



# Neil Chapman

Wildland Fire Captain

Flagstaff Fire Department  
Summit Fire & Medical District

928-213-2512

[neil.chapman@flagstaffaz.gov](mailto:neil.chapman@flagstaffaz.gov)





## WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT



### Our Mission

Increase and maintain wildfire resilience for the City of Flagstaff, Summit Fire & Medical District, and priority watersheds.

### Our Vision

We envision a community where Flagstaff thrives due to the Wildland Fire Management Division's unique skills, knowledge, and abilities within Wildland Fire Operations, Forest Management, Firewise Development, and Wildland Urban Interface Code Enforcement.

### Initiatives

- [Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project](#)
- [Flagstaff Carbon Neutrality Plan](#)
- National Emergency Response Support (Call-Out Program)
- [Greater Flagstaff Forest Partnership](#)
- [Four Forest Restoration Initiative](#)
- [Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission](#)
- Flagstaff Wildland Urban Interface Code
- [Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network](#)
- [Prescribed Fire Training Exchange Network](#)
- [Hepa Air Purifier Distribution](#)

### Our Tactics (7 E's of Community Risk Reduction)

1. Work with partners to create & manage fire adapted **Ecosystems**
2. Develop and **Enforce** firewise codes and ordinances
3. **Engineer** a fire adapted built environment
4. Continuously improve **Emergency Response** based on lessons learned
5. **Educate** citizens on the natural role of forest fire and how to minimize smoke impacts
6. Support **Economic Incentives** that encourage wildfire risk reduction investments
7. Work in a way that **Enables** and inspires other communities to become fire adapted

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**WILDLAND FIRE  
MITIGATION AND  
MANAGEMENT  
COMMISSION**

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# AMERICA BURNING



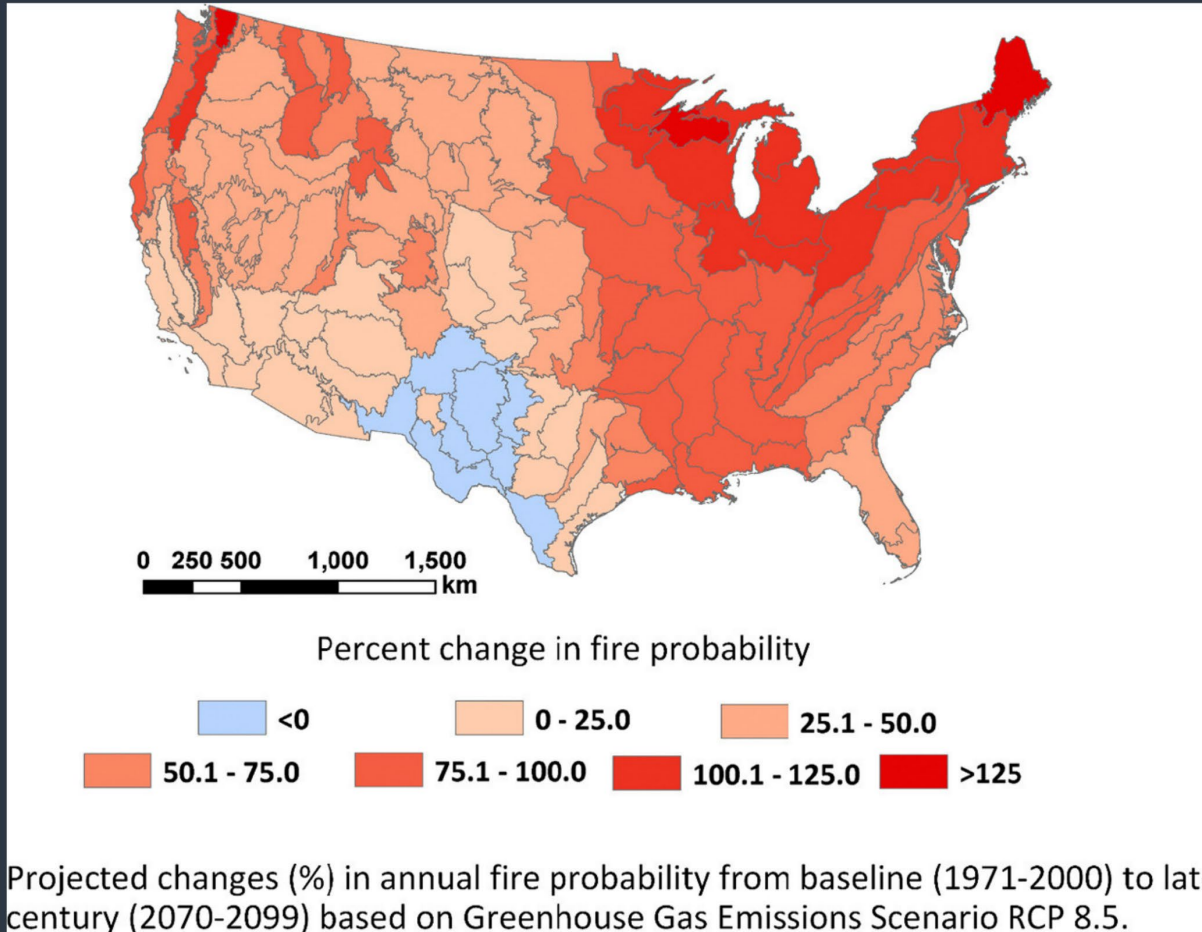
The Report of The National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control

