



# Strategic Plan for Wildland Fire Protection

Phase I



April 2006



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**Natural Resources**

Doug Sutherland - Commissioner of Public Lands

# Acknowledgements

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This document is the *"2006 Strategic Plan for Wildland Fire Protection, Phase I"*, on non-federal lands in the State of Washington. It contains specific strategic direction but does not contain the detailed background and in-depth analyses found in the *"Phase II, Pathway to 2020"*.

Both the *"Strategic Plan for Wildland Fire Protection, Phase I"* and *"Phase II, Pathway to 2020"* are available from:

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April 21, 2006

**Re: Strategic Plan for Wildland Fire Protection**

Although fire is naturally a part of Washington's forests, there is also a lot at risk— lives, homes, habitat, natural resources, financial resources, and public and firefighter health and safety. So it is understandable that there has been a lot of interest in wildland fire protection. Many of the concerns that have been raised reflect increased risks that stem from changing conditions in climate, increased population and deteriorating forest health.


Considering all this, it was clear we needed an approach for Washington State that both addressed the conditions and concerns, and recognized the natural role of fire. The result is this *Strategic Plan for Wildland Fire Protection*.

This Strategic Plan recognizes the connection between forest health and fire. It recognizes that collaboration and partnerships are essential. And it supports a net-cost approach to wildland fire protection.

Building on the 2004 *Strategic Plan for Healthy Forests* and the recommendations of the 2005 JLARC fire suppression study, the *Strategic Plan for Wildland Fire Protection* is a call for action, change and accountability. It recognizes that there are shared responsibilities between the public, landowners and various levels of government.

As DNR implements the plan, you can expect us to work to clarify current authorities and propose new legislation, and to seek opportunities to work with others to reduce costs, increase the effectiveness of firefighting and reduce resource damage. Collectively, these actions will benefit landowners, improve the quality of life and benefit all the people of Washington.

Sincerely,



Doug Sutherland  
Commissioner of Public Lands





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Phase I



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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**Natural Resources**  
Doug Sutherland - Commissioner of Public Lands



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# Strategic Plan

## Introduction

The *Strategic Plan for Wildland Fire Protection* was collaboratively developed with the help of an external Advisory Committee. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sought the Advisory Committee's ideas on the future of wildland fire protection. It has been nearly two decades since the last comprehensive evaluation of how 12.7 million acres of forest lands are protected by the DNR.

The *Strategic Plan for Wildland Fire Protection* creates a series of goals, objectives and strategies that are designed to identify legislative, budget and operational actions necessary to respond to changes in climate, population and forest health. The *Plan* defines broad steps necessary to achieve a preferred future for fire protection in the State of Washington.

The *Plan* is based on the premise of action. Specific actions necessary to implement the Plan are being developed by a series of Implementation Teams. The DNR asked all Advisory Committee members to participate in the Implementation Teams that will develop specific proposals and priorities for action. The DNR anticipates a number of changes can be made within existing authorities and budget. Other actions would require collaborative efforts to propose legislation and suggest appropriate budgets. Many, but not all, implementation details, including early priorities, will be known by the end of calendar year 2006.

The "*Strategic Plan for Wildfire Protection*" is abstracted from the "*Phase II Pathway to 2020*" which also contains background data and detailed analyses that led to the development of this *Strategic Plan*.





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# The Strategic Plan

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## A Wildland Fire Protection Program for Washington

### Phase II<sup>1</sup>

History shows that wildfire<sup>2</sup> has always played a big role in the forests of the western United States. What has changed is the risk. Wildfire risk to public safety, private property and the quality of life in Washington is now really different. Many also sense that the risks will only increase unless there are fundamental changes, changes that must involve many people.

As the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) evaluated necessary changes, it became clear that a framework was necessary. We looked at current practices and added new elements to create a path to lead to where Washington's wildfire protection will better serve the needs of today and tomorrow. The framework forms the components of this Strategic Plan.

The Wildland Fire Protection Strategic Plan was built using a hierarchical model. Figure 1 identifies the major components. In this model, the Mission and other components provide direction and unifying themes to anything below.

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<sup>1</sup> Phase I is the *Pathway to 2020*, a report that contains detailed analyses and other background data. The *Pathway to 2020* can be found at [http://www.dnr.wa.gov/htdocs/rp/fire\\_strategic\\_plan/index.html](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/htdocs/rp/fire_strategic_plan/index.html).

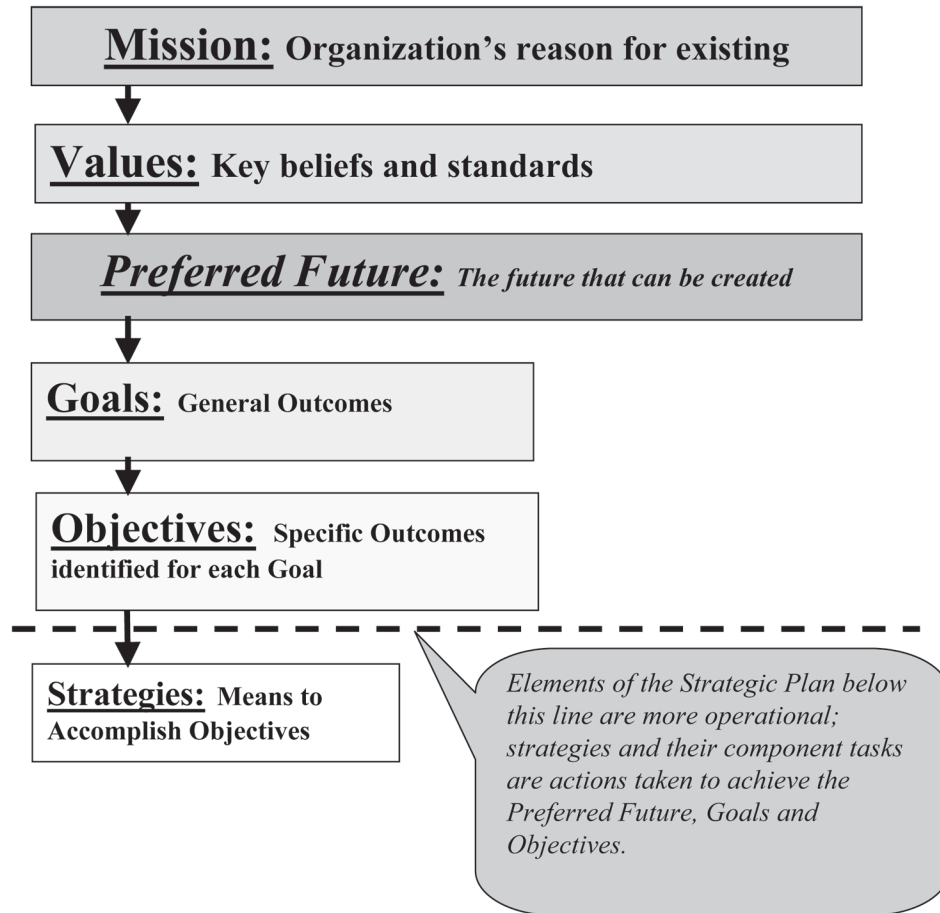
<sup>2</sup> In this plan, the following definitions apply:

**Wildland Fire** - any vegetation fire that occurs in the wildland that may or may not involve structures;

**Wildfire** - an unplanned, unwanted wildland fire; and

**Prescribed Fire** - any wildland fire, planned or unplanned, used to meet specific objectives and is within an established prescription.

