



# Proposal

**Date:** November 18, 2011 (revised 11/17/11)

## **Description of Issue or Assignment:**

The Wildland Fire Executive Council designated a Cohesive Strategy Communication Workgroup (CS-CW) via Tasking Memorandum on September 2, 2011. The group's overarching goal was to develop a *"unified communication guidance and direction document."* The CS-CW met this goal by developing a Communication Framework, targeted for use by individuals, agencies, organizations, governmental bodies, and interested stakeholders to use as a roadmap for effective communication and collaboration activities related to the Cohesive Strategy.

Full implementation of the Communication Framework will involve coordination of communication and collaboration activities, from the development of collateral materials to advice and direction to different agencies on how information should be shared within their organizations. Implementation scenarios were presented at the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) meeting November 9-10, 2011. This proposal is in response to the discussion and follow-up actions needed presented at the WFLC meeting.

*(Note: The September 2, 2011 tasking indicated that the final communication document, including implementation guidelines would be complete by December 9, 2011. Additionally, the tasking indicated that the Cohesive Strategy Communication Workgroup tasking sunsets on January 6, 2012.)*

## **Discussion of Proposed Recommendation(s):**

Three implementation scenarios were presented to WFLC by CS-CW, providing a range of options. Regardless of the scenario accepted the CS-CW recommended that a *Cohesive Wildland Fire Communication Steering Group (CSG)* be established. The CSG would be similar in nature to the initial workgroup but would be expounded upon based on lessons learned during the short duration of the initial communications workgroup. WFLC members concurred with the concept of an overarching steering group.

In response to the three implementation scenarios, WFLC opted for Scenario Two, *"Dedication of 60-80 Hours per Week of Agency/Organization Staff Time at the Communications Professional Level for Full Year or More."* (Note: Intent of 60-80 hours collective staff time.) This scenario noted that participating agencies and organizations in the Cohesive Strategy have a vested interest in insuring that the process is successful and that most have access to, or retain on staff, quality communications professionals who have experience in virtually all aspects of tasks identified in the communications framework.

Success for this scenario will hinge upon having the hours necessary to develop materials, make contacts, identify other individuals and organizations who need to be pulled into the process, and monitoring how the word is getting out the Cohesive Strategy. The work done to date has been developed with such professionals, but continued dedication of theirs, or any other staff time, must be evaluated against other agency/organization priorities.

As a result of the discussion of Scenario Two, WFLC, working through WFEC requested that further definition of the Communication Steering Group be established, including roles and responsibilities, strategic oversight for communication and collaboration practices and estimated hours for participants.

WFLC also noted that if funds become available obtaining assistance through other sources (Enterprise Teams for example) to develop products and materials would be an option. (This option is a result of the discussion of Scenario One, which highlighted obtaining outside professional communication assistance.)

**Discussion of Proposed Recommendation(s):**

- Establish *Cohesive Wildland Fire Communication Steering Group (CSG)* tasking addressing roles and responsibilities, including roles and responsibilities, strategic oversight for communication and collaboration practices and estimated hours for participants.
- Update the *Communication Framework for a National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy* to reflect the implementation tasking.
- Revise the communications section of the Phase II document to reflect the discussion above and future strategic implementation approaches.

**Proposal:**

- WFEC approve the tasking for *Cohesive Wildland Fire Communication Steering Group*.
- WFEC to identify communication professionals from their agency, organization or group to fill out the roster for the CSG and for the agency point of contacts.

**Identify Considerations:**

Using the *Communication Framework for a National Cohesive Wildland Fire* and recognizing that this is a dynamic process, the intent is for the CSG to expound upon this unified national level communication and collaboration framework. As a result, WFEC support and concurrence for implementation of practices, policies and recommended procedures established by the CSG is needed. Since CSG will report directly to WFEC, WFEC will provide the appropriate oversight and support to ensure implementation.

**Rationale for Recommendation(s):**

Clear, consistent, and concise unified messages combined with effective collaboration with all stakeholders is critical for the success of the Cohesive Strategy overall.

