

BUDGET The United States Department of the Interior **JUSTIFICATIONS**

and Performance Information
Fiscal Year 2025

WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

NOTICE: These budget justifications are prepared for the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees. Approval for release of the justifications prior to their printing in the public record of the Subcommittee hearings may be obtained through the Office of Budget of the Department of the Interior.



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Executive Summary

Introduction

Fire is generally a natural and essential component of a healthy ecosystem, but it can be destructive and costly when combined with climate change, drought, altered fire regimes, and increased population and development. In recent decades, the average wildfire has become larger, costlier, and more complex, and wildfires increasingly occur in the United States year-round. Furthermore, climate change has contributed to more frequent and severe wildfire activity, and wildfire itself in turn contributes to climate change through the release of carbon emissions into the atmosphere.

The devastating consequences of severe wildfires continue to affect communities and wildland firefighters across the country. The National Interagency Coordination Center reports that more than 56,000 wildfires occurred in the United States in 2023, burning nearly 2.7 million acres. Climate change-driven, long-term trends continue, with increasing wildfire occurrence, burned area, and high severity incidents expected in 2025 and beyond. For 2025, the President's Budget expands the Nation's response to wildfire impacts beyond the near term and invests in longer-term actions and capability.

The President's 2025 Budget for the Department of the Interior's (Interior) Wildland Fire Management program is \$1.6 billion, including \$1.3 billion for the Wildland Fire Management account and \$360.0 million for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund. The request for the Wildland Fire Management account includes \$831.8 million in emergency designated appropriations (i.e., "shifted base"). The total request is an increase of \$206.7 million, or 14.4 percent above the 2024 Annualized Continuing Resolution (CR) level for base Wildland Fire Management, of which \$75.0 million supports permanent pay increases for federal and tribal wildland firefighters. The 2025 budget request also provides an increase of \$39.8 million more than the 2024 Annualized CR level to increase firefighting capacity by an estimated 56 federal and 7 tribal full-time equivalent (FTE) personnel.

The 2025 budget request reflects that the Administration continues to press for implementation of permanent, comprehensive pay reform for wildland firefighters employed by Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service. Enacting pay reform is essential to meeting the challenges of increasing wildfire occurrence by ensuring stable recruitment and retention. The cornerstone of the long-term reforms is funding requested to implement a permanent increase in pay to replace the temporary pay increases provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) using BIL funding and continued in the 2024 CRs using base funding. Complementing these pay reforms are additional investments to enhance the health and well-being of wildland firefighters, hire additional permanent and temporary wildland firefighters to increase capacity, and improve government housing for Wildland Fire Management personnel. These investments would help address long-standing recruitment and retention challenges, improve firefighters' mental health and well-being, increase Interior's capacity to complete critical risk mitigation work, and further the Administration's commitment to build a more robust and resilient wildland firefighting workforce as the frequency and intensity of wildfires continue to increase due to climate change.



The wildland fire community includes two Cabinet-level agencies that manage wildland fire on behalf of the federal government: the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Federal Wildland Fire Management Leaders and Partners

Interior and the USDA Forest Service lead the federal government's wildland fire management. The goal of Interior's Wildland Fire Management program is to provide integrated, cost-efficient, and operationally effective actions that meet resource and safety objectives before, during, and after wildfires. The guiding program principles and priorities are to create fire-resilient landscapes, promote fire-adapted communities, and safely and effectively respond to wildfires through strong federal, tribal nation, state, and local collaboration.

Interior's Wildland Fire Management program primarily comprises the Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) and the wildland fire management activities within four bureaus: (1) the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), (2) the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), (3) the National Park Service (NPS), and (4) the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). In addition, other Interior bureaus and offices (e.g., the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)) play an integral role in supporting the program.

OWF is the principal Interior office responsible for developing, managing, and overseeing Wildland Fire Management policy, planning, budget, program accountability, and review. In carrying out these responsibilities, OWF works to facilitate consistent program implementation of and adherence to the laws and directives established by Congress and the President, Administration priorities, the Department's Strategic Plan, and the Department's wildland fire policies and directives. OWF also is responsible for developing and managing many of the information technology systems the Wildland Fire Management community uses for tracking and using data, planning, and responding to wildfires. See the Appendix for an OWF organization chart.

Interior and USDA collaborate and coordinate with several other federal agencies on wildland fire management, including the following:

- Department of Commerce’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—including the National Weather Service—and National Institute of Standards and Technology,
- Department of Defense,
- Department of Health and Human Services’ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Public Health Service, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration,
- Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency, including the U.S. Fire Administration,
- Environmental Protection Agency,
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and
- Office of Personnel Management.

Wildland Fire Management Coordination

Interior, USDA Forest Service, and other federal agencies are integral parts of a larger wildland fire management community that works collaboratively to implement a cohesive fire management framework of people working to secure the safety of wildland firefighters and the public while mitigating losses from wildfire. Federal interagency wildland fire management is closely coordinated and integrated with the efforts of tribal nations, states, and local governments and private, non-profit, and international partners. Programs use interoperable equipment, training, and standards.

Across the United States, wildland fire management is guided by common policy and approach and implemented through agency line organizations. Partners collaborate using an “all hands, all lands” approach. Partners use a number of governance structures to develop and maintain this common, integrated approach—ranging from the national, strategic level to regional and local coordination groups.



The Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) is an intergovernmental council that includes federal, tribal, state, and local officials. The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture established WFLC in 2002 in the aftermath of several severe fire seasons. WFLC provides strategic guidance in the application of policy across multiple jurisdictions. WFLC was instrumental in the development and is involved in continued implementation of the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*, which remains the foundation of U.S. wildland fire management policy.

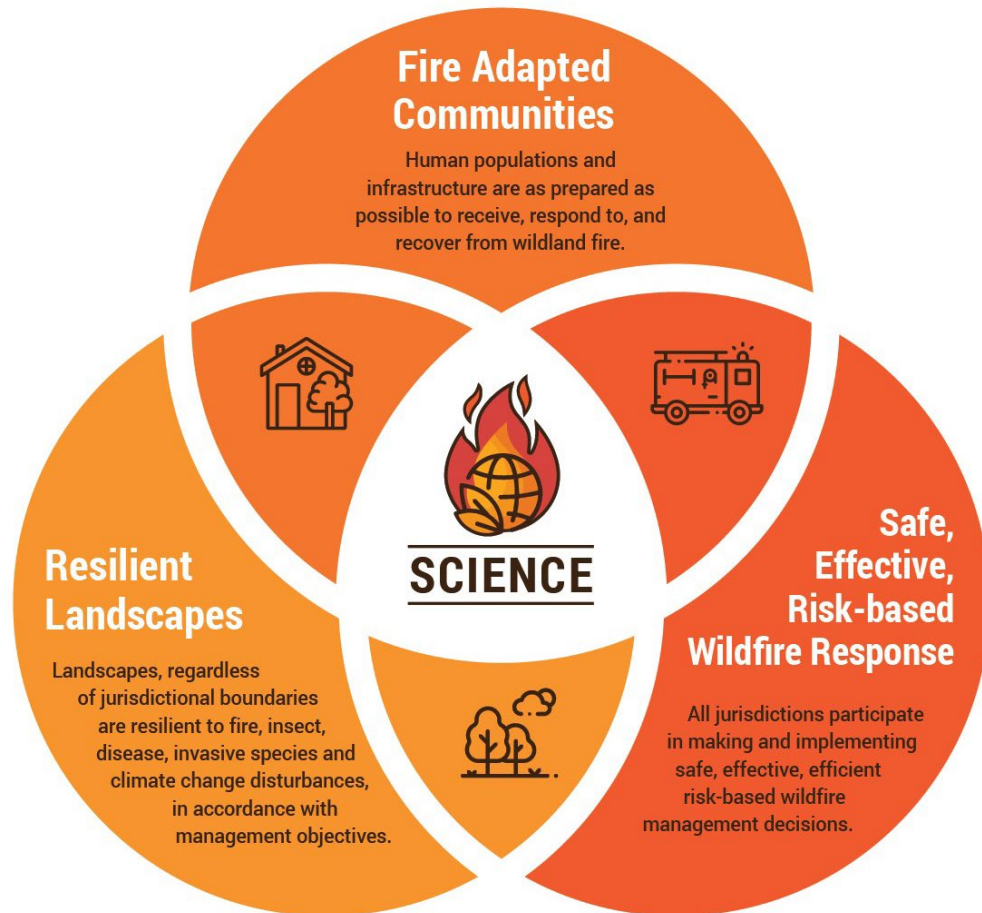


Diagram of the vision and goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

The *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*, developed in 2014 and updated in 2023, establishes a national vision for wildland fire management. It represents a commitment to working collaboratively among all stakeholders and across all landscapes through shared stewardship to achieve three national goals:

1. Resilient landscapes,
2. Fire-adapted communities, and
3. Safe, effective, risk-based wildfire response.

Community Partnerships Improve Wildfire Preparedness in Alaska



NPS staff and local leaders meet to strengthen community wildfire preparedness in the Anderson-Clear area north of Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska. (Photo by NPS.)

In 1924, a large fire burned through the Nenana Valley and Riley Creek watersheds, an area that now contains most of Denali National Park and Preserve's critical infrastructure. A century later, park staff and local leaders are demonstrating the importance of partnership to create fire-adapted communities.

The park recently completed a fuel management project to strategically remove vegetation in a high-risk area. However, wildfires know no boundaries, which means engagement by neighboring communities is essential to ensure this work is effective.

The Anderson-Clear area, north of the park and preserve, has experienced several major fires in the last decade. In recent years, communities in the area have taken important steps toward becoming fire-adapted, which proved important during the Clear Fire in 2022.

In 2023, NPS, Denali Borough, and the Anderson Fire Department staff surveyed tactical methods implemented during recent wildfires. The partners examined the effectiveness of dozer lines, shaded fuel breaks, masticated fuel breaks, and areas that have been visited by fire repeatedly in recent years. They discussed how this work provided safe access for fire crews, as well as the aftermath of the fires.

Partnerships like this are vital to creating more fire-adapted communities nationwide.

Other important wildland fire management coordinating bodies are the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, President Biden’s Wildfire Resilience Interagency Working Group, and the Wildfire Mitigation and Management Commission established by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, or Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), on November 15, 2021. BIL is making significant new investments in the Nation’s infrastructure and economic competitiveness. The landmark investments are rebuilding America’s critical infrastructure, tackling the climate crisis, advancing environmental justice, and driving the creation of good-paying union jobs. By addressing long-overdue improvements and strengthening our resilience to the changing climate, these investments in our communities across the country are growing the economy sustainably and equitably so everyone gets ahead for decades to come.

BIL is providing Interior nearly \$1.5 billion over five years—Fiscal Years (FY) 2022 through 2026—for Wildland Fire Management. The funding is “no year,” which means that it is available until expended. However, Congress made available specific amounts in each of the five years. For 2022, \$407.6 million was made available, and for each of the years 2023 and 2024, \$262.6 million was made available. That same amount will become available to Interior for each of the years 2025 and 2026.

Interior is using this funding to strengthen the resilience of communities and ecosystems to the threat of wildfire by making historic investments in the wildland fire workforce; forest and rangeland restoration; hazardous fuels management; science, technology, and equipment; and post-wildfire restoration activities. For more information on these BIL investments, see the “Program Activities” and “Other Exhibits” sections of this justification. Specifically, the FY 2025 spend plan for Interior’s BIL Wildland Fire Management activities is included in the “Other Exhibits” section.

Fire on the Horizon: Training Future Fire Leaders



Ignition operations and holding crews work together to ignite a piece of line during prescribed fire operations in South Florida. (Photo by NPS.)

On a hot South Florida day in 2023, a dark gray smoke column rose out of the characteristically flat horizon, seemingly out of place in the clear blue sky. The first wildfire of the season had ignited. Within minutes, wildland firefighters were on the scene, swiftly suppressing the flames. Firefighters immediately began to protect nearby structures from the approaching fire front. Within hours, they had doused active flames and kept the fire from becoming a large and potentially devastating incident.