**Figure 1 — Hierarchical Model of the Resource Protection Strategic Plan.**



## Mission, Values & Preferred Future

Given the current legal framework in Washington, DNR evaluated its primary purposes concerning wildland fire protection. This became the 2020 Mission Statement for wildland Fire Protection. It was quickly followed by a statement of key beliefs and standards—Values for Wildland Fire Protection. These are not the Mission and Values of the whole DNR.

It was also necessary to identify some givens and assumptions about the future, based upon trends and forces now in play or likely to be in play in the near future in the world and in the state. These assumptions permitted us to envision a probable future for 2020.

## **Our 2020 Mission**

- To acknowledge the role of fire in Washington's wildlands.
- To provide exemplary service and leadership in the effective and efficient protection of human life, natural resources and property from wildfire.
- To promote the role of healthy forests in minimizing the unwanted effects of wildfire to enhance the quality of life for Washington's citizens.
- To prevent and safely and aggressively suppress wild fires.

Our mission will be achieved through community-based action and collaboration with our partners.

## **Our Values**

In achieving our Mission, the following Values guide the fire protection program:

### **PUBLIC, COMMUNITY AND FIREFIGHTER SAFETY**

- Safety is the top priority.

### **ENDURING STEWARDSHIP**

- This agency exists to provide enduring stewardship of our State's natural resources, including preventing loss of human life and reducing real property and other resource losses.
- Healthy forests contribute to the quality of life in Washington.
- Combining the best mix of both public service and business-like approaches enables us to carry out our duties with competence, consistency and fairness.

### **VISIONARY LEADERSHIP**

- The DNR continues to be recognized as a world leader in wildland fire protection. Technology is creatively and efficiently used to reduce costs, resource damage and other losses.
- We strive to make a difference by realizing our full potential.

- There is a strong urban and rural connection which helps support the quality of life.
- Using a world class organization that has effective and clear jurisdictions, appropriate authorities collaborate to deliver services to the people of Washington.

#### INCLUSIVE DECISION-MAKING

- Decision-making will be timely, open, well informed, and adaptively respond to new information. The common sense and consistency of our decisions and priorities will always be apparent.
- Enable the public, communities and landowners to share and acknowledge their responsibilities for wildfire protection.
- Long-term public safety is dependent upon a collaborative approach to land-use planning that acknowledges the risks of fire, the role of fire and the importance of forest health.

#### CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

- Clear, workable solutions to our natural resource issues emerge from the exercise of sound judgment and a bias for action, innovation and informed risk taking.
- Clear accountability exists for the effective and efficient use of budget.

#### RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

- Relationships matter, both inside and outside the agency. All voices are heard when we see all interested parties as partners, engaging and listening to them.

#### CAPABLE, DIVERSE AND SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

- Those who participate in the resource protection program are representative of the society they serve. A well-trained work force contributes to the safety of all.

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## **The Future can be Created**

Creating the preferred future begins with envisioning it.

It was necessary to state some givens and to make some assumptions about the future. There are world, national and local forces that interact with both the social and political landscapes of Washington; these forces are also dynamic and are guaranteed to

change. Knowing this, the Strategic Plan is dynamic. The result is an ongoing commitment to periodically assess the validity of the givens and assumptions. The changes create both threats and opportunities that will require modification of the Strategic Plan.

## **Givens about the Probable Future in 2020**

- The core forest protection laws will exist in essentially their current form, including the existing limits on Department responsibilities relative to protecting improved property.
- Citizens will expect that wildfires on private and state lands are effectively and efficiently suppressed.
- The costs of wildfire suppression will continue to increase.
- A healthy forest is resistant to uncharacteristic, economically or environmentally undesirable wildfire, windstorm, pests, disease and other damaging agents, and is able to recover following disturbance.<sup>3</sup>

## **Probable Future Assumptions**

The DNR identified assumptions about 2020 and placed them into categories that included the following:

- Land use and demographics;
- Societal values;
- State forest health trends;
- State Landscape Characteristics and trends;
- Firefighting resources;
- Interagency cooperation; and
- Funding.

## **Preferred Future in 2020 and its Key Themes**

Using the Mission, Values, and Probable Future, DNR answered questions about the future such as:

- “What will 2020 be like?”
- “What do we want forest protection to be like?”
- “What are appropriate roles for individuals, communities and institutions such as the fire districts, the department and other agencies?” and
- “What changes should be made?”

The answers to such questions created a view of the Preferred Future in 2020. This is the future that can be created through strategic action. The Wildland Fire Protection Strategic Plan is

<sup>3</sup> From: WADNR. December 2004. *A Desirable Forest Health Program for Washington's Forests*. Forest Health Strategy Work Group Report. See page 4.

built on the intention to create the Preferred Future in 2020. It is both future oriented and grounded in today's actions that will lead to the Preferred Future in 2020.

DNR identified key themes that have great potential impact, not only on current operations but also on our sense of the Preferred Future. The success of the Strategic Plan is based on our ability to correctly interpret the status and trends within the themes, making periodic adjustments as necessary.

- **More people, more houses.** By 2020, forecasts show there will be an additional 1.6 million people<sup>4</sup> with over 600 thousand new homes, compared to the year 2000. About 80 percent of growth will be in western Washington.
- **Homes and other improvements in the forests.** Wildfires will become larger, more complex and costly due to mixed land uses that increase public safety risks.
- **The connection between forest health and wildfire.** Wildfire suppression costs are directly related to forest health. Minimizing net costs is only possible through investments in forest health and wildfire prevention.
- **Climate change will affect forest health.** The continuing decline of forest health increases risk to the public, fire fighters and the environment of the Evergreen State.
- **The “graying” of Washington.** By 2020, more than one in five Washingtonians will be 60+ years, over a 40% increase. This will place new demands on the state budget with a correspondingly elevated concern about public health effects of smoke, whether from wildfire or prescribed burning.
- **Change in land use patterns.** Beyond the effects of new homes in the forests, larger forest ownerships will become increasingly fragmented, further reducing public access to wildlands.
- **Disparities.** The social and economic differences between urban/suburban and rural landscapes will increase.
- **Water.** Competition for water and concerns about water quality will reach critical proportions by 2020.
- **Partnerships in wildland fire protection.** No one has enough resources, resulting in increased reliance in partnerships. All partners face serious challenges in developing essential skills and an adequate number of trained people, even without the increasing demands to work on “all risk” incidents such as the Katrina hurricane.
- **Competition for financial resources.** State and federal dollars will be increasingly scarce.