**Recommendation(s):** Recommend approval.

**Contact Information:**

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**WFEC Decision:**

- WFEC Approves
- WFEC Approves with Modifications (not required to resubmit for WFEC approval)
- Need More Information (required to come back to WFEC for approval)
- WFEC Does Not Approve

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Roy Johnson, DFO

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Date

*Notes regarding decision:*



## TASKING MEMORANDUM

December 2, 2011 (submission date pending)

**Subject:** Cohesive Wildland Fire Strategy Communication Steering Group (CSG)

### **Background:**

The Cohesive Strategy Communication Workgroup (CS-CW) was established via a WFEC Tasking Memorandum on September 2, 2011. The group's overarching goal was to develop a "unified communication guidance and direction document." The CS-CW met this goal by developing a Communication Framework, which was presented and accepted by the WFEC and WFLC at the November WFLC meeting. This December tasking reflects the November WFLC decisions and was developed in response to the WFLC decision to adopt CS-CW Scenario 2. This December tasking effectively replaces the September tasking, including the September tasking's sunset of the CS-CW on or before January 6, 2012.

To fully implement the Communication Framework addressing the coordination of communication and collaboration activities, a *Cohesive Wildland Fire Communication Steering Group (CSG)* is established as result of this tasking memorandum.

### **Tasking:**

The WFEC is requesting that an interagency communication steering group, with members from the Department of the Interior, US Forest Service, and state and local government serve as the *Cohesive Wildland Fire Communication Steering Group (CSG)*. As recognized professional communicators, the group will come together and function as a group of peers.

### **Cohesive Wildland Fire Communication Steering Group:**

Building upon the outline presented in the Communication Framework, the CSG will provide guidance and leadership on strategic communication and collaboration practices and procedures, facilitate opportunities to share communication products and/or training opportunities to enhance outreach activities, and actively facilitate with WFEC representatives, subcommittees, agencies, organizations and groups on the overarching communication efforts. The CSG supports the Subcommittees and National Science and Analysis Team (NSAT) as well as the federal and non-federal points of contact and designated spokesperson(s) – as outlined below – in their development of communication products.

The six core positions for the CSG are identified below followed by an estimated time commitment for the respective position.

- Liaison from WFEC (10%)
- Lead Coordinator (25%)
- One representative from the following:
  - Department of the Interior (coordinate with OWF to represent, BIA, BLM, FWS, NPS, USGS) (10%)
  - US Forest Service (FS) (10%)

- National Association of State Foresters (NASF) (10%)
- International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) (10%)

Due to the broad and extensive nature of the Cohesive Strategy effort, two additional groups of individuals are identified as critical partners with the CSG. The two groups are:

- Communication Liaisons to each of the four Cohesive Strategy Sub-Committees and the National Science and Analysis Team
- Agency Point of Contacts.

Additional information on their role is outlined below. Participation by individuals in both of these groups will result in a cascading flow of consistent information about the communication and collaboration practices, policies, and procedures.

**Communication Liaisons For Cohesive Strategy Subcommittees and NSAT:** In order to effectively facilitate the communication and collaboration efforts within the Cohesive Strategy sub-committees and National Science and Analysis Teams, an individual from the CSG will participate with the assigned Committee/Team as a CSG Liaison.

- Cohesive Strategy Sub-Committee (1)
  - National Science Team (1)
- Regional Strategy Committee (Northeast) (1)
- Regional Strategy Committee (Southeast) (1)
- Regional Strategy Committee (West) (1)

**Agency Point of Contacts:** (See list attached.) Typically, this will be an individual(s) in External Affairs, Public Affairs or a group's Communication Director. It is critical that there be designated point(s) of contact to facilitate organizational specific-communications, serve as communication consultants for designated spokespersons (outlined below) for the Cohesive Strategy, and to coordinate with senior- level officials within the home organization about progress in the communications and collaboration arena. (For example: tracking presentations and delivery to key audiences.) Organizational Points of Contact, in accordance with their specific guidelines will assist and facilitate designated spokesperson(s) along with informing key audiences, including media and elected officials as appropriate.

