



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

US Forest Service Wildfire Risk Mitigation Programs

Presentation to National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC)

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USFS Hazardous Fuels and Prescribed Fire Program - Purpose

- Reduce loss from wildfire by:
 - Creating Resilient Landscapes
 - Building Fire Adapted Communities
 - Improving wildfire response safety and effectiveness
- Natural resource management (habitat, vegetation mgt., etc.)

Andrea Wastad, fire prevention supervisor on the Flagstaff Ranger District, observes the Camino fire's success in burning off forest fuels such as the pine needles carpeting the forest floor in this area. The 2015 Camino fire occurred southeast of Marmon Lake, near Flagstaff, AZ, on the Coconino National Forest. Fires such as this help remove down and dead forest fuels, increasing safety for communities and lessening the threat of severe wildfires in the area. USDA Forest Service photo by Deborah Lee Salazar.

WILDFIRE CRISIS strategy

+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.

Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act of 2021

- Over \$3 Billion for Wildfire Risk Reduction(FY22 through FY26)
- Hazardous fuels, prescribed fire, community mitigation, hazard mapping, workforce modernization and other provisions



Routes for External Organizations to Get Involved in Wildfire Mitigation

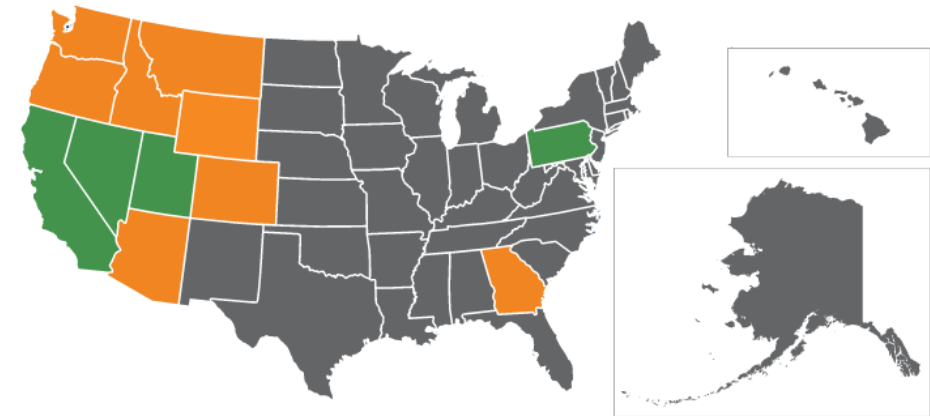
- #1 route is through State Foresters in each state
 - States usually have grant programs augmented by USFS Cooperative Fire/Forestry Funds
- Agreements to work cooperatively across jurisdictional boundaries
 - Some funding sources available, but leveraging funds or other contributions from cooperators/partners is ideal
- FEMA also has Wildfire Mitigation Grant Opportunities

Enforceable Wildfire Codes and Standards

- NFPA's Firewise Program – informational, not enforceable
- Only 4 states have wildfire related building codes/standards
- Others either use Firewise or similar “guidelines” or have no program at all



CODES AND PROGRAMS BY STATE



WUI CODE ADOPTED STATEWIDE

- California
- Nevada
- Pennsylvania
- Utah



GUIDELINES, PROGRAMS TO REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK

- Arizona
- Colorado
- Georgia
- Idaho
- Montana
- Oregon
- Washington
- Wyoming



NO MANDATORY PROGRAMS

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arkansas
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Florida
- Hawaii
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Oklahoma
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Vermont
- Virginia
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin

Challenge – Claims for Damages

- Prescribed fires can in rare instances result in property damage
- In those states where liability laws and certified burner programs offer protections to certified burners, claims process may be unsatisfactory for those suffering damages
 - Difficult to navigate the process, and claims may not be paid if practitioners did not act negligently
- Dissatisfaction leads to reduced support of Rx fire
- Proposals being discussed to foster prescribed fire support through more responsive relief mechanisms in the event of property damage
 - [Increasing Pace and Scale of Prescribed Fire via Catastrophe Funds for Liability Relief – Varner et al 2021](#)

Questions?

