

ROADMAP FOR WILDFIRE RESILIENCE: SOLUTIONS FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT

The Nature Conservancy and Aspen Institute's policy recommendations to build resilience to wildfire in the United States

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Wildfires are increasing in frequency and intensity in part because of changing climate conditions and decades of fire suppression. Though fire is a natural ecological process in many forest ecosystems, extreme wildfires now pose a growing threat to the nation's natural resources and communities. These trends will continue to worsen absent bold and transformative policy action to change the trajectory of how we manage and prepare for wildfire impacts.

Recent legislation infused historic levels of funding into federal agencies aimed at addressing this urgent need and offers a transformational opportunity to rethink the country's approach to wildfire. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Aspen Institute have spent the last year responding to this opportunity by hosting a series of workshops that sought input from all levels of government, Tribal Nations, the private sector, fire-prone communities, philanthropists, academics and other stakeholders, culminating in a Roadmap for Wildfire Resilience. The Roadmap concentrates on the two pillars of the 2014 National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy—resilient landscapes and fire-adapted communities—that require an investment commensurate with the third pillar—safe and effective wildfire response—to alter the current wildfire trajectory.

This Roadmap weaves together lessons from decades of policy and practice with forward-thinking approaches that incor-



porate new technology and knowledge. The contents are organized into eight themes (see page 2), each of which contain a series of problem statements and associated policy solutions requiring action from Congress, the executive branch or partners. The Roadmap also integrates five cross-cutting themes that are relevant throughout the document.

The Roadmap makes clear that a paradigm shift requires the need for an all-of-society approach in close coordination with state and local governments, Tribal Nations and partners, in

addition to durable and predictable funding at or above current levels. Importantly, recent public opinion research commissioned by TNC underscores the broad, bipartisan support for ambitious action and robust funding for wildfire resilience amongst American voters (see figure above). While some problems and solutions may be addressed individually and in the shorter-term, most are intimately connected and require long-term, strategic and cross-sector coordination.

The Nature Conservancy and Aspen Institute invite decision makers, advocates and other interested readers to use this Roadmap to advance a more strategic and coordinated approach to wildfire resilience in ways that reflects the concerns of voters and contribute to addressing climate change, promoting ecosystem health, advancing economic recovery and supporting historically underserved and excluded communities.



Wildfire Resilience Policy Roadmap

Themes & Problem Statements

Theme 1: Landscape Scale & Outcome-Driven



- 1A: Cross-boundary efforts
- 1B: Workforce capacity
- 1C: Resource predictability
- 1D: Planning & analysis
- 1E: Performance measures

Theme 5: Partnerships, Finance & Insurance



- 5A: Partnership funding & capacity
- 5B: Modeling avoided costs & impacts
- 5C: Outcome-based investments
- 5D: Risk-reduction incentives & metrics

Theme 2: Controlled Burning



- 2A: Lack of resources
- 2B: Liability & insurance
- 2C: Air-quality impacts

Theme 6: Equity & Access



- 6A: Equitable resource access
- 6B: Matching requirements
- 6C: Benefit-cost analysis
- 6D: Capacity challenges

Theme 3: Resilient Communities & Landscapes



- 3A: Scaling WUI resilience
- 3B: Siloed investments
- 3C: Smoke impacts
- 3D: Community planning

Theme 7: Recover for Resilience



- 7A: Seeds & nurseries
- 7B: Funding reforestation
- 7C: Post-fire recovery

Theme 4: Forest Products



- 4A: Federal coordination
- 4B: Contracting mechanisms
- 4C: Utilization challenges

Theme 8: Technology & Innovation



- 8A: Research & coordination
- 8B: Data interoperability

Cross-Cutting Issues



- Workforce capacity
- Tribal Nation partnerships & ecological knowledge
- Community capacity & collaboration
- Natural climate solutions
- Communications