This type of proficiency does not happen by accident. It is crafted into reality through planning, training, and on-the-ground experience, all of which are critical for the success of wildfire management.




NPS personnel in south Florida are building mutually beneficial coalitions with numerous agencies around the country to train wildland firefighters. South Florida provides a good opportunity for training because prescribed burning and other vegetation treatments can be done in the winter months, when many wildland fire personnel are not mobilized for wildfire suppression activities in the West.




Thanks in part to funding from BIL, NPS's South Florida Fire and Aviation personnel are training state and federal firefighters during the winter months. In 2023, more than 100 firefighters from across the nation converged in South Florida to train and conduct prescribed burns on more than 231,000 acres across Big Cypress National Preserve and Everglades National Park.

Wildland Fire Management Program & Budget Overview

Interior’s Wildland Fire Management program is committed to addressing the effects of climate change and wildfires on public health, natural and cultural resources, critical infrastructure, and communities. Interior and its partners work to restore and maintain resilient landscapes, protect lives and properties, create fire-adapted communities, and ensure safe and effective responses to wildfires. The Department strives to achieve a cost-effective, technically sound, and evidence-based wildland fire management program that safely meets resource management goals. Interior makes every effort to minimize the costs of wildfire response and the damage to communities, nature, and cultural resources in accordance with the Department’s strategic goals. As part of its ongoing efforts to improve program performance and efficiencies, in FY 2025 Interior also plans to conduct a portfolio review of wildland fire facilities assets to inform planning and improve resource allocation.

Interior uses the **Wildland Fire Management account** to fund the Administration’s priorities for wildland fire management and increase the country’s resilience to the adverse effects of climate change. Appropriations for the Wildland Fire Management account fund the following program activities and subactivities:

Program Activity		Description
	Preparedness	Provides an integrated and coordinated framework for wildfire response by funding core firefighting resources and managing the capacity of assets and operations to respond to fire activities across the United States.
	Suppression Operations	Comprises a range of actions taken to provide effective wildfire response.
	Fuels Management	Represents a strategic investment in actively managing vegetation to reduce the intensity, severity, or negative effects of wildfire through wildfire hazard reduction designed to protect values at risk. Fuels management practices include prescribed fires and mechanical, chemical, and biological treatments.

Subactivities (Other Operations)		Description
	Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR)	Supports efforts to repair or improve burned landscapes unlikely to recover without human assistance.
	Facilities Construction and Maintenance	Provides for the infrastructure used to support firefighters, safeguard the public, and improve Interior’s capability to protect values at risk from damage by wildfire.
	Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP)	Program through which USDA and Interior fund dedicated wildland fire research and science to inform wildland fire management policies and decisions at local, regional, and national levels.

Through appropriations to the **Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund account**, Congress makes available to Interior additional funding for emergency wildfire response and suppression when Suppression Operations funding in the Wildland Fire Management account is inadequate to meet the needs. Unobligated balances of funding in the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund carry forward into the next year.

2025 Budget Request

Table 1: Summary Budget Table for Interior’s Wildland Fire Management
(Budget Authority and Personnel Level)

Budget Authority (Dollars in Thousands)	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Request
Current, Wildland Fire Management (14X1125)/ A	1,092,786	1,092,786	1,279,510
<i>Total, Transfers from Reserve Fund (14X0130)</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Net Other Transfers/ B</i>	<i>1,877</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
Total Current, Wildland Fire Management (with Transfers) without Supplemental Funding	1,094,663	1,092,786	1,279,510
<i>Supplemental Funding / C</i>	<i>337,600</i>	<i>262,600</i>	<i>262,600</i>
<i>Supplemental Funding Transfers (BIL)/ B</i>	<i>-1,313</i>	<i>-1,313</i>	<i>-1,313</i>
Total Current, Wildland Fire Management (with Transfers) with Supplemental Funding	1,430,950	1,354,073	1,540,797
Current, Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund (14X1130)	340,000	340,000	360,000
<i>Total Current, Reserve Fund (with Transfers)</i>	<i>340,000</i>	<i>340,000</i>	<i>360,000</i>
Total Current, Wildland Fire Management Program/ A	1,770,950	1,694,073	1,900,797

Personnel Level

Budget Authority	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Request
Full-Time Equivalent Employees (FTE)/ D - Total Current with Supplemental Funding, including Reimbursable FTE	4,016	4,333	4,394

A/ The 2023 Enacted and 2024 Annualized CR levels for the Wildland Fire Management account include \$429,000,000 in base funding that was shifted to emergency appropriations (i.e., “shifted base”), including \$45,343,000 in Preparedness and \$383,657,000 in Suppression Operations. The 2025 Request level for the

Wildland Fire Management account includes a total of \$831,816,000 designated as emergency appropriations, including \$448,159,000 in Preparedness and \$383,657,000 in Suppression Operations.

B/ For FY 2023, the transfer amounts reflect the amount of funding received from the USDA Forest Service (\$1,877,000) for interagency projects and the funding the Wildland Fire Management program was required by BIL to transfer directly to Interior's Office of Inspector General (OIG) (\$1,313,000). For FY 2024 and FY 2025, the amounts reflect the funding the Wildland Fire Management program is required by BIL to transfer directly to Interior's OIG.

C/ Supplemental funding in FY 2023 includes \$75,000,000 provided as Emergency/Disaster Relief funding for Suppression Operations and \$262,600,000 provided through BIL for Preparedness, Fuels Management, Burned Area Rehabilitation, and the Joint Fire Science Program. Supplemental funding for FY 2024 and FY 2025 is funding provided through BIL.

D/ Except as indicated otherwise, all references to "FTE" in this justification are federal Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employee levels. This justification also includes estimates of tribal FTE personnel. The FTE amounts in this table include both direct allocated and reimbursable FTE employees, which explains the difference between the FTE levels displayed in this table and Table 3: Summary of Requirements and elsewhere in this justification.

The President's 2025 Budget for Interior's Wildland Fire Management program is \$1.6 billion, including \$1.3 billion for the Wildland Fire Management account and \$360.0 million for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund. The request for the Wildland Fire Management account includes \$831.8 million in emergency designated appropriations (i.e., "shifted base"). The total request is an increase of \$206.7 million, or 14.4 percent above the 2024 Annualized CR level for base Wildland Fire Management, of which \$75.0 million supports permanent pay increases for federal and tribal wildland firefighters. The 2025 budget request also provides an increase of \$39.8 million more than the 2024 Annualized CR level to increase firefighting capacity by an estimated 56 federal and 7 tribal FTE personnel.

The 2025 budget request reaffirms the Administration's commitment to press for implementation of permanent, comprehensive pay reform for wildland firefighters employed by Interior and the USDA Forest Service. Enacting pay reform is essential to meeting the challenges of increasing wildfire occurrence by ensuring stable recruitment and retention. The cornerstone of the long-term reforms is the funding and authorization requested to implement a permanent increase in pay to replace the temporary pay increases provided by BIL using BIL funding and continued in the 2024 CRs using base funding.

Complementing these pay reforms are additional investments to enhance the health and well-being of wildland firefighters, hire additional permanent and temporary wildland firefighters to increase capacity, and improve government housing for Wildland Fire Management personnel. These investments would help address long-standing recruitment and retention challenges, improve firefighters' mental health and well-being, increase Interior's capacity to complete critical risk mitigation work, and further the Administration's commitment to build a more robust and resilient wildland firefighting workforce as the frequency and intensity of wildfires continue to increase due to climate change.

The 2025 budget request continues to prioritize the important role proactive fuels management plays in wildland fire management to reduce the intensity, severity, and negative effects of wildfire and improve the resiliency of the Nation's public lands. The budget includes \$287.6 million for Fuels Management to maintain program capacity at the 2024 Annualized CR level, while including a program increase of \$25.0 million for the Fuels Management program's share of permanent pay increases for wildland firefighters. Combined with funding provided by BIL for fuels management, Interior expects to treat

1.8 million acres in 2025. The 2025 budget request also proposes changes in appropriations language to increase Interior's flexibility to engage in cross-boundary fuels management and burned area rehabilitation, including with non-federal partners, to support the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*. Among other benefits, these changes will support underserved communities that may be unable to share costs for work that has multiple jurisdictional benefits.

The President's 2025 Budget, featuring improved compensation, increased workforce capacity, vital health and well-being assistance, and improved housing—will transform interagency wildland fire management by improving recruitment and retention and laying the foundation for further advancements. The Administration looks forward to working with Congress to enact the important pay reform legislation and provide the requested funds needed to implement these reforms in FY 2025.

Workforce Reform – Pay Increases for Firefighters and Other Wildland Fire Personnel

The President's 2025 Budget proposes significant reforms to increase the Nation's investments in the wildland fire management workforce. The cornerstone of these long-term reforms is a permanent increase in pay. The Administration proposes legislation to:

- Establish a special base rate salary table for wildland firefighters,
- Create a new premium pay category that provides some additional compensation for all hours a wildland fire responder is mobilized on an incident,
- Establish a streamlined pay cap that provides waiver authority to the Secretary using specific criteria, and
- Provide permanent authorization to grant paid rest and recuperation leave to employees returning from certain multi-day incidents related to wildland fires.

The 2025 budget request includes a total increase of \$75.0 million, including \$50.0 million in Preparedness and \$25.0 million in Fuels Management, to cover the costs of the new special base rate table for federal firefighters and similar pay increases for tribal firefighters (see the "Preparedness," "Fuels Management," and "Suppression Operations" sections of this justification). These proposals build upon the historic reforms in BIL to ensure that wildland fire personnel receive the enhanced support they need to meet evolving mission demands, as both the frequency and intensity of catastrophic wildfires are expected to continue to increase due to climate change. Enacting these reforms is essential to providing wildland firefighters a more competitive and equitable wage, helping prevent burnout and fatigue, and improving recruitment and retention.

The special base rate table will apply to all federal wildland firefighters and will raise base pay at all grades on a sliding scale. For example, entry-level firefighters at grade GS-3 will receive a pay increase of 36 percent, and the most senior firefighters, at grades GS-14 and GS-15, will receive an increase of 3.0 percent and 1.5 percent, respectively. The proposed premium pay will apply to all federal wildland fire incident responders, with standardized duty days and compensation for all hours they are mobilized on an incident. Although these pay reforms are for federal personnel, the budget also provides funding for similar pay increases to tribal wildland fire personnel.

Bootcamp Trains Women as Wildland Firefighters



After lighting several wood piles during a training session, a group of boot camp participants gather for a briefing. (Photo by BLM.)

BLM developed the Oregon/Washington Vale District's Women in Wildfire Boot Camp to encourage more women to work in wildland fire and provide them with basic firefighting training. It has grown since the first camp in 2018. One of just a few firefighter training camps designed by women for women, it has attracted hundreds of participants from all 50 states and internationally.

In October of 2023, during the camp's sixth year, 28 participants spent seven days at a remote duty station where they lived, ate, and slept within the world of firefighting. They learned incident management organization, firefighting techniques, and suppression equipment use, safety, strategy, and tactics, along with details about fire behavior.

Since the boot camp started six years ago, many participants have entered rewarding wildland fire careers. The Women in Wildfire Boot Camp is one example of the Interior Department's continued efforts to improve diversity within wildland fire management.

Workforce Reform – Increased Support for Wildland Firefighters' Health and Well-Being

The 2025 budget request also supports additional reforms to address other significant challenges associated with recruiting and retaining wildland firefighters. The budget includes an increase of \$10.0 million for Interior (and another \$10.0 million for USDA) to establish a comprehensive joint Interior-USDA program

to enhance wildland firefighters' mental and physical health and well-being (see the "Preparedness" section of this justification). These efforts will help to better meet firefighters' needs and build longevity to sustain the workforce in a demanding work environment by managing critical incident stress and preemptive stress.

