



# Wildfire Risk Reduction Partner Recommendation Analysis

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February 2022

# Overview and Context

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- Forest Service plans to engage partners and employees around development and implementation of a **Strategic Implementation Plan** for wildfire risk reduction.
- Past recommendations from partners and agency employees provide **initial building blocks**.



# Framing the analysis

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Forest Service collected recommendation documents from partners – collaborative meetings, collaborative papers and reports.

- **Over 50 documents** were analyzed for issue and recommendations framing.
- Issues and recommendations were catalogued and **sorted into 11 topics.**
- Recommendations that arose frequently from many different sources and over multiple time periods were rounded up as **key themes.**

# Key Themes

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## **Provide sustained funding over multiple years.**

*Funding needs to be sustained and allocated across multiple years at project onset to create security and efficiencies for contractors and collaborative partners.*

## **Focus fire research with a social science lens.**

*Looking at biophysical and social issues together can help assess and minimize risk to communities, especially those that may be underserved.*

# Key Themes (continued)

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## **Create and maintain consistent and collective leadership support.**

*Coordination of leadership intent and support will help incentivize agency and partner investments. Coordinated support can also help advance large-scale, landscape-level collaborative projects.*

## **Increase the agency's ability to build and sustain partnerships and work with collaborative groups.**

*Increased training for employees on the science of relationships and creating and sustaining positions that support partnerships with the right people are key.*

# Recommendation Topics

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Incorporation of  
Best Available  
Science

Prioritization  
and Planning

Workforce  
Capacity

Policy and  
Legislation

Working Across  
Boundaries and  
Collaboration

Funding and  
Finance

Business  
Practices

Industry and  
Infrastructure

Equity and  
Inclusion

Communication

Monitoring and  
Evaluation

# Synthesis: What We've Heard

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## Incorporation of best available science

- *Better integration of biophysical and social sciences*
- *Better understanding of local contexts*
- *Create shareable platforms, databases and datasets*
- *Better track accomplishments*
- *Provide larger investments in smoke modeling*
- *Increase funding towards Joint Fire Sciences Program*

## Prioritization and planning

- *Create a comprehensive policy framework for this work*
- *Plan projects and management using information on high poverty areas and high fire risk areas to speak to environmental justice*
- *Assess the economic value of avoided costs based on investments into wildfire restoration*
- *Incentivize prescribed fire work*

# Synthesis: What We've Heard

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## Workforce Capacity

- *Minimize staff turnover, consider more year-round or long-term appointments*
- *Consider standing up specialized regional and national teams (e.g., NEPA)*
- *Use contractors or partnership agreements to fill agency capacity gaps and modernize processes*
- *Expand the use of authorities like Good Neighbor Authority and Stewardship Agreements*
- *Work with others to explore needs around a 21<sup>st</sup> Century forestry workforce*
- *Provide additional training on partnership authorities and contracting processes*

## Policy and Legislation

- *Coordinate post-disaster relief with partner agencies (e.g., Department of Homeland Security)*
- *Expand the use of prescribed burning*
- *Increase the duration of seasonal firefighter appointments*
- *Consider fire risk before permitting suburban or remote development*
- *Develop new outcome-based metrics*
- *Incentivize forests to exceed fuels reduction targets*



# Synthesis: What We've Heard

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## Working Across Boundaries and Collaboration

- *Use “All Hands” approach to bring depth of knowledge and skill base to project development*
- *Ensure local units are engaged in projects from the beginning*
- *Provide consistent funding to encourage larger- and longer-scaled projects*
- *Clarify and revise the Federal Advisory Committee Act*

## Funding and Finance

- *Fund capacity building and planning not just implementation and maintenance of treatments*
- *Incorporate the economic value of avoided costs and capture the value of social, economic, and ecological co-benefits in project design*

## Businesses Practices

- *Address the risk of low-value materials and impact on feasibility*
- *Increase cross-training on grants and agreements mechanisms, including Good Neighbor and 638 Authority*
- *Address issues related to match requirements (when applies, deviation, etc.)*

# Synthesis: What We've Heard

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## Industry and Infrastructure

- *Develop solutions to a general lack of market for small-diameter timber*
- *Leverage Wood Innovations Grant Program to support wood biomass market development*
- *Support State Wood Energy and Utilization Teams, cost of hazardous fuels reductions reduced in areas with local markets*

## Equity and Inclusion

- *Identify minority populations that may be disproportionately adversely affected at the onset of a project to improve outreach and collaboration*
- *Develop social initiatives to reduce fire risk*
- *Use existing program delivery (Rural Community Assistance Programs)*
- *Work with Indigenous peoples and work proactively on ecosystem management and equitable community preparedness work*

# Synthesis: What We've Heard

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## Communication

- *Create a national and locally targeted public communication campaign to increase public understanding overall*
- *Focus communication on topics such as air quality and the public health benefits of prescribed versus unplanned fires*
- *Coordinate messaging among partners on the nature and benefit of prescribed fire and active management*

## Monitoring and evaluation

- *Closely coordinate research, monitoring, and science with partners*
- *Collaboratively develop socioeconomic performance measures for restoration work*
- *Develop a longer-term social condition framework (similar to watershed condition framework)*
- *Provide additional guidance on adaptive management and monitoring, incorporating the importance of external accountability and review in monitoring*

# Internal and External Engagement

## Keys to success:

- *Build upon the strong foundations of **relationships, trust, and understanding.***
- ***Explore options** with others on how to improve and build better future conditions.*
- ***Learn** from each other on what's working and not, what tools to apply where and when.*
- *Ensure **transparency and accountability.***
- *Look for **long-term solutions, long-term capacity, long-term investments.***



# Where do we go from here?

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**This is what we've heard from partners and employees over the last 10-15 years.**

- Some feed into requirements and abilities under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
- Which still resonate for you?
- What new challenges, opportunities, solutions do you have?