As noted in the Communication Framework the following positions have critical roles and responsibilities for full implementation of the cohesive the communications effort:

- **WFLC Representatives and / or their designees:** Serve as key contacts for agency leadership, overseeing and coordinating communication, collaboration, and stakeholder activities within their respective agencies. WFLC members also serve as the decision-making body.
- **WFEC Representatives:** Provide advice for coordinated national-level wildland fire leadership, direction, and program oversight in support of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council. WFEC representatives serve as key participants in implementing consistent communication practices and procedures.
- **Agency or Organization Communication Point of Contacts:** (Outlined above.)
- **Designated spokesperson(s):** Credible spokespersons will be chosen by respective agencies, organizations, and groups and these individuals should be well versed in the Cohesive Strategy, the principles of wildland and structural fire, communication strategies and techniques, and the overriding need for safety for firefighters, communities and the public at large.

- **Participants in the Cohesive Strategy Process:** Regardless of their individual or group role, all participants in the CS process are established leaders known for their expertise and commitment to the CS. As such, participants are requested to assist in the cohesive communications effort by recognizing and supporting that communications is the responsibility of all individuals locally, regionally and nationally.

**Outcome / Deliverable:**

The primary role of the CSG is to facilitate clear, consistent and effective communication and collaboration activities by actively empowering participants in the Cohesive Strategy to fully participate in communication efforts. Due to the dynamic nature of the communications, the action plan will be dynamic and update on a quarterly basis.

At a minimum, the CSG will facilitate:

- Primary and secondary core messaging to enhance the unified effort.
- Collecting and collating products, materials, and documents which exhibit Best Practices in communication and collaboration. This information will be shared for all participants to adapt for their use for their respective audiences. (How this material will be shared will be developed once the group is established.
- Facilitate three to five webinars on effective communication and collaboration methods.
- Develop effective working relationships with the Regional Strategy Committees, the National Science and Analysis Team, the Agency Points of Contact, and the designated spokesperson(s) to maximize the cascading flow of information. Support their efforts to implement effective, efficient, and consistent outreach for Cohesive Strategy.
- Determine priority products and facilitate their production. (As funding permits and based upon priorities established in an Implementation Action Plan, a separate document.)

**Operating, Meeting and Reporting Procedures for the CSG**

- The committee reports directly to WFEC and the Lead Coordinator will organize and facilitate responses to WFEC.
- The Lead Coordinator or a designated member will represent the committee and provide a progress report at the bi-weekly WFEC meetings until the task is completed.
- The CSG will determine their meeting schedule and shall meet as necessary to conduct business.
- Reports will be submitted to WFEC and will be public documents available to the public.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

CSG Lead Coordinator:

- Ensures interagency and collaborative process.
- Ensures committee completes task on established timeline.
- Communicate progress and status to WFEC on a regular basis.
- Identify and troubleshoot emerging issues.
- Develop and implement interim methods of communicating with various committees and subcommittees in order to keep groups positively engaged in the process.

CSG Team Members:

- Address tasking using their expertise and professional judgment.
- Participate in CSG telephonic meetings at a 90% participation rate.

- Complete or facilitate tasks as assigned.
- Communicate progress and status to Lead Coordinator on a regular basis.

**Participants in the Cohesive Strategy Process:**

- Regardless of their individual or group role, all participants in the CS process are established leaders known for their expertise and commitment to the CS process. As such, participants are requested to assist in the cohesive communications effort by recognizing and supporting that communications is the responsibility of all individuals locally, regionally and nationally.
- Recognize and respect diverse organizational missions, cultures, and opinions.
- Facilitate effective working relationships within and outside of the CS-CW in order to meet the defined task.

**Timeline:** TBD

**Approval:**

This tasking is in effect on the date of approval (noted above) by the Designated Federal Official. This task shall sunset by XXXX.

**Contact Information:**

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draft 11-30-2011

**Western Region  
Program of Work  
2012**

It is clear from the completion of the Phase II report, the efforts of Communications Framework and the National Science Team there are high expectations of the respective Regional Strategy Committees and Work Group to stay engaged, active and continue to contribute to the overall completion of the Cohesive Strategy through Phase III and beyond. Accordingly, the Western Region proposes the following Program of Work for 2012 along with a Communication and Outreach Assistance Strategy for the West.