Workforce Reform – Increased Housing for Wildland Fire Personnel

The 2025 budget request also increases funding for Wildland Fire Management Facilities Construction and Maintenance by \$5.0 million to provide a total \$15.0 million, including \$10.0 million to repair, renovate, and construct housing for wildland fire personnel (see the "Facilities Construction and Maintenance" section of this justification). These funds will go a long way toward addressing the problem of inadequate or unaffordable housing facing many wildland firefighters working in certain geographic locations.

Workforce Reform – Expanded Capacity to Fight Wildfires

The 2025 budget request includes an increase of \$39.8 million in Preparedness to increase staffing by an estimated 56 federal and 7 tribal FTE. Interior will use these funds to continue its transformation and move toward a more permanent workforce for wildland fire management. The budget will help ensure that the federal government and tribal nations can effectively meet the demands of wildland fire year-round while providing individual firefighters more opportunities for much-needed rest, recuperation, training, and professional development.

Strengthening Preparedness – Increases for Aviation, Science, and Technology

In addition to the workforce reforms, the President's 2025 Budget will further improve wildland fire preparedness by enhancing uncrewed aerial systems support and increasing funding for aviation contracts. The 2025 budget request provides increases of \$5.0 million for each of these proposals (see the "Preparedness" section of this justification). The budget also will further improve wildland fire management through the establishment of a Joint Office for Wildfire Science and Technology. The office, which receives an initial \$5.0 million investment in the Budget (split evenly between Interior and the USDA Forest Service), would lead the development, deployment, and sustainment of technology, science, and data to be used to improve safety, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of U.S. wildland fire management.

Good Accounting Obligation in Government Act Report

The Good Accounting Obligation in Government Act (GAO-IG Act, Public Law 115-414) enacted January 3, 2019, requires that Agencies report the status of each open audit recommendation issued more than one year prior to the submission of the Agency's annual budget justification to Congress. The Act requires Agencies to include the current target completion date, implementation status, and any discrepancies on closure determinations.

The Department of the Interior leadership takes audit follow-up very seriously and considers our external auditors, to include the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and Office of the Inspector General, valued partners in not only improving the Department's management and compliance obligations but also enhancing its programmatic and administrative operations. As stewards of taxpayer resources, the Department applies cost-benefit analysis and enterprise risk management principles in recommendation implementation decisions. The Department's GAO-IG Act Report will be available at the following link: <https://www.doi.gov/cj>.

Budget Summary Tables

Budget at a Glance

Table 2: Wildland Fire Management Budget at a Glance
(Dollars in Thousands)

Appropriation: Wildland Fire Management (14X1125)	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Fixed Costs (+/-)	2025 Internal Transfers (+/-)	2025 Program Changes (+/-)	2025 Request
Preparedness, Total/ A	427,159	427,159	+10,002	+0	+131,616	568,777
<i>Preparedness: Baseline Capacity – 2024 Fixed Costs</i>	0	0	+0	+0	[+19,363]	0
<i>Preparedness: Increase Firefighters' Compensation</i>	0	0	+0	+0	[+50,000]	0
<i>Preparedness: Increase Workforce Capacity</i>	0	0	+0	+0	[+39,753]	0
<i>Preparedness: Invest in Workforce Health and Well-Being</i>	0	0	+0	+0	[+10,000]	0
<i>Preparedness: Enhance Uncrewed Aerial Systems Support</i>	0	0	+0	+0	[+5,000]	0
<i>Preparedness: Increase Funding for Exclusive-Use Aviation Contracts</i>	0	0	+0	+0	[+5,000]	0
<i>Preparedness: Establish a Joint Office for Wildfire Science and Technology</i>	0	0	+0	+0	[+2,500]	0
Suppression Operations, Total/ A	383,657	383,657	+0	+0	+0	383,657
Fuels Management, Total	247,000	247,000	+5,316	+0	+35,290	287,606
<i>Fuels Management: Baseline Capacity – 2024 Fixed Costs</i>	0	0	+0	+0	[+10,290]	0

<i>Fuels Management: Increase Firefighters' Compensation</i>	0	0	+0	+0	[+25,000]	0
Other Operations, Total	34,970	34,970	+0	+0	+4,500	39,470
Other Operations: Burned Area Rehabilitation	20,470	20,470	+0	+0	+0	20,470
Other Operations: Facilities Construction and Maintenance	10,000	10,000	+0	+0	+5,000	15,000
<i>Facilities: Increase Housing for Personnel</i>	0	0	+0	+0	[+5,000]	0
Other Operations: Joint Fire Science Program	4,500	4,500	+0	+0	-500	4,000
<i>Joint Fire Science Program: Wildland Fire Research</i>	0	0	+0	+0	[-500]	0
TOTAL: Wildland Fire Management/ A	1,092,786	1,092,786	+15,318	+0	+171,406	1,279,510
<i>Wildland Fire Management: Net Other Transfers/ B</i>	1,877	0	+0	+0	+0	0
TOTAL: Wildland Fire Management (with Transfers) without Supplemental Funding, Total/ A, C	1,094,663	1,092,786	+15,318	+0	+171,406	1,279,510
<i>Supplemental Funding: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) (P.L. 117-58)</i>	262,600	262,600	+0	+0	+0	262,600
<i>Supplemental Funding: Disaster Relief (P.L. 117-328)</i>	75,000	0	+0	+0	+0	0
<i>Supplemental Funding: Transfer to OIG (BIL)/ B</i>	-1,313	-1,313	+0	+0	+0	-1,313
TOTAL: Wildland Fire Management (with Transfers) with Supplemental/ A	1,430,950	1,354,073	+15,318	+0	+171,406	1,540,797
Appropriation: Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund (14X0130)						
<i>Reserve Fund: Suppression Operations</i>	340,000	340,000	+0	+0	+20,000	360,000

TOTAL: Wildland Fire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund/ C	340,000	340,000	+0	+0	+20,000	360,000
TOTAL, ALL DEPARTMENTWIDE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT/ A	1,770,950	1,694,073	+15,318	+0	+191,406	1,900,797

A/ The 2023 Enacted and 2024 Annualized CR levels for the Wildland Fire Management account include \$429,000,000 in base funding that was shifted to emergency appropriations (i.e., "shifted base"), including \$45,343,000 in Preparedness and \$383,657,000 in Suppression Operations. The 2025 Request level for the Wildland Fire Management account includes a total of \$831,816,000 designated as emergency appropriations, including \$448,159,000 in Preparedness and \$383,657,000 in Suppression Operations.

B/ For FY 2023, the transfer amounts reflect the amount of funding received from the USDA Forest Service (\$1,877,000) for interagency projects and the funding the Wildland Fire Management program was required by BIL to transfer directly to Interior's OIG (\$1,313,000). For FY 2024 and FY 2025, the amounts reflect the funding the Wildland Fire Management program is required by BIL to transfer directly to Interior's OIG.

C/ Supplemental funding in FY 2023 includes \$75,000,000 provided for Disaster Relief for Suppression Operations and \$262,600,000 provided through BIL for Preparedness, Fuels Management, Burned Area Rehabilitation, and the Joint Fire Science Program. Supplemental funding for FY 2024 and FY 2025 is funding provided through BIL.

Summary of Requirements

Table 3: Summary of Requirements, Wildland Fire Management
(Dollars in Thousands)

ACCOUNT/Activity/Subactivity	2023 Actual	2023 Actual FTE/ D	2024 Annualized CR	2024 Annualized CR FTE/ D	2025 Request Fixed Costs (+/-)	2025 Request Internal Transfers (+/-)	2025 Request Program Changes (+/-)	2025 Request Program Changes (+/-) FTE	2025 Request	2025 Request FTE/ D	2025 Request TOTAL Change from 2024 (+/-)
WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT											
Preparedness/ A	427,159	2,143	427,159	2,437	+10,002	+0	+131,616	+61	568,777	2,498	+141,618
Total, Preparedness/ A	427,159	2,143	427,159	2,437	+10,002	+0	+131,616	+61	568,777	2,498	+141,618
Suppression Operations/ A	383,657	295	383,657	295	+0	+0	+0	+0	383,657	295	+0
Total, Suppression Operations/ A	383,657	295	383,657	295	+0	+0	+0	+0	383,657	295	+0
Fuels Management	247,000	1,274	247,000	1,297	+5,316	+0	+35,290	+0	287,606	1,297	+40,606
Total, Fuels Management	247,000	1,274	247,000	1,297	+5,316	+0	+35,290	+0	287,606	1,297	+40,606
Other Operations: Burned Area Rehabilitation	20,470	74	20,470	74	+0	+0	+0	+0	20,470	74	+0
Other Operations: Facilities Construction and Maintenance	10,000	2	10,000	2	+0	+0	+5,000	+0	15,000	2	+5,000
Other Operations: Joint Fire Science Program	4,500	4	4,500	4	+0	+0	-500	+0	4,000	4	-500
Total, Other Operations	34,970	80	34,970	80	+0	+0	+4,500	+0	39,470	80	+4,500
TOTAL, WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT W/O SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING/ A	1,092,786	3,792	1,092,786	4,109	+15,318	+0	+171,406	+61	1,279,510	4,170	+186,724
Net Other Transfers/ B	1,877	0	0	0	+0	+0	+0	+0	0	0	+0
TOTAL, WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT (W/ TRANSFERS) W/O SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING/ A, C	1,094,663	3,792	1,092,786	4,109	+15,318	+0	+171,406	+61	1,279,510	4,170	+186,724
Supplemental Funding: BIL (P.L. 117-58)	262,600	0	262,600	0	+0	+0	+0	+0	262,600	0	+0

ACCOUNT/Activity/Subactivity	2023 Actual	2023 Actual FTE/ D	2024 Annualized CR	2024 Annualized CR FTE/ D	2025 Request Fixed Costs (+/-)	2025 Request Internal Transfers (+/-)	2025 Request Program Changes (+/-)	2025 Request Program Changes (+/-) FTE	2025 Request	2025 Request FTE/ D	2025 Request TOTAL Change from 2024 (+/-)
<i>Supplemental Funding: Disaster Relief (P.L. 117-328)</i>	75,000	0	0	0	+0	+0	+0	+0	0	0	+0
<i>Supplemental Funding: Transfer to OIG (BIL)/ B</i>	-1,313	0	-1,313	0	+0	+0	+0	+0	-1,313	0	+0
TOTAL, WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT (W/TRANSFERS) WITH SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING	1,430,950	3,792	1,354,073	4,109	+15,318	+0	+171,406	+61	1,540,797	4,170	+186,724
WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS RESERVE FUND Suppression Operations	340,000	0	340,000	0	+0	+0	+20,000	+0	360,000	0	+20,000
TOTAL, WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS RESERVE FUND	340,000	0	340,000	0	+0	+0	+20,000	+0	360,000	0	+20,000

A/ The 2023 Enacted and 2024 Annualized CR levels for the Wildland Fire Management account include \$429,000,000 in base funding that was shifted to emergency appropriations (i.e., "shifted base"), including \$45,343,000 in Preparedness and \$383,657,000 in Suppression Operations. The 2025 Request level for the Wildland Fire Management account includes a total of \$831,816,000 designated as emergency appropriations, including \$448,159,000 in Preparedness and \$383,657,000 in Suppression Operations.

B/ For FY 2023, the transfer amounts reflect the amount of funding received from the USDA Forest Service (\$1,877,000) for interagency projects and the funding the Wildland Fire Management program was required by BIL to transfer directly to Interior's Office of Inspector General (OIG) (\$1,313,000). For FY 2024 and FY 2025, the amounts reflect the funding the Wildland Fire Management program is required by BIL to transfer directly to Interior's OIG.

C/ Supplemental funding in FY 2023 includes \$75,000,000 provided for Disaster Relief for Suppression Operations and \$262,600,000 provided through BIL for Preparedness, Fuels Management, Burned Area Rehabilitation, and the Joint Fire Science Program. Supplemental funding for FY 2024 and FY 2025 is funding provided through BIL.

