

Assistant Secretary Scarlett, New Chair of  
Wildland Fire Leadership Council, Predicts More Gains  
In Battle Against Western Fires

WASHINGTON July 15, 2003 Assistant Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett, recently appointed chairman of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, reported today that the National Fire Plan is helping alleviate dangers to public health and safety.

"Now in its third year of implementation, the National Fire Plan has made important strides toward reducing the impacts of catastrophic wildland fire to communities and the environment," says Scarlett, who was appointed chair at the June 20, 2003 meeting of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, which implements and coordinates the National Fire Plan and 10-year implementation plan. She succeeds Dale Bosworth, Chief of the Forest Service.

"Hazardous fuels have been reduced through increased firefighting resources and fuel treatment programs," Scarlett reported today. "State and local fire prevention and protection capability has grown dramatically with grants under the National Fire Plan totaling millions of dollars each year. Now the council is taking additional actions that will produce more gains in the battle against western fires."

The Wildland Fire Leadership Council was established by a Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior in April 2002. The council consists of members from federal wildland agencies, National Association of State Foresters, National Association of Counties, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Intertribal Timber Council and National Governors Association.

In 2002 the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture and 17 western governors also signed the Ten-Year Comprehensive Strategy's Implementation Plan for reducing wildland fire risks to communities and the environment.

"Fighting wildland fires demands teamwork," Scarlett said. "One of the most important results of the National Fire Plan has been the increase in collaboration among federal, state, tribal and local agencies as well as grassroots and community organizations."

At its recent meeting, the Council approved actions to continue implementing the National Fire Plan such as cooperative budgeting and establishment of broad, nationally compatible standards for identifying communities at risk, while allowing maximum flexibility at the state and regional levels.

Scarlett says the Council's vision includes facilitating and streamlining the cooperative work underway among land and fire management agencies and communities. "What we call the '4c's' at the Interior Department ? consultation, cooperation and communication needed to bring about conservation ? are also needed to reduce the risk and devastating effects of wildland fire to property and natural resources."

In addition to Scarlett and Bosworth, council members include Undersecretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and the Environment Mark Rey; Governor Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho, representing the National

Governors Association; National Park Service Director Fran Mainella; Bureau of Land Management Director Kathleen Clarke; Fish and Wildlife Service Director Steve Williams; Terry Virden representing the Bureau of Indian Affairs; Ronald Christensen representing the National Association of Counties; Jim Hull representing the National Association of State Foresters; Jim Erickson, Intertribal Timber Council; and Charlie Dickinson representing the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

National Fire Plan Coordinators are Tim Hartzell for the Department of the Interior, Corbin Newman for the Department of Agriculture, and Jim Hubbard for the National Association of State Foresters.

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