The major program items are identified as follows:

I. Identify Specific Regional Alternatives

- Review and build on the portfolio of actions and activities identified in Phase II.
- Identify regional alternative management strategies.
- Engage the Science Team to provide feedback and stakeholder involvement with the tradeoff analysis as the analysis is being developed.
- Identify with stakeholder involvement, metrics or performance measures. Answer the question, if the Cohesive Strategy is successful in 2017, what was accomplished?
- Complete a Regional Implementation Plan and assist with development of a National Implementation Plan.

II. Expand Outreach Within the Region Utilizing the Communications Framework

- Share the Regional Assessment, solicit and exchange new information in an effort to better understand the complexities and challenges that exist within the West.
- Expand outreach efforts to identify additional stakeholders to involve now and in the future within the fire management community.
- Utilize the Communications Framework in completing communication and outreach activities.
- Using the Communications/Implementations Framework, stylize that for the west and continue that effort.
- Create a Communications Strategy Work Group within the Region to implement a communication and outreach strategy which is consistent with the Communications Framework.
- Create sub-regions, or organize around the three overarching goals, or utilize existing organizations i.e. State Foresters/Regional Foresters, NGO's, Fire Chiefs to specifically "take on an issue" and either resolve or develop a path for resolution an objective, sub-objective or activity that can be achieved during the short term.
- Continue engaging and add to the current stakeholder support. We would share our assessment, continue the dialog and by using an errata sheet, continue to improve our assessment for the West.
- Continue the every 2-3 week updates to stakeholders.

- Continue engagement with CSSC, WFEC, NST, Communications Group and WFLC with our efforts, along with the other regions.

### III. Continue to Identify Immediate Opportunities

- Through regional dialogs, identify existing activities that have been successful in making progress toward achieving the three national goals.
- Discuss opportunities within the region to continue investments in these successes.
- Utilize existing authorities to implement immediate opportunities for success, as appropriate.
- Continue to locate Immediate Opportunities for Success in the West including areas where the 3 overarching goals are being met, how do we continue to make investments in that success.
- Identify opportunities to streamline processes and utilize existing authorities with agencies and organizations to streamline processes which create immediate success with accomplishments on the ground.

Specific timelines for each program item will be forthcoming. Additionally, working with METI, we have developed a Communications and Outreach Strategy for the west and included in the program of work. Additionally an example of a Western Update is included.

**Proposed METI Communication and Outreach Assistance  
to the Western Regional Strategy Committee  
During Phase III of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy**

12/14/2011

Outreach and communication efforts during Phase II provided the Western Regional Strategy Committee (WRSC) and Working Group (WG) with valuable information used to develop the Western Assessment. Efforts by the WRSC/WG to fully engage all stakeholder groups across the West were hampered by a combination of the time of year outreach was conducted and time limitations established by WFLC. As a result there are opportunities to strengthen and expand stakeholder engagement during Phase III and set the stage for successful implementation of the Cohesive Strategy.

The WRSC desires to continue an emphasis on stakeholder communication and outreach during Phase III of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. Communication and outreach objectives identified in the Western Region's Phase II Outreach Communication Plan will persist and be expanded upon during Phase III. Phase III communication and outreach objectives include:

1. Engaging people affected by this strategy in its development within the timeframes identified by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC).
2. Following a collaborative, rigorous, transparent development path.
3. Collecting data representing interests and opinions of stakeholders.
4. Using local, regional, and traditional knowledge and insights to frame the western strategy assessment.
5. Disseminating clear and current information to stakeholders using multiple media on a routine basis.
6. Identifying and sharing immediate success stories and "ingredients" to success.
7. Seeking input from stakeholders to develop metrics and performance measures for Cohesive Strategy implementation and applying key metrics associated with successful projects.
8. Engaging with stakeholders interested in pursuing expanded use of existing authorities to achieve the national Cohesive Strategy goals.

