



**National Interagency
Prescribed Fire Training Center
Strategic Plan 2023-2028**

Executive Summary

The National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (NIPFTC) was established in 1998 to provide hands-on prescribed fire experience to federal firefighters from across the country. NIPFTC offers unique programs that blend prescribed burning experience with a flexible curriculum covering foundational to advanced topics for prescribed fire practitioners, fire and fuels managers, and agency administrators. Emphasis is placed on applied field experience, providing maximum opportunities to build skills and knowledge of prescribed fire. Since its inception 3200 students have attended NIPFTC and assisted in implementing more than 1.2 million acres of prescribed fire in ten southern states while making significant progress on position task books.

The 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) contains funding to support fuels management and wildfire restoration on the forests, rangelands, and grasslands of the United States. The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy), prepared jointly with federal, Tribal Nation, State, local, and nongovernmental partners, articulates the shared goals of:

1. Restoring fire-adapted ecosystems on a landscape scale
2. Building fire-adapted human communities
3. Responding effectively to wildland fire

This Strategic Plan articulates the vision and direction of NIPFTC over the next 5 years. It also identifies goals and the specific immediate and long-term actions needed to reach those goals to position NIPFTC for the Nation's future in prescribed fire. These goals are:

1. Maintain the delivery of our core curriculum in the southeast
2. Expand our offerings to deliver core curriculum in western venues
3. Support for emerging training initiatives that push the boundaries of prescribed fire technology and performance beyond current limits
4. Provide support to the Interagency Fuels Academy to help expand agency's capacity for planning, implementation, and analysis of fuel treatments that include prescribed fire and vegetation management activities

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Introduction

This Strategic Plan reinforces the mission statement for the National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (NIPFTC) and articulates the vision and direction of the center over the next 5 years. This plan also identifies the goals for the next 5 years as well as the specific immediate and long-term actions needed to reach those goals and position NIPFTC for the Nation's future in prescribed fire.

NIPFTC offers unique programs that blend prescribed burning experience with a flexible curriculum covering foundational to advanced topics for prescribed fire practitioners, fire and fuels managers, and agency administrators. Emphasis is placed on applied field experience, providing maximum opportunities to build skills and knowledge of prescribed fire. The target audience is federal and state partners that adhere to National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) qualification standards; however, international participants, non-governmental organizations, tribal government agencies, and other federal and non-federal participants are welcome to participate as well regardless of whether their organization recognizes or adheres to NWCG standards.

Core Values

- Safety of firefighters and the public
- Professional integrity and accountability
- Competence and leadership in action
- Scientific understanding of fire as an ecological process

Mission Statement

To maintain a national interagency center of excellence for prescribed fire, with an emphasis on actual field experience, in order to increase skills and knowledge and to build confidence in the application of prescribed fire.

Vision Statement

NIPFTC is recognized as a national leader in all aspects of prescribed fire and fuels management training. NIPFTC, with its supporting partners, provides opportunities for employees of federal, state, local agencies, along with tribal partners and others, to become highly skilled prescribed fire practitioners. NIPFTC emphasizes learning from practical experience by participating in field operations and by observing and working with successful prescribed fire programs. NIPFTC is a leader in developing and utilizing new technologies in prescribed fire training, and the model of a learning prescribed fire culture.

Over the next 5 Years, NIPFTC will focus its energy on:

- Maintaining the delivery of our core curriculum in the southeast
- Expanding our offerings to deliver core curriculum in western venues
- Supporting emerging training initiatives that push the boundaries of prescribed fire technology and performance beyond current limits
- Providing support to the Interagency Fuels Academy to help expand agency's capacity for planning, implementation, and analysis of fuel treatments that include prescribed fire and vegetation management actions.

This Strategic Plan will drive the NIPFTC for the next 5 years by identifying goals and specific actions needed to achieve those goals.

Recent Developments

The 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) contains funding to support fuels management and wildfire restoration on the forests, rangelands, and grasslands of the United States. These funds will assist in the efforts to promote climate resiliency across landscapes and communities, modernize the firefighter workforce, create an educated workforce, and protect the safety and long-term well-being of wildland firefighters. The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy), prepared jointly with federal, Tribal Nation, State, local, and nongovernmental partners, articulates the shared goals of:

- 1) Restoring fire-adapted ecosystems on a landscape scale
- 2) Building fire-adapted human communities
- 3) Responding effectively to wildland fire

The Department of Interior's (DOI) five-year plan and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service's ten-year wildfire crisis strategy build on the vision and collaborative process of the Cohesive Strategy. These plans add cutting edge science and outline a commitment to responsibly and expeditiously implement the historic investments provided in the BIL. Successful implementation of both strategies will require a significant increase in the number of prescribed burn acres implemented each year. And this is dependent upon growth in the number of skilled practitioners and level of expertise among these practitioners.

