

Key Talking Points on the Loss of Fire Management (7/1/2025)

- The loss of fire management would cripple the Forest Service's ability to accomplish the mission. It is integrated into almost every program the agency has. Such a move could spell trouble for the future of the agency, especially if its other historically core programs, that include research, State, Tribal and Private Forestry are broken up and scattered to other agencies.
- Wildfire management is more than extinguishing fires. Separating fire management from land management agencies risks loss of forest resilience. Fire and Aviation Management includes a wide range of responsibilities including prescribed burning, fuel treatments including integration with timber management and planning. To be effective full integration of wildland fire management with land management and research is critical to implement active land management strategies.
- While the suppression organization is important, there is an urgent need to address the root cause of catastrophic wildfire, which includes overly dense forests, development in the wildland-urban interface, and changing weather patterns. Adequate agency staffing is key to successfully addressing all these variables. The "*Fix Our Forest Act*" (H.R. 471), which focuses on addressing these underlying issues is currently in the Senate.
- The single agency suppression proposal overlooks the critical role of many thousands of Forest Service employees who assist in firefighting efforts but are not primary firefighters. This crucial expertise could be lost in the reorganization. Unfortunately, the administration has already dismissed many of these employees or encouraged them to leave and accepted their resignations. Others could be targeted in future reduction in force. An additional consideration is the sheer complexity, cost and time required to organize staff and stand up a new organization.
- There is currently a push to "blow up the system" so to speak, even though it's a system that has been in place since the formation of NWCG in 1976. **Why not work to improve the system in place?** Nearly 80% of all federal firefighters and

equipment, including air tankers, and contracts are currently managed by the USDA Forest Service.

- Clearly effective fire management requires all partner's cooperation, federal, state and private. The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (2009), which we and many other entities have supported, is a strategic plan to work collaboratively among all stakeholders and across all landscapes to make meaningful progress towards the three goals of (1) Resilient Landscapes, (2) Fire Adapted Communities, and (3) Safe and Effective Wildfire Response.
- It is far more compelling to spend our limited money, time, and focus on reducing the wildfire threat through increased active forest management, primarily through forest thinning and prescribed fire, and improving fire management systems, rather than spending billions on creating a new federal fire agency.