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# **DEFINING THE CRISIS**

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# The Changing Face of Wildfire



***Robust projections  
of future fire  
probability for the  
conterminous  
United States  
Credit: Patrick Gao,  
et al., 2021***

# Defining the Crisis



Between 2000 and 2019, nearly **2,000 communities** were threatened by wildfire.



Between the years of 2005 and 2022, nearly **100,000 structures were destroyed** by wildfire.



The western United States alone has witnessed a **246 percent increase in structures lost** to wildfires when comparing the decade from 1999-2009 to 2010-2020.

Sources: Headwaters Economics, 2020, 2023c; Higuera et al., 2023

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# **COMMISSION BACKGROUND**

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# The Commission (in brief)



Established by statute (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law)



Tasked with making recommendations to mitigate and manage wildland fire



50 members from diverse geographies and backgrounds



Completed two reports to Congress

# The Commission

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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

# 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)

# Commission Process

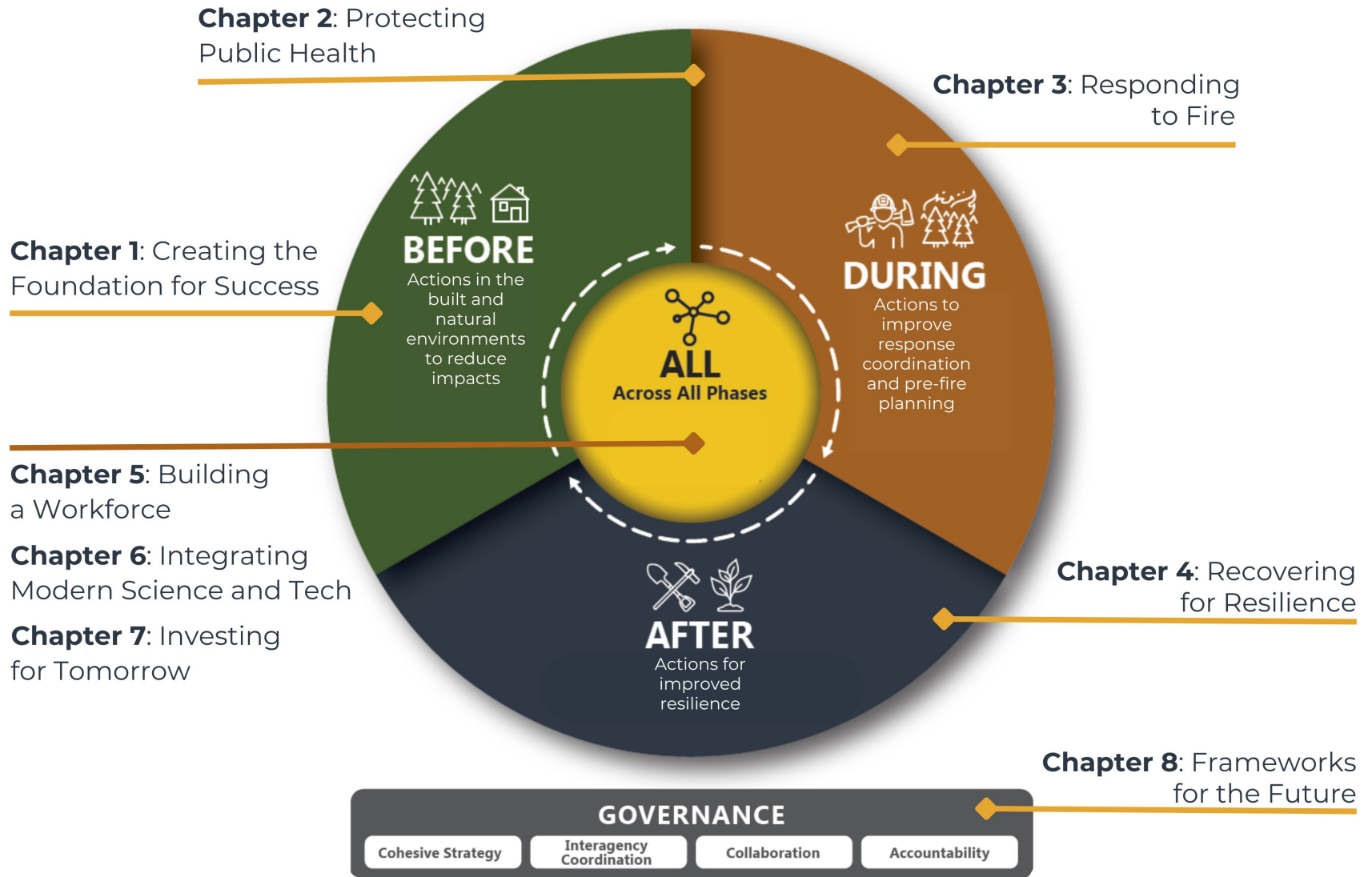
## **Solicited outside opinions**

- Public comment portal
- Over 500 submissions, many focused on workforce issues

## **Worked with Subject Matter Experts**

- Over 125 SMEs and agency staff
- Seated on workgroups
- Panel discussions
- Materials review
- Connection to live and emerging research

# Report Organization



# Summary

## Key Takeaways

- Report contains 148 consensus recommendations in 340 pages which can be summarized in seven key themes
- Report is comprehensive but not exhaustive

***No single recommendation or sentence should be considered alone.***

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

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# **THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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# Commission Themes



*Issues are interrelated and overlapped.*

# Selected Recommendations

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“Congress should acknowledge Tribal cultural burning in federal law, ensure it is not confused with prescribed fire, and grant agencies the authority to coordinate with Tribes on the conduct of Tribal cultural burning on federally administered lands”

- Grant agencies authority to coordinate with Tribes conducting cultural burning on federally administered land.

# THEME: Supporting Collaboration

**“Solutions should not and cannot be accomplished by federal agencies alone, but must involve individuals, entities, and jurisdictions at every level of society.”**

# THEME: Reactive to Proactive

**“Only through significant investments in proactive planning, mitigation, risk reduction, and the workforce needed to accomplish these tasks can we break the current cycle of increasingly severe wildfire risk, damage, and loss.**

# THEME: Investing in Resilience



***...the wildfire crisis needs to be funded, staffed, and acted upon like the national emergency that it is. To do less is to resign ourselves to tremendous costs and losses.***

# 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: Enabling Beneficial Fire



# Selected Recommendations

## THEME: Enabling Beneficial Fire

14	Congress should instruct the agencies to develop the necessary administrative systems to allow resource ordering for prescribed fire to be as seamless as it is for wildfire response.