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<sup>4</sup> Data source: OFM, Office of the Governor, population forecasts.



## Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Figure 1 identifies the relationship between the various components of the Strategic Plan. All Goals are important. For wildland fire protection to be both safe and successful, all Goals must be simultaneously pursued. However, given the very real risks to human life, the Safety Goal necessarily must be paramount. While state law<sup>5</sup> does charge us with aggressive wildfire fighting (and we are aggressive), state law recognizes the primacy of saving lives. The DNR is both grateful and proud that we have not had a wildfire fighter fatality in the last twenty five years.

Table 1 provides a high-level summary, showing the number of Objectives and Strategies for each Goal. Overall, there are

- *6 Goals*, with a combined total of
- *34 Objectives*, with a combined total of
- *134 Strategies*.

### **SAFETY GOAL: Providing safety for the public and those engaged in firefighting and prescribed fire is paramount.**

#### **Strategic and tactical significance of the Goal and its supporting Objectives and Strategies**

The risks and consequences of wildfires have increased in the last few decades. Fatalities, burned homes, millions of dollars of suppression costs and uncalculated resource damage, whether economic, social or ecological, all speak to the importance of a safe wildfire fighting effort. Protecting public safety and those who choose to fight wildfires has become more important as more people live in the wildlands and wildfire behavior routinely becomes increasingly extreme.

Recent national disasters have shown the importance of training, planning and the ability to communicate across organizational boundaries. This Goal heavily relies on the Incident Command System (ICS) and established training and qualification standards adopted by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group to achieve many of its key components.

<sup>5</sup> Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 76.04.167(2).

Fire protection involves hazards, including smoke. Of particular importance is the recognition that fuels treatments can minimize net smoke emissions. Prescribed fire can reduce wildfire smoke emissions and meet targets for minimizing net smoke emissions; however, social and regulatory challenges are significant to the expanded use of prescribed fire.

Land use regulations and development standards have a major impact on firefighter safety and possible firefighting tactics. Model ordinances can be developed that acknowledge public and firefighter safety. By promoting landowner and governmental actions that are consistent with forest health objectives, firefighter safety will be increased and suppression costs reduced.

## **Supporting Objectives and Strategies**

**SAFETY OBJECTIVE 1.** ENSURE ALL FIREFIGHTERS ARE TRAINED AND EQUIPPED TO SAFELY CONDUCT EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS.

**Safety Strategy 1.1.** Adopt National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) training and qualification standards as the DNR's safety framework.

**Safety Strategy 1.2.** Influence NWCG standards to reflect DNR's fire safety needs.

**Safety Strategy 1.3.** Identify how many DNR employees are needed to fill each Incident Command System (ICS) position, in order to meet DNR's commitments and responsibilities.

**Safety Strategy 1.4.** Ensure DNR employees receive quality training and provide appropriate training resources for our partners.

**Safety Strategy 1.5.** Ensure adequate and stable funding for appropriate equipment and training.

**Safety Strategy 1.6.** Require a physically fit workforce and;

**Safety Strategy 1.7.** Ensure decision-making skills so that all fire personnel make appropriate and timely safety decisions.

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**SAFETY OBJECTIVE 2. PREVENT FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES TO FIREFIGHTERS AND THE PUBLIC.**

**Safety Strategy 2.1.** Adopt the NWCG Fireline Handbook as the DNR's safety standard.

**Safety Strategy 2.2.** Engage in a continuous review of the Fireline Handbook and other NWCG products to better meet DNR needs.

**Safety Strategy 2.3.** Establish interoperability standards for communications systems, both in terms of hardware and use.

**Safety Strategy 2.4.** Train and coach all firefighters in the use of LCES (Lookouts, Communications, Escape routes and Safety zones), in order to ensure their "situation awareness".

**Safety Strategy 2.5.** Exercise leadership in cooperative public safety strategies and;

**Safety Strategy 2.6.** Investigate, review and analyze all serious injuries, "burn-overs" and fire-shelter deployments, to determine cause and prevent similar reoccurrences.

**SAFETY OBJECTIVE 3. MITIGATE PUBLIC HEALTH HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH SMOKE AND OTHER HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH WILDFIRE AND PRESCRIBED FIRE.**

**Safety Strategy 3.1.** Encourage fuel treatments that minimize net smoke emissions and that are consistent with financial considerations.

**Safety Strategy 3.2.** Apply new smoke modeling technology to smoke management and wildfire decisions.

**Safety Strategy 3.3.** Maintain a continuous improvement program to adapt to emerging technologies.

**Safety Strategy 3.4.** Protect communities from the health effects of smoke from wildfires and prescribed burns by effective partnerships and planning for air quality impacts from wildfire and prescribed fire and;

**Safety Strategy 3.5.** Review the DNR's Smoke Management Plan, to ensure consistency with the federal Environmental Protection Agency's Interim Air Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fire.

**SAFETY OBJECTIVE 4. MITIGATE FIREFIGHTER HEALTH HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH SMOKE AND OTHER HAZARDS.**

**Safety Strategy 4.1.** Minimize exposure to all fire-associated hazards, consistent with achieving DNR's protection mission and;

**Safety Strategy 4.2.** Develop and implement a coordinated education program with our partners.

**SAFETY OBJECTIVE 5. CREATE SAFE FIREFIGHTING OPTIONS BY AFFECTING DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AND LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.**

**Safety Strategy 5.1.** Develop and implement educational programs for landowners, land managers and permitting authorities and;

**Safety Strategy 5.2.** Promote landowner and governmental actions that are consistent with forest health objectives.

**SAFETY OBJECTIVE 6. PROMOTE STANDARDIZATION FOR TRAINING, QUALIFICATION, EQUIPMENT AND COMMUNICATION AMONG ALL PARTNERS.**

**Safety Strategy 6.1.** Develop and implement standardized information exchange between all partners and;

**Safety Strategy 6.2.** Standardize safety reports and uniformly distribute safety data.

## **Forest Health Goal: Create landowner capability and public desire to improve or maintain forest health, to allow efficient and effective wildfire protection.**

### **Strategic and tactical significance of the Goal and its supportive Objectives and Strategies**

Among scientists and forestland managers, there is an increasing understanding of the strong connection between forest health conditions and wildfire risks. This connection is much less understood by the general public. The major outcome of the Forest Health Goal is to extend the understanding to the public and landowners with the expectation that shared forest health responsibilities lead to action.

