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## Northern Blue Mountain Cohesive Strategy Pilot Project Action Plan



**Wildfire Response**  
Foster Gulch Fire-Halfway



**Restore Resilient landscapes**  
Forest Management- Union Co.



**Fire Adapted Communities**  
Home in Mt. Emily WUI

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This plan contains a description of actions and tasks that are necessary for implementing a successful Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (a.k.a. Cohesive Strategy) in the Pilot Project area. The initial set of actions outline the necessary elements to build a Cohesive Strategy foundation in the Pilot Project area. This is a description of action items that were undertaken to develop a collaborative process within the Northern Blue Mountain Pilot Project. The second group of actions outlines the Pilot Project Action Plan for implementation of each of the three Cohesive Strategy goals. Stakeholder/partner input was used in developing, selecting, and refining these Pilot Project actions and tasks.

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Pilot Project Summit-May 2013

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## Building a Cohesive Strategy Pilot Project Foundation

**Goal: Ensure the coordinated implementation of the Cohesive Strategy among all stakeholders and partners in the Pilot Project area.**

***Action: Educate and inform the stakeholders/partners in the Pilot Project area on the Cohesive Strategy.***

**Tasks:**

- Conduct a Pilot Project Inaugural Meeting between Regional and State level leaders and Pilot Project core members. **Status: COMPLETED**
- Request/receive a “Leader’s Letter of Intent” for the Pilot Project and communicate to stakeholders/partners. **Status :COMPLETED**
- Conduct educational/ informative group meetings on the Cohesive Strategy throughout the pilot project area. **Status :COMPLETED**

***Action: Determine Pilot Project membership and establish a Steering Committee and work groups as needed.***

Tasks

- Determine core member stakeholders and partners. On an ongoing basis evaluate the need to obtain participation from other expertise. *Status: COMPLETED and ON-GOING*
- Determine Steering Group membership and develop a charter to implement the Cohesive Strategy in the Pilot Project area. *Status: COMPLETED*
- Establish work groups as needed to accomplish the actions identified in this Action Plan.

***Action: Develop a Pilot Project Action Plan.***

Tasks

- Obtain input for a Pilot Project Action Plan through small group stakeholder/partner meetings. *Status: COMPLETED*
- Conduct a Summit for all stakeholders/partners to interact and provide input and priorities for the action plan. *Status: COMPLETED*
- Finalize, prioritize and adopt a Pilot Project Action plan. *Status: IN PROGRESS*
- At the one-year mark, revisit and assess the Action Item with Cohesive Wildfire Strategy Steering Committee to assure that necessary elements are included.

***Action: Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Pilot Project Action Plan.***

Tasks

- Glean successes and barriers from Pilot Project and implementation of action plan. *Status: IN PROGRESS*
- Make recommendations for reducing barriers and opportunities for transferring successes to others. *Status:: IN PROGRESS*

***Action: Institutionalize the Cohesive Strategy as a standard practice in conducting business for wildland fire and resource management agencies in the Pilot Project area.***

Tasks

- Develop an agreed upon long term collaboration agreement amongst all stakeholders and partners in the Pilot Project area.

**Action: *Develop a Pilot Project website and a system for internal/external communications and public relations.***

Tasks

- Solicit assistance from stakeholders within Pilot Project area to provide expertise in developing a website. *Status: IN PROGRESS*
- Solicit assistance from stakeholder within the Pilot Project as well as at the Regional/State level in developing avenues for internal and external outreach and communications. *Status: IN PROGRESS*
- Develop a public relations network that can assist in developing or researching existing informational and educational materials for use in Pilot Project on topics such the ecological benefits of fire and the impacts, such as smoke management and western fire issues.

### Improve Wildfire Response Effectiveness



Spring Creek Fire (Near La Grande)-Rural and Wildland Response

**Goal: All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient response to wildland fire.**

**Action: *Establish an integrated Geo-region Collaborative for fire suppression and management (utilize Pilot Project Steering Committee as this collaborative) to lead efforts to improve response effectiveness.***

Tasks

- Establish county or regional level Liaisons/Coordinators to assist facilitating the development and implementation of Cohesive Strategy concepts in the Pilot Project area. Seek funding sources for establishing these coordinators.