On September 8, 2022, USDA Forest Service Chief Moore released the USDA Forest Service National Prescribed Fire Learning Review. In the Foreword of this document Chief Moore states, "By January 1, 2023, we will establish a Western Prescribed Fire Training curriculum with the interagency fire and research community, and partners, to expand the successes of the National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (NIPFTC) headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida. This curriculum will incorporate the knowledge and experience of Tribes, partners, and communities and include a strategy of training and developing skills together so we can build collective capacity to expand the use of prescribed burning on National Forest System and other lands. We will identify and provide the additional staffing needed to support this action." NIPFTC has been tasked to identify, develop, and implement the organization necessary to deliver on the "Western Prescribed Fire Training" initiative.

NIPFTC Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Action Items

Our strategic plan is focused on maintaining the excellence already established in training prescribed fire managers and practitioners and expanding our reach to bring more training opportunities to western venues while continually adopting cutting edge prescribed fire techniques and technology. Our plan consists of three outcome-oriented goals along with a host of related objectives and actions.

Goal 1: Maintain the delivery of our core curriculum in the southeast

Objective 1A: Continue to provide opportunities for development of future leaders in prescribed fire

- **Action 1A-1:** Continue to provide women in prescribed fire modules as a part of the 20-day field sessions
- **Action 1A-2:** Assist participants from the Fuels Academy to find advanced prescribed fire details and training opportunities.
- **Action 1A-3:** Support burn plan writing workshops to provide for both inter- and intra-agency consistency and accuracy in burn plans
- **Action 1A-4:** Set the example by practicing and showcasing interagency cooperation and collaboration in everything we do.
- **Action 1A-5:** Identify one former student each year to return to NIPFTC for 6 months and participate in a “master’s level” detail with the staff and interagency partners. (A shorter version of what the FS used to do with Forester Trainees.

Objective 1B: Maintain the following deliverables yearly in the Southeast for the next 5 years:

- Nineteen 6-person modules for 20-day sessions out of Tallahassee (Jan-Apr)
 - Including 3 Fire Leadership for Women Modules
- Two AA Workshops

Objective 1C: Improve the NIPFTC physical infrastructure support at Tall Timbers Research Station

- **Action 1C-1:** Explore opportunities to modify the existing Tall Timber agreement to allow NIPFTC to utilize additional support facilities at the station.
- **Action 1C-2:** Add an eight-bay pole building for vehicles to the NIPFTC footprint at Tall Timbers using USDA Forest Service and/or US Fish and Wildlife service BIL funding before FY 26.
- **Action 1C-3:** Add a prefabricated metal storage building to the NIPFTC footprint at Tall Timbers using USDA Forest Service and/or US Fish and Wildlife Service BIL funding before FY 26.

Goal 2: Expand NIPFTC's offerings to deliver core curriculum in western venues

Objective 2A: Complete adding additional staff to NIPFTC to meet agency commitments of significantly increasing the amount of fuels treatments and prescribed fire in the western states.

- **Action 2A-1:** Fill the approved positions described below by Jan 1, 2023.
 - Additional positions at Tall Timbers Research Station (NIPFTC headquarters)
 - Supervisory Administrative Specialist (GS-11) – (completed 3/2023) - Support the three training centers (NAFRI, NIPFTC, WFAP) and Work Force Development (WFD) with complex administrative functions. Retain the GS-9 Admin position to support all the needs of our training deliveries.
 - Training Specialist (GS-9/11) – (completed 3/2023) – support the needs of the Agency Administrator Workshop, Interagency UAS Aerial Ignition Academy, and Interagency Burn Boss Workshop.
 - New positions in the west, some locations still TBD or virtual
 - Assistant Director – Western PFTC (under Director of NIPFTC) (FS Boise) (GS 12) – (completed 4/2023) – Expand western based prescribed fire training deliveries such as Burn Boss Workshop, UAS Aerial Ignition Academies, and other Experiential training (new Western PFTC model). Build relationships with state, local, nongovernmental, and federal land management agencies to build and grow our training canvas.
 - Assistant Director –Interagency Fuels Academy (under Director of NIPFTC) (FS Tucson) (GS-12) – (completed 4/2023) – Expand and institutionalize the Fuels Academy throughout the nation. Lead the development of the partnerships needed for the success of the Academy.
 - Two Operations Specialist (USFWS Full Telework) (GS 11) – (completed 4/2023) – Plan western operations with additional 20-day sessions, and AAWS. Develop relationships with hosting units for the 20-day session modules and any other field-based training.
 - Operations Specialist/Training Development – (BLM) (GS-12) -BLM – Located in Boise, ID. Support the Interagency Fuels Academy, as well as provide support to other aspects of the National Fire Training Centers (e.g., NIPFTC, WFAP, NAFRI).