Central to the Goal is education and communication. Working with the diverse interest groups, ranging from landowners, the public and land use planners to the educational community, a number of key messages will be developed. They include but are not limited to the following:

- Forests change over time and are strongly affected by human actions;
- Forest health risk classes directly relate to public and firefighter safety;
- Prescribed fire can improve forest health and increase operational firefighting effectiveness, thereby reducing costs;
- Incentives can be used to achieve both landowner and wildland fire protection objectives; and
- Societal and ecological values can be better protected if forest health is improved.

### **Supporting Objectives and Strategies**

**FOREST HEALTH OBJECTIVE 1. ESTABLISH SHARED FOREST HEALTH RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND LANDOWNERS.**

**Forest Health Strategy 1.1.** Test social acceptance and relevance of proposed forest health strategies.

**Forest Health Strategy 1.2.** Develop a forest health “owners” manual for landowners as part of a campaign to educate landowners on forest health opportunities and responsibilities.

**Forest Health Strategy 1.3.** Develop an educational campaign that is targeted to the public and focus on its forest health opportunities and responsibilities.

**Forest Health Strategy 1.4.** Create outreach materials that characterize the role that fire plays in forest health.

**Forest Health Strategy 1.5.** Work with educational communities to build forest health curricula that meet essential learning requirements.

**Forest Health Strategy 1.6.** Evaluate natural resource educational programs for opportunities to integrate forest health principles and;

**Forest Health Strategy 1.7.** Evaluate large fires to identify key messages and lessons regarding land use, forest health, public safety and impacts on the sense of place.

**FOREST HEALTH OBJECTIVE 2. INCREASE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING THAT FORESTS CHANGE OVER TIME AND ARE INFLUENCED BY HUMAN ACTION/NON-ACTION.**

**Forest Health Strategy 2.1.** Expand and implement a forest health communication strategy.

**Forest Health Strategy 2.2.** Sponsor a landscape-level demonstration project across several classes of ownerships to identify both problems and solutions.

**Forest Health Strategy 2.3.** Sponsor a community-based firesafe demonstration project in the wildland urban interface incorporating forest health principles.

**Forest Health Strategy 2.4.** Create an integrated GIS forest land data layer, to assess risk and current forest conditions.

**Forest Health Strategy 2.5.** Develop simplified forest health evaluation tools for landowners, that integrate risk class concepts.

**Forest Health Strategy 2.6.** Identify fire behavior relationships that are associated with different forest health risk classes.

**Forest Health Strategy 2.7.** Recognize family and other forests as “healthy forests,” based on collaboratively developed criteria and;

**Forest Health Strategy 2.8.** Coordinate regulatory requirements with forest health strategies, to achieve key mutual objectives.

**FOREST HEALTH OBJECTIVE 3. INTEGRATE FOREST HEALTH PRINCIPLES WITH WILDFIRE PROTECTION.**

**Forest Health Strategy 3.1.** Promote appropriate forest treatments, including prescribed fire, to achieve landscape-level objectives.

**Forest Health Strategy 3.2.** Integrate landowner objectives into pre-suppression and suppression planning, to reduce landscape level risks and to achieve lowest net costs and;

**Forest Health Strategy 3.3.** Identify the cost: benefit relationships and other links between and among forest health, fire prevention and suppression.

**FOREST HEALTH OBJECTIVE 4. DEVELOP OPPORTUNITIES AND INCENTIVES TO MOVE TOWARD APPROPRIATE TREE SPACING AND FUEL ACCUMULATION LEVELS.**

**Forest Health Strategy 4.1.** Strengthen extreme fire hazard laws, to achieve reduced fuel loading and;

**Forest Health Strategy 4.2.** Address regulatory and civil liabilities associated with conducting prescribed fire.

**FOR HEALTH OBJECTIVE 5. TAKE ACTIONS THAT REDUCE EXTREME FIRE BEHAVIOR.**

**Forest Health Strategy 5.1.** Assess fire potential, risks and resource demands to appropriately pre-position fire suppression resources.

**Forest Health Strategy 5.2.** Promote strategic pre-suppression forest treatments and fuel breaks and;

**Forest Health Strategy 5.3.** Develop land management prescriptions that identify cause and effect relationships between forest health risk and stand-level actions.

**FOREST HEALTH OBJECTIVE 6. PROTECT SOCIETAL AND ECOLOGICAL VALUES BY INCREASING SURVIVABILITY OF FOREST LANDSCAPES FROM FIRE, INSECTS AND DISEASE.**

**Forest Health Strategy 6.1.** Confirm that DNR's forest health policies and procedures reduce economic and environmental risks and improve forest health.

**Forest Health Strategy 6.2.** Promote landowner actions that result in the right number of trees, favoring species that are best adapted to the location.

**Forest Health Strategy 6.3.** Evaluate the financial, social and regulatory barriers that limit the use of prescribed fire.

**Forest Health Strategy 6.4.** Advocate for habitat conservation plans and similar plans address forest health and;

**Forest Health Strategy 6.5.** Coordinate risk and hazard reduction activities at the landscape level, across all ownerships.



## **Responsibility and Authority Goal: Landowners, communities, governmental entities and the public acknowledge and fulfill their wildfire protection responsibilities.**

### **Strategic and tactical significance of the Goal and its supporting Objectives and Strategies**

Current Washington State law does not require universal<sup>6</sup> fire protection, creating tension both for property owners and those who provide fire protection services. By providing universal fire protection, resources will be protected in a more consistent and cost-effective manner. Assigning the best wildland fire protection provider (through collaboration and more cooperation) should make it easier to protect the increasing number of structures located in the wildlands.

Model land use ordinances would be collaboratively developed; the ordinances would acknowledge that healthy forests, forest protection and individual and community responsibilities play significant roles in building more firesafe landscapes. Incentives would be created and assistance would be provided to landowners and communities to participate in forest protection activities such as fuel reduction.

Because federal forests make up about half of Washington's forests, it is necessary to actively participate in federal land use, planning processes and fuel reduction efforts to minimize the adverse impacts from adjacent federal wildfires.

## **Supporting Objectives and Strategies**

**RESPONSIBILITIES OBJECTIVE 1.** CLARIFY JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES, TO ADDRESS GAPS AND ELIMINATE REDUNDANCY (INCLUDING ALL-RISK RESPONSES).

