
**WILDLAND FIRE
MITIGATION AND
MANAGEMENT
COMMISSION**

BACKGROUND

The Commission (in brief)



Established by statute (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law)



Focused on recommendations to mitigate and manage wildland fire



50 members from diverse geographies and backgrounds



Complete two reports to Congress

Commission Background



Statute tasked the Commission with making recommendations.

- Some tasks were very specific; others broad
 - “Small and impoverished community”
 - “Mitigate and manage wildfire”
- One-year timeline reflects the urgency of the crisis

Commission Background

50

50 members from diverse geographies and backgrounds:

- 14 federal members
- 36 state, NGO, academic, and other seats
- Backgrounds in wildland fire, emergency management, community preparedness, public health and more
- Members with experience in both policy and practice
- Nonpartisan composition

Commission Background



Completed two reports to Congress:

- Aviation report released in Feb. 2023 and publicly available
- Final report released in Sept. 2023
- Final report includes additional context on discussions
- **Recommendations were by unanimous consensus**

Congressional Direction

Coordination

- Evaluate coordination, response, suppression
- Any changes to improve coordination

Cohesive Strategy

- Review
- Any changes to improve effectiveness

Federal Spending & Programs

- Assess federal spending for fires and post-fire recover
- Provide a description and assessment of Federal grant programs for pre- & post-fire mitigation & recovery
- Any changes to improve funding program effectiveness
- Improve mitigation effectiveness
- Assess "small impoverished community" definition

Implementation

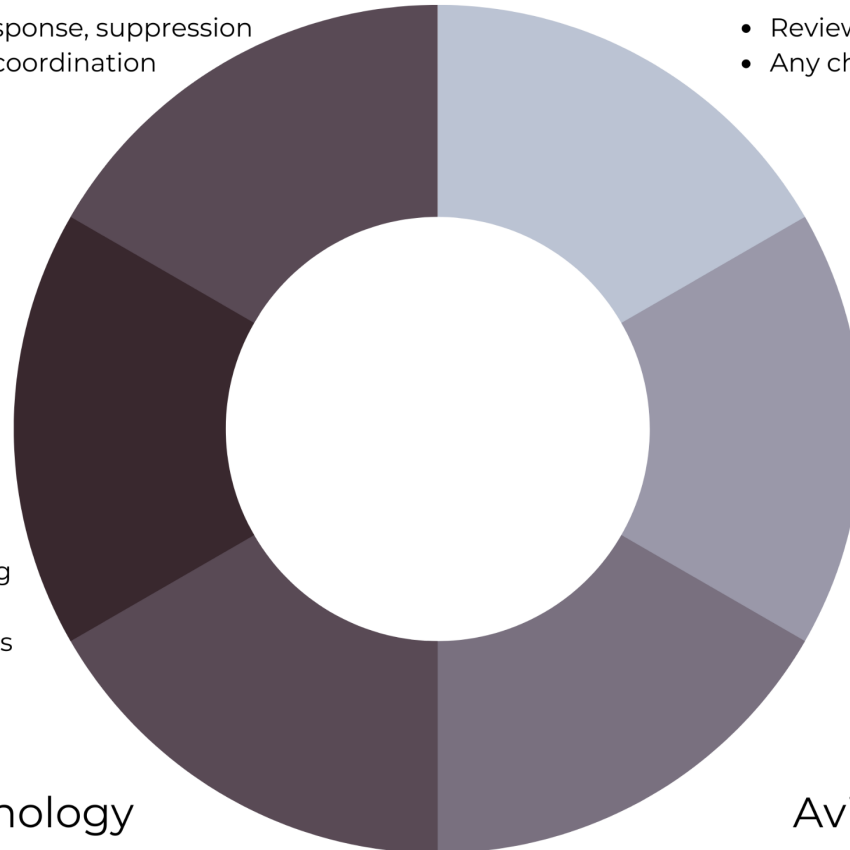
- Maximize protection of life & essential structures
- Short and long-term forest management
- Manage WUI
- Manage utility corridors
- Rehabilitate land post-fire
- Improve hazardous fuels capacity

Technology

- Modernize and expand use of technology
- Improve early wildland fire detection
- Changes to Dingell act

Aviation

- Assess expected aircraft and parts to fight fire through 2030
- Assess existing authorities to provide or sell surplus parts
- Ensure availability of aircraft and parts
- Any additional authorities needed



PROCESS

Terminology



Fire

- Basic process of combustion
- Without contextual or values-based associations



Wildland Fire

- Fires, both planned and unplanned, that burn in the natural environment.



Wildfire

- All fires that burn in the natural environment, regardless of their interaction with the built environment.

Beneficial Fire



- Prescribed fire, cultural burning, and wildfire managed for resource objectives

Workgroups as the Engine

The Commission used workgroups to make its workload more manageable

- 10 workgroups
- Most members participated in three

Workgroups guided the work process

- Report structure only loosely follows workgroups
- Provided an opportunity for cross-cutting themes to emerge

Workgroup Topics

Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission

Aviation



strategy to meet aerial firefighting equipment needs through 2030 in the most cost-effective manner

Cohesive Strategy



review of the Cohesive Strategy and recommendations for increasing its effectiveness

Communities



structure ignition zone (modifications to structures and landscapes, defensible space) insurance, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, land-use planning, codes and ordinances, risk assessment, community risk reduction.

Landscapes



landscape treatments, prescribed fire, landscape planning (including discussion of CEs and capacity). Includes industry and wood utilization.

Post-fire



Social recovery, long-term recovery planning, flood after fire. Includes remediation and reforestation post fire,

Response Coordination



evaluation of coordination of response to and suppression of, wildfires occurring across jurisdictions. Includes suppression remediation.

Public Health & Infrastructure



utilities, transportation, occupational health, monitoring and alert infrastructure, water, public health, and evacuation. Physical health infrastructure.

Science, Data & Technology



policy change for modernizing and expanding use of technology. Includes data-mining issues and data diversity.

Appropriations



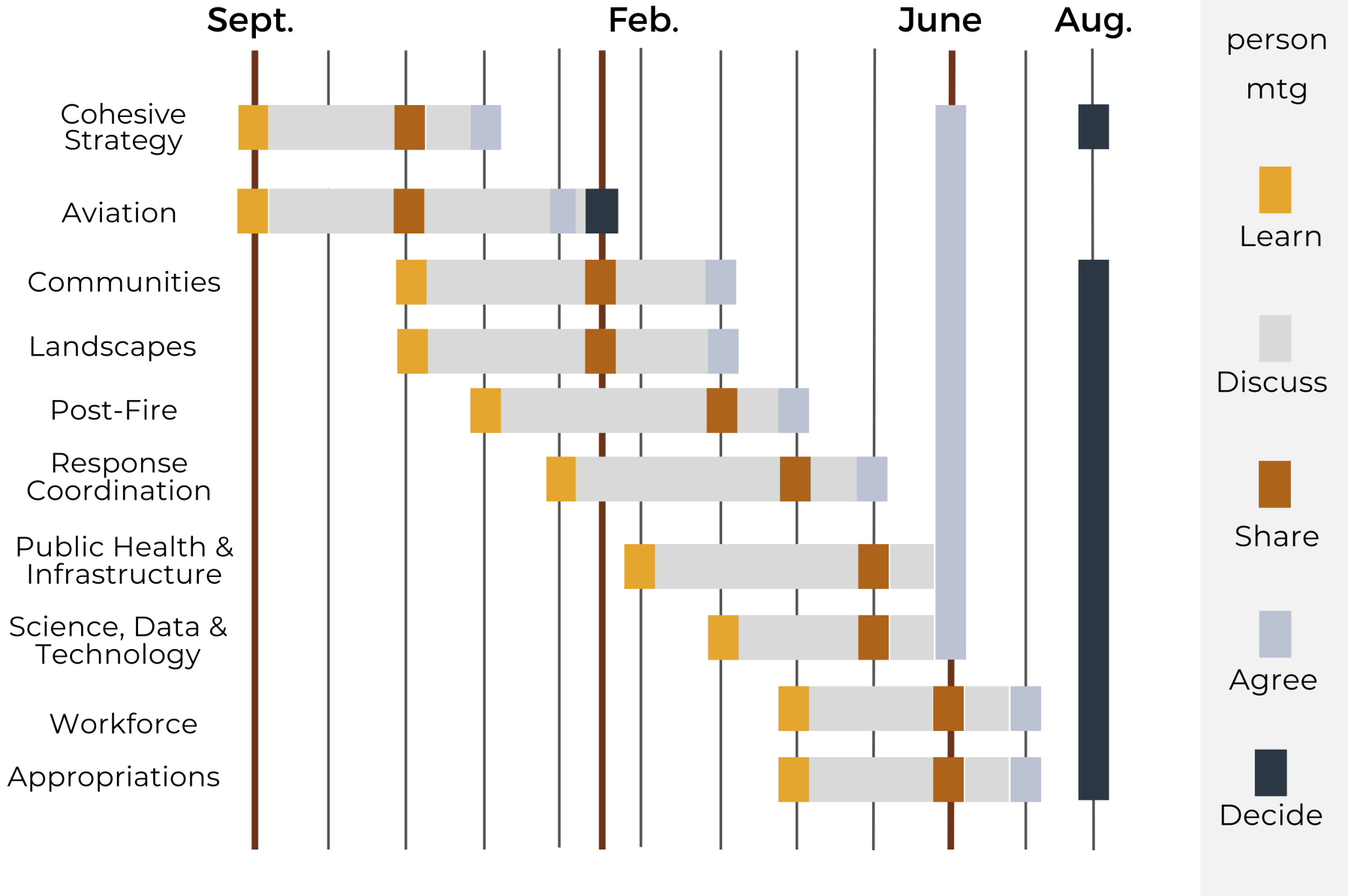
assessment of Federal spending, performance measures, and accountability for wildland fire-related disaster management