D/ The federal FTE employee levels in this table include personnel funded by supplemental appropriations, including Disaster Relief and BIL. The levels do not include reimbursable FTE, which explains the difference from the FTE levels displayed in Table 1: Summary Budget Table.

Program Activities

The President's 2025 Budget for Interior's Wildland Fire Management program—including both the Wildland Fire Management account and the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund—is \$1,639,510,000 and 4,170 direct and allocated federal FTE employees, which are increases of +\$206,724,000 (+14.4 percent) and +61 FTE (+1.5 percent) above the comparable 2024 Annualized CR levels, respectively. Within these totals:

- The 2025 budget request for the Wildland Fire Management account is \$1,279,510,000 and 4,170 federal FTE, which are increases of +\$186,724,000 (+17.1 percent) and +61 FTE (+1.5 percent) above the 2024 Annualized CR levels, respectively. The increase includes \$15,318,000 for 2025 fixed costs. The budget also will increase tribal FTE personnel by an estimated 7 above the 2024 Annualized CR level, to a total of 755 for 2025.
- The 2025 budget request for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund is \$360,000,000 and 0 FTE, which is an increase of +\$20,000,000 (+5.9 percent) above the 2024 Annualized CR level.

The President's 2025 Budget proposes significant reforms to increase the Nation's investments in the wildland fire management workforce. The cornerstone of these long-term reforms is a permanent increase in pay. The Administration proposes legislation to establish a special base rate salary table for wildland firefighters, create a new premium pay category that provides some additional compensation for all hours a wildland fire responder is mobilized on an incident, and establish a streamlined pay cap that provides waiver authority to the Secretary using specific criteria. The budget funds these federal pay reforms and similar pay increases for tribal personnel. These proposals build upon the historic reforms in BIL to ensure that wildland fire personnel receive the enhanced support they need to meet evolving mission demands, as both the frequency and intensity of catastrophic wildfires are expected to increase due to climate change.

Wildland Fire Management Appropriation

Preparedness (\$568,777,000/2,498 FTE)

The 2025 budget request provides \$568.8 million for Preparedness, an increase of +\$141.6 million (+33.2 percent) above the 2024 Annualized CR level. The request provides funding for 2,498 federal FTEs and 292 tribal FTE. The budget provides +\$10.0 million more than the 2024 level for fixed costs and +\$131.6 million more than the 2024 level for program changes. The request, which includes \$448,159,000 of emergency appropriations, provides:

- +\$19.4 million for baseline capacity increases tied to 2024 fixed costs,
- +\$50.0 million to increase federal and tribal firefighters' compensation,
- +\$39.8 million to increase workforce capacity (supporting increases of +56 federal FTE and +7 tribal FTE above the 2024 levels),
- +\$10.0 million to increase investments in wildland fire personnel health and well-being with USDA,
- +\$5.0 million and +5 federal FTE to enhance uncrewed aerial systems support,
- +\$5.0 million to increase funding for exclusive-use aviation contracts, and
- +\$2.5 million to establish a joint office for wildfire science and technology with USDA.

Suppression Operations (\$383,657,000/295 FTE)

The 2025 budget request provides \$383.7 million for Suppression Operations. The budget funds Suppression Operations at the ten-year average of suppression obligations as reported in the 2015 budget, in accordance with Division O of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P. L. 115-141). This level is equal to the 2024 Annualized CR level and the level provided for by P.L. 115-141. Congress appropriated 2023 funds for Suppression Operations through the disaster relief supplemental. All of the 2025 budget request for Suppression Operations is provided as emergency appropriations. The request provides funding for 295 federal FTE, the same as the 2024 level. (See also the “Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund,” below.)

Fuels Management (\$287,606,000/1,297 FTE)

The 2025 budget request provides \$287.6 million for Fuels Management, an increase of +\$40.6 million (+16.4 percent) above the 2024 Annualized CR level. The budget provides +\$5.3 million for fixed costs, +\$10.3 million for baseline capacity increases tied to 2024 fixed costs, and +\$25.0 million to increase federal and tribal firefighters’ compensation. The request provides funding for 1,297 federal FTE and 395 tribal FTE, the same as the 2024 levels. The 2025 budget request also proposes changes in appropriations language to increase Interior’s flexibility to engage in cross-boundary fuels management and burned area rehabilitation, including with non-federal partners, to support the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*. Among other benefits, these changes will support underserved communities that may be unable to share costs for work that has multiple jurisdictional benefits.

Burned Area Rehabilitation (\$20,470,000/74 FTE)

The 2025 budget request provides \$20.5 million for Burned Area Rehabilitation, the same as the 2024 Annualized CR level. Interior will use the funds to promote resilience to climate change in areas adjacent to underrepresented communities, tribal nations, and elsewhere by reducing the long-term negative effects of wildfires and increasing the resiliency of landscapes and ecosystems in areas that are unlikely to recover on their own. The request provides funding for 74 federal FTE and 68 tribal FTE, the same as the 2024 enacted levels. See also the proposed appropriations language change mentioned in Fuels Management, above.

Facilities Construction and Maintenance (\$15,000,000/2 FTE)

The 2025 budget request provides \$15.0 million for Facilities Construction and Maintenance, an increase of +\$5.0 million above the 2024 level. The increased funding will allow Interior to advance its efforts to repair, renovate, and construct housing for personnel. Combined with base funding, the 2025 budget provides \$10.0 million for housing. These funds will go a long way toward addressing the problem of inadequate or unaffordable housing facing many wildland firefighters working in certain geographic locations. The request provides funding for 2 federal FTE, the same as the 2024 level.

Joint Fire Science Program (\$4,000,000/4 FTE)

The 2025 budget request provides \$4.0 million for the Joint Fire Science Program. Interior and USDA Forest Service jointly fund and administer the program, which funds high-priority research studies to ensure that climate change adaptation and resilience are integrated throughout the Wildland Fire Management program. The request provides funding for 4 federal FTE, the same as the 2024 level.

Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund Appropriation

Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund (\$360,000,000/0 FTE)

The 2025 budget request increases funding for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund by +\$20.0 million (+5.9 percent) above the 2024 Annualized CR level. These resources are available to Interior's Wildland Fire Management program for emergency wildfire response and suppression when Suppression Operations funding provided in the Wildland Fire Management account is inadequate to meet the needs. Reserve funding that is not needed for one year carries forward into the next year. The Reserve Fund currently has a balance of \$670.0 million from FYs 2022 and 2023 appropriations, and the FY 2024 CRs (P.L. 118-15, 118-22, and 118-35) make available another \$148.6 million. The 2024 Annualized CR level is \$340.0 million.

PREPAREDNESS



The Preparedness activity provides an integrated and coordinated framework for wildfire response. Preparedness funds the core firefighting resources, assets, and operations that Interior uses to respond to fire activities across the United States.

Activity: Preparedness
Subactivity: Preparedness

	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Fixed Costs (+/-)	2025 Internal Transfers (+/-)	2025 Program Changes (+/-)	2025 Request	Change from 2024 Level (+/-)
Dollars <i>(in Thousands)/ A</i>	427,159	427,159	+10,002	+0	+131,616	568,777	+141,618
<i>FTE/ B</i>	2,143	2,437	+0	+0	+61	2,498	+61
<i>Tribal FTE</i>	251	285	+0	+0	+7	292	+7

A/ The 2023 Actual and 2024 Annualized CR levels include \$45,343,000 in base funding for Preparedness that was shifted to emergency appropriations (i.e., “shifted base”). The 2025 Request level includes \$448,159,000 in Preparedness designated as emergency appropriations.

B/ Direct and allocated federal FTE

Program Changes

The 2025 budget request provides \$568,777,000 for Preparedness, a total program change of +\$131,616,000 (+30.8 percent) above the 2024 Annualized CR level. The request provides funding for 2,498 federal FTE (+61 above the 2024 level) and 292 tribal FTE (+7 above the 2024 level).

Summary of 2025 Program Changes for Preparedness

Program Changes	Dollars in Thousands	FTE/ A
Baseline Capacity – 2024 Fixed Costs	+19,363	+0
Increase Firefighters’ Compensation	+50,000	+0
Increase Workforce Capacity	+39,753	+56
Invest in Workforce Health and Well-Being	+10,000	+0
Enhance Uncrewed Aerial Systems Support	+5,000	+5
Increase Funding for Exclusive-Use Aviation Contracts	+5,000	+0
Establish a Joint Office for Wildfire Science and Technology	+2,500	+0

Program Changes	Dollars in Thousands	FTE/ A
TOTAL Program Changes	+131,616	+61

A/ Direct and allocated federal FTE; estimates of tribal FTE are included elsewhere in this justification.

- Baseline Capacity – 2024 Fixed Costs** (+\$19,363,000/+0 federal FTE/+0 tribal FTE) – The 2025 budget request includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must-pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill Interior’s Wildland Fire Management mission. The 2025 budget request includes \$19.4 million in the Preparedness activity which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2024. This request, in combination with the FY 2025 fixed cost amounts, will allow the program to meet must-pay requirements without impacting program activities.
- Increase Firefighters’ Compensation** (+\$50,000,000/+0 federal FTE/+0 tribal FTE) – The 2025 budget request increases funding for federal and tribal wildland firefighters’ pay by a total of \$75.0 million, including \$50.0 million in Preparedness (see also the “Suppression Operations” and “Fuels Management” sections of this justification). These pay increases build on the President’s 2021 compensation increases for wildland firefighters and the BIL special pay supplements for federal firefighters in 2022 and 2023 (continuing during the 2024 CR) with reforms to provide permanent increases in pay for wildland firefighters. The federal government must provide a level of pay that is competitive with the compensation provided by state, local, and private employers. Otherwise, firefighting capacity-building goals will be undermined as the federal government hires and trains firefighters who are subsequently lured away to higher-paying jobs.

To implement permanent pay increases for federal wildland personnel, the Administration proposes legislation to:

- Establish a special base rate salary table for wildland firefighters,
- Create a new premium pay category that provides some additional compensation for all hours a wildland fire responder is mobilized on an incident,
- Establish a streamlined pay cap that provides waiver authority to the Secretary using specific criteria, and
- Provide permanent authorization to grant paid rest and recuperation leave to employees returning from certain multi-day incidents related to wildland fires.

The budget funds these federal pay reforms and similar pay increases for tribal personnel. These proposals build upon the historic reforms in BIL to ensure that wildland fire personnel receive the enhanced support they need to meet evolving mission demands, as both the frequency and intensity of catastrophic wildfires are expected to continue to increase due to climate change. Enacting these reforms is essential to meet the challenges posed by longer and more intense fire seasons while providing wildland firefighters a more competitive and equitable wage, helping prevent burnout and fatigue, and improving recruitment and retention.

The special base rate table will apply to all federal wildland firefighters and will raise base pay at all grades on a sliding scale. For example, entry-level firefighters at grade GS-3 will receive a pay increase of 36 percent, and the most senior firefighters, at grades GS-14 and GS-15, will receive an increase of 3.0 percent and 1.5 percent, respectively. The proposed premium pay will apply to all federal wildland fire incident responders, with standardized duty days and compensation for all hours they are mobilized on an incident. Although these pay reforms are for federal personnel, the budget also provides funding for similar pay increases for tribal wildland fire personnel.