**Responsibilities Strategy 1.1.** Develop an approach that will provide wildfire protection to all land in Washington.

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<sup>6</sup>Universal fire protection means that all land and all improvements will have fire protection services. These services would be required under legal authorities that do not exist today. The legislature would be asked to provide explicit direction on who would provide fire protection services and a funding mechanism.

**Responsibilities Strategy 1.2.** Develop an approach to address the tension associated with protecting structures versus protecting resources.

**Responsibilities Strategy 1.3.** Conduct a comprehensive statewide collaborative assessment to identify the best wildland fire protection provider for each geographical area.

**Responsibilities Strategy 1.4.** Collaborate with fire protection districts and municipal fire departments to formalize appropriate wildland fire protection responsibilities.

**Responsibilities Strategy 1.5.** Support & collaborate with fire protection districts and municipal fire departments that are interested in assuming wildland fire protection responsibilities but currently lack some of the resources to formally assume the responsibilities.

**Responsibilities Strategy 1.6.** Support fire service consolidation where appropriate.

**Responsibilities Strategy 1.7.** Consolidate dispatch responsibilities in areas of mixed jurisdictions, where appropriate.

**Responsibilities Strategy 1.8.** Help develop and implement a comprehensive all-risk incident response system in Washington and;

**Responsibilities Strategy 1.9.** Coordinate prescribed burning with other authorized burning.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OBJECTIVE 2. DELIVER A COMPREHENSIVE AND COORDINATED FOREST PROTECTION PROGRAM.**

**Responsibilities Strategy 2.1.** Evaluate state-wide forest protection activities and programs to identify gaps or redundancies.

**Responsibilities Strategy 2.2.** Educate the public, communities and local governments about their wildfire protection responsibilities and;

**Responsibilities Strategy 2.3.** Achieve uniform and accurate reporting of all wildland fires by all jurisdictions.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OBJECTIVE 3.** AFFECT LOCAL LAND USE DECISIONS SO THAT THE RESULT IS HEALTHY FORESTS AND FIRESAFE COMMUNITIES.

**Responsibilities Strategy 3.1.** Develop model wildfire protection ordinances.

**Responsibilities Strategy 3.2.** Advocate land use planning that leads to healthy forests, wildfire protection and firesafe communities and;

**Responsibilities Strategy 3.3.** Comment on proposals that impact wildfire protection during State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OBJECTIVE 4.** MINIMIZE POTENTIAL NEGATIVE IMPACTS THAT INDIVIDUAL LANDOWNER ACTIONS HAVE ON ADJOINING PROPERTIES.

**Responsibilities Strategy 4.1.** Develop incentives for landowners to actively participate in wildfire protection activities and;

**Responsibilities Strategy 4.2.** Provide state-funded wildfire protection assistance to landowners.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OBJECTIVE 5.** MINIMIZE ADVERSE IMPACTS TO STATE- PROTECTED PROPERTIES FROM WILDFIRES ON ADJACENT FEDERAL LANDS.

**Responsibilities Strategy 5.1.** Actively participate in federal land use, planning processes and fuel reduction to effect positive changes.

**Responsibilities Strategy 5.2.** Complete Community Wildfire Protection Plans for communities at risk by June 30, 2008.

**Responsibilities Strategy 5.3.** Develop local operating plans with partnering agencies to include pre-suppression agreements, reciprocal agreements and contingency plans and;

**Responsibilities Strategy 5.4.** Coordinate and prioritize fuel reduction projects on lands protected by the DNR.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OBJECTIVE 6. SUPPORT FUNDING FOR FIRE DISTRICT IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES.**

**Responsibilities Strategy 6.1.** Support funding for wildfire-related training, equipment acquisition and maintenance;

**Responsibilities Strategy 6.2.** Promote and fund existing authorities to assist fire department programs and;

**Responsibilities Strategy 6.3.** Coordinate funding requests for comprehensive wildland fire protection.

**Partnership Goal: Enhance the state's wildland fire protection efficiency and effectiveness through collaborative partnerships (both traditional and new).**

**Strategic and tactical significance of the Goal its supporting Objectives and Strategies**

Only partnerships can provide the type and levels of wildfire protection needed in Washington. Analyzing the cost effectiveness of various entities, both governmental and private sector, will create solutions that save money and provide better services.

All larger fires are fought using the Incident Command System Management Teams and resources that are composed of inter-agency and (usually) contractor resources. Identifying the appropriate number and composition of the Teams is necessary to restore equitable participation among all the partners, both for wildfire and all-risk incidents such as Hurricane Katrina.

Washington's increasing population will create the need for more formal fire protection agreements between fire districts and DNR. In such locations, DNR's role will shift from being a primary initial attack agency to providing technical and other types of assistance.

Helping people understand the role of fire in Washington's forests and its connection to forest health is a major educational need. This and other needs can best be met using traditional and new partners to both educate and improve the marketing of forest-related products and value-added industries.

Wildfire risks and forest health risks should be acknowledged. These factors should become a consideration in setting insurance rates. The same factors should be legally disclosed prior to closing any realty transaction on or adjacent to forestland. Such disclosures would allow landowners to understand possible corrective actions or to knowingly accept known risks.

## Supporting Objectives and Strategies

### **PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVE 1. DELIVER EFFECTIVE COST-EFFICIENT WILDFIRE PROTECTION THROUGH THE USE OF PARTNERSHIPS.**

**Partnership Strategy 1.1.** Analyze the cost efficiency of various resources, including private sector, state, tribal, local, and federal sources.

**Partnership Strategy 1.2.** Evaluate the appropriate use of contractors for initial attack, extended attack, large fires, and fire management.

**Partnership Strategy 1.3.** Use partnerships to achieve successful initial attack.

**Partnership Strategy 1.4.** Evaluate current and potential partnerships to avoid duplication.

**Partnership Strategy 1.5.** Develop coordinated dispatch functions with a single contact point for contract resources.

**Partnership Strategy 1.6.** Evaluate cost effectiveness, levels of risk and trade-offs associated with interagency participation in the DNR's wildfire protection and all-risk responsibilities.

**Partnership Strategy 1.7.** Identify the appropriate number and composition of Incident Management Teams and;

**Partnership Strategy 1.8.** Enter into formal fire protection agreements with entities with mutual interests.

**PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVE 2.** DEVELOP EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE THE PUBLIC'S UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE OF FIRE'S APPROPRIATE AND NECESSARY ROLE IN WASHINGTON'S FORESTS.

**Partnership Strategy 2.1.** Develop a cooperative public relations campaign, building on the principles of "Keep Washington Green."