- Explore opportunities to realign protection responsibilities to the organization that is best suited to provide efficient protection (e.g., exchange of isolated tracts, block protection areas, offset protection agreements, protection contracts, and intergovernmental agreements).
- Identify where unprotected lands exist in the Pilot Project for both wildland and structural. Explore annexation (extending jurisdictional responsibilities) by existing agencies (BLM/ODF/USFS/Rural Fire Departments/Rangeland Associations) or the creation of new organizations in an effort to minimize unprotected lands. *Status: ON-GOING* (WDNR protection in SE WA)
- Utilize this Geo Region fire collaborative in a Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) role for the Pilot Project. Establish operating guidelines that outlines communication and coordination opportunities during critical fire situations (i.e. when and how).
- Seek opportunities to extend our Fire Danger Operating Plan beyond its current scope. Determine a test Fire Danger Rating Area (FDRA) where uniform public use restriction could be enacted across all jurisdictions.
- Inform and collaborate with affected partners when funding opportunities are available through various grant sources.

***Action: Improve local wildland fire response capacity by implementing a more integrated and coordinated, all agency approach.***

Tasks

- Develop all agency/interagency coordinated staffing and severity plans at high and extreme fire danger. Explore County Level Firefighting Task Forces and a mechanism to share this resource between Counties in the Pilot Project area.
- Explore opportunities for multi-agency funding/manning/procurement of critical fire fighting resources that maybe lacking in the geo-region that would improve response effectiveness.
- Explore cohesive opportunities in communication systems, aerial firefighting resources, and severity/move-up resources. Utilizing the Pilot Project as the geographical area, focus on expanding opportunities with non -traditional partners.
- Conduct County level “all agencies” wildfire simulations and training. Include local Law Enforcement, Search and Rescue and other entities that may be called upon in emergencies. Build capacity within the local fire/emergency services with collateral duty firefighters/personnel. *Status: IN PROGRESS/ON-GOING*(at least two simulations conducted Spring 2013)
- Evaluate opportunities to improve early fire detection needs within the Pilot Project including the use of fire detection cameras and the availability of detection planes. Seek funding or cost share sources to assist in making any identified improvements.

- Develop a comprehensive, all agency inventory/database of firefighting resources in the Pilot Project.
- Continue support of Interagency Type 3 Incident Management Teams and build capacity/membership of teams by reaching beyond traditional recruitment sources; such as soliciting participation from Rural Fire Departments and local governments. *Status: IN PROGRESS/ON-GOING*

## Create Fire Adapted Communities



**Bridge Creek Fire (South of Ukiah)**

**Goal: Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.**

***Action: Develop more comprehensive and robust Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs).***

### Tasks

- Seek grant sources which can be used to support development, updating, and implementation of new, all inclusive, comprehensive and robust CWPPs.
- Research and develop a common CWPP template for Counties in Pilot Project to use in the revision of current CWPPs and outline a CWPP revision process to begin in the fall of 2013.
- Involve all entities in developing/revising and updating CWPPs such as emergency management, county sheriffs' offices, Rural Fire Departments, and forest interface

homeowners and landowners. Use an inclusive approach by addressing other values at risk of fire such as scattered farm/ranch communities and dwelling and infrastructure improvements such as watersheds, communication sites, and critical habitats.

- Utilizing existing county land use planning information, develop a common template for pre-fire identification of home site locations to be incorporated into CWPPS. Actual inventory to occur outside of CWPP revision process. Triage ability to be protected from fire and firefighter safety aspects in the highest priority at risk of fire communities.
- Develop “all agency” fire suppression plans for communities at risk of fire within the CWPPS.
- Develop evacuation plans for each community at risk of fire and inform affected residents.
- Develop guidelines for response criteria or trigger points for invoking the conflagration act for communities at risk of fire. Work with State Fire Marshall’s Office on acceptance of response criteria/trigger points.
- Utilize West Wide Risk Assessment and other appropriate risk assessment models for identifying values at risk of fire in CWPP revisions.

***Action: Promote forest restoration/fuels treatment in and around communities and in the “middle ground” further from communities.***

Tasks

- Increase fuels reduction effectiveness by coordinating “all lands”, collaborative treatment efforts across all ownerships (private, local, state, tribal, and federal) in the highest hazard areas identified in CWPPs and/or risk assessment models. *Status: IN PROGRESS/ON- GOING* (East Face and Cove II projects)
- Promote increased funding for fuels treatment at the federal, state and local level.
- Pursue grant and cost share programs for private land work, including funding for technical assistance, to strategically reduce issues relating to transference of risk and make communities more fire-adapted.
- Accelerate fuels treatment in and around communities at risk of fire by developing improved economics for biomass utilization.
- Synchronize fire education, prevention, and hazardous fuels reduction program activities that will help create Fire Adapted Communities.

***Action: Develop an Integrated Information, Education and Awareness Program.***

Tasks

- Incorporate an intensified, interagency approach to implement Firewise in at risk of fire communities.

- Research, identify and make available for use by fire agencies a variety of the most current and successful fire prevention education tools for use in at risk of fire communities.
- Inform residents in at risk of fire communities of their individual and collective responsibilities in preparing their homes and properties for the possibility of fire. Identify technical and financial resources available. Motivate individual community members and key community interests to take positive action.
- Seek out a Fire Adapted Community demonstration site in Pilot Project area for use as an educational opportunity.
- Provide information and/or recommendations to State Fire Marshalls office regarding their role in planning and responding to fire events.
- Research and disseminate best practices and sample wildfire zoning ordinances, building, subdivision, and development codes for Wildland Urban interface areas. Work with county planning departments on the application and enforcement of applicable regulations.
- Work with insurance partners to identify best practices to incentivize adoption of Firewise Communities for fuels reduction and maintenance of reduced fuels over time.

## **Restore and Maintain Resilient Landscapes**



**Red Mountain Fire- Near East Face FS/State/Private Forest Collaborative Project**

**Goal: Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with management objectives.**



***Action: Promote collaborative forest management and restoration planning.***

Tasks

- Work in a complimentary and supportive role with existing Forest /County Collaboratives, the National Forests and the Eastside Strategy. *Status: IN PROGRESS/ON-GOING*
- Encourage large scale management, restoration and fuels treatment projects that embrace sustainability by recognizing the social, environmental and economic benefits derived through applying the three goals of the Cohesive Strategy on the ground across all ownerships. *Status: IN PROGRESS/ON-GOING* (i.e. East Face Project with the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest)
- Promote increased utilization of the “Good Neighbor Policy” and Stewardship contracting authority to accomplish forest management and restoration activities.
- Encourage revenue producing (i.e. commercial timber harvest) projects that, in turn, can help support increased restoration and forest management activities while providing some economic benefits to our local communities.
- Promote, coordinate and facilitate planning and implementation of forest management and restoration activities across jurisdictional and ownership boundaries. *Status: IN PROGRESS/ONGOING* (i.e. East Face Project)
- Encourage core Cohesive Strategy Pilot Project stakeholders/partners to actively participate in Forest Collaboratives. *Status: IN PROGRESS/ON-GOING*
- Seek new and redirect existing grants and/or incentives to complete work on non-federal lands that complements landscape restoration projects on Federal lands. This effort would include direct cost-share monies and technical assistance to landowners.

***Action: Identify and Prioritize Landscapes for Treatment.***

Tasks

- Act as a technical resource to Forest Collaboratives in prioritization of landscapes for treatment (i.e. WUI, middle ground, and roadless or wilderness areas) to reduce the threat of destructive wildfires in the interface and intermingled (private/federal) landscapes.
- Revise and develop more comprehensive and robust Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) that consider and identify forest interface and middle ground landscape treatment priorities.
- Introduce and provide training in the Pilot Project area on the West Wide Risk Assessment model. Incorporate this model with other risk assessments to assist in determining landscape treatment priorities. *Status: COMPLETED/ON-GOING*

***Action: Improve efficiencies and economics of forest biomass removal and marketing; improve understanding of biomass utilization resources, opportunities, and challenges; and improve understanding, acceptance and support and of biomass utilization as a tool for enhancing forest health and fuels reduction.***

Tasks

- Demonstrate how biomass utilization can lead to enhanced fuels reduction outcomes.
- Invest in biomass project feasibility and provide ongoing project development support. **Status: COMPLETED/ON-GOING** (i.e. Pilot Project Feasibility Grants Awarded )
- Provide current and accurate information on biomass availability, existing and emerging markets, and new business opportunities.
- Connect suppliers to markets.
- Identify and share lessons learned from successful biomass utilization efforts across the geo-region.

***Action: Seek understanding, acceptance and support for managed wildfire (prescribed and natural).***

Tasks

- Encourage projects that improve defensible wildfire buffers between wilderness/roadless areas and private land to allow for management of fires when appropriate.
- Recognize the importance to protect natural resource management lands from catastrophic wildfire.
- Promote an aggressive prescribed fire program. Develop an assistance program for private landowners who are interested in prescribed burning and address private landowner liability issues associated with prescribed fire use. Encourage and promote opportunities to conduct prescribed burning across ownership boundaries.
- Collectively, as Cohesive Strategy partners, support prescribed burning. Develop public education tools to provide information on the benefits of prescribed burning and addresses smoke management/air quality concerns.
- Provide public information and education on western wildfire issues and resulting air quality issues, and the ecological benefits of fire. Involve environmental groups in these discussions.