CY 2023 NIPFTC Organization

NIPFTC

Current Organization Chart

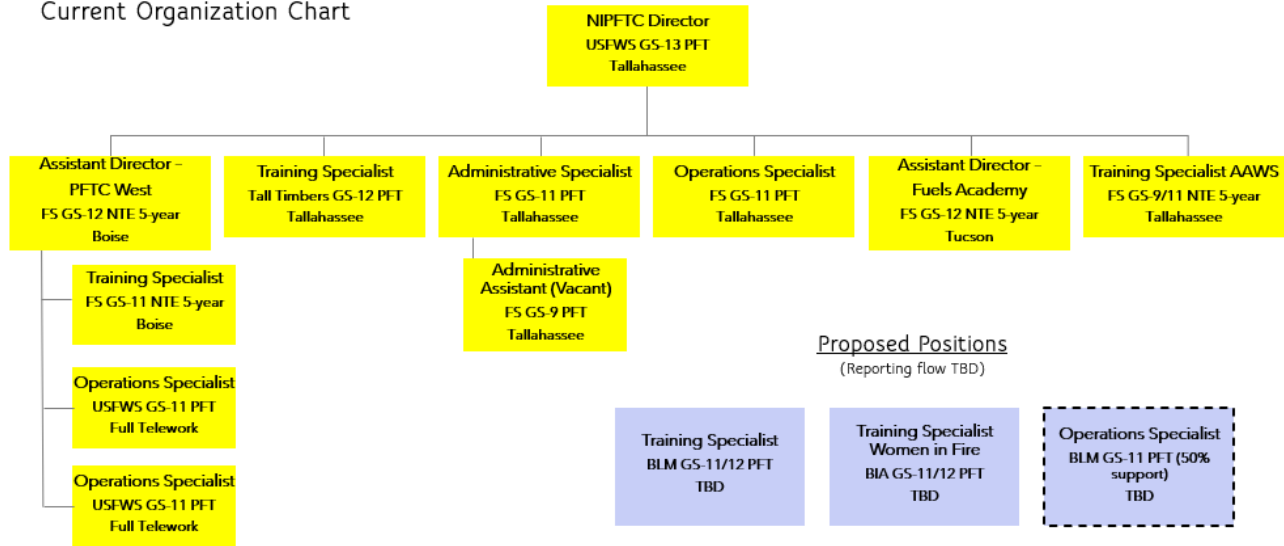


Figure 1

- **Action 2A-2:** Complete contract actions to retain and/or increase the number of prescribed fire experts under contract with NIPFTC to assist with ongoing and new training deliveries. Submit contracting packages through the USDA FS Contracting process by Jan 1, 2023, with award by April 1, 2023.
- **Action 2A-3:** Fill short term details (30-120 days) for additional positions as needed to allow NIPFTC to fully function and provide all the previous training products and the anticipated new products in an efficient and expeditious manner.

Objective 2B: Investigate and develop a new experiential training model for prescribed fire in the western US using the NIPFTC model as a starting point, acknowledging the new model may be significantly different. Seek to deliver 1 new AA Workshop, and 2 or more 20-day module experiences in western venues by FY24.

- **Action 2B-1:** Immediately open a dialog with the regional level fire management officials from the federal agencies in each geographic area. Identify a single point of contact for each geographic area for all communication and information needs, as NIPFTC explores different ideas and models for delivering on the ground live prescribed fire experience in the west.
- **Action 2B-2:** Through the contacts identified in Action 2B-1 above, initiate a thorough analysis of weather, historic burn days and missed potential burn days for all the federal agencies within each geographic area. In addition, a review of existing fuels data should be compiled to identify the best and safest opportunities for successful live fire training.

- **Action 2B-3:** Obtain a summary from each geographic area on what authorities are being used for prescribed fire partnerships and what locations are being the most successful utilizing those authorities.

Objective 2C: Increase the number of AA Workshop deliveries to 3 per year beginning in FY 2024. Incorporate a western delivery of the AA Workshop into the overall course delivery schedule of NIPFTC during FY 2024, and minimally every 2 years after that.

- **Action 2C-1:** Use a NIPFTC contractor to evaluate and recommend a location for the first western AA delivery by May 2023. (complete)
- **Action 2C-2:** Identify specific host units and obtain support from the respective AAs and Fire Management Officer to support the western workshop by July 2023.
- **Action 2C-3:** Identify training location and lodging by July 2023.
- **Action 2C-4:** Complete contract for training facility by Oct 2023.
- **Action 2C-5:** Complete the Western AA workshop delivery by June 2024.

Goal 3: Support emerging training initiatives that push the boundaries of prescribed fire technology and performance beyond current limits

Objective 3A: Support the following initiatives for the next 5 years:

- Support Aviation Program in delivery of Interagency UAS Aerial Ignition Academies
 - 2 to 4 per year with 20-30 trainees per session
- Burn Plan Writing Workshops – 2 in FY 2023 and 3 per year after that; at least 2 in western venues

Objective 3B: Act as a facilitator, convener, and proponent of innovative, cutting-edge prescribed fire training over the next 5 years

- **Action 3B-1:** Supporting Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) training in cooperation with agency aviation branches to expose UAS pilots to firing techniques and prescribed fire managers to UAS capabilities
- **Action 3B-2:** Incorporate virtual reality (VR) or other new and innovative technologies into existing programs. NIPFTC should be the leader in cutting-edge technology
- **Action 3B-3:** Assist and support in the presentation of regional and sub-regional Burn Boss workshops and support the advancement of UAS, VR, and evaluations of next generation technologies.
- **Action 3B-4:** Engage with partners to provide support to units in need of prescribed fire training. Techniques, confidence, and experience can be delivered on the unit's home ground when attendance at a more formalized training session is impracticable
- **Action 3B-5:** Promote the use of electronic simulation tables for prescribed fire training by incorporating and demonstrating their use and value into AA workshops, Burn Boss workshops and any other appropriate settings.

