WELCOME TO THE NORTHERN REGION WILDFIRE CRISIS STRATEGY ROUNDTABLE
Today’s Agenda

• Welcome and Opening
• Partners in Leadership Panel
• 10-year Strategic Implementation Plan
  ▪ Overview and Plans for Engagement
• Questions and Answers
• What We Have Learned from Past Partner Input
• Closing
OUR WILDFIRE CRISIS STRATEGY
GET READY TO ACT!

Regional Forester Leanne Marten
National Wildfire Crisis Strategy Roundtable
April 20, 2022
A MOUNTING CRISIS …

Area burned by wildfires, United States, 1990-2020.

Historic forests experienced frequent, low severity wildfire that maintained the open, parklike forest.

Fire exclusion, beginning in the late 1800’s, has allowed infilling of trees and increased fuels on the landscape.

Hayman Fire 2002 burned at a high severity, removing the majority of forests, potentially altering future ecosystems.
A MOUNTING CRISIS …

88 Years of Change in Ponderosa Pine Forest

Photos taken from one point show changes resulting from fire exclusion, removal of large pines and ecosystem management treatments in the 1990's.

4/25/2022
RESTORING FIRE-ADAPTED FORESTS

THINNING

BURNING

4/25/2022
NEW APPROACH NEEDED
HIGH-RISK FIRESHEDS

2017 Lolo Peak Fire, MT (photo courtesy, Eric Henderson)
Other data built into criteria:

1. Fireshed Values

1. Percent Overlap with: State Forest Action Plans

2. Percent Overlap with Fire Risk FAI

3. Percent Overlap with Vegetation Hazard FAI

4. Percent of Fireshed with cleared NEPA
Kootenai Complex

- Early Investment Area

4/25/2022
Northern Region Roundtable
USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station
Monica Lear, Station Director
The charge to FS Research & Development

- Provide best available science as basis for decisions
- Project layout and development
- Building social acceptance of fire
- Monitoring and data collection
- Economics and the bioeconomy
- Integrate biological, physical and social sciences
- Data collection, management and availability
Science Programs

- Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute*
- Fire, Fuel and Smoke*
- Forest and Woodland Ecosystems*
- Human Dimensions*
- Inventory and Monitoring / FIA*
- Maintaining Resilient Dryland Ecosystems
- Water and Watersheds*
- Wildlife and Terrestrial Ecosystems*
- Science Applications and Communication

*Scientists located in MT and ID

NOTE: Scientists from other programs not located in R1 are doing work there.
Science-based decision making
✓ Before, during and after fire
  • Assess risk
    o Priority landscapes
    o Critical watersheds
    o Communities
  • Mitigate Risk
    o Build community preparedness
  • Manage risk
    o Fire behavior modeling
    o Fire decision support
    o Firefighter safety
Identifying the right places

- Firesheds
- PODs
Identifying the right places

- Values at Risk
  - Priority landscape values
  - Water Resources
  - Forest health and wildlife habitats
  - Species of Conservation Concern
  - Recreation
  - Communities
Identifying the right places

- Building social acceptance
  - Rx Fire
  - Fire Management
  - Smoke effects

- Wildfire Risk to Communities
  - CoMFRT
  - Wildfire Research (WiRē)

- Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA)

- TreeMap model of U.S. forests developed to assess wildfire risk to carbon.

- Reducing wildfire risk by turning slash into biochar
Fire response

- Fire and fuels management planning
- Wildland fire management planning and operations
- Fire behavior prediction tools
- Quantitative wildland fire risk analysis methods
- Modeling, assessment, and planning to support fire management decisions
- WildfireSAFE - real-time identification of wildfire responder hazards and operational engagement opportunities
After the fire

- After Fire Toolkit for managers
- BAER tools and support
- Prioritizing infrastructure protection
- Water quality monitoring
- Recovery and restoration
- Effectiveness monitoring
Restoration

• National Whitebark Pine Restoration Plan
• Long-term watershed restoration
• Restoring dry pine forest structure
• Climate adaptation in a western larch forest
• Pollinators
• Using biochar on degraded soils
• Identifying coldwater refuges for aquatic species
Monitoring Outcomes

• Project layout and development
• Long-term studies of forest management and species of conservation concern (Canada lynx, wolverine, other forest carnivores)
• Treatment effectiveness at reducing wildfire risk
• Water quality responses to mechanical and prescribed fire fuel treatments and wildfire
• Road analysis and inventory (GRAIP); “legacy” roads
• Invasive species
Changing climate

Projections are for a 10-100% reduction in April 1 snow water equivalent across Region 1 forests, meaning reduced water holding capacity at higher elevations.
Partners in Leadership Panel

- Tom Claeys, North Dakota State Forester
- Jim Durglo, Intertribal Timber Council Fire Technical Specialist
- Greg Chilcott, Ravalli County Commissioner and Chair of Montana Forest Counties Coalition
- Tom Watson, Montana Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Conservationist
- Chris Cromwell, Idaho Bureau of Land Management Fuels Program Manager
- Craig Foss, Idaho State Forester
FOREST SERVICE WORK UNDER THE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT

- WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE TEAM – Hazardous Fuels
- NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM
  - Recreation
  - Restoration
  - Reclamation
  - Roads/Trails
- STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY
  - Grants and Agreements
  - Firefighter Pay
  - Community Wildfire Protection Plans
- RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT – Supporting all efforts with up-to-date science
THE HISTORY

• More than 20 years of milestones have set the stage for our work today

THE NEED

• Wildfires have been growing in size, duration, and destructivity.

