



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240

FEDERAL INTERAGENCY SENIOR STEERING COMMITTEE

For

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED RANGELAND FIRE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

CHARTER

I. PURPOSE

The Federal Interagency Senior Steering Committee (the Committee) for Implementation of the *Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy* (the Strategy) is established to ensure efficient and coordinated implementation of actions associated with Secretarial Order 3336, *Rangeland Fire Prevention, Management, and Restoration* (the Order). The Order sets forth enhanced policies and strategies for preventing and suppressing rangeland fire and for restoring sagebrush landscapes impacted by fire across the West. The Order was signed by the Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell, on January 5, 2015. The Order established the Rangeland Fire Task Force (Task Force) and is chaired by the Deputy Secretary of the Interior. Members of the Task Force include: Assistant Secretary, Policy, Management and Budget; Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management; Assistant Secretary, Fish and Wildlife and Parks; Assistant Secretary, Water and Science; and the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs.

II. AUTHORITIES

In order to ensure implementation of the actions identified in Appendix A of “*An Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy – Final Report to the Secretary of the Interior, May 2015*,” the Federal Interagency Senior Steering Committee is formed. This Committee is established pursuant to the September 11, 2015, Memorandum, *Governance Structure to Implement the Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy*, signed by the Deputy Secretary of the Interior, Michael Connor (Connor Memo).

Section 3 of the Order identifies additional authorities under which the Order itself was issued.

III. BACKGROUND

The Department of the Interior (DOI) manages millions of acres of public land across the United States. These lands – and the many resources and services they provide – are for the benefit of current and future generations. The protection and recovery of imperiled species of plants and animals and the ecosystems upon which they depend is one of DOI’s management objectives across these lands.

The sagebrush-steppe biome covers about 120 million acres and extends across 11 western states. More than 60 percent of the biome is located on public land. The Strategy is intended to be applied range-wide where there is benefit to sagebrush-steppe. However, the primary focus of the Strategy is the Great Basin region. In the Great Basin region – including portions of Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, and California – a significant portion of the landscape is comprised of the sagebrush-steppe biome. This biome is one of the most imperiled in the United States. The accelerated invasion of non-native annual grasses—in particular cheatgrass and medusahead rye—and the spread of pinyon-juniper

into the sagebrush-steppe biome, coupled with the effects of intensified drought and climate change are creating conditions that are leading to larger, more intense rangeland fires across the Great Basin.

The increasing frequency and intensity of rangeland fires and conversion of sagebrush-steppe biome to invasive annual grasses pose a major threat to ranchers, local communities, and others who live and work on the iconic sagebrush-steppe landscape and depend on these lands and resources to sustain their livelihoods and quality of life. This unique American landscape supports energy development, ranching, and outdoor recreation such as hunting, hiking, and camping. In addition, more intense rangeland fires pose an increased threat to the more than 350 species of birds, plants, and animals, including the greater sage-grouse that rely on this critically important ecosystem.

The Strategy is intended to improve the efficiency and efficacy of actions to address rangeland fire, to better prevent and suppress rangeland fire, and to improve efforts to restore fire-impacted landscapes. These activities involve targeted investments in specific portions of the Great Basin region, consistent with efforts of states, tribal, and other lands, and in keeping with the trust responsibilities to Indian tribes and other statutory obligations.

Essential to the success of the Strategy is improving efforts to work on a landscape level and better employing science and technology to target areas of high priority for preventing, suppressing, and restoring fire-impacted landscapes using a risk-based approach. Through application of “All Hands, All Lands” management, increased collaboration among Federal, state, tribal, and local officials, natural resource managers, and the fire community can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall rangeland fire management effort. A commitment to monitoring changes in resource conditions to evaluate the effectiveness of different management strategies will improve learning and, through adaptive management, increase the successful implementation of the Strategy.

The Order emphasizes that rangeland fire management is a critical priority for “protecting, conserving, and restoring the health of the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem and, in particular, greater sage-grouse habitat, while maintaining safe and efficient operations.” While the actions in the Strategy primarily focus on the needs of the Great Basin, the approaches developed (or lessons learned) will be applied range-wide where there is benefit to the sagebrush-steppe biome and the habitat of the greater sage-grouse.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

As identified in the Connor Memo, the Senior Steering Committee is comprised at a minimum of key officials from:

- Policy Management and Budget (ASPMB);
- Lands and Minerals Management (ASLM);
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS);
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); and
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Additional members of the Senior Steering Committee not specifically identified in the Connor Memo include:

- Representation from the Office of the Secretary (OS);
- Representation from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA);
- Representation from the National Park Service (NPS); and

- Representation from the Office of Wildland Fire (OWF).

The position of Strategy Implementation Manager was also identified in the Connor Memo. The Implementation Manager supports both the Task Force and the Senior Steering Committee in a variety of oversight and tracking, coordination, and facilitation roles as identified in the Connor Memo. The position is also responsible for identifying key issues, ensuring consistency of approach, and resolving differences in support of the Task Force.

