



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

JUN 1 2011

Memorandum

To: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, Fish and Wildlife Service
Director, National Park Service

From: Rhea Suh 
Assistant Secretary, Policy, Management, and Budget

Subject: Department of the Interior Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program Priorities

The Department of the Interior (DOI) and its bureaus are responsible for the hazardous fuels reduction (HFR) program and have made great strides over the last several years in achieving progress consistent with the newly released *DOI Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2011 – 2016* and the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*. The central theme of these foundational documents is the reduction of risk to our firefighters, communities, and natural and cultural resources, as well as the improvement of ecological condition for our forests, shrub lands, and grasslands. Future HFR Programs of Work will continue to support Congressional, White House and Secretarial priorities.

Reduction of risk and achievement of desired land health conditions will continue to be the overarching themes that guide the HFR program. This year presents another opportunity to build upon past success as we develop and utilize a prioritized program of work that ensures that the highest priority projects are funded to meet the Department, agency, and program policy objectives. Listed below is additional guidance on the types of projects which will be prioritized within the future HFR Program of Work. The program of work will be finalized in the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System and made available to the Office of Wildland Fire Coordination as required.

- Create Fire-Adapted Communities – Priority will be given to projects that protect values-at-risk and achieve fire management objectives identified in applicable management plans (i.e., community wildfire protection plans (CWPP), land/fire management plans, and local risk assessments), including projects which specifically:
 - Protect Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) or will influence the risk to the WUI if not treated
 - Support a CWPP or CWPP equivalent
 - Provide economic opportunities for communities, tribal members, or youth
 - Perform work through the use of a contractor or cooperator
 - Provide biomass potential

- Restore and Maintain Resilient Landscapes – Priority will be given to projects that move landscapes toward desired condition or projects that maintain desired conditions, including those which specifically:
 - Protect special interest species
 - Address areas of high-priority fire regime/condition class
 - Establish and restore resilient landscapes
 - Protect or restore treasured landscapes
 - Promote carbon sequestration
 - Provide collaboration opportunities
 - Include joint (intra-bureau) labor and funding
 - Ensure project efficiencies
 - Include contributed (non-bureau) labor and funding
 - Maintain previous investments

- Respond to Wildfire – Priority will be given to projects that provide the greatest opportunities to improve wildfire response, including projects which specifically:
 - Provide for firefighter safety
 - Reduce large fire costs
 - Enhance full spectrum response to wildfires

I want to emphasize the importance of collaborating with our partners in developing a program of work. Continued collaboration and partnerships with communities, State governments, tribes, and other stakeholders in support of local economies remains a priority for the DOI as we look beyond our borders and the landscape as a whole. All projects funded within the HFR Program of Work must result from a collaborative process. These efforts will continue to be systematically tracked to gauge our abilities in meeting the local, regional, State, and national goals and objectives.

I strongly encourage the bureaus to enhance efficacy, longevity, and geospatial data associated with wildfire risk and consequences to help our managers to make informed, science-based decisions. These data support the fire management program, as well as broader management decisions that affect our human communities and valued landscapes.

It is recognized that these priorities will change and evolve. They will remain in effect until they are superseded by policy, statute, or other official direction.

Please direct any questions to Kirk Rowdabaugh, Director, Office of Wildland Fire Coordination, 202-606-3447.

cc: Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs
 Assistant Secretary, Land and Mineral Management
 Assistant Secretary, Fish, Wildlife, and Parks