Workforce



compensation, recruitment and retention, staffing structure, and ways to meet the challenge of filling workforce capacity needs (including workforce support structures like housing as well as workforce health and wellbeing)

Workgroup Schedule



THEMES

Commission Themes

Summary of Recommendations and Key Themes

- Seven key themes emerged from the process:
 - Urgent new approaches
 - Supporting collaboration
 - Shifting from reactive to proactive
 - Modernizing tools for informed decision-making
 - Enabling beneficial fire
 - Supporting and expanding the workforce
 - Investing in resilience
- Each with showcase recommendations
- Issues are interrelated and overlapped

Themes provide a more accessible way to encapsulate the Commission's significant body of work.

Commission Themes

Governance
(How)

Urgent New Approaches, Collaboration, and
Informed Decision-making

Action
(What)

Investing
for
Resilience

Reactive
to
Proactive

Beneficial
Fire

Workforce

THEME: Urgent New Approaches

*Significant change is needed in this space
Issue of public health and public safety*

Types of Recommendations:

- Governance and goals
 - Increased partnership
 - Interagency coordination
 - Accountability
 - Performance measures
 - Better feedback loops

THEME: Supporting Collaboration

Partnerships are needed across all relevant entities and jurisdictions

Types of Recommendations:

- Financial support for collaboration at a community scale
- Increase accessibility of federal programs
 - Match waivers
- Improve co-management with Tribal governments

THEME: Informed Decision-making

Use of best available science and technology
Updated models are needed for new conditions

Types of Recommendations:

- Improve interagency technical coordination
 - Improve data sharing and accessibility
 - Shared service provision (e.g., mapping, decision support tool, etc.)
- Improve community decision support tools

THEME: Reactive to Proactive

Increase investments in and focus on pre-fire mitigation and post-fire recovery

Types of Recommendations:

- Support for communities and the built environment
- Improve planning for the post fire environment
- Improve delivery of mitigation and recovery functions

THEME: Enabling Beneficial Fire

Recognize the importance and benefits of fire

Types of Recommendations

- Increase use of prescribed fire
- Acknowledge and support cultural burning
- Improve liability protection for burners
- Greater use of pre-fire planning
- More integration of public health and smoke management

THEME: Enabling Beneficial Fire

“Beneficial fire – including prescribed burning, cultural burning, and wildfire managed for resource objectives – is necessary to restore fire-adapted ecosystems and reduce the risk of high-severity wildfires that pose a significant threat to communities.”

THEME: Workforce

Expand, support, and diversify the workforce

Types of Recommendations:

- Workforce focused on restoration and mitigation
- Year-round, cross-trained workforce
- Increase wages and benefits
- Greater consideration of workforce physical and mental health needs
- Greater inclusion of nonfederal partners

THEME: Workforce

“ [A] comprehensive, expanded, and sustainable workforce is a cornerstone of our ability to change our fire future. Without this robust workforce, many of the Commission’s recommendations become far less feasible and may, in fact, become impossible.

THEME: Investing in Resilience

Increased funding is needed across all aspects of wildfire management

Types of Recommendations:

- Increased funding
- Greater certainty through multiyear funding
- More flexible funding
- Incentivize state and local governments to invest

Funding in risk reduction leads to decreased suppression and recovery costs

RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Concepts



Taken together, these recommendations are intended to help lead the nation toward better wildfire outcomes including diminished loss of life and property, and functioning and resilient ecosystems.

Key Concepts

“There is a need for both incremental and fundamental change, but the Commission emphasizes that top-down, one-size-fits-all approaches and opportunistic half-measures will continue to fall short of desired outcomes.

Commission Recommendations

Key Takeaways

- Report contains 148 consensus recommendations which can be summarized in seven key themes
- Recommendations are both short and long term
- Largely focused on congressional action
- Report is comprehensive but not exhaustive

No single recommendation or sentence should be considered alone.

NEXT STEPS



AUDIENCE: Committees of Congress

Senate

- Energy and Natural Resources
- Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
- Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
- Environment and Public Works
- Appropriations

House

- Natural Resources
- Agriculture
- Homeland Security
- Ways and Means
- Appropriations



Opportunities For Non-Congressional Action

Interagency Working Group

- Federal interagency coordination
- Administrative actions
- Agency policy

Wildland Fire Leadership Council

- State-federal coordination
- Non-agency partnership (Tribal, nonprofits, etc.)
- Culture and practice
- Long-term change

Report Release

- Commission remains empaneled for 180 days
 - Members available at Congressional requests
- Members as ambassadors in other venues
- Administrative change could occur through existing venues
 - Interagency Wildfire Working Group (IWG)
 - Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC)

Discussion