Working with WRSC and Working Group leadership, members of the METI Outreach and Communications Team identified the following desired outcomes and preliminary activities for Phase III.

### **Phase III Communication and Outreach Outcomes and Actions**

The WRSC has identified the following seven preliminary communication and collaboration outcomes and supporting activities to be achieved during Phase III:

- 1. Create an effective organizational framework for Western Region Phase III outreach and communication efforts.**
  - a) Establish a Communications/Implementation Work Group for the Western Region, including the METI Outreach and Communication Team, to serve as a focal point for collaboration and outreach efforts.

- b) Update the Western Region Outreach and Communication Plan, using elements of the National Communication Framework. The update should include activities leading up to and through Strategy implementation, slated to begin in December 2012.
- 2. Involve stakeholders throughout the West on an on-going basis using multiple media and expanded networks.**
- a) Improve elements of the Western Assessment by providing opportunity for stakeholder comment, seeking specific input to the Goals, Objectives, Sub-Objectives, Actions and broad policy questions described in the Western Assessment.
  - b) Expand the dialog and stakeholder participation and continue to identify and add good ideas.
  - c) Distribute accurate, timely information regarding Phase III objectives, progress, and participation opportunities.
  - d) Continue bi-weekly or monthly stakeholder updates using newsletters, website, social media, etc.).
  - e) Expand stakeholder support beyond that developed in Phase II.
- 3. Identify performance measures or measures of success.**
- a) Seek ideas on measures of success/performance.
  - b) Identify elements or factors that should drive the investigation of management options and selection of national strategy components.
- 4. Emphasize elements and tools for successful implementation that do not require completion of the National Cohesive Strategy.**
- a) Continue to identify “Immediate Opportunities for Success” in the West focused on those examples where the three national goals are being met.
  - b) Identify and describe “ingredients for success,” including performance measures and metrics, which can be shared with those at the operational level focused on accomplishing work on the ground.
  - c) Actively share and expand the application of successful techniques with willing stakeholder groups.
- 5. Facilitate efforts with agencies to streamline processes and increase production by taking full advantage of existing authorities to accomplish goals outlined in the Strategy.**
- a) Solicit ideas from successful collaborative efforts to cut through process and achieve results.
  - b) Identify perceived and actual procedural barriers to accomplishment of work and provide materials that clarify procedural options and/or identify options to improve procedures.
  - c) Provide tools and materials to assist the WRSC/WG in communicating with stakeholders regarding available procedural options.
- 6. Actively engage with the Science Team during the Phase III effort.**
- a) Keep western stakeholders updated on progress, products, and opportunities to provide input.
  - b) Clarify what the Phase III trade off analysis is, and provide tangible descriptions of Phase III’s expected outcomes to western stakeholders.
- 7. Continue to keep the CSSC, WFEC and other Regions apprised of Western Region communication and outreach efforts. Coordinate west-wide efforts with the national communication strategy and team.**

## Western Region Phase III Outreach and Communication Action Examples

The Communications/Implementation Work Group, working in conjunction the WRSC/WG, would develop and implement an action plan to support the updated Western Region Outreach Communication Plan. The following actions are not intended to be all-inclusive, but to illustrate the range of actions that could be taken during Phase III. In some instances, actions can achieve more than one of the desired outcomes described above:

### A. Establish the Western Region Communications/Implementation Working Group.

- 1) Develop a Communications and Outreach Plan for Phase III.
- 2) Clearly state the relationship of the Working Group's role and charter this effort within the scope of responsibilities for the WRSC.

**Timeframe:** Complete by mid-January.

### B. Provide stakeholders the opportunity to review and comment on the Western Assessment using the UNC website and a comment form/written letter option (similar to the NE Region's Phase II approach).

- 1) Analyze comments to provide the WRSC a portrait of stakeholder response.
- 2) Sustain and expand stakeholder engagement established in Phase II.
- 3) Identify additional improvements and "gems" that should be added to the Western Assessment.
- 4) Identify potential performance metrics or factors that should drive investigation of management options by the Science Team (e.g., number of established collaborative groups, acres of fire resilient acres treated or maintained, number of fire adapted communities added, number of communities meeting FireWise standards, etc.)

