



IN THE KNOW

The Strategy: An Introduction

IN THE KNOW is the official newsletter for the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership (FRFTP). It provides up-to-date information to employees and stakeholders involved with the FRFTP.

The FRFTP is a strategy developed jointly by the Pike/San Isabel National Forests (PSICC), the Arapaho/Roosevelt National Forests (ARP), the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) and the Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS) to reduce the risks of wildland fires along the Front Range of Colorado. The National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have also joined the Partnership.

The goal of the strategy is to identify, prioritize and rapidly implement hazardous fuels treatment along the Front Range of Colorado. The FRFTP implements the national 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy and Implementation Plan, focusing on public and firefighter safety; housing in the wildland interface; watersheds providing municipal water; ecosys-

tem function; and threatened and endangered species.

One key to the success of the FRFTP will be extensive participation from local governments and public involvement in identifying and supporting projects.

The focus of the FRFTP is the Front Range of Colorado, with its extensive wildland-urban interface.

There were many effects of the Front Range fires last summer. For example, major ash and sediment flows from the Hayman Fire have impacted water quality and storage capacity at Cheesman Reservoir, which is a primary water storage facility for Denver. Millions of residents and farmers receive their water from the national forests. The FRFTP will focus much of its energy on watershed protection, along with community protection and economic stability and forest health.

Fire suppression and rehabilitation cost from last fire season has been dramatic, with an estimated \$45 million

spent on suppression along the Front Range and almost \$24 million spent on Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation. Another economic effect of last summer's devastating fires was the loss of tourism. Health concerns from smoke and fire bans kept many individuals inside, away from the dangers of the fire.

The FRFTP identifies all of these effects and the current condition of the forests when prioritizing projects along the Front Range. However, implementation comes at a price.

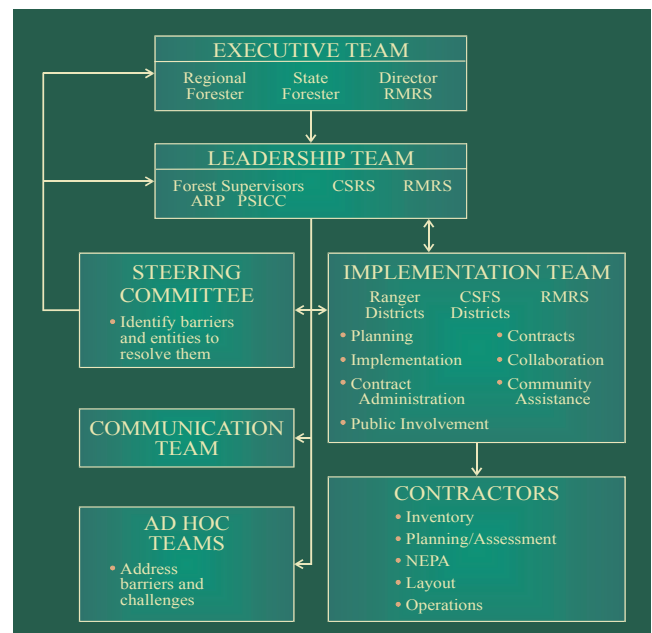
The Partnership realized early on the need for increased funding to reach the goals of the strategy. The FRFTP recently received \$5 million of extra Rocky Mountain Regional funding for fiscal year 2003. The estimated breakdown of the funding is \$2 million to the PSICC, \$2 million to the ARP, \$500,000 to the CSFS and \$500,000 to the RMRS.

For a copy of the proposal and project areas, please refer to the website. www.fs.fed.us/r2/arnf/

The Partnership: Who's Involved

The leadership team for this effort is made up of the Forest Supervisor from the Pike and San Isabel National Forests, Bob Leaverton; the Forest Supervisor from the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests, Jim Bedwell; the Colorado State Forester, Jim Hubbard; and the Director of the Rocky Mountain Research Station, Marcia Patton-Mallory. These four are supported by an executive team, consisting of Rocky Mountain Regional Forester Rick Cables, Hubbard and Patton-Mallory, and a steering committee made up of personnel from all four of these agencies and a member from both the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management to facilitate implementation of the FRFTP. The organizational chart for the partnership appears to the right.

Common understanding, extraordinary cooperation and communication form the foundation for the leadership team and its organizational structure. It is important that everyone involved in the partnership has the same level of understanding of activities, issues and interested parties with the FRFTP.



Information Related to the FRFTP

Roadless Initiative -

On December 12, 2002, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a split decision, reversing the May 10, 2001, ruling by the U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho, which enjoined USDA from implementing the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule). On April 4, 2003, the Ninth Circuit said it would not rehear the appeal. On June 4, 2003, the Bush administration announced the Roadless Rule will be reinstated. On July 14, 2003, the District Court of Wyoming enjoined the implementation of the Roadless Rule nationwide, stating the rule violates NEPA and the Wilderness Act.

Over the last year, we have been working toward a responsible and balanced approach that fairly addresses concerns raised by states, tribes and local communities impacted by the rule and incorporates the Department's May 4, 2001, principles of informed decision making; working together; protecting forests, communities, homes, and property from fire; and protecting access to property.

For more information visit www.roadless.fs.fed.us

Forest Planning Rule -

Forest planning is complex, controversial and has resulted in a significant commitment of agency resources to conduct. The proposed revised planning rule is an opportunity to streamline this complex process and incorporate what the Forest Service has learned about ecosystems, public involvement and planning since 1982.

The proposed rule is consistent with important and long-standing environmental protections, such as NEPA and NFMA, while giving forest supervisors and other responsible officials the flexibility they need to meet new environmental

threats and challenges. The comment period for the rule was extended to April 7, 2003.

For more information visit www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma

Colorado State Forest Service Approach-

The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) strategy for implementing the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership focuses time and expertise to build partnerships that facilitate landscape-scale, cross-boundary fuels treatment and that provide significant protection to people and natural resources.

Specifically, CSFS is budgeting staffing, operations and project funding for two fiscal years and plans to be fully operational by September 1, 2003. CSFS has assigned foresters to work on the FRFTP on a full-time basis on each of its six Front Range districts. In addition, CSFS has assigned other staff to coordinate partnerships, operations, communications, community assistance, GIS, economic action program delivery, and marketing and utilization.

"The funding provided for the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership represents a significant national investment in Colorado's forests and communities and it is a challenge we must meet with meaningful accomplishment on the ground," said Jim Hubbard, Colorado State Forester.

Website for Further Information -

The Rocky Mountain Area Interagency Wildland Fire Communications Group is providing a site for posting information related to the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership. It will be in operation the week of July 20.

www.rockymountainwildlandfire.info

Calendar of Events

November 8, 2002 –The FRFTP was presented to the Regional Forester, Colorado State Forester and the Director of the Rocky Mountain Research Center.

December 13, 2002 – The FRFTP was presented to the Chief and Staff for their input and support.

April 9, 2003 – Rick Cables addressed the State of Colorado Agriculture Committee. The topic was the National Fire Plan and the Healthy Forest Initiative.

Spring 2003—Colorado State Forest Service began County Forums to provide information about forest health and fuels management.

May 21, 2003—FRFTP Legislative Roll-out in Denver

Summer 2003—Legislative Field Trips and County Forums

November 2003— 2nd edition of *In the Know* distributed (*In the Know* will be produced quarterly)

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