- **Action 3B-6:** Explore opportunities to partner with leading technology focused universities to develop new tools for prescribed fire training. (i.e., a realistic prescribed fire video game)

Objective 3C: Provide Support for Regional or Local Burn Boss Workshops over the next 5 years.

- **Action 3C-1:** Provide planning and logistic support to regions or sub-regions to assist in planning and delivering high quality burn boss workshops.
- **Action 3C-2:** Provide subject matter experts and speakers for Burn Boss Workshops.

Objective 3D: Collaborate with Tall Timbers to train using the new fuels and fire behavior models

- **Action 3D-1:** Develop an instructional plan detailing how to effectively include the new models in the 20-day sessions and Fuels Academy modules by May 2023

Goal 4: Providing support to the Interagency Fuels Academy to help expand agency's capacity for planning, implementation, and analysis of fuel treatments that include prescribed fire and vegetation management activities

- **Action 4-1:** Fill an Assistant Director position to focus on the Fuels Academy and programmatic evolution in the next several years. Agency affiliation to be determined. (completed 4/2023)
- **Action 4-2:** Formalize the process to allocate Fuels Academy trainees to NIPFTC field sessions.
- **Action 4-3:** Provide staff and/or contractors to assist in mentor roles with the Fuels Academy trainees

NIPFTC Current Situation

The current staffing of NIPFTC is 1 Director, 2 Assistant Directors, 3 Training Specialist, 3 Operations Specialist, and 1 Administrative Specialist. They are supported by numerous detailers and contractors as needed as the workload ebbs and flows with the presentation of courses. The contractors, mostly federal agency retirees, will not be able to continue in those roles indefinitely and will need to be replaced over time.

The core deliverables for the current staffing level are 2 Agency Administrator (AA) Workshops (30 students each) and 19 modules (6 students each) for the 20-day field sessions which also includes 3 all-women modules as part of the Fireline Leadership for Women program.

NIPFTC staff assist, as time is available, in the presentation of Burn Boss Workshops, Burn Plan Writing Workshops, UAS Academies, and other training across the country as requested.

Future Action Needed

The outlook for NIPFTC is an expansion of our current training offerings to provide even more experiential training opportunities to improve and grow our pool of prescribed fire practitioners. To achieve this, we will endeavor to expand our training opportunities as described below:

NIPFTC will work toward the following annual training offerings:

- 19 or more 6-person modules for 20-day sessions
 - FY23 on: Target up to 19 6-person 20-day session modules operating out of Tallahassee (Jan-Apr) including up to three Fire Leadership for Women modules.
 - FY24 on: Target two or more modules operating out of western venues, locale and length of sessions TBD
 - Consider including one or more Fire Leadership for Women Modules once western module operations become established
- Three AA Workshops (up to 30 students per session)
 - FY23: Continue delivery of 2 AA Workshops in the Southeast
 - FY24 or 25: Deliver an additional AA Workshop at a western venue
- Two or more Burn Boss Workshops
 - FY23: up to two BB Workshops with at least one offered at a western venue
 - FY24: up to three BB Workshops targeting at least two offered in western venues.
- Continued support for the delivery of:
 - UAS Academy – 2 to 4 sessions with 20-30 students per
 - Fuels Academy – 1 to 2 sessions lasting 2-3 weeks with 20-30 students per.

Much has happened in a very short time to move forward on a PFTC-West initiative. The most critical immediate action is the filling of the identified additional positions. Coordination and cooperation between the federal agencies to get these positions advertised is already underway. How to incorporate States, Tribes, Counties, and communities has not yet been identified, but NIPFTC is gathering ideas and researching options to move forward. Developing these key partnerships and completing the inclusion of these partners will be at the forefront of NIPFTC efforts and energy moving into the future.

To complete the ongoing actions above and to implement new ideas, it is imperative that NIPFTC clearly identify and state our new 5-year goals and take immediate actions to begin the expansion toward a fully functioning western PFTC curriculum.

The current organizational structure is developed around several of the positions being Not to Exceed (NTE) 1-year (with possible extensions up to 5-year). These include the 2 Assistant Directors and 2 Training Specialists. By the end of FY25, a strategy needs to be implemented to transition these positions into permanent positions. With the understanding that the NIPFTC

and PFTC-West programs will be increasing the expected workload, these positions will need to be established as permanent to continue to support the program beyond the 5-year time frame.