V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To the extent appropriate and feasible, the Senior Steering Committee shall:

- a. Operate on a general collaborative principle of “mission over agency” due to the emphasis on a landscape-scale approach to dealing with restoration and rangeland fire issues.
- b. Streamline and align policies and procedures among Federal agencies, where feasible, for the purpose of clarity and consistency in working with state, local, tribal, fire community, and other interested/affected parties concerning protection and management of the sagebrush-steppe biome.
- c. Collaboratively address issues brought forward by the designated Secretarial Order Coordinators, Regional Leadership Coordination Committees, and/or the Strategy Implementation Manager, and when necessary, provide recommendations for resolution to the Rangeland Fire Task Force.
- d. Assure that existing national guidance, such as the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, the National Seed Strategy, the National Pollinator Strategy, and the National Invasive Species Management Plan are considered, incorporated into the Strategy, and coordinated in implementation.
- e. Assure that actions identified in support of the Strategy address the full spectrum of potential actions (i.e., proactive/protection, reactive/suppression, emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation, and ecological restoration) available to DOI bureaus. Such actions will be based upon the best available science.
- f. Provide for a collaborative approach for research, applied science, and field trials/demonstration projects (e.g., targeted grazing for reducing cheat grass and newly available biopesticides are examples) that bring together science and management expertise and are properly designed to ensure that lessons learned can be applied in implementation of the Strategy. Ensure that existing expertise and mechanisms, such as the U.S. Geological Survey, Joint Fire Science Program, and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, are utilized to design research projects and ensure that research results are appropriately communicated to field practitioners (e.g., through effective use of technology and technology transfer).
- g. Assure that approaches to monitoring and evaluation/analytical mechanisms are properly designed and implemented to ensure that research results are understood and properly communicated and prioritized for on-the-ground treatments.
- h. Ensure that monitoring and evaluation results are used to guide adaptive management decisions and evaluate their effectiveness.
- i. Assure mechanisms are in place to provide the public with reliable and up-to-date web-based information on implementation of the Strategy that is easily accessible with modern communication

devices.

- j. Assure that the designated Secretarial Order Coordinators for their respective DOI bureaus update the Strategy Implementation Tracking Sheet on at least a monthly basis.
- k. Identify funding needs and make funding recommendations to the Task Force to assure resources are available to meet the goals and objectives of the Secretarial Order and the Strategy.
- l. Assure staff support is made available to meet the goals of the Order, within the scope of available bureau resources.

VI. COORDINATION

The Committee is established to support the Rangeland Fire Task Force, established by the Order, with implementation, tracking and coordination, and oversight of the Strategy. As provided in the Connor Memo, the Strategy Implementation Manager shall support the Task Force and Committee with meeting preparation and follow-up. As such, routine coordination is expected with both the designated Secretarial Order Coordinators for each bureau within the DOI and the Strategy Implementation Manager.

The designated Secretarial Order Coordinators will serve as the “hands-on” link to bureau employees tasked with implementing the detailed action items identified in the Strategy. Close coordination and timely communication between the Committee, the Secretarial Order Coordinators, and the Strategy Implementation Manager in response to requests for information and/or recommendations for resolution of issues and concerns will be critical to achieving success.

Implementation of many of the action items in the Implementation Plan will require coordination with organizations and agencies outside of the DOI. The Committee, on an as-needed basis, may be asked to facilitate connections with those external entities, consistent with the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The DOI bureaus will consult with impacted tribes on any SO 3336 actions, as needed.

VII. MEETINGS

The Committee will meet at least quarterly, as determined by the Strategy Implementation Manager. Conference calls may be requested by the Implementation Manager on an ad-hoc basis.

VIII. CONDUCT OF ACTIVITIES

The agencies will handle their own activities and use their own resources, including the expenditure of their own funds, in meeting the Roles and Responsibilities identified in this Charter. In implementing this Charter, each agency will be operating under its own laws, regulations, and policies and will be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

IX. MODIFICATION, TERM, and TERMINATION

This Charter may be modified and amended upon written request of any party and the subsequent written concurrence of the other parties.

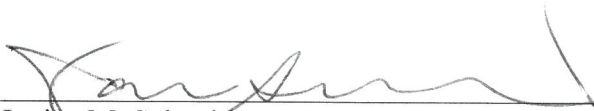
The term of this Charter commences upon the date of the last of the 6 signatures comprising the Rangeland Fire Task Force, as identified below, and shall expire 5 years from the date of the last signature, unless renewed beforehand in writing by all the parties or terminated by the Deputy Secretary.

X. SIGNATURES



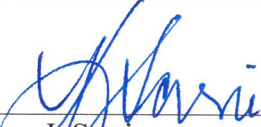
Michael L. Connor
Deputy Secretary

May 10, 2016
Date



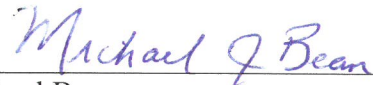
Janice M. Schneider
Assistant Secretary
Land and Minerals Management

5-11-16
Date



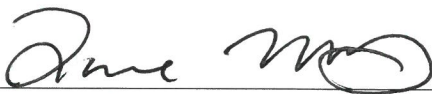
Kristen J. Sarri
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
Policy, Management and Budget

5/11/16
Date



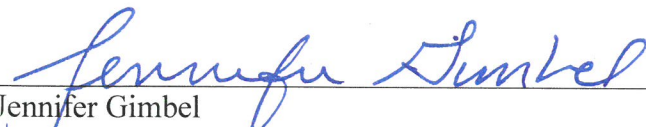
Michael Bean
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
Fish and Wildlife and Parks

5/16/16
Date



Lawrence S. Roberts
Acting Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

5/23/16
Date



Jennifer Gimbel
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
Water and Science

5-12-16
Date