



## **Memorandum of Understanding Wildland Fire Leadership Council**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by and among the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture authorizes the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (Council), an intergovernmental committee supporting the implementation and coordination for Federal wildland fire management.

### **Mission**

The Council is an intergovernmental committee of Federal, State/territory, Tribal, county, and municipal government officials convened by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture dedicated to promoting consistent wildland fire policies, goals, and management activities. The Council provides advice to help ensure policy coordination, accountability, and effective implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and related long-term strategies through a collaborative environment to continue to support the evolution of the land and wildland fire management system, and to help ensure effective and efficient wildfire management, promote fire-adapted communities, protect public health, and create resilient landscapes to achieve long-range benefits for society and nature.

### **Goals**

The Council, through its members and pursuant to relevant statutory authority, and within available appropriations and authorities, works strategically and collaboratively to review, monitor, and influence the development, implementation, and coordination of:

- Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy;
- National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy;
- Science, research, data, and technologies that are needed for more informed decision making and sound and effective wildland fire management; and
- Policies, procedures, and program management to protect communities and natural resources from wildfires and wildland fire smoke, reduce hazardous fuels, restore fire-adapted ecosystems, and assist communities in their efforts to reduce loss and recover from wildfires.

To reach those goals, the Council seeks to:

- Establish a forum for discussion of wildland fire management issues and promote and recognize improvement and innovation in wildland fire management.
- Identify, remove and/or mitigate barriers to successful wildland fire management and promotion of public health protections.

- Identify, remove, and/or mitigate barriers for equitable access to resources for risk mitigation activities.
- Ensure consistent outreach and communication to other senior policy makers and senior leaders in related program areas, and with other related coordination groups.
- Promote initiatives to ensure the wildland fire workforce is resilient; properly compensated; and provided with a safe, harassment free-work environment that promotes full health and well-being.
- Coordinate resources to identify and address the highest risk areas and priorities across landscapes consistent with risk management principles, including facilitating communities' resilience in the wildland urban interface with additional focus on the built environment and land use.
- Coordinate information from the Nation's wildland fire community and promote communication and outreach to the public, as appropriate.
- Meet the goals and accelerate the implementation of the of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, including the strategy's intention to promote the acceptance of short-term risk in order to achieve long-term objectives.
- Promote risk management frameworks that determine what safeguards need to be adopted while achieving land management objectives.

## **Organization and Operations**

Membership on the Council includes the following Federal officials:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture – the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment; Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation; Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment; and Chief of the Forest Service.
- U.S. Department of the Interior – the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget and the Directors of the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and U.S. Geological Survey.
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency – the Administrator of the U.S. Fire Administration and Deputy Administrator for Resilience.
- U.S. Department of Defense – the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Environmental Management and Restoration and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Integration and Defense Support of Civil Authorities.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Assistant Administrator, Office of Air and Radiation.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control and Prevention – the Deputy Director for Non-Infectious Diseases.

In addition to the Federal officials, the Council includes seven non-Federal members, primarily senior elected officials of State/territory, Tribal, county, and municipal governments. These members, acting in their official capacities, include:

- A State Governor who is a member of the National Governors Association.
- A State Governor who is a member of the Western Governors' Association.
- The president of the Intertribal Timber Council or their designee (acting in their official capacity as a delegated representative of a federally recognized Tribe).
- A county commissioner who is a member of the National Association of Counties.
- A mayor who is a member of the National League of Cities.
- A State forester designated by their Senior Elected Officials.
- A State emergency manager, designated by their Governor.
- A fire chief of a State or any political subdivision thereof, designated by their Senior Elected Official.

The elected officials making designations may delegate alternates in writing to attend in their absence.

## **Governance**

Responsibility for chairing the Council will alternate between the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture annually. The Department of the Agriculture will chair the Council first beginning on the effective date of this memorandum. The Department of the Interior will chair the Council beginning on the first anniversary of the effective date, after which they will rotate the chair on an annual basis on the anniversary of the effective date. The Council will meet regularly, as directed by the Council Chair, to accomplish the stated goals. Additional business protocols may be adopted by the Council to facilitate its efficient operation.

The Council Chair will provide at least 30 days written notice to Council members of meeting dates, location, and preliminary agenda items. Council members are encouraged to bring strategic topics requiring intergovernmental coordination before the Council and to invite additional participants to present information to help inform the Council's deliberations.

The Council Chairs are responsible for ensuring appropriate and accurate recordkeeping. The actions and obligations of the departments, agencies, and bureaus under this MOU are limited to those authorized by each department, agency, or bureau's statutory and regulatory authorities and are subject to the availability of appropriations. Each participant will strive to carry out its activities in a coordinated and mutually beneficial manner. The Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, Department of Health and Human Services, and Environmental Protection Agency will manage their own activities, work within respective statutory authorities, and utilize their own resources, including the expenditure of their own funds, in pursuing these objectives.

This MOU will be effective on the date it is signed by the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture and will remain in effect for one year from the date of execution. This MOU may be extended or amended upon the written request of any of the signers and the subsequent written concurrence of the others. Either Secretary may terminate his or her department's participation in this MOU with a 60-day written notice to the others.

### **Collaboration and Public Participation**

The President and Congress have directed the Federal departments and agencies to work collaboratively with, State/territory, Tribal, and local governments and the public to develop and implement strategies to address wildfire preparedness and suppression, hazardous fuels reduction, landscape restoration, and rehabilitation of the Nation's wildlands (e.g., rangelands, forests, and wetlands), and provide assistance to communities. In the collaborative spirit of this direction, and pursuant to provisions of law, including the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act exemption to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Council is an intergovernmental committee established to exchange views, information, and advice relating to the management and implementation of Federal programs in wildland fire management, hazardous fuels reduction, and natural and cultural resource management; promotion of public health; and community preparedness. To the extent practicable, the Council will also exchange information, views, and advice relating to the integration of these activities with other Federal, State/territory, Tribal Nation, and local programs.

Meetings are to be open to the public. Exchange with individual members of the public in attendance will be encouraged through designation of "public comment" time on the agenda or by other informal means. The Council Chair, with the consent of the members present, may declare a portion of the meeting as an "executive session." An executive session may include routine administrative duties, ministerial tasks, or discussion of highly sensitive or confidential matters. The Council will strive to keep its meeting open to the public.

### **Approval**

The undersigned approve this Memorandum of Understanding.

  
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Secretary of the Interior

AUG 2 2024  
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Date

  
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Secretary of Agriculture

August 2, 2024  
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Date