PFTC Expansion

The National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center expansion (aka PFTC-West) is an initiative to expand the reach and influence of the NIPFTC ([NIPFTC Website](#)) located at Tall Timbers, near Tallahassee, Florida, to bring more opportunities for experiential prescribed fire training to western locations. Doing so will increase and improve prescribed fire training and, support efforts to increase the pace and scale of prescribed fire work in the western states.

Implementing the PFTC-West concept will step-up the pace of “prescribed fire training-to-qualification” in the western US, provide trainees with real-time experiential learning in different fuel types and terrain, and ultimately increase national prescribed fire resource capacity.

As the demand for professional prescribed fire expertise has increased across the interagency wildland fire community, several federal land managers on western forests, parks and reserves have expressed interest in leveraging the NIPFTC training model to bolster training and experience in the West, as well as to develop a deeper bench of expertise. For example, over the past three years, the Intermountain Region has invited NIPFTC personnel to assist with the Burn Boss Workshop and associated burning on the Payette and Fishlake National Forests to increase expertise and exchange of best practices among burn bosses in that geographic area. The Southwestern Region is currently working with NIPFTC to deliver a similar Burn Boss Workshop in March of 2023.

NIPFTC's success has been founded by the symbiotic relationships forged with partners both nationally and internationally with a vision that success includes all the land stewards seeking educational and experiential learning. The expansion of this program to the West will require shared leadership from all participating partners who provide direction and oversight to NIPFTC through the NIPFTC Steering Committee.

Expansion of NIPFTC will include a series of concept meetings around the western US in the spring of 2023, with Tribes and partners to solicit ideas and input on the training concepts being developed for inclusion in the PFTC-West curriculum and regarding NIPFTC Steering Committee expansion.

Interagency Fuels Academy

The Interagency Fuels Academy is a standalone program with oversight from the Interagency Fuels Academy Steering Committee with an established charter. The [charter](#) can be found in the Appendices section of this document.

Beginning with the 2024 class, the Interagency Fuels Academy will operate with support from the NIPFTC staff; via the Assistant Director-Fuels Academy position ([see Figure 1](#)). The Fuels Academy provides a structured, 3-year training and development program for new or recently hired Fuels Specialists to prepare them for full-performance in their positions. Each year will consist of at least one 2-to-4-week residential training session consisting of classroom and field training exercises, structured on-the-job (OJT) and targeted training accomplished on the home unit, priority consideration for participation in related training programs such as the NIPFTC 20-day field sessions, and continual mentorship and guidance by Academy personnel to help guide and support each employee's development.

Conclusion

NIPFTC has been serving a vital role in the success of fuels treatments using prescribed fire across the US for the past 25 years. The challenges of the future require an expanded redesigned strategy of training as well as developing skills together so we can build collective capacity in utilizing prescribed fire on federal, state, and other lands throughout the US. This strategic plan lays the foundation for NIPFTC to begin this journey.

The NIPFTC staff and Steering Committee are committed to monitoring and updating our systems and processes to ensure that we are delivering the highest quality prescribed fire training to our students. This strategic plan will be reviewed annually by the Steering Committee and NIPFTC staff will report out on actions described under each goal, documenting whether actions are complete, active, or in need of removal or modification.

Appendices

Background/History

The National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (NIPFTC) was established in 1998 to provide hands-on prescribed fire experience to federal firefighters from across the country. The training was structured to provide maximum opportunities for firefighters working on Burn Boss 2 and Ignition Specialist qualifications and to accelerate completion of their task books. Since year one over 3200 students have attended NIPFTC and assisted in implementing more than 1.2 million acres of prescribed fire in ten southern states while making significant progress on position task books. The official name of the Center is NIPFTC; however, over the years it has generally been called PFTC. Tallahassee, Florida was selected as the location for the center to take advantage of the extensive field application opportunities due to the broad burn windows and regional partnerships. The center was a shared facility, supported by National Forests in Florida.

After burning exclusively in Florida during its first year, NIPFTC expanded into Georgia and Alabama and then to other southern states over the next few years. Following the implementation of the Healthy Forests Initiative in 2003, an interagency review of NIPFTC was conducted. That team recommended that the NIPFTC develop a strategic plan, formalize their cooperative agreements, firm up funding from the sponsoring agencies, expand both the office and classroom facilities, provide for an adequate fleet to support the students during the burning season, develop a staffing plan that clearly defines the role of the Center Director and the need for additional staff, and develop a strong charter approved by the national fire directors on the mission, scope and structure of the NIPFTC. This led to the development of a Strategic Plan in 2005 and another in 2010.

During the first four years of operation, NIPFTC only offered prescribed fire experience and the opportunity to work on position task books through the 20-day sessions. Sessions were held from January through June, which encompassed the primary dormant-season burning months and the most ecologically relevant growing-season burning months.