**Partnership Strategy 2.2.** Identify and explore non-traditional partnership opportunities with groups such as The Nature Conservancy, Washington State University and the Rural Technology Initiative (U of W) and;

**Partnership Strategy 2.3.** Inform the legislature and local leaders.

**PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVE 3.** PROMOTE FOREST HEALTH AND PROTECT COMMUNITIES FROM WILDFIRE BY PARTNERSHIPS THAT RECOGNIZE ACTIONS OF INDIVIDUALS, GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS.

**Partnership Strategy 3.1.** Develop a better connection between forest/rural landscapes and the increasingly urbanized population.

**Partnership Strategy 3.2.** Improve the marketing of forest-related products and value-added local industries.

**Partnership Strategy 3.3.** Promote the state’s Forest Stewardship Program as a solution to communication, education and landowner assistance needs and;

**Partnership Strategy 3.4.** Create key messages about wildfire protection.

**PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVE 4. DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH COOPERATIVE ACTIONS.**

**Partnership Strategy 4.1.** Encourage the consideration of forest health risks and fire risks in setting insurance rates and;

**Partnership Strategy 4.2.** Explore forest health and fire risk disclosure processes to be used prior to closing any realty transaction that is on or adjacent to forest land.

**PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVE 5 EVALUATE, RECOGNIZE, AND CELEBRATE PARTNERSHIPS BY:**

**Partnership Strategy 5.1.** Develop a process to evaluate whether DNR’s partnerships are furthering mutual objectives and;

**Partnership Strategy 5.2.** Develop a formal process to recognize effective partnerships.

**Wildland Protection Goal: Protect Washington’s forests to maintain economic, ecological and social values such as viable forest industries, watersheds, community stability, wildlife habitat and a sense of place.**

**Strategic and tactical significance of the Goal and its supporting Objectives and Strategies**

Humans cause about 85 percent of all fires on DNR-protected forest lands. Prevention efforts should be focused on human-caused fires most likely to be the largest and most costly to contain.

Implementing the 2004 Forest Health Strategy Plan will reduce the number and severity of wildfires. While the reduction will not be immediate, it is possible to target high-fire-risk areas first, supported by a multi-agency regulatory program for fire protection. The Wildland Fire Protection Strategic Plan and this Goal seeks to protect wildlands by preventing fires through forest health principles, Firewise-communities and community wildfire plans.

Steps to minimize net costs include:

- Deploying the optimum mix of wildfire prevention and preparedness resources;
- Allocating resources by using analytical and predictive models; and
- Measuring the effectiveness of wildland fire protection activities.

To ensure the appropriate mix of people, equipment and agreements are in place at the right time, the DNR will:

- Analyze the costs and effectiveness of all resources, whether governmental or private, to create the “best value;” and
- Assess the best means for providing wildland fire protection for each geographic area.

For safety and fiscal reasons, there must be an adequate number of well-trained people available on a sustained basis. This can be achieved through careful successional planning; reduction of institutional barriers that impede participation in the fire programs across all partnerships; and equitable participation by local, state, and federal agencies.

Keeping fires small requires effective and aggressive initial attack. This requires the right fire fighting resources available where and when needed, and an effective means for dispatching them. Effective use of technology, such as an integrated geographic information system (GIS) data layer, can improve dispatch and planning. This will mean smaller fires with reduced suppression costs and less resource damage.



## Supporting Objectives and Strategies

**PROTECTION OBJECTIVE 1.** CONTROL NINETY-FIVE PERCENT OF ALL WILDFIRES ON DNR-PROTECTED WILDLANDS AT LESS THAN TEN ACRES.

**Protection Strategy 1.1.** Focus fire prevention emphasis in places and times where human-caused fires have the likely potential to be largest and most damaging.

**Protection Strategy 1.2.** Ensure effective fire detection and fire danger evaluation by utilizing appropriate technology and;

**Protection Strategy 1.3.** Ensure initial attack resources are effectively assigned and pre-positioned on an anticipated-need basis.

**PROTECTION OBJECTIVE 2.** REDUCE WILDFIRE OCCURRENCE AND SEVERITY.

**Protection Strategy 2.1.** Implement the 2004 Forest Health Strategy Plan.

**Protection Strategy 2.2.** Target high fire risk areas for forest health activities.

**Protection Strategy 2.3.** Develop a multi-agency regulatory program for fire protection.

**Protection Strategy 2.4.** Develop youth and adult fire prevention education programs and;

**Protection Strategy 2.5.** Promote personal responsibility for preventing fires through the use of forest health principles, Firewise-communities and community wildfire plans.

**PROTECTION OBJECTIVE 3.** EFFECTIVELY ALLOCATE DNR RESOURCES FOR WILDFIRE PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS AND SUPPRESSION.

**Protection Strategy 3.1.** Use the optimum mix of wildfire prevention and preparedness efforts to minimize net costs.

**Protection Strategy 3.2.** Adopt appropriate wildland fire protection decision making tools for allocating resources and;

**Protection Strategy 3.3.** Measure the effectiveness of wildland fire protection activities.

**PROTECTION OBJECTIVE 4.** ENSURE AN APPROPRIATE MIX OF PEOPLE, EQUIPMENT AND AGREEMENTS ARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME.

**Protection Strategy 4.1.** Analyze the effectiveness and cost efficiency of various resources, including contractors, tribal, federal, local and state sources.

**Protection Strategy 4.2.** Create a comprehensive statewide assessment to identify the best solution for wildland fire protection for each geographic area.

**Protection Strategy 4.3.** Ensure availability of appropriate providers and resources.

**Protection Strategy 4.4.** Maintain effective relationships with contractor associations, contractors, PNWCG, Northwest Compact, State Fire Defense Committee, and other formal interagency groups.

**Protection Strategy 4.5.** Execute appropriate agreements to complement and supplement DNR's wildland fire protection and;

**Protection Strategy 4.6.** Implement a system for regular re-assessment and reallocation of resources.

**PROTECTION OBJECTIVE 5.** ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE NUMBERS OF WELL-TRAINED PEOPLE ARE AVAILABLE ON A SUSTAINED BASIS.

**Protection Strategy 5.1.** Implement successional planning within the DNR that recognizes the appropriate use of contractors and other agencies;

**Protection Strategy 5.2.** Acknowledge that each DNR employee has the responsibility to directly or indirectly support the fire program and ensure they understand this responsibility and their role in the fire program and;

**Protection Strategy 5.3.** Strive to achieve equitable participation in the fire program by local, state and federal agencies.