41	While enabling proactive use of beneficial fire, Congress should increase the capacity of federal agencies, including Environmental Protection Agency, Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Department of the Interior to work with state, local and Tribal governments to ensure that air quality, public health, and land management programs work toward minimizing impacts of smoke to human health and to ensure communities and individuals are better prepared for anticipated smoke from all forms of wildland fire.
147	Change the system of land management agency performance metrics beyond acres treated, timber volume output, or acres burned to measure success. Success should be measured by outcomes such as the number of protected assets, values, and resources, and the degree to which forests and rangeland are returned to and maintained in a more resilient state.

# 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.**

# Selected Recommendations

## THEME: Workforce

51	In order to facilitate the prioritization of public safety in response resource ordering, Congress should establish a task force of relevant entities to review eligible costs for the purposes of expedited resource deployment and reimbursements processes.
52	Some locations offer positive examples of more effective resource mobilization and should serve as models for other areas.
53	Congress should direct a task force to explore the potential to improve the national resource ordering and status system and ensure that it is more accessible to qualified entities and individuals.
54	Increase access to qualifications and training opportunities for all partners.
55	Create and fund more training opportunities for the mitigation and management response workforce.

# Selected Recommendations

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## Improve training and coordination between structure fire departments and wildland fire management

- Support U.S. Fire Administration to:
  - Provide expanded community-based wildfire training and engagement of the nation's non-federal fire service.
  - Promote fire-adapted communities to build community resilience.
  - Improve coordination with wildland fire management as a critical and necessary partner in wildfire risk reduction.

# THEME: Workforce

Federal agencies field approximately **19,000** members as a dedicated workforce. This includes both year-round and seasonal firefighters, though it almost certainly undercounts other federal employees whose skills and time are utilized on incidents (GAO 2022).

There are approximately **24,000** private contractors

Local fire departments registered with FEMA field an estimated **1,215,800** personnel (FEMA website). **Of the fire departments registered with FEMA, approximately 63% report providing specialized services to wildland fire or the wildland urban interface (FEMA website).**

Non-profit workforce numbers are not large, likely less than **1,500** wildfire qualified staff nationally, but their role with prescribed fire advocacy across all lands is significant.

# Recommendations

## Key Takeaways

- Recommendations are both short and long term; immediately actionable and transformative
- Largely focused on congressional action but includes administrative action with congressional accountability role
- We offered a few examples to provide a sense of the style and structure of recommendations

***There is no single solution.***

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**NEXT STEPS**

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# 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

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**THANK YOU**

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