In 2002, 2003 and 2004, after response to continued requests from former students, NIPFTC attempted to conduct follow-up sessions in western fuel types. Students who had previously completed a 20-day session were contacted and agreed to attend a follow up session within reasonable travel time of their home unit. The Gunnison National Forest in Colorado was selected for the first session in 2002, the Stanislaus National Forest in California for the second session in 2003, and the Coconino National Forest in Arizona for the final session in 2004. Despite considerable work with the hosting units and local burning experts trying to target weeks with the best burning weather window, NIPFTC was unable to conduct any of the 10+ planned live burns during the three western attempts. Weather and narrow burning windows were the main factors preventing the burns. Budget concerns and lack of interest from potential students contributed to NIPFTC placing these “regional pilot” sessions on hold after 2004. This experience emphasizes the need for considerable research and planning on weather

patterns and fuel conditions to increase the chance of success for future NIPFTC-like deliveries in the west.

In 2002, in cooperation with USDA Forest Service Region 2, NIPFTC began offering a workshop for Agency Administrators (AAs). This AA workshop has been held every year since, except for 2007. NIPFTC also conducted workshops specifically for FMOs in 2002 and 2003, and workshops for Resource Specialists for three years between 2009 and 2011. Although these specialty workshops had value and were successful, they were dropped because the NIPFTC budget was inadequate to expand while still maintaining the core 20-day sessions and the AA Workshop.

Through 2010, the AA Workshop was conducted annually for 15 participants. In 2011, due to increasing demand, the participant number was increased to 30. By 2015 both the USFWS and the USFS recognized the NIPFTC AA Workshop as one of the avenues for Agency Administrators to meet the training and experience to approve burn plans for their agencies. This led to another big jump in demand. In 2018, NIPFTC began offering the AA workshop twice a year for a total of 60 students annually. With the US Forest Service adopting a prescribed fire task book for AAs in 2019, demand for the course took another large jump. This slowed during the COVID pandemic, but 150 applications were received for the FY 23 fall and spring AA workshops.

NIPFTC has hosted 62 foreign students in a 20-day session during the first 25 years. In addition to those students, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) sponsored and funded 2 modules (6 students and a Field Coordinator) from Central and South America during a 20-day session, one in 2008 and one in 2009. In the Fall of 2015 FS International Forestry sponsored a five-day Prescribed Fire Workshop for participants from Brazil. This workshop was modeled after the successful AA Workshops with 2 burn days. In both these cases, the language barrier was overcome with interpreters and the workshops were very successful.

SWOT Analysis

To assist in the development of this Strategic Plan, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis was completed. It highlights the internal and external factors that could help or hinder the achievement of our mission and vision and sets the foundation for our strategic goals for the next 5 years.

	Helpful	Harmful
<u>Internal</u>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The experience, knowledge and professionalism of our employees, contractors, and detailers -The dedication of our people to find a way to make things happen -The support of a hundred+ partners that allow us to train attendees on their lands -The support of the program from many levels -An internationally recognized research organization on site. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Low number of permanent staff -Operating from a temporary facility -New main training room is still 2+ years away -Contracting and interagency budget process to time -Administrative Specialist has no current backup. -Purchasing authority for services is too low. -Uncertainty for the future with various aspects of PFTC-West curriculum implementation
<u>External</u>	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Budget support from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) -New Staff on the way -New partnership opportunities across the west -Partnership opportunities with non-federal and non-traditional entities -National Incident Management Organization (NIMO) assistance is available for planning and implementing new ideas -Better trained Burn Bosses and Agency Administrators managing lands across the US -Nationally more lands are treated with prescribed fire 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -PFTC-West might pull key Field Coordinators and other instructors away from the standard NIPFTC deliveries -Agency administrative processes are becoming more restrictive and are forcing NIPFTC to change procedures that have been very successful in the past. -Prescribed fire liability concerns are growing throughout the workforce -Climate related reductions in burn windows -Public opposition to prescribed fire is extreme in some locations (e.g., parts of Oregon). -NIPFTC may lose dozens of years of experience in delivering its sessions and workshops in the upcoming contract advertisement.

Interagency Fuels Academy Charter

The following document is in draft format as of the date this Strategic Plan is being finalized. It is being included to articulate the intended plans for the Interagency Fuels Academy.



NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FUELS ACADEMY



PROJECT CHARTER:

GOVERNANCE, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND BUSINESS PROCESSES

April 2023

Revision History

Version Number	Date	Edited by	Description
0.1	12/08/22	Frankie Romero & Michelle Woods	Final Draft for Mgt. Review
0.2	3/29/23	Angie Simpson/Frankie Romero	Update BLM Contacts
0.3	4/13/23	F. Romero	Updated FS contacts

Purpose:

The purpose of this charter is to document the agreed-upon governance, organizational structures, and processes involved with the delivery of the National Interagency Fuels Academy program.

The National Interagency Fuels Academy Director in coordination with the Chair or Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee are jointly responsible for maintenance of this document and will ensure at a minimum an annual review is completed during a regular meeting.

This is a living document and may be modified any time the Fuels Academy Director, Steering Committee, or leadership from any of the member agencies determines there is a need. Minor edits are reviewed by the Interagency Fuels Academy staff who advises the steering committee, with the steering committee approving the edits. Major changes are proposed by the steering committee with concurrence from the Fuels Academy Director and forwarded to the Management Oversight Board for their approval.

Note: This document reflects the current situation where only Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management are participating. It will require modification if other Department of Interior Bureaus elect to participate in the future.

Mission and Objectives:

The National Interagency Fuels Academy delivers a multi-year developmental program that reduces the time to competence and enhances career growth and performance for early-career prescribed fire and fuels specialists.

Governance & Interagency Coordination:

The National Interagency Fuels Academy is authorized by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (FS) Washington Office, Director of Fire and Aviation Management, and the US Department of Interior (USDOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Assistant Director of Fire and Aviation Management.

For USDA FS, the Assistant Director for Landscapes & Partnerships and the Assistant Director for Workforce Development and Training share in the management oversight and administrative responsibilities for USDA FS interests and support of the National Interagency Fuels Academy.

For USDOI BLM, the Fire Planning and Fuels Management Division Chief is responsible for the management oversight and administrative responsibilities for the BLM interests and support of the National Interagency Fuels Academy.

Together, the officials in those positions named above serve as the Management Oversight Board responsible for overall fiscal and administrative oversight for establishing and operating the National Interagency Fuels Academy.

National Interagency Fuels Academy – Management Oversight Board				
Name	Title	Agency	Phone	Email
Clint Cross	Assistant Director, Landscapes and Partnerships	USFS	202-205-0995	clinton.cross@usda.gov
Tammy Randall-Parker	Acting, Assistant Director, Workforce Development and Training	USFS	970-209-2027	Tamera.randall-parker@usda.gov
Molly Anthony	Division Chief, Fire Planning and Fuels Management, Acting	BLM	208-387-5375	mathony@blm.gov

Steering Committee Co-Chairs and Membership:

The National Interagency Fuels Academy Steering Committee is appointed by and reports to the Management Oversight Board member(s) for the respective agencies (i.e., FS Managers appoint FS members, BLM Managers appoint BLM members). The Steering Committee composition should strive to represent training and fuels expertise as well as agency administrator prospective from a variety of geographic areas. With only two (2) agencies/bureaus the chair will be shared (co-chairs) without term limits, but if three or more agencies/bureaus are participating, a rotating chair/vice chair system with 3-year terms should be instituted.

National Interagency Fuels Academy Steering Committee					
Name	Expertise	Role	Agency	Phone	Email
Frankie Romero	WO Fuels	Co-Chair	USFS	208-630-4685	francisco.romero@usda.gov
Angie Simpson	WO Fuels	Co-Chair	BLM	208-807-1632	ajsimpson@blm.gov
TBD-Schaffler?	Regional Fuels	Member	USFS	414-297-3682	Brian.schaffler@usda.gov
Pat Harty	State Fuels	Member	BLM	406-896-2911	wharty@blm.gov
Mark Skudlarek	Training	Member	BLM	208-789-6079	muskudlar@blm.gov

<i>Vacant – Jay W.</i>	NFTC	Member	USFS		
Lisa Renken	Human Resources	Liaison	USFS	480-417-9801	lisa.renken@usda.gov
Heath Cota	Training	Advisor	USFS	208-957-3045	Heath.cota@usda.gov
Pam McDonald	Training	Advisor	BLM	208-608-8144	pmcdonald@blm.gov
<i>TBD</i>	Agency Administrator	Advisor	USDOJ		

The Steering Committee Co-Chairs provide liaison between the National Interagency Fuels Academy and the Management Oversight Board. The Co-Chairs will work with the National Interagency Fuels Academy Director to consider business needs, prioritize topics, schedule meetings, prepare agendas, and provide regular updates on status and business needs to the Management Oversight Board. There are no term limits for committee members, and length of terms for committee members may be negotiated individually with their respective Management Oversight Board member.

Subcommittees, Advisors and Liaisons:

The Steering Committee may establish subcommittees, task teams, work groups, or individuals with specialized expertise to serve as necessary to advise and assist the Steering Committee and National Interagency Fuels Academy Program.

Subcommittees:

The Curriculum Subcommittee is the primary group established to develop and deliver learning as part of the academy. The subcommittee's role is to establish curriculum, identify and recruit instructors, and facilitate instruction delivery. As a three-year developmental program, the cadre needed to deliver instruction will vary by subject matter for each year. As such, the Curriculum Subcommittee is charged with recruiting and maintaining a cadre of instructors to deliver each year's content, which may require the coordination and maintenance of more than one cadre of instructors (i.e., Year 1 Cadre, Year 2 Cadre, and Year 3 Cadre). Membership on the Curriculum Subcommittee is by appointment by the Steering Committee.

Advisors:

Individuals or groups may be sought out as appropriate to provide advice to the Steering Committee on specific issues or topics. The following are examples of personnel with applicable expertise to serve in an advisory capacity:

- Robert Trincado – Prescribed Fire Training Center, Director
- Wildland Fire Apprentice Program – Matt Ziegler, Director

- Others as deemed necessary.