**PROTECTION OBJECTIVE 6. ACHIEVE OPTIMAL INITIAL ATTACK, THROUGH COORDINATED ACTIONS BY:**

**Protection Strategy 6.1.** Improve planning and suppression actions through using an integrated GIS forest land data layer.

**Protection Strategy 6.2.** Improve dispatch through the effective use of technology and;

**Protection Strategy 6.3.** Use a continuous improvement program to incorporate emerging technologies.

**Financial Goal: Wildfire protection is achieved at the lowest net cost to taxpayers and landowners.**

**Strategic and tactical significance of the Goal and its supportive Objectives and Strategies**

The Financial Goal calls for full consideration of net costs, not simply suppression costs. The Forest Health Strategy Work Group<sup>7</sup> identified how investments in forest health and fuel reductions save taxpayers money while protecting landowner property and protecting public resources. Some of the first steps include the following:

- Developing standard methodology to quantify wildfire resource damage;
- Incorporating non-market cost and avoided cost concepts in the development of forest health and wildfire prevention, preparedness and suppression activities;

<sup>7</sup> See Appendices C and D for details.

- Minimizing large fires by having an effective forest health program, a prevention program and aggressive initial attack; and
- Developing an analytical model to assess forest protection and staffing needs.

Keeping fires small saves millions of dollars. When there are wild-fires, cost containment is a major consideration. All DNR fires have built-in cost containment practices. All DNR fires are investigated, seeking cost recovery for all negligent fires.

A reduction in fuel loading is a necessary step to long-term forest health. There is a direct correlation between fuel loading and a series of critical factors such as suppression costs, resource damage and public and firefighter safety. Identifying and developing economically viable utilization of forest materials is central to successfully reducing dangerously high fuel loading.

## **Supporting Objectives and Strategies**

### **FINANCIAL OBJECTIVE 1. INCORPORATE COST CONTAINMENT IN DECISION MAKING ON LARGE FIRES.**

**Financial Strategy 1.1.** Implement cost containment strategies through the Agency Administrator's Delegation of Authority and wildfire protection actions.

**Financial Strategy 1.2.** Use planning tools that analyze the fiscal impacts of alternatives and;

**Financial Strategy 1.3.** Identify high cost items and their appropriate use.

### **FINANCIAL OBJECTIVE 2. INVESTIGATE ALL FIRES AND PURSUE COST RECOVERY FOR ALL NEGLIGENT FIRES.**

**Financial Strategy 2.1.** Implement fire suppression cost recovery strategies and;

**Financial Strategy 2.2.** Ensure the availability of an adequate number of well-trained fire investigators and cost recovery specialists.

### **FINANCIAL OBJECTIVE 3. REDUCE SUPPRESSION COSTS AND RESOURCE LOSS BY MAKING WISE SPENDING DECISIONS.**

**Financial Strategy 3.1.** Minimize large fires by implementing an effective forest health program, an effective prevention program and aggressive initial attack.

**Financial Strategy 3.2.** Respond to changing conditions by adjusting the number and type of resources.

**Financial Strategy 3.3.** Eliminate duplication of wildfire protection services.

**Financial Strategy 3.4.** Develop suppression procurement authorities that allow more cost effective decisions (e.g., purchase versus renting) and;

**Financial Strategy 3.5.** Use the most cost efficient and effective resources.

**FINANCIAL OBJECTIVE 4.** OPTIMIZE ALLOCATION OF AVAILABLE FUNDING BY COORDINATING AMONG AGENCIES, LANDOWNERS AND COMMUNITIES.

**Financial Strategy 4.1.** Seek appropriate new funding sources.

**Financial Strategy 4.2.** Develop strategies to eliminate overlap or duplication and;

**Financial Strategy 4.3.** Enhance the use of local operating plans.

**FINANCIAL OBJECTIVE 5.** APPLY LOWEST NET COST APPROACHES THAT ACHIEVE ALL POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR BOTH BUDGET DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS.

**Financial Strategy 5.1.** Develop and implement an analytical model for assessing wildfire protection and staffing needs and;

**Financial Strategy 5.2.** Quantify avoided costs and their impact on management actions and wildland fire protection.

**FINANCIAL OBJECTIVE 6. ENSURE STABLE AND EQUITABLE FUNDING FOR FOREST HEALTH AND WILDFIRE PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS AND SUPPRESSION.**

**Financial Strategy 6.1.** Improve wildland fire protection by better analyzing resource damage, fire causes, land conditions, fire costs and resources at risk.

**Financial Strategy 6.2.** Include non-market costs in the development of forest health and wildfire prevention, preparedness and suppression activities and;

**Financial Strategy 6.3.** Recommend a funding system and budgets for wildland fire protection that reflects risks, current land use patterns and resource conditions.

**FINANCIAL OBJECTIVE 7. COLLABORATE WITH APPROPRIATE ENTITIES TO REDUCE FUEL LOADING THROUGH ECONOMICALLY VIABLE UTILIZATION OF FOREST MATERIALS.**

**Financial Strategy 7.1.** Promote the development of markets for small diameter wood.

**Financial Strategy 7.2.** Identify grants to help finance forest biomass and small-wood conversion facilities.

**Financial Strategy 7.3.** Identify financial incentives to reduce hazardous fuel loading and;

**Financial Strategy 7.4.** Promote forest biomass use by providing information and technical assistance to entities with responsibility for developing alternative fuel and energy programs.



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# Implementation Plan and Continuous Improvement

Strategic plans frequently fail due to a lack of an implementation plan and support from the executive leaders. Without a clear structure with appropriate authorities, responsibilities and a timeline for key events, many strategic plans become “shelf art” that produces costly documents that achieve little.

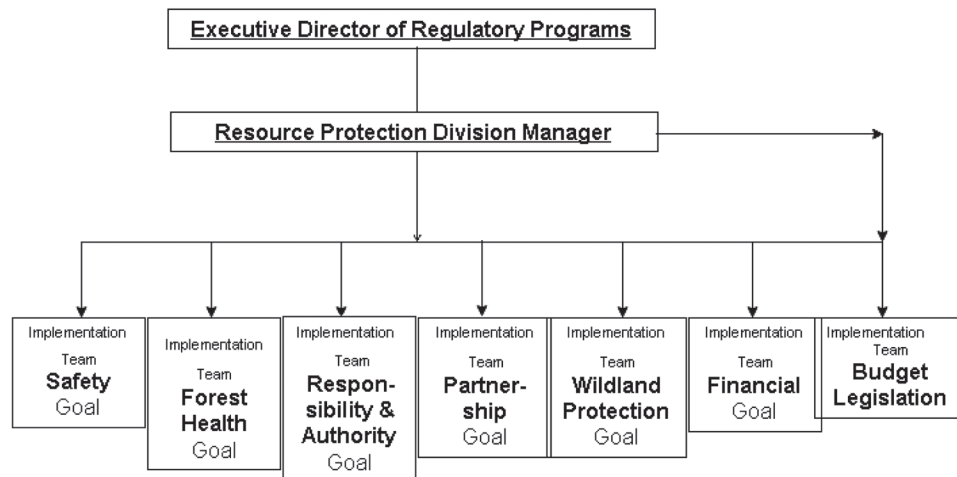
Equally important are monitoring and feedback loops that periodically evaluate progress towards the preferred future. Much of the plan is based on where we sense Washington State will be in 2020. This dependency requires monitoring actual versus forecasted trends. Tactical and strategic direction will need to change as both the internal and external environment change. This adaptive component is central to effective and efficient wildland fire protection, ensuring appropriate use of both budget and policy.