- **Increase Workforce Capacity** (+\$39,753,000/+56 federal FTE/+7 tribal FTE) – The 2025 budget request increases Preparedness firefighting capacity by 56 federal FTE and 7 tribal FTE to help Interior better respond to the growing threat of wildfires timely and effectively. The budget will allow Interior to build on the workforce transformation begun in 2021 to increase the number of permanent positions and continue developing a professional, year-round wildland fire workforce to meet the demands of longer, larger, costlier, and more complex wildfires. Further, the expanded personnel capacity will allow firefighters to have more time for rest and recuperation after being mobilized on incidents and more time for training and professional development.
- **Invest in Workforce Health and Well-Being** (+\$10,000,000/+0 federal FTE/+0 tribal FTE) – The 2025 budget request increases Preparedness funding by \$10.0 million for Interior to work with USDA to implement a comprehensive joint Interior-USDA program to enhance firefighters’ mental and physical health and well-being. These efforts will help better meet firefighters’ needs and build longevity to sustain the workforce in a demanding work environment by managing critical incident stress and preemptive stress. (The request for USDA Forest Service also provides \$10.0 million for this program.)
- **Enhance Uncrewed Aerial Systems Support** (+\$5,000,000/+5 federal FTE/+0 tribal FTE) – The 2025 budget request provides an increase of \$5.0 million for Interior’s investments in uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) that support wildland fire management. Interior will acquire additional fleet and equipment and hire personnel for program operations and leadership. In 2025, Interior will target more of these new investments on increasing UAS fleet and equipment. Over time, Interior expects the balance to shift toward further expanding the number of personnel and operational capacity. The request will increase Preparedness personnel by +5 federal FTE above the 2024 level.
- **Increase Funding for Exclusive-Use Aviation Contracts** (+\$5,000,000/+0 federal FTE/+0 tribal FTE) – The 2025 budget request provides an increase of \$5.0 million in Preparedness for Interior’s exclusive-use aviation contracts. These contracts reduce the need for “call-when-needed” contracts, which provide less assurance that resources will be available for suppression operations and are more costly over the long run.
- **Establish a Joint Office for Wildfire Science and Technology** (+\$2,500,000/+0 federal FTE/+0 tribal FTE) – The 2025 budget request provides an increase of \$2.5 million to Interior and a corresponding increase to USDA Forest Service for the two departments to establish a Joint Office for Wildfire Science and Technology. This joint office would lead the development, deployment, and sustainment of technology, science, and data to be used to improve safety, effectiveness, and cost efficiency across the full spectrum of wildland fire management operations. This proposal addresses recommendations identified in recent federally-directed advisory reports on wildland fire

management, including the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology’s *Report to the President Modernizing Wildland Firefighting to Protect Our Firefighters* (released in February 2023), *ON FIRE: The Report of the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission* (released in September 2023 by the commission required by BIL), and the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Addendum Update* (released in 2023).

BLM Expands Wildfire Detection in Oregon and Washington



A contract technician installs wildfire detection cameras on a tower overlooking public lands managed by BLM Oregon/Washington (Photo by University of Nevada-Reno.)

As climate change propels increasingly extreme wildfires, BLM is employing technology to improve early detection and assist with response operations. In 2023, the bureau expanded its network of wildfire detection cameras across the Pacific Northwest.

The ALERT Wildfire detection camera program began over a decade ago. Through partnerships with the University of Nevada-Reno and the University of Oregon’s Seismological Laboratories, the program is helping install wildfire detection cameras in Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. The cameras are high definition and high speed with pan, tilt, and zoom capabilities. Each camera sends a remote feed to a public webpage that updates the picture every 10 seconds.

Today, 41 cameras are strategically positioned to monitor areas in Oregon and Washington for wildfire ignitions. These cameras help firefighters and first responders locate wildfires, quickly scale fire resources appropriately, monitor fire behavior, and safely evacuate nearby communities.

“Additional detection cameras will provide continued statewide access to vital information of emergent wildfires and provide for the most efficient and effective emergency response, thereby ensuring the quality of lives of Oregonians and protecting our natural resources,” said Jeff Fedrizzi, BLM Oregon State Fire Management Officer.

Program Overview

The Preparedness activity provides for the firefighting resources and assets to protect public health, natural and cultural resources, critical infrastructure, and communities from the detrimental effects of wildfires. Through the interagency Wildland Fire Management program, Interior and its partners manage a fire response framework for efficient wildfire response locally, regionally, and nationally. As conditions change throughout the year and wildfire activity increases in specific locations, Interior and its partners strategically move firefighting resources, including equipment and people, to locations where the risks are highest and additional resources are needed.

Most importantly, the Preparedness activity funds firefighters. It supports firefighting assets such as aviation resources, engines, and equipment, along with services that provide the capacity to fight wildfires safely and effectively. Interior shares these resources and assets at all levels of government across the country. Through national interagency coordination and collaboration, assets are available at the national, regional, tribal, or local level depending on current need. Maximizing the mobility of resources increases efficiency by lowering costs and reducing the potential for duplicating the deployment of valuable firefighting assets.

Interior strives to increase efficiencies and partnerships to maintain core capabilities. For example, increasing partnerships and collaboration helps to reduce administrative and operational redundancy through the use of combined positions and shared contracts. Cooperative protection agreements with other federal agencies, states, self-governing tribal nations, and local communities—along with contracts with private firms—provide protection, facilitate the sharing of resources, and streamline work. These agreements promote safe and rapid response, help minimize overall protection costs for all parties, and foster relationships essential to the development of a cohesive and coordinated response to manage wildfires. This coordination is especially important when wildfires burn across land ownerships, jurisdictions, and administrative boundaries.

Program Activities

The 2025 budget request continues to support an interoperable approach to Preparedness that increases efficiencies, supports partnerships, and maintains core capabilities. Preparedness efforts help reduce the risk of large wildfire potential and lower the cost of more intensive wildfire response.

The 2025 budget request for Preparedness:

- Supports 2,498 federal FTE (+61 more than the 2024 Annualized CR level) who make up Interior's core firefighting capacity—to increase preparedness to respond to the growing threat from wildfires and climate change;
- Funds 292 tribal FTE (+7 more than the 2024 level);
- Increases firefighters' compensation, building on the President's 2021 compensation increases for wildland firefighters and BIL special pay supplements for federal firefighters in 2022 and 2023, which are continuing under the 2024 CRs;

- Increases the number of firefighters and continues the workforce transformation to a more permanent workforce, which Interior began in 2021 and which BIL supports;
- Provides dedicated funding to expand Interior’s efforts, working with USDA, to enhance the physical and mental health and well-being of wildland fire personnel;
- Increases investments in the UAS fleet and staffing and the exclusive-use contracts for aviation that support wildland fire management;
- Provides funding for Interior to establish a Joint Office of Wildfire Science and Technology;
- Funds other core firefighting resources and operations necessary to respond to wildfire activity across the United States, including fire engines, planes, helicopters, and other firefighting equipment and resources; as well as Interior’s share of the personnel and funding for the National Interagency Fire Center, the National Interagency Coordination Center, and Predictive Services (see also Tables 4, 5, and 6, below); and
- Maintains the 2024 Annualized CR level of Preparedness funding for contract and administrative support for firefighting organizations managed by tribal nations and tribal workforce development through dedicated funding totaling \$15.0 million.

The effective mobilization of wildfire response resources is critical to meet objectives for protecting and managing natural and cultural resources. Federal wildland fire management agencies emphasize risk-informed wildfire response. This approach means Interior and other agencies take intensive suppression actions when required to protect life, property, and other assets at risk. However, a different approach may be utilized in areas where wildfire risks are low or where fire may achieve ecological benefits.

Managing wildfires for multiple objectives allows implementation of wildland fire management strategies and tactics to better manage risk, meet protection and resource objectives, and reduce costs. Effective response to wildfire requires the proper resources to analyze risks, evaluate potential actions, provide program management and oversight, and provide operational resources to manage wildfires.

Interior recognizes the importance of developing and adopting advanced or emergent technologies to support the preparation for and response to wildfire incidents.

BIL provides Interior additional funding each year through FY 2026 for certain Preparedness activities. For more information on BIL-funded Preparedness accomplishments and plans, see the FY 2025 BIL spend plan in the “Other Exhibits” section of this justification.

Preparedness Resources Tables

Table 4 provides the total number of personnel employed within the Preparedness program and the type and number of resources used (staffed or contracted). The data for 2023 data is actual, as reported, while the data for 2024 and 2025 are estimates.

Table 4: Estimated Interior Preparedness Resources, Fiscal Years 2023-2025

Asset or Resource Type	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Request
Personnel: Total Number of Federal Personnel	4,669	5,100	5,130
<i>Personnel: Federal Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)</i>	<i>2,143</i>	<i>2,437</i>	<i>2,498</i>
Personnel: Number of Smokejumpers	163	175	180
Personnel: Number of Type 1 Hotshot Crews	18	18	18
Equipment: Number of Engines	654	660	665
Equipment: Number of Other Heavy Equipment	92	95	97
Aviation: Number of Water Scoopers	6	6	6
Aviation: Number of Single Engine Air Tankers	35	35	35
Aviation: Number of Type 1 Helicopters	1	1	1
Aviation: Number of Type 2 Helicopters	9	9	9
Aviation: Number of Type 3 Helicopters	31	31	31
Aviation: Number of Smokejumper Planes	7	7	7
Aviation: Number of ASM/Lead Planes	5	5	5
Aviation: Number of Air Tactical Units	13	13	13
Aviation: Number of Utility Aircraft	5	5	5

This table provides estimates for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025. Actual figures will depend on the timing and implementation of specific budget actions.

Aviation contracts are funded with a combination of Preparedness and Suppression Operations funds.

BIA Invests in New Aircraft to Improve Wildfire Suppression



One of two new aircraft used for air attack and surveillance, for which BIA contracted during 2023, is inspected on the tarmac at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. (Photo by BIA.)

Advanced aviation technology is helping BIA respond to wildfires with greater precision. In June 2023, BIA awarded contracts for two Pilatus PC-12 aircraft with advanced air surveillance and reconnaissance sensors. These single-engine aircraft fly over an incident, providing tactical coordination with the incident commander on the ground and directing airtankers and helicopters to critical areas of a fire for retardant and water drops.

These two planes are equipped with Wescam MX-15 technology, which includes electro-optic imaging systems, a thermal imager, short-wave infrared sensor, advanced video tracker, and speed measurement tools. This technology provides a considerably more accurate and technologically advanced picture to inform decisions and deploy ground and air resources to have maximum impact.

BIA procured the service of these aircraft under an exclusive-use contract. This type of contract is an important element of Interior's ability to prepare for effective wildfire suppression. The FY 2025 Budget increases funding in the Preparedness activity for aviation contracts.

Table 5 identifies additional Preparedness resources funded through agreements between BIA and individual tribal nations. The data for 2023 data is actual, as reported, while the data for 2024 and 2025 are estimates.

Table 5: Estimated Tribal Preparedness Resources, Fiscal Years 2023-2025

Asset or Resource Type	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Request
Personnel: Total Number of Tribal Personnel	901	999	1,025
Personnel: Tribal Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	251	285	292
Personnel: Number of Type 1 Hotshot Crews	4	4	4
Equipment: Number of Engines	50	51	52
Equipment: Number of Other Heavy Equipment	18	19	19

This table provides estimates for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025. Actual figures will depend on the timing and implementation of specific budget actions.

Table 6 displays Preparedness expenditures across the different general cost categories. The 2023 column displays actual budget data from Interior’s financial accounting system. The 2024 Annualized CR and 2025 Request columns display estimated cost category allocations.

Table 6: Estimated Preparedness Program Costs, Fiscal Years 2023-2025
(Dollars in Thousands)

General Cost Category	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Request
Salaries and Benefits	292,144	264,144	388,777
Travel and Permanent Change of Station Moves	8,299	9,299	10,000
General Contracts and Agreements	54,051	58,557	62,000
Aviation Contracts	44,673	44,673	50,000
Tribal Contracts and Agreements	28,153	28,153	30,000
Fire Vehicle and Equipment Fleet	10,259	12,259	12,500
Supplies and Materials	25,296	27,296	27,500
Other/ A	11,628	12,628	13,000
Total Program Costs	474,503	457,009	593,777

A/ The “Other” category includes primarily expenditures in utilities and rental payments.

Notes: Amounts include BIL funding: \$99,500,000 for 2023; \$29,850,000 for 2024; and \$22,795,450 for 2025.