**Timeframe:** Comment period open in January, with Content Analysis completed by mid-February and presented to the WRSC.

### C. Assess WRSC/WG member perspectives regarding the collaborative engagement and support within the communities they represent.

- 1) Interview and compile an assessment of the "strength" of WRSC/WG connections to stakeholder communities of interest at the sub-regional scale.
- 2) Identify sub-regions and communities of interest that require more complete engagement, and develop plans to expand stakeholder understanding and buy-in within those sub-regions/stakeholder groups, including internal to the federal, state, and local agencies involved in the Cohesive Strategy effort.
- 3) Assist WRSC/WG members assigned to pursue stakeholder engagement with these groups by providing communication tools and outreach materials.

**Timeframe:** Begin interviews in January and present to the WRSC in early March. WRSC engagement with communities of interest will begin in March, with ongoing emphasis on strengthening and building relationships throughout Phase III.

### D. Identify stakeholder groups that were not engaged at all in Phase II, and expand outreach to connect with these groups.

- 1) Identify sub-regions and communities of interest not engaged (e.g., some environmental groups and organizations, and urban stakeholders)

- 2) Develop tactics and best methods for attracting and retaining these groups' attentions. Stimulate understanding of and buy-in to the Western Assessment and the Cohesive Strategy.

**Timeframe:** Beginning in mid to late February following the Content Analysis and continuing throughout Phase III.

**E. Use diverse media to sustain and expand stakeholder outreach and communication, creating the social connection and traction needed for successful collaborative foundation in the West during strategy implementation. Use these communication methods to enhance the human dimension or "face" of the Western RSC by filling in the picture of who we are, what we are doing and why.**

- 1) Expand and enhance communication outreach networks using methods and messages optimized for multiple communication media, leveraging current media to appeal to targeted sets of constituents by location, culture, and other pertinent factors. One targeted audience may be those who were not contacted at all during Phase II.
- 2) WRSC/WG members interact in public mediated settings by blogging, podcasting, using social media and other forms of interactive engagement to add value to the Western effort in a format accessible to and used by the majority of stakeholders and citizens, including those not engaged in Phase II.

**Timeframe:** Beginning in January and continuing throughout Phase III.

# Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy - Phase II

## Western Regional Strategy Committee (WRSC) Update – 12/05/11

### Help us make the transition to Phase III

The WRSC would like to take this opportunity in the spirit and intent of the iterative stakeholder process to solicit focused feedback on the *Western Regional Assessment and Strategy*. To strengthen the overall effort, we are asking all stakeholders – those who have already participated and those who may be new to the process – to focus on the West’s current objectives, actions, and policy questions that have been identified to support the three national goals. We are looking to strengthen and add to this outline in order to identify as accurately as possible a suite of potential solutions best meets the West’s needs.

The content to focus on is pages 20-34 of the *Western Regional Assessment and Strategy*.

- **The policy questions** that have been identified are the bullets in the shaded descriptions for each goal area and address the policy context within which the objectives and actions have been developed. *Are there key ideas missing? Can issues be framed more effectively?*
- **The objectives and actions** were developed through an iterative process and informed by stakeholder outreach. They address decision-making and planning efforts that are local, regional, and national in scope and are to be used in Phase III to construct and analyze different management scenarios. *Are there key ideas missing? Can issues be framed more effectively?*

Although there are many ways to phrase the complex challenges and opportunities in the West, we have a fairly high level of consensus on much of the text in the *Western Regional Assessment and Strategy* and are not soliciting general editorial suggestions.

Please visit the western outreach website to access the *Western Regional Assessment and Strategy*.  
<http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/updates/>

Your comments and questions may be submitted to either of the Western regional leads, identified below.

### Points of Contact:

#### **Western Regional Strategy Committee (WRSC) Lead**

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### For More Information:

On the Cohesive Strategy, please visit  
<http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/>  
On the Western Regional Strategy Committee, please visit:  
<http://sites.nemac.org/westcohesivefire/>