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## Proposed time lines and accountabilities

Figure 2 identifies the overall implementation structure. Six Implementation Teams will focus on the Strategic Plan Goals (one goal per team). An additional Team will work on associated budget and legislative issues. To ensure success, the Implementation Teams will report directly to the Resource Protection Division Manager with active involvement of the Executive Director of Regulatory Programs. The Director of Regulatory Programs will formally approve staff assignments to and the work plans for each Implementation Team.

The six teams working on implementing Strategic Plan Goals will be co-chaired by various members of the DNR’s Internal Working Group that did the detailed work on the Strategic Plan. To improve continuity and connection between policy and operations, one co-chair will be from the Resource Protection Division while

**Figure 2: Strategic Plan Implementation Structure**

the other co-chair will be one of the Resource Protection & Services Assistant Region Managers or the Type 2 Incident Commander. Each Implementation Team will develop a detailed work plan that is based on the Objectives and Strategies for the specific Goal.

The Budget and Legislation Implementation Team will have a single chair, the Resource Protection Division Manager. Also on this team will be a Region Manager and the DNR's Budget Director or designee. Their work will focus on analyses of current budgets and law and the necessary changes to implement the Strategic Plan.

Each Implementation Team will develop a communication plan to appropriately involve DNR's wildland fire protection partners. DNR will also ask External Advisory Committee members if they wish to participate in the more detailed Implementation Teams.

The Implementation Team Co-chairs will select additional DNR employees to complete the teams. Each team's members will be accountable to their co-chairs for timely participation in the ongoing Team assignments. The Executive Director of Regulatory Programs will approve the appointments to the various Implementation Teams. Implementation sub-teams will be formed as necessary. Any workload conflicts will be resolved by the Executive Director of Regulatory Programs.



Table 1 provides a high-level summary of the pending work before each Implementation Team. Outside of the Budget and Legislation Implementation Team, there are

- **6 Goals**, with a combined total of
- **34 Objectives**, with a combined total of
- **134 Strategies**.

As the Teams analyze the 134 Strategies, there usually will be several tasks, specific implementing actions, for each of the Strategies. The complexity and magnitude of the various interactions for the literally hundreds of actions reinforce the need for a highly structured approach to implementation, which will span several years, many internal programs and will draw the attention of a large number of interest groups and the Legislature. Project management during the initial phases will be particularly critical.

Table 1: Summary of Implementation Team Work Plan Responsibilities

Implementation Team	Safety	Forest Health	Responsibility & Authority	Partnership	Wildland Protection	Financial	Budget & Legislation
Objectives	6	6	6	5	6	7	Scope of Work to be Developed
Strategies	23	28	23	15	23	22	

## Project Management and Performance Measurement

The Financial Goal calls for achieving forest protection at the lowest net cost to taxpayers and landowners. To be effective and efficient in achieving this and all the other Goals requires rigorous management of several hundred concurrent tasks.

Early work on the specific tasks and actions will enable DNR to identify performance measures, an important part of project management. While it may not be possible or cost-effective to create performance measures for each of the 168 Objectives and Strategies, let alone the hundreds of additional tasks underneath these, DNR will specify performance measures for the major activities.

To support continuous monitoring and improvement, each of the seven Implementation Teams will use Table 2 or its functional equivalent. The content of Table 2 is a sample, illustrating how the table format can be used. Because implementation items below

the Strategy level (such as specific tasks) have not yet been developed, they are only identified here with “placeholder” numbers. The sample Table 2 was developed for the Financial Goal and one of its Objectives. In actual use, a separate table could be prepared for each objective of each goal.

**Table 2: Sample Project Management and Performance Measurement Tracking, by Goal and by Objective**  
**Strategic Plan Financial Goal: Forest protection is achieved at the lowest net cost to taxpayers and landowners by**

<i>Financial Objective 6: Ensuring stable and equitable funding for forest health and wildfire prevention, preparedness and suppression by</i>								
Strategy	Tasks	Priority	New RCW or WAC	Staffing Impact	Funding Implications	Funding Sources	Implementation Challenges	Performance Measures
Strategy 6.1. Improving resource protection budgets by better analyzing resource damage, fire causes, land conditions, fire costs, resources at risk								
	6.1.1: To be developed							
	6.1.2: and others to be developed							
Strategy 6.2. Incorporating non-market cost concepts in the development of forest health and wildfire prevention, preparedness and suppression activities								
<b>Table Note: A similar approach would be used for all Goals, all Objectives and all Tasks. The finalized tracking form will include milestone dates to establish performance targets and increase accountability.</b>								

Generally, most performance measures will be at the goal and objective levels. Implementation details will be monitored through the use of project milestones.

## Annual Reporting

Annually, in December, DNR will issue a “Resource Protection Program Summary” that will outline the major implementation successes or problems that were encountered. It will report on continuous improvement actions, performance measurement and overall progress towards achieving the Preferred Future.

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## **Monitoring the bigger picture - critical dependencies and assumptions**

Many factors shape the understanding and preference for the future of DNR's role in wildland fire protection. These factors and the department's Fire Mission and Values statements provide the context for the future. Core assumptions, based upon trends and forces now in play or likely to be in play in the near future in the world and in the state, permit us to envision a future for 2020.

To start the 2020 Wildland Fire Protection Strategic Plan, it was initially necessary to accept that the core forest wildfire protection laws will exist in essentially their current form, including the existing limits on DNR responsibilities relative to protecting improved property. However, it is now clear that a number of changes in state law could increase economic, social, public health and ecological benefits.

There may be other changes in macro-economic forces, societal needs and climate that could, over time, modify the strategic direction found in the 2020 Wildland Fire Protection Strategic Plan and the wildland Fire Protection Report.

DNR understands the need to continuously monitor these issues, making timely changes in a manner that is respectful of the diversity of opinions and interests.