The 2024 Annualized CR amount for Salaries and Benefits reflects a shift of the cost of firefighter pay supplements from Preparedness to Suppression Operations.

SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS



Interior’s Wildland Fire Management bureaus, offices, and partners prepare thoroughly so that, when the need for wildfire suppression arises, personnel and other resources and assets are ready to go to incidents on a moment’s notice. The Suppression Operations activity comprises a range of actions taken to provide effective wildfire response.

The Suppression Operations activity also provides funding for post-fire emergency stabilization.

Activity: Suppression Operations Subactivity: Suppression Operations

	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Fixed Costs (+/-)	2025 Internal Transfers (+/-)	2025 Program Changes (+/-)	2025 Request	Change from 2024 Level (+/-)
Dollars <i>(in Thousands)/ A</i>	383,657	383,657	+0	+0	+0	383,657	+0
<i>FTE/ B</i>	295	295	+0	+0	+0	295	+0

A/ The 2023 Actual and 2024 Annualized CR levels include \$383,657,000 in base funding for Suppression Operations that was shifted to emergency appropriations (i.e., “shifted base”). The 2023 Actual level does not include an additional \$75,000,000 appropriated as disaster relief supplemental funding for FY 2023. The 2025 Request level includes \$383,657,000 in Suppression Operations designated as emergency appropriations.

B/ Direct and allocated federal FTE

Program Changes

The 2025 budget request provides \$383,657,000 for Suppression Operations, designated as emergency appropriations (i.e., “shifted base”), which will fund 295 federal FTE. The request reflects no program changes from the 2024 Annualized CR level. The 2025 budget request is equal to the level provided for by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141).

Program Overview

When wildfires occur, Interior uses Suppression Operations funds to support the direct response to manage these incidents to protect life, property, infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources. The Suppression Operations activity of the Wildland Fire Management account funds an extensive range of resources, including such things as:

- Incident management personnel and support functions;
- Aviation and operational assets;
- Logistical services, supplies, and equipment;
- Temporary emergency firefighters; and
- Personnel costs beyond those that are covered by the Preparedness activity.

Wildfire response actions are guided by resource priorities and objectives identified in departmental and bureau management plans, including wildfire management plans. Responses may include the following:

- Suppressing wildfires that threaten lives, communities, and values at risk;
- Managing wildfires to accomplish resource benefit, when it is determined to be safe and appropriate;
- Implementing emergency stabilization projects that minimize threats to life or property; protect water quality; and reduce the risks of floods, landslides, and erosion; and
- Using fire severity funding, provided by the Suppression Operations appropriation, to increase Preparedness response capabilities during extraordinary situations. These funds ensure that Interior can effectively prepare for and manage wildfire response even in periods of prolonged high wildfire activity and danger.

In addition to this funding, the 2025 budget request makes available another \$360.0 million through the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund. Interior may access the Reserve Fund if the costs of fire suppression operations exceed the resources available for Suppression Operations in the Wildland Fire Management account. In combination, Suppression Operations funding and Reserve Fund resources help to ensure that sufficient funds are available for suppression needs at all times. For more information on the Reserve Fund, see the “Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund” section of this justification.

Program Activities

The 2025 budget request for Suppression Operations supports wildfire suppression and response throughout the United States. It provides funding for 295 federal FTE, including seasonal and temporary workers who provide increased response capacity.

The request for Suppression Operations also supports the President’s firefighter pay reforms, which are funded in part through proposed program increases for Preparedness and Fuels Management (see also those sections of this justification). Interior estimates, however, that the additional costs to Suppression Operations attributable to these reforms can be fully covered within the current and planned appropriation levels for suppression. Actual costs will depend on wildfire activity, which varies from year to year. These costs will be paid using the funding provided for Suppression Operations through the Wildland Fire Management account, including funding transferred from the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund.

Burned Area Emergency Response Protects People from Post-fire Risk

A representative of the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe discusses his concerns for post-fire conditions in Stetattle Creek with archaeologists on the Sourdough BAER team on September 13, 2023. (Photo by NPS.)

After firefighters have doused flames, and smoke is no longer in the air, in many cases, there is still work to be done. Post-wildfire hazards, such as flooding, erosion, and water quality issues, can create serious problems for residents and wildlife. Post-wildfire recovery starts with a Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team, often before wildland firefighters leave the area.

When the Sourdough Fire burned in North Cascades National Park, a BAER team quickly got to work identifying post-fire hazards and creating a plan to mitigate them. The plan involves stabilizing soil, mitigating hazards to visitors, repairing trails and infrastructure, and protecting important cultural and natural resources.

Wildfires consume vegetation that holds soil in place and reduces erosion, creating hazards even after the fire is extinguished. For example, the Stetattle Creek drainage has a high concentration of large boulders over two feet wide that can dislodge during a flood. Nearby homes could be vulnerable. The BAER team and the North Cascades National Park staff collaborated with the local power company, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the National Weather Service to protect the nearby town by developing a plan to stabilize these boulders. Additionally, the team created a plan to repair highly popular trails that were also affected.

While the long-term work to implement the plan begins when the BAER team departs, those teams are critical for guiding effective post-fire management so residents, employees, and visitors remain safe.

Annual Suppression Operations obligations fluctuate from year to year. In calculating the ten-year average, Interior adjusts obligations estimates annually to account for inflation. Funding for Suppression Operations was historically formulated using a ten-year average of prior-year obligations that was updated annually. Since the enactment of P.L. 115-141, though, funding for Suppression Operations is based on the ten-year average of suppression obligations as reported in the 2015 President’s Budget. For informational purposes, to show the trend in fire suppression costs, Interior continues to report the updated ten-year average, as shown in Table 7, below.

Table 7:
Budget Obligations on Suppression Operations
Fiscal Years 2014–2023
(Dollars in Thousands)

Fiscal Year	Net Nominal Suppression Obligations (\$)	Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Inflator [2012=1.00]	GDP Deflator [2023=1.00]	Adjusted Obligations (\$) [2023=1.00]	Rolling 10-Year Average of Obligations (\$)
2014	326,194	1.0318	0.7963	409,624	482,786
2015	417,545	1.0374	0.8006	521,509	490,614
2016	371,729	1.0444	0.8061	461,173	474,863
2017	508,103	1.0627	0.8202	619,506	469,948
2018	528,350	1.0863	0.8384	630,197	478,969
2019	440,708	1.1051	0.8529	516,718	500,576
2020	510,947	1.1267	0.8696	587,587	528,069
2021	648,317	1.1585	0.8941	725,097	558,414
2022	649,743	1.2278	0.9476	685,675	566,623
2023	466,325	1.2957	1.0000	466,325	562,341

As illustrated in Figure 1, below, the trend over the last quarter of a century indicates a significant rise in costs, with obligations more than doubling during this time period.

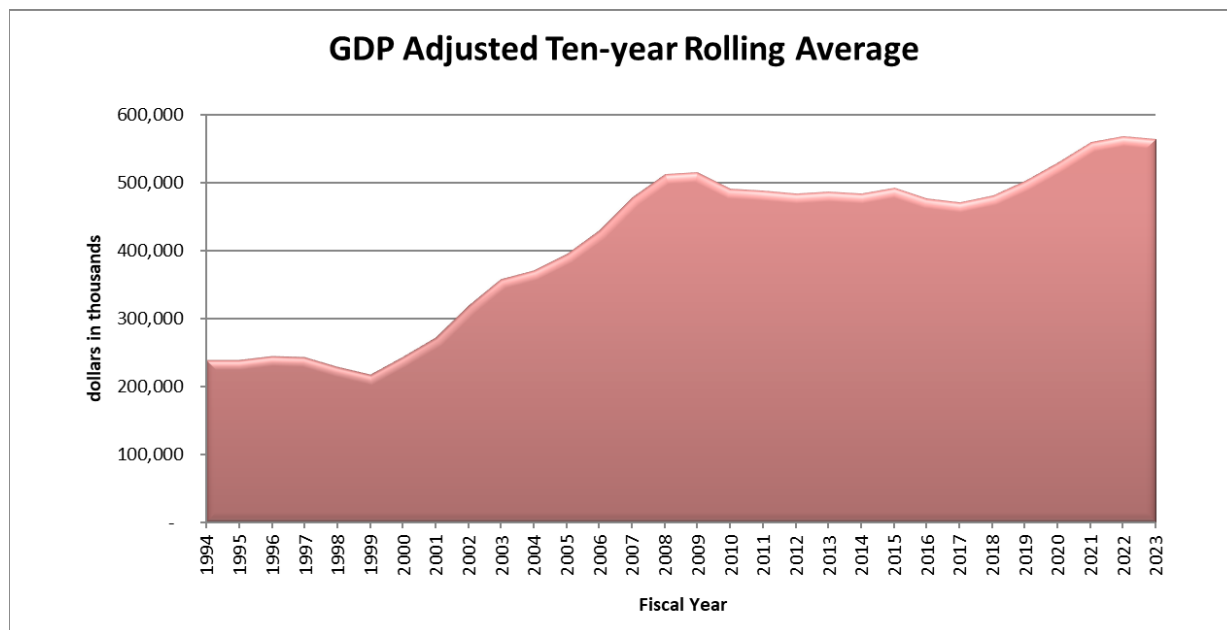


Figure 1: Trend in the ten-year average of Department of the Interior suppression obligations, 1994-2023

This rise in costs is attributable to several compounding factors such as climate change (which is contributing to increased annual fire workload and severity); population growth and increased development in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) (both of which are increasing wildfire exposure and incident complexity); and escalation in costs of wildland firefighting resources. For example:

- Increases in invasive annual grasses result in increased flammability and shorter fire return intervals on rangelands;
- Drought conditions, insect infestations, below normal snowpack (or earlier mountain snow melt), and extended burning seasons contribute to a higher frequency of large fires and greater wildfire severity in forests; and
- Population growth and home construction in the WUI complicate landscape protection and response efforts while also creating additional sources of ignition.

Interior continues to work closely with the USDA Forest Service and other partners to address the challenge of rising suppression costs. This work includes using risk-based strategies to reduce unwanted vegetation and manage wildfires to meet resource and protection objectives. A single wildfire may simultaneously be suppressed in one location and allowed to burn in another location to achieve resource benefits, including the reduction of fuel load, when it is safe and appropriate to do so. These operations balance the expenditure of Suppression Operations funding with the risk a wildfire poses to firefighters, the public, and natural and cultural resources.

Allowing Wildfire to Naturally Protect Giant Sequoias



Visitors watching the Redwood Fire from Moro Rock in Sequoia National Park, California. (Photo by NPS.)

While suppressing wildfires is often important to save lives, property, infrastructure, or natural resources, it also removes wildfire from its natural role on the landscape. Some tree and plant species, such as the Giant Sequoias, depend on fire to survive. Giant Sequoia tree ring records show that surface fires occurred frequently over the past 2,000 years.

In some cases, we can manage wildfires to safely allow them to reduce flammable vegetation and make the ecosystem more naturally resilient to future wildfires while protecting the public. Firefighters use a number of strategies, like backfiring and creating firelines to act as barriers, to contain the fire while still allowing low-intensity flames to benefit the ecosystem.

In August and September of 2023, fire managers used a strategy that confined and contained a lightning-ignited wildfire burning in Sequoia National Park. The ecosystem received significant rain and snow during the previous winter and spring, making the vegetation very moist, which resulted in less intense flames and a slower moving fire. Firefighters carefully monitored and contained the fire, using backfires in some areas, while allowing it to reduce flammable vegetation within the park.

This indirect firefighting strategy allowed the wildfire to take its natural course across nearly 2,000 acres of mixed conifer forest, including 152 acres of Giant Sequoia tree groves. These groves and surrounding mixed conifer forest are now more resilient and better prepared to survive future wildfires.

FUELS MANAGEMENT



The Fuels Management activity funds strategic investments in managing vegetation to reduce the intensity, severity, and negative effects of wildfire. Fuels management provides cost-effective benefits to the American people, helps restore and maintain healthy ecosystems, supports communities in their efforts to become fire-adapted, and helps protect highly valuable resources and assets. Hazardous fuels treatments reduce the risks and mitigate the impacts of wildfires and contribute to greater resilience to climate change.

