WELCOME TO THE
REGION 2 WILDFIRE CRISIS
STRATEGY ROUNDTABLE

February 28, 2022
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!

Rocky Mountain Regional Forester Frank Beum
National Wildfire Crisis Strategy Roundtable
February 28, 2022
A MOUNTING CRISIS …

Area burned by wildfires, United States, 1990-2020.
Fuel breaks on the White River National Forest in Colorado directly protect nearby homes during the Buffalo Fire in the community of Silverthorne, Colo. on June 12, 2018.
HIGH-RISK FIRESHEDS

2021 Black Mountain Fire, Routt National Forest, Colorado
Chief Curt Rogers from Jefferson County, South Platte District Ranger, Brian Banks, and Jefferson County Commissioner Lesley Dahlkemper discuss the Sand Springs Prescribed Burn in October 2021 on the South Platte Ranger District.

Fuel reduction work completed more than ten years ago helped firefighters with the 2021 Straight Creek Fire, White River National Forest, which threatened the Town of Dillon in Colorado and I-70.
What is Shared Stewardship?

Shared Stewardship is a way of doing business that emphasizes a collaborative approach to land management. It puts a renewed emphasis on collaborating across jurisdictions to address challenges on shared landscapes.

Changing climate and growing population are rewriting the playbook for land managers. Shared Stewardship means:

1. Work at Scale
2. Cross Boundary Solutions
3. Joint Priority Setting
NEW PARADIGM NEEDED

2020 Grizzly Creek Fire, White River National Forest, Colorado

2016 Lava Mountain Fire, Shoshone National Forest, Wyoming
Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative Landscapes

Legend
- RMRI Project Proposal Areas
- Counties in Colorado

0 100 Miles
RMRI-Upper South Platte

10 Year Commitments:

Restoring and Maintaining Resilient Landscapes.
- 75,000 acres of private lands
- 75,000 acres of public lands

Creating Fire-Adapted Communities.
- Structure assessments (2,633 per year)
- Defensible space/home hardening, (2,633 per year)
- Create 4,000 acres of strategic fuel breaks.

Ensuring Safe and Effective Wildfire Response.
- Conduct new fire pre-planning data collection
- Increase fire qualifications of fire agencies
- Utilize for local prescribed fires.
- Support fuel treatment targets.
- Develop agreements and water supplies.

Vision. The Upper South Platte Partnership (USPP) is dedicated to creating a sustainable and resilient landscape with healthy forests, clean water supply for the Denver Metropolitan Area, high-quality recreation opportunities, proactive and engaged fire-adapted communities, and safe, effective and efficient fire response and management.
Rocky Mountain Regional 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
Rocky Mountain Research Station
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 NM or AZ
NOTE: Scientists from other programs not located in R3 are doing work there.
Science-based decision making
• Before, during and after fire
  • Assess risk
    ▪ Priority landscapes
    ▪ Critical watersheds
    ▪ Communities
  • Mitigate Risk
    ▪ Build community preparedness
  • Manage risk
    ▪ Fire behavior modeling
    ▪ Fire decision support
    ▪ Firefighter safety
Identifying the right places

Firesheds

Pods
Identifying the Right Places

Values at Risk:
• Wildfire risk to 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 (WiRe)
- Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA)
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
- Real-time identification of wildfire responder hazards and operational management opportunities
- Strategic wildfire risk: aligning wildfire response actions with land and resource
After the fire

- Modeling erosion and flood potential
- BAER mitigation
- After Fire Toolkit for Managers
- Prioritizing infrastructure protection
- Water quality monitoring
- Soil burn severity measurement
- Recovery and restoration
- Effectiveness monitoring
Restoration

- Restoring dry mixed-conifer forest structure
- Post-fire patterns of Ponderosa Pine regeneration
- Western Center for Native Plant Conservation and Restoration Science
Monitoring Outcomes

- Project layout and development
  - Design to provide science basis for future work under WCS
  - Use Research Natural Areas to address specific management outcomes

- Long-term studies of forest management and species of conservation concern

- Treatment effectiveness at reducing wildfire risk
Changing Climate

Projections are for a 10-100% reduction in April 1 snow water equivalent across Region 2 forests, meaning reduced water holding capacity at higher elevations.
Partners in Leadership Panel

- Frank Beum, Regional Forester
- Dr. Monica Lear, Director, Rocky Mountain Research Station
- Matt McCombs, State Forester, Colorado
- Bill Crapser, State Forester, Wyoming
- Greg Josten, State Forester, South Dakota
- Manual Hart, Chairman, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
- Walter Echo-Hawk, President, Pawnee Nation
- Kevin Killer, President, Oglala Sioux Tribe
- Dr. Cynthia West, Northern Research Station and Forest Products Lab
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.

- **+20 MILLION**
  - Treating up to an additional 20 million acres of National Forest System lands.

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

- **10 YEARS**
  - 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.

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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
• 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?
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THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING