to develop science programs to provide the foundation for land and Fire Management Plans and activities. These programs must address the land and fire management information needs of land managers, conduct basic and applied research, transfer information to end users, and ensure that appropriate results are applied and implemented.**

The Joint Fire Science Program has made good initial efforts to meet fuels management information needs of fire managers. However, a broader effort is required to support all the science-related Action Items in the 1995 Report, and to implement the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. Science activities should cover restoration and rehabilitation programs and the social dimensions of fire management. A partnership between managers and research scientists is needed to develop clear procedures for identifying information needs. Since not all future information needs can be anticipated, fire science programs should include both basic and applied research, and address local as well as broad, nationwide needs. Critical to fire science program success are mechanisms to ensure that the information is transferred to land and fire managers in a usable form. Similarly, managers must ensure that land and Fire Management Plans and actions actively incorporate and apply the new information.

- b. **Develop coordinated databases for federal fire information that support fire program development and implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.**

Systems to collect essential wildland fire data and information should be developed and implemented to support internal and external program needs. While each agency is responsible for collecting and reporting data, consistent systems, reporting thresholds and criteria, data fields, and terms are essential to assure the reliability and credibility of the information for its intended use. Other information sources related to wildland fires (such as the wildland fire information collected by the National Fire Incident Reporting System) should be reviewed to determine whether that information (a) is applicable and appropriate for program needs, and (b) can and should be linked to programmatic databases.

6. WORKFORCE AND ORGANIZATION

a. Develop an interagency strategy for wildland fire workforce management.

A national, interagency workload analysis is needed to determine the future workload and workforce skills mix necessary to accomplish the full range of fire management activities. Demographic information about the current organization should be used, along with initial attack requirements identified through agency fire planning activities, to help develop this strategy.

b. Review the structure of fire management and fire suppression organizations.

Federal agencies, in cooperation with non-federal partners, need to review the structure of their operational fire management organizations to ensure efficient, interagency implementation of the full range of fire management activities. Of principal concern are organizations to manage large fires and organizations to accomplish prescribed fire and other fuel treatment activities. These reviews will require a common approach among fire management agencies.

7. FUNDING

Provide full funding for fire management and associated programs to ensure successful implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

The individual fire management agencies, the Administration, and the Congress must work to develop and adopt annual budgets for fire management preparedness, fuels management activities, scientific support, post-fire stabilization and rehabilitation, and support for State and local cooperators. Continued levels of funding to support all aspects of the fire management, fuels management, and related activities will be required in Fiscal Year 2002 and future years in order to continue to implement the Report to the President and the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. Analyses by the two Departments indicate that funding for all aspects of fire management, fuels management, and related activities needs to grow substantially. Implementation of the Report to the President will substantially increase planning, environmental review, and Endangered Species Act consultation workloads, requiring increased funding for agencies and organizations with those program responsibilities.

Adequate funding for agencies not historically considered fire management agencies is also critical. Those with land management responsibilities—the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, and Bureau of Reclamation—do not have specific, stable, adequate funding sources to implement the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. Agencies with supporting programs, such as the National Weather Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Geological Survey, may require additional funding to support implementation of fire management, fuels management, and related activities.

Finally, increased federal support for non-federal organizations through programs such as the State and Private Forestry Program of the USDA Forest Service and programs in the Department of the Interior to support rural fire districts is critical to ensure that cooperating fire organizations are able to implement fire policy consistently.

8. COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

Develop a national, interagency communication and education program to enhance understanding of the fire management mission for both internal and external audiences.

A national, interagency communication and education program requires that all federal fire agencies, along with their partners and cooperators, design consistent messages and strategies to communicate those messages. Both internal (all levels of the agencies) and external (public, non-federal organizations) audiences should be targeted. Agencies should develop and implement a communication and education program in a joint, collaborative manner.

9. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

a. Establish a mechanism for coordinated interagency and interdisciplinary oversight of implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

Successful implementation of 2001 Federal Fire Policy requires coordination, consistency, and agreement among five traditional fire management operating agencies in two Departments, requires fire managers to forge new working relationships with other disciplines within those agencies, and requires the inclusion of agencies not traditionally integrated into wildland fire management activities. Although some interagency groups and committees exist to help facilitate coordination, they do not include the full range of affected programs and often lack authority to resolve differences.

A new mechanism for coordinated interagency and interdisciplinary implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy is necessary to lead the broad array of agencies and programs in the future. The principal functions of such a mechanism would be to:

- provide a forum for raising and resolving issues across agency and disciplinary lines;
- provide strategic direction and leadership for overall implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy;
- provide oversight and evaluation of program effectiveness and success; and
- provide a focal point for consolidating and articulating funding and workforce requirements necessary to implement the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

This mechanism must include the following features:

- include all agencies with fire management or directly related programs;
- ability to bring skills and resources together to reach common agreement on interagency and interdisciplinary matters;
- authority, either directly or through access to senior agency managers, to resolve differences in a timely manner.

This mechanism could be based on a number of different models for cross-agency leadership and coordination. However, dedicated personnel responsible for this function are essential.

b. Expand the regular and ongoing participation in fire management program management and implementation to all federal agencies with fire-related capabilities and responsibilities.

Fire management has traditionally been the province of the USDA Forest Service and the four principal land management agencies of the Department of the Interior. However, many other agencies also have varying degrees of land management, regulatory, or other fire-related responsibilities, capabilities, and interests. These include (but are not limited to) the Departments of Defense and Energy, the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the endangered species management programs of the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey. The participation and integration of these agencies in the fire management program needs to be expanded at both the senior policy level and the operational level through participation, as appropriate, in such organizations as the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, and Geographic Area Coordinating Groups.

c. Improve coordination among all federal, State, tribal, and local organizations.

Successful implementation of all aspects of fire management activities requires improved coordination among federal agencies and a variety of State, tribal, and local organizations. Many non-federal organizations, such as State regulatory bodies, have not usually been included in planning and program development activities. Other organizations with operational roles, such as State and local emergency management agencies, have not been integrated into fire suppression activities. Coordination can be improved through existing organizations such as Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and Multi-Agency Coordinating Groups. In other cases, new or ad hoc methods of coordination may be appropriate.

d. Standardize and implement operational policies and procedures.

Develop and use, to the maximum extent possible, standardized operational procedures for wildland fire management agencies. Establish and implement a clear, concise system of accountability based on standard job performance requirements.

e. Develop a national plan for weather services that provides products, standards, and services to support the full range of responses required by both federal and State wildland fire management agencies.

A national plan should be developed that articulates the weather products, standards, and services needed to support the entire spectrum of wildland fire responses, and the best means of meeting these requirements. The plan should specifically address recommendations from the NWCG, the action items of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy, and support for meteorological services for State, tribal, and local organizations involved in wildland fire management. The plan should resolve the issue of providing non-federal organizations with meteorological services needed to support the full range of fire management responses.

The Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorology is uniquely qualified to develop such a plan. That office can establish a process for coordinating with fire management agencies and the NWS, and develop a plan that lays out options to assure that adequate weather services are available to both federal and non-federal fire management agencies.

10. EVALUATION

Establish clear mechanisms for evaluating the 2001 Federal Fire Policy and its implementation.

Evaluation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy and its implementation will require clear performance measures, mechanisms for collecting and analyzing data, and the tracking of accomplishments. All of these should be developed and used on an interagency, interdisciplinary basis.

The underlying 2001 Federal Fire Policy should be evaluated on a 3 to 5 year cycle, without waiting for specific fire events as has happened in the past.

Evaluation of policy implementation should include both headquarters and field organizations and activities, and their effectiveness in meeting the performance measures. Evaluations should be linked to each agency's existing program and project evaluation process. However, the interagency, interdisciplinary aspects of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy may require supplemental or unique evaluation activities.

11. 1995 FEDERAL FIRE POLICY ACTION ITEMS

Complete implementation of Action Items recommended from the 1995 Report in accordance with the 2001 Federal Fire Policy and the Implementation Actions in this Review and Update.

The 1995 Report contained over 80 specific Action Items to implement the recommended policy. Many of these have been completed and have been incorporated into normal agency fire management programs and activities. Many have been partially implemented. A few have not been implemented and a few others, upon further review and analysis, are no longer appropriate or relevant. In general, implementation has been least successful when consistency and compatibility across agencies was required or when integration of fire with other disciplines was required. Appendix E contains a detailed listing of each Action Item and the status of implementation. Included is a recommendation for future action. Continued attention to full implementation of the concepts and principles of the great majority of the Action Items from 1995 remains critical for implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. In many cases, the specific language of an Action Item is less important than accomplishing the overall objective of the item. The recommended future action for each item in Appendix E includes discussion about aspects requiring special attention as well as noting areas in common with other Implementation Actions in this Review and Update.

CHAPTER 4 — APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS

GLOSSARY

1995 Federal Fire Policy—1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy

1995 Report—1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review

2001 Federal Fire Policy—2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy

Agencies—Federal agencies that have direct fire management or land management responsibilities or that have programs and activities that support fire management activities.

Agency Administrator—The official responsible for the management of a geographic unit or functional area.

Appropriate Management Response—the response to a wildland fire is based on an evaluation of risks to firefighter and public safety, the circumstances under which the fire occurs, including weather and fuel conditions, natural and cultural resource management objectives, protection priorities, and values to be protected. The evaluation must also include an analysis of the context of the specific fire within the overall local, geographic area, or national wildland fire situation.

Burned Area Rehabilitation—the full range of post-fire activities to rehabilitate and restore fire damaged lands, including protection of public health and safety.

Cooperators—Federal, state, and local agencies and Indian tribes that participate in planning and conducting fire management projects and activities.

Ecosystem Sustainability—the capacity to maintain ecosystem health, productivity, diversity, and overall integrity, in the long run, in the context of human activity and use.

Fire Management Activities—include fire planning, fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives, prevention; preparedness, education, and addresses the role of mitigation, post-fire rehabilitation, fuels reduction, and restoration activities in fire management

Fire Management Plan—strategic plans that define a program to manage wildland fires based on an area's approved land management plan. Fire Management Plans must address a full range of fire management activities that support ecosystem sustainability, values to be protected, protection of firefighter and public safety, public health and environmental issues, and must be consistent with resource management objectives and activities of the area.

Full range of fire management activities—see Fire Management Activities.

Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC)—interagency regional operational centers for fire resource coordination and mobilization.

Geographic Area Coordinating Group (GACG)—interagency regional fire management bodies.

Initial Attack—the aggressive response to a wildland fire based on values to be protected, benefits of response, and reasonable cost of response.

Interagency—coordination, collaboration, communication among cooperating agencies.

Intergovernmental—coordination, collaboration, communication between federal agencies, Indian tribes, and foreign governments.

MAC Group—Multi-Agency Coordinating Group; national, regional, or local management groups for interagency, intergovernmental planning coordination, and operations leadership.

NWCG—National Wildfire Coordinating Group; the NWCG is an interagency, intergovernmental body that establishes operational fire management standards and procedures such as qualification and certification protocols, allocation or resources protocols, equipment standards, training programs.

Partners—all agencies and organizations that engage in joint decision making with federal agencies in planning and conducting fire management projects and activities.

Prescribed Fire—any fire ignited by management actions to meet specific objectives. Prescribed fires are conducted in accordance with prescribed fire plans.

Prescribed Fire Plan—a plan for each prescribed fire. Plans are documents prepared by qualified personnel, approved by the agency administrator, and include criteria for the conditions under which the fire will be conducted (a prescription).

Prescription—measurable criteria that define the conditions under which a prescribed fire will be ignited, guide selection of appropriate management responses, and indicate other required actions.

Prescription criteria may include safety, economic, public health, and environmental, geographic, administrative, social, or legal considerations.

Report to the President—Glickman, Dan, and Bruce Babbitt. 2000. Managing the impact of wildfires on communities and the environment. A Report to the President in response to the wildfires of 2000. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of the Interior. 34p.

Review and Update—Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

Values to be Protected—Include property, structures, physical improvements, natural and culture resources, community infrastructure, and economic, environmental, and social values.

Wildland Fire—any non-structural fire that occurs on wildland.

Wildland Urban Interface—defined as the line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels.

LIST OF ACRONYMS USED

| | |
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| BIA – Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior | MAC – Multi-Agency Coordinating Group |
| BLM – Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior | NASF – National Association of State Foresters |
| BOR – Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior | NMFS – National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce |
| DOC – U.S. Department of Commerce | NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |
| DOD – U.S. Department of Defense | NPS – National Park Service, Department of the Interior |
| DOE – U.S. Department of Energy | NWCG – National Wildfire Coordinating Group |
| DOI – U.S. Department of the Interior | NWS – National Weather Service, Department of Commerce |
| EPA – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | TWT – Training Working Team (NWCG) |
| FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency | USDA – U.S. Department of Agriculture |
| FWS – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior | USDA Forest Service – U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service |
| GACC – Geographic Area Coordination Center | USFS – U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture |
| GACG – Geographic Area Coordinating Group | USGS – U.S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior |
| IMET – Incident Meteorologist | WFSA – Wildland Fire Situation Analysis |
| ISO – Insurance Service Organization | |
| JFSP – Joint Fire Science Program | |

APPENDIX C: CHANGES TO THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND 1995 FEDERAL FIRE POLICY, WITH RATIONALE FOR CHANGES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Rewrite the existing guiding principle on coordination and cooperation to add “international” coordination and cooperation.

POLICY

New Policies

a. Ecosystem Sustainability

- ***The full range of fire management activities will be used to achieve ecosystem sustainability including its interrelated ecological, economic, and social components.***

Rationale: The concept of ecosystem sustainability was not fully considered in the original concept of fire management, as incorporated in the 1995 Federal Fire Policy. Using the full range of fire management activities is essential for achieving ecosystem sustainability, including ecological sustainability and socio-economic considerations. Under this policy, fuels management activities will be designed to support ecological and socio-economic sustainability.

b. Rehabilitation and Restoration

- ***Rehabilitation and restoration efforts will be undertaken to protect, and sustain ecosystems, public health, safety, and to help communities protect infrastructure.***

Rationale: Rehabilitation and restoration activities are essential components of achieving ecosystem sustainability when areas are not expected to recover through natural processes. Protection of community infrastructure, public health and safety, endangered species habitat, and other resource values must be considered in developing rehabilitation and restoration strategies and plans.

c. Science

- ***Fire management plans and programs will be based on a foundation of sound science. Research will support ongoing efforts to increase our scientific knowledge of biological, physical, and sociological factors. Information needed to support fire management will be developed through an integrated interagency fire science program. Scientific results must be made available to managers in a timely manner and must be used in the development of land management plans, Fire Management Plans, and implementation plans.***

Rationale: Scientific information is essential to develop and implement land and fire management programs and to evaluate their potential benefits and consequences. Information will be developed through an interagency, integrated fire science program. The fire science program should include federal science agencies, academic institutions, and independent research groups. The program needs to support ongoing efforts to increase our scientific knowledge of biological, physical, and sociological factors. Science organizations must produce tangible, accessible, and useful research products that can be incorporated in Fire Management Plans and programs. It is incumbent on fire managers to actively incorporate and implement the results of scientific research.

d. Communication and Education

- ***Agencies will enhance knowledge and understanding of wildland fire management policies and practices through internal and external communication and education programs. These programs will be continuously improved through the timely and effective exchange of information among all affected agencies and organizations.***

Rationale: The 1995 Federal Fire Policy is not fully understood by internal and external audiences. Shortfalls exist in disseminating the information and integrating the policy into affected disciplines needed to implement the policy. The addition of more cooperating agencies into the wildland fire management mission makes coordinated and enhanced communication programs essential.

e. Evaluation

- ***Agencies will systematically evaluate the effectiveness of projects through implementation of the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. The evaluation will assure accountability, facilitate resolution of areas of conflict, and identify resource shortages and agency priorities.***

Rationale: There is no systematic method or program for evaluating federal fire policy and its implementation, especially across agency and program or discipline boundaries. No performance measures or other means exist to determine the status of implementation or the effectiveness of the policies. The review of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy found substantial actions that were not completed. There is no ongoing or established process for tracking status of policy implementation within or among agencies.

Modifications to the 1995 Federal Fire Policy Statements

These are explanations of changes to the 1995 Federal Fire Policy. The full text of the original 1995 and the new 2001 statements are in Appendix D.

- a. Safety:** No change.
- b. Planning:**

Rationale: This policy statement was changed to clarify the role and nature of Fire Management Plans as the fundamental strategic documents, based on land use plans, to guide the full range of fire management related activities in a unit or area. Fire Management Plans are supplemented by operational plans such as preparedness plans, dispatch plans, prescribed fire plans, and prevention plans. Resource management objectives and activities addressed in Fire Management Plans include activities to restore and sustain ecosystems or to protect communities or public safety. Fire Management Plans must address concerns and discuss consequences for air and water quality, endangered species, and similar issues. Fire Management Plans should be developed and implemented across agency boundaries to ensure consistent approaches to similar conditions.

c. [Response to] Wildland Fire:

Rationale: The policy statements for Wildland Fire and Use of Fire were modified to more clearly distinguish between the two. The Wildland Fire policy statement was re-titled as Response to Wildland Fire and clarifies and emphasizes that the context or circumstances of the fire are to dictate the appropriate response, based on an approved Fire Management Plan. This policy is intended to minimize the use of different personnel, qualification systems, dispatch and resource allocation protocols, and so on for different “types” of fire. Rather, emphasis is on pre-planning by agencies to determine the appropriate management response to the occurrence of fire, regardless of ignition source or location. The term “be based on best available science” was dropped from this policy statement since a new policy statement on science has been added.

d. Use of [Wildland] Fire:

Rationale: The use of Fire Policy Statement was re-titled to the Use of Wildland Fire. Along with the above change in Wildland Fire, this policy statement now clarifies and emphasizes the critical importance of Fire Management Plans and operational plans in determining the appropriate response to a fire, regardless of its source of ignition or location.

e. Preparedness:

Rationale: This statement was revised to include a reference to management oversight. There is no process for ongoing integrated, interagency oversight and monitoring of preparedness activities. This change clarifies and emphasizes the importance of oversight and monitoring to ensure that fire management preparedness activities are appropriate, especially across agency lines.

f. Suppression: No change.

g. Prevention:

Rationale: This statement was changed to clarify the intent of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy, not to change it substantively. The addition of the word “partners” makes the revised policy statement more inclusive.

h. Protection Priorities:

Rationale: This policy statement was revised to clarify policy related to human health and protection of structures. The 1995 Federal Fire Policy statement on

protection priorities provides a solid framework for decision making in fire situations. Conflicting protection priorities are resolved through the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) and through the process of allocating resources at the geographic and local levels. However, two significant protection considerations are not specifically recognized in the 1995 Federal Fire Policy. First, human health, including the potential effects of smoke, is not explicitly considered in either the WFSA process or the process for allocating resources. Second, the 1995 Federal Fire Policy does not distinguish between the concept of property and the concept of community and community infrastructure. Recent experience has dramatically demonstrated the threat that uncontrolled wildland fire poses to human communities. While property may simply represent isolated structures, communities and their associated infrastructure are the social and economic fabric that supports life in rural areas. However, the primary responsibility for protecting private property and rural communities lies with individual property owners and local governments. This responsibility is usually achieved through proactive pre-fire actions such as those promoted in the FIREWISE Communities program.

i. Interagency Cooperation:

Rationale: This policy statement was revised to highlight education, prevention, restoration, and rehabilitation in interagency cooperation. This highlights the importance of doing prevention and education initiatives in an interagency, collaborative environment.

j. Standardization: No change.

k. Economic Efficiency: Dropped

Rationale: This statement was dropped because it duplicated a Guiding Principle.

l. Wildland Urban Interface:

Rationale: This statement was changed to clarify the 1995 Federal Fire Policy, not to change it substantively. The revised policy more accurately distinguishes between the terms “structure protection” and “structure suppression.”

m. [Agency] Administrator and Employee Roles:

Rationale: This statement was changed to recognize that wildland fire management is not the sole responsibility of dedicated fire management personnel. In the past in federal land management agencies, wildland fire activities took precedence over all agency functions and activities except the safeguarding of human life. The notion that a broad cross-section of employees need to be trained, certified and available for wildland fire assignment has gradually diminished over time, both on the part of Agency Administrators and employees themselves. Further, because of the diminishing federal workforce, the need to mutually support each other for wildland fire activities—locally, regionally and nationally—is increasingly important. The intent of the policy is to require every employee to be available to support wildland fire if the situation demands. Also, the intent is to strike a common-sense balance between requiring *every employee* of any agency to be trained, certified, and available for wildland fire assignment, and the notion that *only fire management personnel* have any responsibility to respond to wildland fire activities.

**APPENDIX D: TABULAR CROSSWALK BETWEEN THE
1995 AND 2001 FEDERAL FIRE POLICIES**

FEDERAL WILDLAND FIRE POLICIES

| POLICY ELEMENT | 1995 POLICY | 2001 POLICY |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Safety | Firefighter and public safety is the first priority. All Fire Management Plans and activities must reflect this commitment. | Firefighter and public safety is the first priority. All Fire Management Plans and activities must reflect this commitment. |
| Ecosystem Sustainability | --- | The full range of fire management activities will be used to achieve ecosystem sustainability including its interrelated ecological, economic, and social components. |
| Response to Wildland Fire | Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale, across agency boundaries, and will be based upon best available science. All use of fire for resource management requires a formal prescription. Management actions taken on wildland fires will be consistent with approved Fire Management Plans. | Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale, and across agency boundaries. Response to wildland fires is based on ecological, social and legal consequences of the fire. The circumstances under which a fire occurs, and the likely consequences on firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and values to be protected dictate the appropriate response to the fire. |
| Use of Wildland Fire | Wildland fire will be used to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and, as nearly as possible, be allowed to function in its natural ecological role. | Wildland fire will be used to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and, as nearly as possible, be allowed to function in its natural ecological role. Use of fire will be based on approved Fire Management Plans and will follow specific prescriptions contained in operational plans. |
| Rehabilitation and Restoration | --- | Rehabilitation and restoration efforts will be undertaken to protect and sustain ecosystems, public health, safety, and to help communities protect infrastructure. |

| POLICY ELEMENT | 1995 POLICY | 2001 POLICY |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Protection Priorities | Protection priorities are (1) human life and (2) property and natural and cultural resources. If it becomes necessary to prioritize between property and natural and cultural resources, this is done based on relative values to be protected, commensurate with fire management costs. Once people have been committed to an incident, these resources become the highest value to be protected. | The protection of human life is the single, overriding suppression priority. Setting priorities among protecting human communities and community infrastructure, other property and improvements, and natural and cultural resources will be done based on the values to be protected, human health and safety, and the costs of protection. Once people have been committed to an incident, these human resources become the highest value to be protected. |
| Wildland Urban Interface | The operational role of federal agencies as a partner in the Wildland Urban Interface is wildland firefighting, hazard fuel reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. Structural fire protection is the responsibility of tribal, State, and local governments. Federal agencies may assist with exterior structural suppression activities under formal Fire Protection Agreements that specify the mutual responsibilities of the partners, including funding. (Some federal agencies have full structural protection authority for their facilities on lands they administer and may also enter into formal agreements to assist State and local governments with full structural protection.) | The operational role of federal and State agencies as partners in the Wildland Urban Interface are wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. Structural fire suppression is the responsibility of tribal, State, or local governments. Federal agencies may assist with exterior structural protection activities under formal Fire Protection Agreements that specify the mutual responsibilities of the partners, including funding. (Some federal agencies have full structural protection authority for their facilities on lands they administer and may also enter into formal agreements to assist State and local governments with full structural protection.) |
| Planning | Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved Fire Management Plan. Fire Management Plans must be consistent with firefighter and public safety, values to be protected, and land and resource management plans and must address public health issues. Fire Management Plans must also address all potential wildland fire occurrences and include the full range of fire management actions. | Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved Fire Management Plan. Fire Management Plans are strategic plans that define a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires based on the area's approved land management plan. Fire management plans must provide for firefighter and public safety, include fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives; address values to be protected and public health issues; and be consistent with resource management objectives, activities of the area, and environmental laws and regulations. |

| POLICY ELEMENT | 1995 POLICY | 2001 POLICY |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Science | --- | Fire management plans and programs will be based on a foundation of sound science. Research will support ongoing efforts to increase our scientific knowledge of biological, physical, and sociological factors. Information needed to support fire management will be developed through an integrated interagency fire science program. Scientific results must be made available to managers in a timely manner and must be used in the development of land management plans, fire management plans, and implementation plans. |
| Preparedness | Agencies will ensure their capability to provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land and resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, and equipment. | Agencies will ensure their capability to provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land and resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, equipment, and management oversight. |
| Suppression | Fires are suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected, consistent with resource objectives. | Fires are suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected, consistent with resource objectives. |
| Prevention | Agencies will work together and with other affected groups and individuals to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fires. | Agencies will work together and with their partners and other affected groups and individuals to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fires. |
| Standardization | Agencies will use compatible planning processes, funding mechanisms, training and qualification requirements, operational procedures, values-to-be-protected methodologies, and public education programs for all fire management activities. | Agencies will use compatible planning processes, funding mechanisms, training and qualification requirements, operational procedures, values-to-be-protected methodologies, and public education programs for all fire management activities. |
| Interagency Cooperation | Fire management planning, preparedness, suppression, fire use, monitoring, and research will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of all parties. | Fire management planning, preparedness, prevention, suppression, fire use, restoration and rehabilitation, monitoring, research, and education will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of cooperators and partners. |

| POLICY ELEMENT | 1995 POLICY | 2001 POLICY |
|--|--|--|
| Communication and Education | --- | Agencies will enhance knowledge and understanding of wildland fire management policies and practices through internal and external communication and education programs. These programs will be continuously improved through the timely and effective exchange of information among all affected agencies and organizations. |
| Agency Administrator and Employee Roles | Employees who are trained and certified will participate in the wildland fire program as the situation demands; employees with operational, administrative, or other skills will support the wildland fire program as needed. Administrators are responsible and will be accountable for making employees available. | Agency administrators will ensure that their employees are trained, certified and made available to participate in the wildland fire program locally, regionally, and nationally as the situation demands. Employees with operational, administrative, or other skills will support the wildland fire program as necessary. Agency administrators are responsible and will be held accountable for making employees available. |
| Evaluation | --- | Agencies will develop and implement a systematic method of evaluation to determine effectiveness of projects through implementation of the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. The evaluation will assure accountability, facilitate resolution of areas of conflict, and identify resource shortages and agency priorities. |
| Economic Efficiency | Fire management programs and activities will be based on economic analyses that incorporated commodity, non-commodity, and social values. | --- |

APPENDIX E: DISPOSITION OF 1995 ACTION ITEMS

Note: Continued attention to full implementation of the concepts and principles of the great majority of the action items from the 1995 Report remains critical for implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. The recommended disposition for each item in this Appendix includes discussion about aspects requiring special attention as well as noting areas in common with specific Implementation Actions in the Review and Update.

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
|--|--|---|
| ROLE OF FIRE IN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT | | |
| 01 Use a compatible fire management planning system that recognizes both fire use and fire protection as inherent parts of natural resource management; this system will ensure adequate fire suppression capabilities and support fire reintroduction efforts. | Agencies have made some progress in implementing this item, but significant work remains. Due to changes in agency missions and organizations, no single interagency system is anticipated. | Implementation is an ongoing process. Agencies must continue to pursue development and application of compatible fire management planning systems. See also Implementation Action 1b. |
| 02 Develop Fire Management Plans for all areas subject to wildland fires. These plans will use information about fire regimes, current conditions, and land management objectives as a basis to develop fire management goals and objectives; address all potential wildland fire occurrences and include a full range of fire management actions; use new knowledge and monitoring results to revise fire management goals, objectives, and actions; and be linked closely to land and resource management plans. | Agencies are updating plans; however, a significant number of plans remain out of date or inconsistent with the 1995 Federal Fire Policy. In some cases underlying land management plans require revisions before fire management plans can be fully written or revised. | See Implementation Action 1b. Implementation is an ongoing process. Fire Management Plans that implement Federal Fire Policy must be completed as soon as possible. All land management agencies should place a high priority on completion of these plans. If necessary, land management plans should be updated, revised, or amended to allow full implementation of Federal Fire Policy. |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
|---|--|--|
| <p>03 Develop research programs that provide a sound scientific basis for the integration of wildland fire into land-use and resource management.</p> | <p>The Forest Service-Interior Joint Fire Sciences Program (JFSP) represents significant progress in making scientific information available to support the fuels program. The Fiscal Year 2001 appropriations bill includes additional funding for the JFSP to address post-fire rehabilitation and restoration and fire management issues.</p> | <p>Science and research programs in agencies such as the U.S. Geological Survey and the USDA Forest Service should continue to be integrated into the federal wildland fire management community. Future research should include social issues such as individual and organizational psychology. See also Implementation Action 5a.</p> |
| <p>04 Create a system for coordination and cooperation among land managers and regulators that explores options within existing laws to allow for the use of fire to achieve goals of ecosystem health while at the same time protecting individual components of the environment, human health, and safety. This system will allow for early collaboration during the process of developing new land management plans and provide a mechanism for incorporating input as existing plans are implemented or revised; and encourage land managers and regulators to enter into agreements that set forth the actions each will take before and during the time fire is reintroduced in their area of responsibility.</p> | <p>No formal system(s) have been created. However, there have been some opportunities for coordination and cooperation such as the Western Regional Air Partnership and the development of EPA's Interim Air Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires. Some ad hoc coordination and cooperation has occurred at Geographic Areas and other locations.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process. Continue to improve the coordination and cooperation between the land managing agencies and regulators, particularly in the development of plans related to fire management. Land managing agencies have an affirmative responsibility to involve other agencies collaboratively in planning activities. See also Implementation Action 1b.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
|--|--|---|
| <p>05 Continue ongoing efforts to jointly develop compatible, ecosystem-based, multiple scale, interagency land management plans that involve all interested parties and facilitate adaptive management. This process will fully integrate ecological concepts that consider long-term dynamics and cross agency boundaries; effectively incorporate current fire-related information, including scientific knowledge, risk assessment, social and economic concerns, and public health considerations; and ensure that existing land management plans are revised or updated to address the above actions.</p> | <p>In general, compatible, ecosystem-based, multiple scale, interagency land management plans have not been developed. Some efforts have been made at large-scale land management planning that integrate ecosystem concepts across agency boundaries, including the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project and the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project. Some unit-level cross boundary efforts is underway.</p> | <p>Continue to implement as part of normal agency policies and procedures with understanding that the original action item should be a long term goal and is not likely achievable in the short run. See also Implementation Actions 1a and 1b.</p> |
| <p>06 Expedite the decision-making process by jointly developing criteria for evaluating ecosystem condition by ecosystem type and for prioritizing areas for the reintroduction of fire to meet resource objectives and reduce hazards. This process will identify those ecosystems where fire does not need to be reintroduced (fire is not a significant natural component, or the fire regime has not been altered); where fire is unlikely to succeed (fire would be adverse, such as areas significantly altered by fuel accumulations and species changes) - determine appropriate, ecologically sound alternatives for these areas; and where treatment with fire is essential or potentially effective (fire is needed to improve resource conditions or reduce risk and hazard).</p> | <p>The JSFP is sponsoring work that will provide tools and information that will support this type of work. However, criteria for evaluating ecosystem condition by ecosystem type and for prioritizing areas for the reintroduction of fire to meet resource objectives and reduce hazards have not been developed. Research is beginning to yield some results.</p> | <p>Continue to implement as part of normal agency policies and procedures with understanding that the original action item should be a long term goal and is not likely achievable in the short run. See also Implementation Actions 1a and 1b.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
|--|--|---|
| <p>07 Jointly implement ecosystem-based fire management programs to accomplish resource or landscape management objectives when consistent with land management plans. These programs will strive to maintain the long-term integrity of the natural resources and minimize the undesirable effects of fire; address the highest-priority needs in ecosystem assessment, monitoring, and management and determine the appropriate scope of fire use, consistent with historical fire regimes, including extent, timing, and risks and consequences; use existing tools and develop new ones to address today's more fragmented landscapes and to enhance our ability to manage wildland fires of varying size and intensity; and illustrate the management actions and their results by establishing or expanding fire management demonstration areas.</p> | <p>Various individual actions have been taken by some agencies to improve planning processes and coordinate some plans. In broad terms, ecosystem-based fire management programs to accomplish resource or landscape management objectives when consistent with land management plans have not been implemented. However, some examples of such planning do exist: Northwest Forest Plan, Interior Columbia Basin Management Plan, and Sierra Framework.</p> | <p>Continue to implement as part of normal agency policies and procedures with understanding that the original action item should be a long term goal and is not likely achievable in the short run. See also Implementation Actions 1a and 1b.</p> |
| <p>08 Conduct a collaborative fire research program to improve the predictive understanding of wildland fire and its relationship to ecosystem dynamics and to strengthen the technological capabilities and organizational framework necessary to sustain the role of fire in natural ecosystems.</p> | <p>The JFSP addresses the fuels management aspects of this action item. The recently expansion of the JFSP will allow additional issues to be addressed.</p> | <p>See Implementation Action 5a.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
|---|--|--|
| <p>09 Establish an interdisciplinary team that includes all agencies, regulators, and other partners to design a consistent fire- role and fire-use message for decision makers and the public. This message will describe and clearly explain issues such as ecosystem condition, risks, consequences (including public health impacts), and costs in open dialogue with internal and external constituents and be designed to maximize open communications and reduce polarization among conflicting interests regarding the use of fire.</p> | <p>Under the leadership of the National Wildfire Coordination Group a joint message was developed. This message has not been incorporated into agency policies and activities.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process. See also Implementation Action 8.</p> |
| <p>10 Build on existing interagency efforts to develop and implement a strategic plan that educates the general public and agency personnel about the role of fire. As part of this effort, agencies will develop and widely transmit a clear message about the important role of fire as a natural process and the risks and consequences of its use and exclusion; integrate this message into existing agency communication systems, agency and partner initiatives (such as forest health, ecosystem management, etc.), and all external outreach efforts, including television, magazines, newspapers, and public meetings; encourage, create, and coordinate partnerships to achieve consistency in messages, build public trust, and obtain public opinion; and develop mandatory national and regional interagency training programs to instill in all employees an understanding of the role of fire in natural systems.</p> | <p>Various agencies have taken actions to provide information internally and externally regarding the role of fire. However, no interagency strategic plan has been developed.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process. See also Implementation Action 8.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
|---|---|--|
| USE OF WILDLAND FIRE | | |
| 11 Jointly develop programs to plan, fund, and implement an expanded program of prescribed fire in fire-dependent ecosystems. | Various joint planning and operational activities have taken place. | Continue to plan, fund, and implement interagency prescribed fire activities. |
| 12 Facilitate the planning and implementation of landscape-scale prescribed burns across agency boundaries. Seek opportunities to enter into partnerships with tribal, State and private land managers to achieve this objective where appropriate. | Various joint planning and operational activities have taken place. | Agencies should continue to place a priority on cross boundary and landscape scale prescribed fire projects. |
| 13 Require appropriate treatment of fuel hazards created by resource-management and land-use activities. | Required by each agency's policies. | Implementation is an ongoing process. |
| 14 Conduct all prescribed fire projects consistent with land and resource management plans, public health considerations, and approved prescribed burn plans. | Required by each agency's policies. | Implementation is an ongoing process. |
| 15 Implement the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) interagency prescribed fire qualification and certification standards. | Standards have been established and are being utilized. | Implementation is an ongoing process. |
| 16 Train and maintain a qualified and adequate work force to plan and implement interagency prescribed fire projects safely and effectively, and make these personnel available when needed. | NWCG training and qualification standards are in place to support the training. | Implementation is an ongoing process. See also Implementation Action 6b. |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
|--|--|---|
| 17 Jointly develop simple, consistent hiring and contracting procedures for prescribed fire activities. | The Department of the Interior has approved the use of Administratively Determined hiring authority to conduct hazard reduction prescribed fire operations. | Implementation is an ongoing process. USDA Forest Service needs to develop simple, consistent hiring and contracting procedures for prescribed fire activities. Procedures should be consistent and applicable across agencies. |
| 18 Conduct research and development on fuel treatment alternatives and techniques. | The JFSP specifically addresses this issue. | Continue to implement the JFSP and through Implementation Action 5a. |
| 19 Seek authority to eliminate internal barriers to the transfer and use of funds for prescribed fire on non-federal lands and among federal agencies. | Report language in the 1998 appropriations bill reduces barriers to use of funds for prescribed fire among federal agencies by eliminating cross billing for personnel costs. Non-federal partnerships can be developed to do prescribed burning through some type of an agreement but there has to be benefit to the federal bureau to justify spending on private lands. Language in the 2001 appropriations bill allows use of funds for fuels treatments on non-federal lands. | Agencies must continue to remove internal administrative barriers related to “types” of fire. Agency procedures should be based on appropriate response to fire, not source of ignition or location. |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
|---|---|--|
| <p>20 Seek authority or provide administrative direction to eliminate barriers to carrying over from one year to the next all funds designated for prescribed fire.</p> | <p>The House Report on the 1998 appropriations bill eliminates the problem of carryover of prescribed fire funding by providing funding authority identical to that for wildland fire suppression. Up front allocation or budgeting for prescribed fire is no longer necessary.</p> | <p>No further action required.</p> |
| <p>21 Work with the Office of Personnel Management to acquire authority for hazard pay to compensate employees exposed to hazards while engaged in prescribed burning activities.</p> | <p>The Interior and Forest Service fire program managers do not support hazard duty pay for prescribed fire operations.</p> | <p>Drop this as an Action Item. However, to the greatest extent feasible, ensure that employees engaged in fire management activities are treated comparably, regardless of source or location of ignition. Address as a pay administration issue based on type of work employees perform.</p> |
| <p>22 Clarify that prescribed fire positions qualify for primary coverage under special firefighter retirement, and issue appropriate guidance to field offices.</p> | <p>Firefighter and law enforcement retirement specialists within the bureaus concurred that prescribed fire positions and work qualified for primary coverage under special retirement coverage for fire. Bureaus have issued memorandums to this effect.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process. In particular, ensure that employees engaged in fuels management work are treated comparably.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
|--|--|---|
| <p>23 Jointly develop an assessment process for determining the probability of success and/or failure associated with the use of prescribed fire and evaluating potential positive and negative consequences. As a part of this process, the effects of not conducting the project will also be evaluated.</p> | <p>An adequate assessment process has not been developed.</p> | <p>Bureaus need to continue to develop and refine assessment processes. These processes should be developed consistently so that joint reviews are possible and so that results are comparable across agency lines. Give emphasis to identifying consequences of failure. See also Implementation Actions 9a and 10.</p> |
| <p>24 Jointly develop tools to identify, assess, and mitigate risks from prescribed fires.</p> | <p>Adequate tools to identify, assess, and mitigate risks from prescribed fires have not been developed.</p> | <p>Bureaus need to continue develop tools to identify, assess, and mitigate risks from prescribed fires. These tools should be developed consistently so that joint reviews are possible and so that results are comparable across agency lines. Give emphasis to identifying consequences of failure. See also Implementation Actions 9a and 10.</p> |
| <p>25 Create an organizational climate that supports employees who implement a properly planned prescribed fire program.</p> | <p>Agencies have developed awards and other recognition programs for the prescribed fire program. Some agencies have taken specific efforts to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
|--|--|--|
| <p>26 Reevaluate prescribed burn planning and execution requirements to ensure adequacy of direction without unnecessary constraint.</p> | <p>Department of the Interior Manual, DOI Bureau manuals and USDA Forest Service manuals have been updated to eliminate unnecessary constraints. Work continues with EPA and states to reduce constraints where appropriate. Manuals and handbook guidance will be continually evaluated to eliminate constraints.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process.</p> |
| <p>26a The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will seek legislation providing for prompt reimbursement to private landowners for damages resulting from escaped prescribed fires originating on federal lands.</p> | <p>Upon further review, amending the Tort Claims Act for this purpose is not of significance for the implementation of the prescribed fire program.</p> | <p>Drop this as an Action Item.</p> |

PREPAREDNESS AND SUPPRESSION

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>27 Establish fire management qualifications based on program complexity, and staff existing and future agency administrator and fire management vacancies with individuals who meet these qualifications and who are committed to accomplishing the total fire management program.</p> | <p>The Interagency Fire Program Management Qualification Standards and Guidelines as been approved by the FFALC and has been sent to the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture for transmittal to the Office of Personnel Management for approval.</p> | <p>After OPM approval agencies should implement as part of normal agency activities.</p> |
|---|--|--|

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
|---|---|--|
| <p>28 Develop appropriate tools (training, handbooks, job performance guidelines, planning documents) necessary to assist administrators and fire management personnel to develop and manage a safe and effective fire management program.</p> | <p>Interagency tools such as Behave, FARSITE, the Implementation of Fire Policy handbook, the Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards Guidelines, Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation, and Fire Effects Monitoring have been developed and are in use by all agencies.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process.</p> |
| <p>29 Through training, job details, or other methods, increase experience and fire qualifications of Agency Administrators and fire management personnel.</p> | <p>Agencies are implementing this recommendation through a variety of training actions. Some agencies have mandated particular courses for agency administrators.</p> | <p>Continue to implement as part of normal agency policies and procedures to ensure that all Agency Administrators and fire management personnel are appropriately qualified as quickly as possible.</p> |
| <p>30 Enforce a system of accountability to manage a safe and efficient fire management program based on standard job performance requirements. These requirements should include items specifically related to safety and will recognize and reward success and provide disciplinary action for failure.</p> | <p>Agencies are implementing this recommendation on an individual basis. Standard job performance requirements are developed but not yet implemented throughout all agencies.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
|--|---|--|
| <p>31 Establish partnerships with contractors; cooperators, such as rural and volunteer fire departments; and others, which encourage and assist them to adopt and implement federal standards for training, qualifications, firefighting equipment, personal protective equipment, etc.</p> | <p>A number of national and local efforts are underway in each agency to improve training, assistance, and other means of working with cooperators. The September 2000 Report to the President and the subsequent 2001 appropriations bill includes additional funding to support improved cooperation with state, rural, and volunteer fire organizations.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process.</p> |
| <p>32 Define values to be protected, working in cooperation with State, local, and tribal governments, permittees, and public users. Criteria will include environmental, commodity, social, economic, political, public health, and other values.</p> | <p>The agencies developed and adopted a Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) to address values to be protected and the other criteria identified in this action item. This document is used by all agencies on incidents that escape initial attack and require a greater commitment of firefighting resources.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process. Agencies should ensure that the WFSA process appropriately defines values to be protected and is a useful tool for incident commanders.</p> |
| <p>33 Develop long-range interagency wildland fire management objectives, based on values to be protected, across geographic and agency boundaries.</p> | <p>Implementation of this action item is carried out at the local level as an ongoing, long-term effort during fire management planning. Guidance is contained in bureau manuals. Implementation across agency and geographic boundaries has been limited.</p> | <p>Continue to implement as part of normal agency policies and procedures with emphasis on developing objectives across geographic and agency boundaries.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| 34 Develop interagency preparedness planning based on established interagency wildland fire management objectives. | A national preparedness plan is incorporated in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide, which is adopted on an interagency basis annually. Annual preparedness plans are developed and included in each Geographic Area's Mobilization Guide. | Continue to implement as part of normal agency policies and procedures with emphasis on the local, unit level. Continued work on cross agency fire management planning at the local, unit level is required. |
| 35 Develop interagency strategies to implement preparedness plans. These strategies must consider both initial attack and extended attack capability and should include the full range of available cooperator and contractor resources. | Preparedness plans are implemented at the geographic and local levels. | Continue to implement as part of normal agency policies and procedures with emphasis on developing objectives across geographic and agency boundaries. |
| 36 Develop consistent language to be included in budget appropriations, enabling the full spectrum of fire management actions on wildland fires. | The Department of the Interior and the USDA Forest Service have worked together to develop consistent language for wildland fire appropriations. | Implementation is an ongoing process. All agencies should continue to develop consistent budget requests and implement consistently at the national and field level. As new agencies, such as DOD and DOE, join the interagency program, their budgets should be consistent with those of DOI and USDA. |
| 37 Work together and with other affected cooperators, groups, and individuals to develop and implement fire prevention plans to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fire. | All agencies have developed and implemented various fire prevention plans, in conjunction with cooperators, partners, and other groups. | Implementation is an ongoing process. |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| 38 Provide first for firefighter and public safety. Once people are committed to an incident, those resources become the highest value to be protected and receive the highest management considerations. | All agencies have implemented strong programs to emphasize that public and firefighter safety is the primary objectives on a wildland fire incident. | Implementation is an ongoing process. This message needs continual re-enforcement and emphasis. |
| 39 Protect property and natural and cultural resources secondary to firefighter and public safety. | Changes have been made in the National Mobilization Guide and in bureau policy statements. Training materials have been revised and developed. | Implementation is an ongoing process. See also the new policy statement on Protection Priorities (changed from 1995). |
| 40 Base the second protection priority on the relative values of property and natural and cultural resources when firefighting personnel and equipment are limited. | Changes have been made in the National Mobilization Guide and in bureau policy statements. Training materials have been revised and developed. | Implementation is an ongoing process. See also the new policy statement on Protection Priorities (changed from 1995). |
| 41 Use standard criteria to assess overall suppression and support requirements. | Interagency standards and criteria have been developed and are in use by all agencies. | Implementation is an ongoing process. |
| 42 Examine and identify, on an interagency basis, employee availability at each organizational level, based on fire qualifications and other necessary skills to provide needed suppression and support. This will include planning for both initial attack and extended attack at the local level. | Some agencies have conducted some workload analyses. However, there has been no interagency effort. | Implement as part of Implementation Action 6a. |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| <p>43 Develop and utilize, to the maximum extent possible, the concept of closest initial attack forces and interagency staffing for wildland fire suppression and support, optimizing the use of the federal and non-federal work force. Qualified contractors are a component to be considered in suppression and support planning.</p> | <p>Resource coordination is carried out through the Geographic Areas and at local levels through dispatch organizations. Local MOU's for sharing resources, including state and local government, continue to be developed.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process.</p> |
| <p>44 Use an analysis and decision making process that considers, on an interagency basis, existing and potential fire severity; suppression resource commitment and availability; prescribed fire activity; environmental, social, and political concerns; and other pertinent factors.</p> | <p>The interagency Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) is used on incidents that escape initial attack and require a greater commitment of firefighting resources. The interagency Allocation of Resources protocols are used to address multiple incidents and complex situations.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process.</p> |
| <p>45 Develop interagency severity plans to provide increased fire suppression capability in emergency situations, including accessing additional resources, pre-positioning resources, and training emergency firefighters.</p> | <p>Local units and interagency partners coordinate resources as dictated by the severity of local conditions. National Preparedness Levels dictate the need for national-level contingencies.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process. Ensure that severity requests are handled on an interagency basis.</p> |
| <p>46 Develop a standard interagency planning, budgeting, and staffing process.</p> | <p>Fire management planning and budgeting systems used by the agencies utilize similar terms, common goals, values and assumptions to gain similar results within the planning and budgeting process. A single, standard system is not feasible due to the difference in missions of bureaus, but outcomes from the process can be compared.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
|---|---|---|
| WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE PROTECTION | | |
| 47 Adopt an operational role in the Wildland Urban Interface that includes wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. | Bureau manual updates contain language defining the operational role in Wildland Urban Interface areas. In some areas significant progress has been achieved with implementing the federal operational role. | Implementation is an ongoing process. In particular, Sub-Geographic Areas and local units, as appropriate, should work actively with partners and cooperators. See also Implementation Actions 3a and 3b. |
| 48 Identify and fund, on a cost-share basis, high-priority fuels management activities on federal lands adjacent to Wildland Urban Interface areas identified through a fire protection assessment process that considers relative values to be protected. These activities may involve adjacent non-federal lands. | Additional funding for fuels management activities has been included in Department of the Interior and the USDA Forest Service wildland fire management budgets since 1995. The 2001 appropriations bill includes both substantial new funding for fuels management activities and direction to identify high-priority areas. | Continue to implement fuels management activities, especially the program proposed in the September 2000 Report to the President and the subsequent Fiscal Year 2001 appropriations. |
| 49 Lead by example in utilizing fire-safe standards at federal facilities. | All agencies adhere to local building codes, but fire-safe standards have not been considered in the design of their facilities. | Agencies must follow fire safe standards at all new and existing facilities. |
| 50 Ensure that all Wildland Urban Interface areas are covered by Fire Protection Agreements; renegotiate existing agreements as needed to reflect a federal responsibility that is compatible with federal policy and to ensure that State and local responsibilities are apportioned appropriately. Agreements will address all partners in these areas. | Agencies have developed and updated fire protection agreements in many areas. | Implementation is an ongoing process. Develop agreements where none exist. Note that role of federal agencies is limited to entering into agreements with non-federal entities. Establishment of Fire Protection Agreements and organizations among non-federal entities is a non-federal responsibility. |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| 51 Incorporate Wildland Urban Interface considerations into agreements, operating plans, land management plans, and agency Fire Management Plans. | Agencies are incorporating Wildland Urban Interface considerations into agreements, operating plans, land management plans, and agency Fire Management Plans. | Implementation is an ongoing process. |
| 52 Charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with identifying and establishing a data-collection mechanism, in coordination with tribal, State, and local governments, insurance industry, National Fire Protection Association, and others, to better assess the nature and scope of the Wildland Urban Interface fire problem. | No national level data collection mechanism, or strategic effort for such, has been developed. | Implement, as appropriate, as part of Implementation Action 5b. |
| 52a Charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with identifying specialized skills and training that are needed by both wildland and structural fire agencies in the interface and incorporating those requirements into the Wildland Fire Qualification System to provide for safe and efficient operations in the Wildland Urban Interface. | Agencies use NWCG approved training including the Fire Operation in the Urban Interface (S-205) course to meet this need. Additional planning and operations course work is being developed as a tiered approach with the S-205 course. | Implementation is an ongoing process. Adopt tiered courses as they become available. |
| 52b Charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with developing operational curricula, in cooperation with the National Fire Academy, for protection in the Wildland Urban Interface. | One course developed and in use; additional course and a workbook still under development (expected in 2001) | Implementation is an ongoing process. |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| <p>52c Charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with implementing training through interagency systems and joint training activities and augmenting fire training not available at the State and local levels. <i>Staffed to NWCG TWT for implementation monitoring</i></p> | <p>Federal fire management training courses are available to personnel from non-federal agencies. WUI issues also incorporated into standard NWCG curriculum.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process.</p> |
| <p>52d Charge the National Wildfire Coordinating Group with identifying and implementing equipment standards for Wildland Urban Interface operation.</p> | <p>Completed</p> | <p>No further action required beyond normal updating of standards as appropriate.</p> |
| <p>53 Increase emphasis on cost-share program assistance in the Wildland Urban Interface through the USDA Forest Service State and Private Cooperative Fire Program, including training and equipping of State and local agencies. Assess and revise, as needed, other mechanisms to ensure funding is directed to agencies with Wildland Urban Interface responsibilities.</p> | <p>The USDA Forest Service, in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and National Volunteer Fire Council, is implementing this action item through the Federal Excess Personal Property, Rural Community Fire Protection, and Rural Fire Prevention and Control programs. Over a half million dollars in grants were provided to the states to assist with Wildland Urban Interface projects in 1999. This included providing equipment and training to local fire agencies. More grants are planned in future years.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process. Additional funding and expanded programs for USDA Forest Service and DOI in the Fiscal Year 2001 appropriations will enhance implementation of this action item.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| <p>54 Educate agency personnel on federal cost-share and grant programs, Fire Protection Agreements, and other related federal programs so the full array of assistance available to States and local agencies is understood.</p> | <p>The USDA Forest Service Cooperative Fire Program Coordinators in each region are sharing information on assistance available to communities and states through the use of Agency personnel. The BIA provides this information to the tribes through its respective programs. Not applicable to other agencies.</p> | <p>Continue to implement as part of normal agency policies and procedures, including new programs in the Department of the Interior.</p> |
| <p>55 Participate in the development and execution of a national Wildland Urban Interface fire hazard mapping scoping study in cooperation with tribal, State, and local governments and the private sector.</p> | <p>Combined with Action Item 83.</p> | <p>See Action Item 83</p> |
| <p>56 Increase communication with Wildland Urban Interface property owners, planners, elected officials, and others through education and awareness messages about the role of fire in wildland ecosystem health, inherent risks in Wildland Urban Interface areas, available prevention and protection measures, and federal disaster assistance programs.</p> | <p>Agencies have ongoing activities with geographic and local prevention programs and teams. The National FIREWISE Communities program has initiated a series of national and regional workshops designed to help local officials understand the risk associated with the interface and the potential solutions. The workshops bring together all levels of program managers and decision makers.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| 57 Expand programs, curricula, and distribution systems for Wildland Urban Interface educational materials in cooperation with structural protection agencies. | Various ongoing agency and interagency efforts through the NWCG Wildland Urban Interface Working Team and through such activities as the interagency, public-private FIREWISE program. | Implementation is an ongoing process. |
| 58 Support and participate in public education efforts in cooperation with the Insurance Institute for Property Loss Reduction (IIPLR) and fire and building code organizations. | Through the FIREWISE program and other activities, the agencies have worked with insurance and fire and building code organizations. | Implementation is an ongoing process. |
| 59 Utilize the recently rechartered National Wildland Urban Interface Fire Protection Program, which includes the Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, FEMA's U.S. Fire Administration, National Association of State Foresters, National Association of State Fire Marshals, and National Fire Protection Association, to focus on Wildland Urban Interface fire protection issues and actions. | The NWCG Wildland Urban Interface Working Team continues to address Wildland Urban Interface fire protection issues and actions | Implementation is an ongoing process. |
| 60 Utilize the Western Governors' Association (WGA) as a catalyst for involving State agencies, as well as local and private stakeholders, with the objective of developing an implementation plan to achieve a uniform, integrated national approach to hazard and risk assessment and fire prevention and protection in the Wildland Urban Interface. | The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) agreed to monitor progress on various intergovernmental and non-governmental implementation activities in the WGA report. | Continue to use WGA, NASF, and other non-federal organizations to develop uniform, integrated national approaches to hazard and risk assessment and fire prevention and protection in the Wildland Urban Interface. |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| 61 Work with the States to develop viable and comprehensive wildland fire hazard mitigation plans and performance-based partnerships. | Principal effort to implement this action item has come through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) pre- and post-disaster mitigation planning programs and guidance. | All agencies should continue to work with the States to develop viable and comprehensive wildland fire hazard mitigation plans. FEMA's mitigation planning programs, including the Project initiative, should continue to be a key aspect of implementing this action item. |

COORDINATED PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

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| 62 Develop and utilize consistent fire management qualification standards and specific selection criteria for fire program managers. | The Interagency Fire Program Management Qualification Standards and Guidelines as been approved by the FFALC and has been sent to the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture for transmittal to the Office of Personnel Management for approval. | Departments of the Interior and Agriculture concur with the Interagency Fire Program Management Qualification Standards and Guidelines and seek OPM approval. After approval agencies implement as part of normal agency activities. |
| 63 Establish job performance standards for Agency Administrators and fire managers that clearly reflect the complexity and scope of fire management responsibilities. | Agency performance appraisal systems generally do not allow specific fire management job performance elements. The Bureau of Land Management has identified performance standards in its fire management operations guide, but there remains no means of assessing consequences of poor performance. | All agencies should identify fire management job performance standards (consistent across agencies). Agencies must determine how to link these performance standards with performance appraisal. |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| <p>64 Provide consistent and adequate training for Agency Administrators commensurate with their roles and responsibilities in fire management.</p> | <p>The Fire Management Leadership course at the National Advanced Resource Technology Center (NARTC) provides training for unit level managers and similar Agency Administrators. Similar training for other Agency Administrators is often not available.</p> | <p>All Geographic Areas need to regularly offer the Fire Management Leadership course for Agency Administrators in their Geographic Areas.</p> |
| <p>65 Ensure that Agency Administrators and fire program managers are held accountable for conducting the fire program in accordance with established policies, procedures, standards, and direction.</p> | <p>Each agency conducts regular readiness and program reviews within its overall organization. These reviews provide the information necessary to hold Agency Administrators and fire program managers accountable.</p> | <p>Continue to conduct regular reviews of programs and implementation at various organizational levels. Agency leaders must hold Agency Administrators and fire program managers accountable for the results of those reviews.</p> |
| <p>66 Ensure that trained and certified employees participate in the wildland fire program as the situation demands; employees with operational, administrative, or other skills support the wildland fire program as needed; and administrators are responsible, accountable, and make employees available.</p> | <p>In general agencies are experiencing difficulties with widespread training, certification, and availability of employees. This action item has not been successfully implemented.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process. Agencies should place an emphasis on training employees and making them available. See also Implementation Action 6a.</p> |
| <p>67 Jointly manage fire use and suppression resources and activities to achieve accomplishment of both programs concurrently.</p> | <p>The interagency Allocation of Resources protocols provide the means for implementing this action item.</p> | <p>The Allocation of Resources protocols must be implemented nationally, at each Geographic Area, and at the sub-Geographic Area level.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| <p>68 Jointly develop a standard methodology for measuring and reporting fire management efficiency that includes commodity, non-commodity, and social values. This methodology should specifically address, among other considerations, the costs and benefits of large-fire suppression.</p> | <p>Not done.</p> | <p>Drop as a specific action item. This issue should be addressed through ongoing interagency program management and evaluation activities. See Implementation Actions 9a and 10.</p> |
| <p>69 Develop criteria to be used in evaluating alternative fire management organizations. Some examples of criteria include: meeting land management objectives, reintroducing fire in the ecosystem, ensuring cost effectiveness, effectively dealing with wildland urban interface fire protection, and using partnerships and cooperative relationships.</p> | <p>See #70</p> | <p>See #70</p> |
| <p>70 Use these criteria to analyze, with cooperators, a broad range of organizational alternatives on a national, regional, and local basis. Examples of alternatives include a single federal fire organization; contracts with States, private sector, tribal governments, military, or combinations thereof; and status quo.</p> | <p>Each agency conducts ongoing reviews of its fire management organizations. The USDA Forest Service sponsored a detailed analysis of options for its organization. No broad scale interagency analyses or reviews have taken place. Recently an interagency effort has begun to look at alternative approaches for large fire organizations.</p> | <p>Address issues of organizational structure and coordination through individual agency reviews and evaluations and through Implementation Actions 6a & 6b.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| <p>71 Jointly identify the legal context for reintroducing fire into wildlands and develop options for accomplishment. Options may include modifying regulations to address ecological processes where appropriate; exercising broader interpretations of policy; or resolving obstacles at regional and local levels, including those on non-federal lands. Based on this interpretation, develop standardized agreements or new agreements that permit these activities.</p> | <p>Not done.</p> | <p>This type of analysis no longer necessary for implementation of Federal Fire Policy. No further action required.</p> |
| <p>72 Clarify and differentiate between agency liability and personal liability resulting from prescribed fire, based on legal review and interpretation of tort law.</p> | <p>This type of information has been developed for specific presentations at various fire management courses, but has not been generally documented.</p> | <p>Include standard information clarifying and differentiating between agency liability and personal liability in fire management courses and other materials for employees and agency administrators.</p> |
| <p>73 Early in the process, involve public health and environmental regulators in developing the most workable application of policies and regulations.</p> | <p>Various efforts have taken place on a national and local level to involve public health and environmental regulators. These activities have focused on air quality issues.</p> | <p>Implementation is an ongoing process. Land managing agencies must continue to include all federal and non-federal regulatory agencies in development of policies, procedures, plans and other aspects of implementing Federal Fire Policy.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| <p>74 The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will direct the Office of the Solicitor and the Office of the General Counsel, in coordination with the Department of Justice and other appropriate federal agencies, to conduct and publish a comprehensive legal review on Wildland Urban Interface fire protection to provide the legal foundation for federal actions. This review will address current authority under federal laws such as the Organic Act, National Forest Management Act, Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.</p> | <p>Not completed. Upon further consideration this review was determined to be unnecessary to implement the wildland urban interface aspects of the Federal Fire Policy.</p> | <p>No further action required.</p> |
| <p>75 The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will direct the Office of the Solicitor and the Office of the General Counsel, in coordination with the Department of Justice and other appropriate federal agencies, to conduct and publish a comprehensive legal review on Wildland Urban Interface fire protection to provide the legal foundation for federal actions. This review will address the subjects of tort liability, budget authorities, cooperative agreements, mitigation activities, and natural resource protection and environmental laws.</p> | <p>Not completed. Upon further consideration this review was determined to be unnecessary to implement the wildland urban interface aspects of the Federal Fire Policy.</p> | <p>No further action required.</p> |

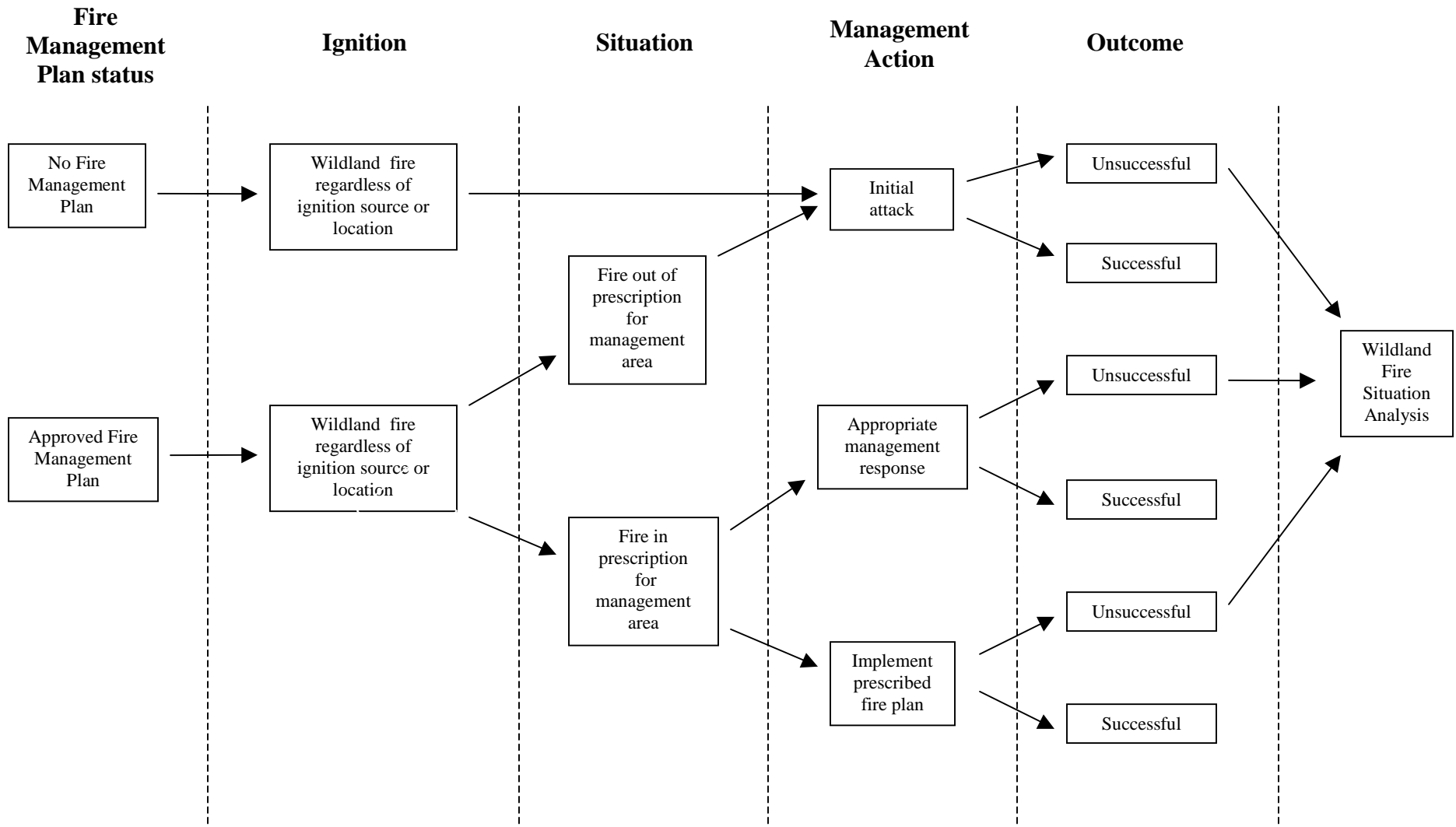
| | ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| 76 | The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, together with the Secretary of Commerce, will assess current and projected requirements for fire weather products necessary to support total wildland fire management program needs. | The NWCG Fire Weather Working Team has attempted to assess current and projected requirements for fire weather products as part of its ongoing efforts to address fire weather issues. To date it has not completed this overall assessment. | See Implementation Action 9e. |
| 77 | The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, together with the Secretary of Commerce, will evaluate alternative methods, including non-federal sources, to provide weather service to the agencies' fire management programs. | The NWCG Fire Weather Working Team has attempted to develop a national strategy that would include an evaluation of alternative methods to provide weather service to the agencies' fire management programs. To date it has not completed this national strategy. | See Implementation Action 9e. |
| 78 | The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture will seek commitment from the Secretary of Commerce to research and develop technology to provide accurate, long-range weather forecasts. | Not completed. | See Implementation Action 9e. |
| 79 | Standardize fire statistics and develop an easily accessible common database. | Not completed. This is part of National Interagency Fire Statistics Information Project (NIFSIP) of NWCG. NWCG has placed a low priority on this relative to other projects. | Implement, as appropriate, as part of Implementation Action 5b. |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| <p>80 Jointly identify, develop, and use tools needed for ecosystem-based fire management programs with mechanisms to integrate fire-related databases with other systems. These tools will include the collection of ecosystem-related data such as disturbance regimes, historical fire patterns, response to management actions, and others; consistent methods to track and access fire-use statistics and administrative costs; and mechanisms to transfer and exchange fire management systems information.</p> | <p>Some work sponsored by the JFSP addresses the issue of the collection of ecosystem-related data such as disturbance regimes and historical fire patterns. No other work on this item has occurred.</p> | <p>Implement, as appropriate, as part of Implementation Actions 5a and 5b.</p> |
| <p>81 Cooperate with tribal, State, and local governments to establish a data-collection mechanism to better assess the nature and scope of the Wildland Urban Interface fire problem.</p> | <p>This has been incorporated into the work of the National Interagency Fire Statistics Information Project (NIFSIP). See Action Item 79.</p> | <p>Implement, as appropriate, as part of Implementation Action 5b.</p> |
| <p>82 Take a lead role in the adoption of the National Fire Incident Reporting System standards for all fire agencies that operate in the Wildland Urban Interface and modify existing reports to reflect Wildland Urban Interface fire protection data.</p> | <p>States have been encouraged to participate in the National Incident Reporting System established by the National Fire Administration. More work needs to be done to establish a national reporting system with involvement of both states and federal agencies. However, little progress has been made in incorporating wildland urban interface data into NFRS.</p> | <p>Implement, as appropriate, as part of Implementation Action 5b.</p> |

| ACTION ITEM FROM 1995 REPORT | STATUS | RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION |
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| <p>83 Complete a national Wildland Urban Interface fire hazard scoping and mapping study in partnership with the Western Governors' Association; tribal, State, and local governments; and the private sector.</p> | <p>Not done. Implementation of the September 2000 Report to the President and the programs funded in the 2001 appropriations may result in additional hazard scoping and mapping. However, this is not expected to be performed at a national scale.</p> | <p>Continue to implement as part of normal agency programs and procedures.</p> |

APPENDIX F: Wildland Fire Flowchart

This chart depicts, in general, what action will be taken given an ignition, regardless of source. Management actions depend on the provisions in the approved Fire Management Plan for an area. The chart recognizes that not all agencies or areas will have such plans completed immediately. This chart is generally applicable to most agencies' fire management programs. However, specific exceptions may exist. A more detailed chart and other supporting materials will be developed as part of implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.



APPENDIX G: FIRE POLICY WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

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