Activity: Fuels Management
Subactivity: Fuels Management

	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Fixed Costs (+/-)	2025 Internal Transfers (+/-)	2025 Program Changes (+/-)	2025 Request	Change from 2024 Level (+/-)
Dollars (in Thousands)	247,000	247,000	+5,316	+0	+35,290	287,606	+40,606
<i>FTE/ A</i>	1,274	1,297	+0	+0	+0	1,297	+0
<i>Tribal FTE</i>	395	395	+0	+0	+0	395	+0

A/ Direct and allocated federal FTE

Program Changes

The 2025 budget request provides \$287,606,000 for Fuels Management, a total program change of +\$35,290,000 above the 2024 Annualized CR level. The request provides funding for 1,297 federal FTE and 395 tribal FTE, the same as the 2024 levels.

Summary of 2025 Program Changes for Fuels Management

Program Changes	Dollars in Thousands	FTE/ A
Baseline Capacity – 2024 Fixed Costs	+10,290	+0
Increase Firefighters’ Compensation	+25,000	+0
TOTAL Program Changes	+35,290	+0

A/ Direct and allocated federal FTE; estimates of tribal FTE are included elsewhere in this justification.

- **Baseline Capacity – 2024 Fixed Costs** (+\$10,290,000/+0 federal FTE/+0 tribal FTE) – The 2025 budget request includes important investments in programs needed to help strengthen America and be more competitive as the world continues to change. These investments include funding needed to maintain a strong, talented workforce and the must-pay requirements needed to continue to fulfill

Interior's Wildland Fire Management mission. The 2025 budget request includes \$10.3 million in the Fuels Management activity which reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in FY 2024. This request, in combination with the FY 2025 fixed cost amounts, will allow the program to meet must-pay requirements without impacting program activities.

- **Increase Firefighters' Compensation** (+\$25,000,000/+0 federal FTE/+0 tribal FTE) – The 2025 budget request increases funding for federal and tribal wildland firefighters' pay by a total of \$75.0 million, including \$25.0 million in Fuels Management (see also the "Preparedness" and "Suppression Operations" sections of this justification). These pay increases build on the President's 2021 compensation increases for wildland firefighters and the BIL special pay supplements for federal firefighters in 2022 and 2023 (continuing during the 2024 CRs) with reforms to provide permanent increases in pay for wildland firefighters. The federal government must provide a level of pay that is competitive with the compensation provided by state, local, and private employers. Otherwise, firefighting capacity-building goals will be undermined as the federal government hires and trains firefighters who are subsequently lured away to higher-paying jobs.

To implement permanent pay increases for federal wildland personnel, the Administration proposes legislation to:

- Establish a special base rate salary table for wildland firefighters,
- Create a new premium pay category that provides some additional compensation for all hours a wildland fire responder is mobilized on an incident,
- Establish a streamlined pay cap that provides waiver authority to the Secretary using specific criteria, and
- Provide permanent authorization to grant paid rest and recuperation leave to employees returning from certain multi-day incidents related to wildland fires.

The budget funds these federal pay reforms and similar pay increases for tribal personnel. For more information on these pay increases, see the "Preparedness" section of this justification.

Program Overview

The strategic management of burnable vegetation (known in the wildland fire management community as "fuels") is an effective approach to reduce the likelihood of negative impacts from wildfires to highly valued resources and assets. Interior carries out fuels management in collaboration with multiple partners, including other federal agencies, tribal nations, states, counties, local organizations, and private landowners. Bureau specialists plan, implement, and monitor fuels management projects to mitigate the likelihood and impacts of wildfires and achieve priority land management objectives. This work occurs year-round, encompassing a diversity of geographic locations, vegetation types, and treatment methods.

Specialists use a variety of active management practices, including prescribed fire (e.g., broadcast burning and pile burning), mechanical methods (e.g., thinning excess trees and mowing brush and grass), and other methods (e.g., chemical, biological, and grazing). Fuels management is coordinated with resource management and among stakeholders to mitigate wildfire risks and ensure projects comply with regulations. Community assistance activities support community-led actions to understand, plan, and implement effective wildfire mitigation efforts in communities across the country.

Prescribed Fire Reduces Wildfire Risk to Communities and Provides Crucial Food for the Endangered Karner Blue Butterfly



One month after a prescribed burn, blue lupine covers the area in a palette of purple. (Photo by FWS.)

The brilliantly-colored Karner blue butterfly, an endangered species, lives in oak savannas and pine barren ecosystems in western Wisconsin and eastward to the Atlantic seaboard. The larvae, or caterpillars, of these iridescent postage stamp-sized insects only eat wild blue lupine, a flower that needs wildfire to periodically clear the ecosystem of shrubs and trees that crowd out other plants.

In March of 2023, a FWS wildland fire crew conducted a 47-acre prescribed fire at the Fox River National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin to reduce built-up vegetation. The burn reduced wildfire risk to community infrastructure near the refuge. It also demonstrated that it's possible to strategically balance wildfire risk reduction with other land management benefits.

One month after the burn, the area transformed into a beautiful palette of wild blue lupine. Thousands of vibrant flowers sprung up in response to the fire, expanding potential Karner blue butterfly habitat and creating a picturesque scene for refuge visitors.

Biologists with FWS and the nonprofit Pheasants Forever-Tomorrow River Chapter were able to collect 25 gallons of lupine seed, adding a valuable stock to the FWS's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. The seeds will be distributed to property owners in central Wisconsin, enabling them to plant more wild blue lupine that will further attract and support the endangered Karner blue butterfly.

Fuels management projects most effectively mitigate the potential losses and impacts from wildfires when projects are prioritized and coordinated across land ownership boundaries. Interior continues to support the implementation of work to achieve the following goals of the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy* through:

- **Fire-Adapted Communities**
 - Working with communities to share expertise and implement effective wildfire mitigation to protect community values, and
 - Contributing to and protecting local and tribal nation economies;
- **Resilient Landscapes**
 - Maintaining and restoring the integrity of landscapes and their resilience to wildfires,
 - Integrating cultural and natural resource program efforts to maintain fire's natural role, and
 - Implementing treatments on invasive species; and
- **Safe and Effective Wildfire Response**
 - Strategically locating treatments to improve public and firefighter safety, enhance opportunities to manage wildfires, and reduce losses from wildfires.

Program Activities

Interior will continue to collaborate and coordinate with federal, tribal nation, state, and local partners and stakeholders to maximize resources and better incorporate fuels management into resource management planning.

The 2025 budget request for Fuels Management:

- Supports 1,297 federal FTE and 395 tribal FTE—the same as the 2024 Annualized CR levels—to plan, implement, and monitor fuels treatments in an integrated approach with resource management and stakeholders to ensure that all projects comply with regulations and meet Interior's objectives, including increasing the safety of wildland fire personnel and the public;
- Maintains 2024 Annualized CR funding for the Reserved Treaty Right Lands (RTRL) program and tribal contract and administrative support for fuels management activities (a total \$11.0 million in regular funding);
- Together with BIL funding, supports fuels management activities in FY 2025 on an estimated 1.8 million acres and funds an estimated 1,700 risk assessments, post-treatment monitoring, contract preparation, and administrative actions necessary to apply scientific principles to mitigate the risks and impacts of wildfires that would otherwise contribute to carbon emissions. This work will improve the climate resiliency of communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems to wildfires by increasing their abilities to withstand a wildfire and recover quickly (see also the FY 2025 BIL spend plan in the "Other Exhibits" section of this justification);

- Helps to mitigate the impacts from potential wildfire emissions by promoting and maintaining land in the desired condition; and
- Proposes changes in appropriations language to increase Interior’s flexibility to engage in cross-boundary fuels management and burned area rehabilitation, including with non-federal partners, to support the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*. Among other benefits, these changes will support underserved communities that may be unable to share costs for work that has multiple jurisdictional benefits.

During 2025, Interior will continue to support efforts to protect the sagebrush ecosystem from wildfire and the potential conversion to invasive annual grasses. The conversion from sagebrush- to annual grass-dominated lands leads to a net reduction in carbon storage. That reduction in carbon storage worsens the impacts from climate change. Homes that exist in this ecosystem are among those with the highest likelihood of loss from wildfire in the United States.¹ Interior will support collaborative wildland fire and invasive plant management strategies to reduce the establishment, spread, and subsequent degradation by invasive annual grasses that alter wildfire probability and intensity and therefore increase risk.

BIL provides Interior additional funding each year through FY 2026 for Fuels Management activities. For more information on BIL-funded Fuels Management accomplishments and plans, see the FY 2025 BIL spend plan in the “Other Exhibits” section of this justification.

¹The USDA Forest Service created the “Wildfire Risk to Communities” website in 2020. The site is designed to help community leaders, such as elected officials, community planners, and fire managers. <https://wildfirerisk.org/>

Reducing Wildfire Severity with Vegetation Treatments in New Mexico



The diversity of native plant species, an important component of healthy wildlife habitat, has increased in Chupadera Mesa, New Mexico, as a result of fuels treatments. (Photo by BLM.)

The slopes and canyons of Chupadera Mesa in New Mexico are a patchwork of native grassland and piñon-juniper woodland and savanna. This landscape evolved with fire, which helped keep pinyon-juniper savannas open and grasslands diverse and productive for wildlife and ranching. Fire suppression in the twentieth century reduced these natural fire cycles. Combined with the spread of invasive weeds and climate change, this has led to extreme wildfire behavior across western rangelands that makes it increasingly difficult to conserve native sagebrush and grassland ecosystems.

BLM has been using a mix of vegetation treatments to improve ecosystem health for more than 20 years in Chupadera Mesa. The treatments begin with chemical spraying to thin vegetation, then hand cutting with tools like chainsaws, followed by mechanical thinning performed by heavy equipment. Finally, prescribed fire is applied where appropriate. This mix of techniques not only allows land managers to determine which tools are most effective in different locations and situations, it also creates a mosaic of diverse habitat across the landscape.

In June 2022, these treatments were put to the test when lightning sparked the Iron Mine Fire. Strong winds pushed the fire into an area of Chupadera Mesa where fuels treatments had been completed. The treatments helped moderate the fire's activity.

The interagency Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring program tracks wildfires that occur in project areas like Chupadera Mesa and documents what happens when those fires intersect with a vegetation treatment. The program allows federal agencies to identify the types of fuels treatments that have the most tangible benefits and illustrates how multi-phase projects like those in Chupadera Mesa can benefit rangeland health and build resilience to future wildfires.

OTHER OPERATIONS

Other Operations is a category of program activities that comprises three subactivities:

1. Burned Area Rehabilitation
2. Facilities Construction and Maintenance
3. Joint Fire Science Program

Activity: Other Operations (Dollars in Thousands)

Subactivity	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Fixed Costs (+/-)	2025 Internal Transfers (+/-)	2025 Program Changes (+/-)	2025 Request	Change from 2024 Level (+/-)
Burned Area Rehabilitation	20,470	20,470	+0	+0	+0	20,470	+0
Facilities Construction and Maintenance	10,000	10,000	+0	+0	+5,000	15,000	+5,000
Joint Fire Science Program	4,500	4,500	+0	+0	-500	4,000	-500
TOTAL, All Subactivities	34,970	34,970	+0	+0	+4,500	39,470	+4,500

Activity: Other Operations (Personnel Levels)

FTE Type	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Fixed Costs (+/-)	2025 Internal Transfers (+/-)	2025 Program Changes (+/-)	2025 Request	Change from 2024 Level (+/-)
<i>FTE/A</i>	80	80	+0	+0	+0	80	+0
<i>Tribal FTE</i>	68	68	+0	+0	+0	68	+0

A/ Direct and allocated federal FTE

Burned Area Rehabilitation



The Burned Area Rehabilitation subactivity supports efforts to repair or improve burned landscapes that are unlikely to recover without human assistance.