• Nearly a quarter of the contiguous United States remain at moderate to very high risk of severe wildfires.

• We must dramatically increase fuels and forest health treatments on America’s forests.
CONFRONTING THE WILDFIRE CRISIS

The Forest Service wildfire crisis strategy combines an historic investment from congressional funding with years of scientific research and planning into a national effort that will dramatically increase the scale of forest health treatments.

Treating up to an additional 20 million acres of National Forest System lands.

Treating up to an additional 30 million acres of other Federal, State, Tribal, and private lands.

Developing a plan for long-term maintenance beyond the 10 years.
HIGH-RISK FIRESHEDS

Community exposure is a central factor in the strategy to confront the wildfire crisis. Other factors include Tribal and State plans, watersheds, equity, climate forecasts, and partner priorities.
IMPLEMENTATION

• Years 1-2. Early implementation.
• Years 3-10. The right work, in the right place, at the right scale.
AGENCY EXPECTATIONS

• Active management
• Engagement
• Equitability
• Accountability
WHAT'S NEXT?
PARTNER and EMPLOYEE ROUNDTABLES
(Feb – May 2022)

• **Purpose:** Targeted listening sessions to identify opportunities and challenges in getting to scale with fuels and fire risk management efforts.

• **Post Engagement:** Presentation of findings and recommendations to the Forest Service - National Leadership Council in June. A series of webinars for participants and interested publics to follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roundtable Geographical Focus</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>February 3, 4, 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>February 22, 23, 24</td>
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<td>February 28, March 1, 2</td>
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<td>March 16, 17, 18</td>
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<td>Region 6</td>
<td>April 5, 6, 7</td>
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<td>Region 1</td>
<td>April 20, 21, 22</td>
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<td>Region 4</td>
<td>May 3, 4, 5</td>
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<td>Region 8</td>
<td>May 17, 18, 19</td>
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<td>Region 9</td>
<td>May 31, June 1, 2</td>
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<td>Region 10</td>
<td>June 7, 8, 9</td>
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<td>Tribal</td>
<td>April 26</td>
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INITIAL LANDSCAPE INVESTMENTS

- Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington
- 208,000 acres planned for FY22
- $131M in funding from the BIL

4/25/2022
# Initial Landscape Investments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape Name</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Size of Landscape (Acres)</th>
<th>FY 2022 Funding (Millions)</th>
<th>FY 2022 Accomplishment (Acres)</th>
<th>Total FY 2022-2024 Funding (Millions)</th>
<th>Total FY 2022-2024 Accomplishment (Acres)</th>
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<tr>
<td>4FRI</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>2,400,000</td>
<td>$12.0</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>$160.0</td>
<td>300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prescott</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>401,000</td>
<td>$11.1</td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>$23.7</td>
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<td>North Yuba</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>313,000</td>
<td>$6.8</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>$25.5</td>
<td>16,900</td>
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<td>Stanislaus</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>245,000</td>
<td>$21.8</td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td>$55.2</td>
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<td>Colorado Front Range</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
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<td>10,000</td>
<td>$170.4</td>
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<td>Southwest Idaho</td>
<td>Idaho</td>
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<td>$17.4</td>
<td>18,000</td>
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<td>Kootenai Complex</td>
<td>Montana</td>
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<td>$3.6</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>$19.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enchanted Circle</td>
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<td>$6.6</td>
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<td>$11.3</td>
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<td>Central Oregon</td>
<td>Oregon</td>
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<td>5,000</td>
<td>$41.3</td>
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<td>Central Washington Initiative</td>
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<td>$24.6</td>
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<td>$102.6</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$131.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>208,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$673.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>742,000</strong></td>
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Table 1: Proposed Initial Landscape Investments. **Note**: Acres denote the size of the landscape, not actual acres to be treated within that landscape. This summary table represents total size of landscapes. FY 2022 funding and planned accomplishments, as well as total funding and accomplishments, for FY 2022-2024. The landscape size does not represent total planned treatment acres. A strategic treatment objective focused on reducing approximately 60 percent of the exposure to structures indicates the need to treat 20 to 40 percent of the overall finished. The 80 to 100 percent treatment objective indicates the long-term need to treat 1.4 to 2.8 million acres on these landscapes.
OUR ASK TODAY

• WHAT are we trying to achieve?
• How can we reach these goals?

Let’s work together to shift the future for our forests.
WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE IN 2031

• Treated up to 20 million acres on the National Forest System and an up to 30 million acres on other Federal, State, Tribal, and private lands in the West.

• A plan for long-term maintenance.

• A paradigm shift in the way we work.
THANK YOU
Wildfire Risk Reduction Partner Recommendation Analysis

February 2022
Overview and Context

• 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

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

1. Provide sustained funding over multiple years.

2. Focus fire research with a social science lens.

3. Create and maintain consistent and collective leadership support.

4. Increase the agency’s ability to build and sustain partnerships and work with collaborative groups.
Recommendation Topics

- 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
Where do we go from here?

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?
THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING