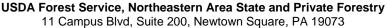
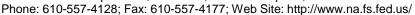
MEDIA ADVISORY





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Regional Action Plans for Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Released

The Wildland Fire Executive Committee today announced the release of Regional Action Plans for wildland fire management in the Northeast, Southeast and West. The plans respond to requirements of the Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement (FLAME) Act of 2009.

Regional Action Plans, (RAP) recently accepted by the WFEC, are the latest of a three-phase effort focusing on the three goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy: Restoring and Maintaining Resilient Landscapes, Creating Fire Adapted Communities, and Responding to Wildfire.

Phase I developed a national strategy document and a report to Congress.

In Phase II, regional assessments addressed the national goals and the challenges found at regional and local levels. Regional Strategy Committees examined how wildland fire, or its absence, threatens wildlife habitats, watershed quality, and local economies.

Phase III took this qualitative information and created regional risk analysis reports that in turn have helped develop management actions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of wildland fire management programs and activities on the ground. Each of the three geographic regions produced an RAP which will help create a National Action Plan due in the fall of 2013.

The Northeast RAP details the goals and actions for the Northeast Cohesive Strategy Region. These actions, identified by the Northeast RSC, will help guide all the partners in wildland fire management in the Northeast Region to make progress in achieving the three national goals.

Local, state and Federal agencies involved in developing the plan include many local fire departments, state forestry agencies, Fire Compacts, federal fire management agencies (the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), and Tribal governments.

Wildland fire burns across landscapes without regard for human boundaries. The effects of fire on wildlife, water, air quality, recreation, and communities extend far beyond the burn's edges. Rural and urban economies depend on services generated by wildland ecosystems; most of those ecosystems depend on wildland fire of appropriate timing and intensity but can be damaged by fires that burn outside the range to which they are adapted. Seldom can one landowner or manager alone adequately influence fire across the landscape. That requires collaboration among many stakeholders with different authorities and resources whether it is implementation of a community wildfire protection plan or restoration of fire resilience to a watershed hundreds of thousands of acres in size.

Addressing wildland fire is not simply a fire management, fire operations or wildland-urban interface problem – it is much larger and more complex, according to the Executive Summary of the Northeast RAP. Each agency and organization represented by the Northeast RSC has the authority, responsibility, and autonomy to develop and implement its own policies. But long-term success can only be achieved through a unified, collaborative and focused effort of all.

The Northeast Region encompasses twenty Midwestern and Northeastern states and the District of Columbia. The twenty states comprise the most densely populated region of the nation, home to more than 41 percent of Americans. Land ownership and management, weather and climate event-created surface fuel loading, high wildfire occurrence, and extensive wildland-urban interface distinguish the Northeast Region from the West, but are similar to the Southeast. The Northeast can be described in risk management terms as having a large number of small, mostly human-caused, wildfires with a low occurrence of large wildfires, but all these present a high risk to life and property when they do occur.

For more information: www.forestsandrangelands.gov

For the Northeast RAP:

 $\underline{http://www.forests and rangelands.gov/strategy/documents/rsc/northeast/NERAP_Final 20}\\ \underline{13April.pdf}$