Liaisons:

Liaisons may be sought out as appropriate to provide a point of contact to programs or functions critical to the success of the Fuels Academy. The following are examples of personnel that serve in a liaison capacity to assist the Fuels Academy fulfil its function:

- Lisa Renken – USFS FAM/HRM Liaison; assists USFS with recruitment and hiring associated with the academy.

Decision Making:

Quorums and Temporary Membership:

At a minimum, the Chair (or one of two Co-Chairs) plus more than 50% of the full voting membership of the steering committee must be in attendance to validate decisions that require a vote. For example, with two Co-Chairs and 4 members, a minimum of four (4) (1 Co-Chair + 3 members) is required to form a quorum.

Steering Committee members that are unable to attend calls, meetings or other functions may assign an alternate of their choosing to temporarily serve in their absence. Temporary alternate members will be empowered with full membership authority (voting) during any time-period they are identified/called upon to act as a Steering Committee member.

Decisions having to do with budgetary, staffing, or personnel matters are made by the Management Oversight Board under advisement from the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is expected to offer up recommendations to the Board, but ultimately it is the Board working through agency executives that must approve commitment of resources (funding and staffing) for their respective agencies. All decisions and recommendations made by the Steering Committee will be recorded in the meeting notes.

Meetings:

The National Interagency Fuels Academy Steering Committee shall meet in-person or remotely to conduct business monthly or as often as deemed appropriate by the Director and Co-Chairs. At each meeting the Academy Director will provide a status update and will present the Steering Committee with any policy, funding, or other business needs that require action from either the Steering Committee or Management Oversight Board.

Agenda items will be submitted to the Co-Chairs and Fuels Academy Director by Steering Committee members, advisors, or liaisons. Written agendas will be provided to members, alternates, advisors, and liaisons at least three days prior to the regular and non-urgent meetings.

Meeting minutes will be taken by the academy staff and will be finalized within one week of the meeting/call and distributed to the Steering Committee members for review. Notes will be approved at the beginning of the next scheduled call and approved notes archived by the academy staff.

National Interagency Fuels Academy Operations and Staffing:

The National Interagency Fuels Academy will operate under the umbrella of the National Fire Training Centers which also oversees the Prescribed Fire Training Center (PFTC), National Advanced Fire and Resource Institute (NAFRI) and the Wildland Firefighter Apprentice Program (WFAP). The staff structure that administers and operates the Fuels Academy are shown below:

National Interagency Fuels Academy – Operational Structure					
Name	Title	Agency	Role	Phone	Email
Vacant Vice - Jay	Director, National Fire Training Centers	USFS	2nd Level Supervisor		
Stew Richter	NAFRI Director	USFS	1st Level Supervisor for Fuels Academy Director	202-841-8807	Stewart.richter@usda.gov
Tim Yurkiewicz	Fuels Academy Director (Working within PFTC organization)	USFS	NTE/PFT	520-799-8743	Timothy.yurkiewicz@usda.gov
Vacant (vice Yurkiewicz)	Fuels/Fire Ecology Training Coordinator - NAFRI	USFS	PFT *		
TBD	Fuels Academy - Training Specialist	USFS	PFT *		
TBD	Fuels Academy - Training Specialist	BLM	PFT *		

TBD	Administrative Support – PFTC/Fuels Academy	USFS	PFT *		
TBD	Logistical Support	Agency Dependent	Detailers or Contracts		

**Note: Several existing and proposed positions would support the Fuels Academy as well as provide support to other aspects of the National Fire Training Centers (e.g., PFTC, WFAP, NAFRI)*

Approvals:

This charter is effective as of the date of signature. By signing the signatories indicate their agreement, support, and commitment to the project. This charter may be amended upon recommendation of the Steering Committee and Fuels Academy Director with concurrence of the Management Oversight Board.

Approved By:

Jerome Perez
Director – USDA FS WO-FAM

Date

Grant Beebe
BLM Assistant Director, Fire and Aviation

Date

Separate but related effort –

California Prescribed Fire Training Center

The State of California is pursuing efforts to establish a state sponsored prescribed fire training center. There are state funds appropriated to CalFire to establish a physical space as well as a curriculum, to provide the necessary training that supports recent legislation to create a Certified Burner program within California. This would provide minimum training standards, as well as liability protections, for Certified Burners in the state.

While this state-specific effort is related, it is independent of NIPFTC's PFTC-West initiative. US Forest Service Region 5 and CalFire are the primary drivers for the California training center; however, WO-FAM and NIPFTC are fully supportive and actively participating. The creation of a prescribed fire training center in California to meet that states' prescribed fire training needs presents great opportunities for NIPFTC to cooperate with USFS R5 and CalFire to administer and deliver prescribed fire training within California in the future. The intent is to maintain and foster this relationship with the hope of a future convergence where NIPFTC will find opportunities to deliver training in a cooperative fashion with the USFS R5/CalFire training center.