Activity: Other Operations
Subactivity: Burned Area Rehabilitation

Category	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Fixed Costs (+/-)	2025 Internal Transfers (+/-)	2025 Program Changes (+/-)	2025 Request	Change from 2024 Level (+/-)
Dollars <i>(in Thousands)</i>	20,470	20,470	+0	+0	+0	20,470	+0
<i>FTE/ A</i>	74	74	+0	+0	+0	74	+0
<i>Tribal FTE</i>	68	68	+0	+0	+0	68	+0

A/ Direct and allocated federal FTE

Program Changes

The 2025 budget request provides \$20,470,000 for Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR), which will fund 74 federal FTE and 68 tribal FTE. The request reflects no program changes from the 2024 Annualized CR level.

Program Overview

The BAR subactivity provides for the early phases of rehabilitation of landscapes damaged by wildfire that are unlikely to recover naturally. Working with partners from tribal nations, states, counties, and local governments, Interior carries out non-emergency rehabilitation actions that may take up to five years to complete. *Immediate* threats after a fire—such as floods, debris flows, and landslides—are treated using Emergency Stabilization funds from the Suppression Operations activity. BAR picks up where emergency stabilization leaves off.

BAR treatments help prevent further degradation of watersheds and landscapes affected by wildfire. Through these projects, agencies may re-seed or plant trees and other desired vegetation to mitigate the risk of catastrophic landslides, prevent the establishment of invasive species, maintain soil productivity, and initiate the recovery of critical wildlife habitat. Other activities may also include the repair of minor assets such as signs damaged by wildfire, rehabilitation of tribal nation trust resources, and monitoring treatment effectiveness and success.

Post-Wildfire Re-Seeding Helps Save Sagebrush Ecosystem



The bag attached to a boom truck is filled with native seeds in preparation for loading an Air Tractor 802 for an aerial seeding operation. (Photo by BLM.)

Stand on any small hill or mountain peak within the Great Basin ecosystem and you will be treated to vast expanses of dusty green sagebrush and melodious sage sparrow song. The ecosystem is home to hundreds of plant and animal species, and it supports the multi-billion-dollar Great Basin economy that contributes to the livelihoods of thousands of people.

Invasive weeds are threatening this precious landscape. Annual grasses, such as cheatgrass, are outcompeting sagebrush and other native plants. After a wildfire, cheatgrass grows fast and crowds out critical plant species before they can re-establish. This changes the ecosystem, negatively affecting native wildlife like the greater sage-grouse, as well as activities like recreation and grazing. Cheatgrass dies off earlier than native plants, creating a blanket of dry fuel to spur more wildfires, repeating the cycle that helps the cheatgrass spread.

The only way to combat this ecosystem loss is to rehabilitate lands after wildfires. Re-seeding burned areas gives native plants a head start against cheatgrass and other invasive weeds.

The Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition, a nonprofit conservation organization, is working with BLM and other federal and state agencies to seed more than 19,000 acres of eastern Nevada's burned public lands. Native seeds are distributed by small airplane, allowing millions of seeds to be spread over thousands of acres. This type of re-seeding and rehabilitating burned landscapes gives native plants a fighting chance against invasive weeds, which will improve ecosystem and watershed health

Program managers evaluate and prioritize rehabilitation projects at the local and national level. Restoration necessary more than five years after a wildfire fall under the land management agency's program goals for long-term management.

Program Activities

The 2025 budget request provides \$20.5 million (the same level as the 2024 Annualized CR) for BAR treatments that restore and enhance ecosystem health and enable landscapes to be more resilient to wildfires and the effects of climate change. Without timely rehabilitation actions to restore burned acres to their desired condition, post-wildfire damages become more complex and costly to treat.

The request supports 74 federal FTE and 68 tribal FTE to evaluate and implement priority rehabilitation projects at the local, tribal, and national levels. The 2025 budget request for BAR will fund BAR treatments for an estimated 630,000 burned acres. Together with funding from BIL, the request will allow Interior and its partners to treat more than 700,000 acres in FY 2025 (see also the FY 2025 BIL spend plan in the “Other Exhibits” section of this justification).

Additionally, BIL funds will support expansion of the proactive development and acquisition of plant materials such as locally adapted, native seeds and vegetation like sagebrush, white bark pine, and giant sequoias that are only available in limited quantities or over long timeframes, particularly when there is an immediate post-fire recovery need. Interior (including USGS) will continue to work cooperatively with the USDA Forest Service and scientific institutions to implement monitoring protocols and methods for BAR treatments.

The Wildland Fire Management program established a baseline in 2009 to monitor the long-term effects of rehabilitating treated acres to their desired condition. The description of desired condition includes objectives for physical, chemical, hydrologic, and biologic attributes. For example, objectives may include managing for specific species canopy cover or vegetation height.

BIL Helps Restore Giant Sequoias After Significant Wildfires



A cone collector rappels from a giant sequoia in the Cedar Flat Grove. (Photo by NPS.)

There is nothing like standing under a giant sequoia, the world's largest tree. If you perch at a sequoia's base and gaze up its massive red-orange trunk, it is easy to feel infinitely small as your eyes follow the corrugated bark hundreds of feet into the air.

These towering giants have evolved with wildfire. Their thick, spongy bark resists burning and insulates the trees against heat. Fire plays a crucial role in the giant sequoia ecosystem. Fire scars in tree rings dating back 2,000 years show that fires occurred naturally every 6 to 35 years.

However, as wildfires become more extreme, sequoias are dying. Between 2020 and 2021, three major fires are estimated to have killed as many as 14,000 large giant sequoias, which is 19 percent of all giant sequoias in their range. Without intervention, the area may not recover naturally.

These unprecedented losses revealed a need for new approaches to studying and mitigating wildfire impacts. With BIL funding, NPS is restoring habitat in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. In collaboration with the USDA Forest Service and Sequoia Parks Conservancy, they harvested sequoia cones and propagated seedlings in September 2022. So far, 110,000 giant sequoia seedlings have germinated from these seed collections and are growing at private and USDA Forest Service nurseries.

The seedlings will be used to replant sequoia groves that experienced catastrophic wildfire in tandem with other restoration and post-fire recovery work in the parks. Together, these efforts will help maintain the ecosystem and the iconic giant sequoias amid a changing climate.

Facilities Construction and Maintenance



The Facilities Construction and Maintenance subactivity provides funding for safe, modern, and energy-efficient facilities that are essential to achieving the Wildland Fire Management program’s mission to protect lives, property, and resources from wildfire.

Activity: Other Operations

Subactivity: Facilities Construction and Maintenance Program

Category	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Fixed Costs (+/-)	2025 Internal Transfers (+/-)	2025 Program Changes (+/-)	2025 Request	Change from 2024 Level (+/-)
Dollars <i>(in Thousands)</i>	10,000	10,000	+0	+0	+5,000	15,000	+5,000
<i>FTE/ A</i>	2	2	+0	+0	+0	2	+0

A/ Direct and allocated federal FTE

Program Changes

The 2025 budget request provides \$15,000,000 for Facilities Construction and Maintenance, a program change of +\$5,000,000 above the 2024 Annualized CR level. The request provides funding for 2 federal FTE, the same as the 2024 level.

Summary of 2025 Program Change for Facilities

Program Change	Dollars in Thousands	FTE/ A
Increase Housing for Personnel	+5,000	+0
TOTAL Program Change	+5,000	+0

A/ Direct and allocated federal FTE

- Increase Housing for Personnel** (+\$5,000,000/+0 federal FTE) – The 2025 budget request increases funding for capital investments in housing for wildland fire management personnel by \$5.0 million above the 2024 Annualized CR level, to a total \$10.0 million. The projects that are proposed for funding are drawn from the program’s five-year Deferred Maintenance and Capital Improvement plan. The increased funding will allow Interior to advance its efforts to repair, renovate, modernize, and construct housing for personnel. These funds will go a long way toward addressing the problem of inadequate or unaffordable housing facing many wildland firefighters working in certain geographic locations.

At the 2025 budget request level, Interior will complete deferred maintenance on buildings and facilities in disrepair, modernize housing and other facilities, and ensure that facilities meet current health and safety standards. The program will provide infrastructure necessary to support Interior's firefighters, safeguard the public, and improve Interior's response to values at risk from wildfire.

BLM Opens a New Fire Station and Crew Quarters in New Mexico



A new fire station and crew quarters constructed by BLM can be seen from the Farmington district office, New Mexico. (Photo by BLM.)

In 2023, BLM opened a new fire station and crew quarters buildings in Farmington, New Mexico, following years of planning, design, and construction work. The new facility was funded by the Facilities Construction and Maintenance subactivity, which funds facilities that help the Interior Department achieve its wildland fire mission.

The fire station includes a two-vehicle engine bay, fire engine water fill station, shop, training room, workspace, and fitness area. The crew quarters building will provide critical affordable housing for wildland fire personnel. It includes ten bedrooms, bathrooms, a kitchen, and a dining area. The site also includes an electric vehicle charging station.

The availability of affordable housing continues to be an important factor affecting the hiring and retention of wildland firefighters. The FY 2025 Budget increases Interior's investments in new housing to maintain firefighting personnel in rural locations and communities with elevated private housing costs.

Program Overview

The Facilities Construction and Maintenance subactivity provides funding for safe, functional, and energy-efficient facilities that are essential to achieving the Wildland Fire Management program's mission to protect lives, property, and resources from wildfire.

The program maintains a five-year Deferred Maintenance and Capital Improvement plan. The plan, which the primary Wildland Fire Management bureaus regularly update, presents the projects of greatest need in priority order, focusing on critical health and safety, mission critical resource protection and public safety, achieving sustainability goals, and decreasing long-term operation and maintenance costs. Each project is submitted consistent with Interior's guidance for deferred maintenance and capital improvement.

To ensure an efficient allocation of funding to the highest-priority projects, a departmentwide team reviews submitted projects by total project score and forwards a prioritized list to Interior's Wildland Fire Management leadership for their consideration as part of the budget process. The bureaus monitor design and construction of all Facilities Construction and Maintenance projects to ensure they are completed within scope and budget. They adjust out-year priorities and project plans and cost estimates as needed based on objective criteria applied during the annual evaluation process. They also adjust plans, as needed, based on enacted funding in comparison to budget request levels.

Key areas of emphasis for the Facilities Construction and Maintenance subactivity include the following:

- Providing housing for firefighters and other wildland fire personnel;
- Correcting critical health- and safety-related facility problems by ensuring facilities comply with federal accessibility and Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements;
- Replacing building systems and components that have exceeded their useful lives;
- Installing facilities that improve the wildfire response capability required to keep wildfires small and reduce threats to communities, structures, municipal watersheds, other infrastructure, and wildlife habitat; and
- Providing facilities that are sufficient to maintain readiness and provide full support for wildland fire management activities.

Safe and properly maintained facilities are critical for protecting firefighters and their equipment. The Wildland Fire Management program is repairing and updating facilities that are in deteriorating condition to maintain current health and safety standards. Maintaining the Facilities Construction and Maintenance subactivity allows the Wildland Fire Management program to centrally evaluate projects submitted by all of Interior's bureaus involved in wildland fire management, enhances coordination, and helps ensure the most cost-efficient allocation of funds to best advance the facilities needs of the integrated program. As facilities are replaced or modernized, efficiencies in design for standard space programming—including features that are essential to the Wildland Fire Management program—result in lower operating costs and energy use. The emphasis on a Quality Built Environment, including sustainability and energy conservation, is important for all projects.

Program Activities

The 2025 budget request provides \$15.0 million for Facilities Construction and Maintenance, a program change of +\$5.0 million from the 2024 Annualized CR level. The request includes \$10.0 million for housing for wildland fire personnel. The 2025 budget request funds eight projects in seven states with the highest critical health, safety, and resource protection ratings at this time. Among these projects are 7 through which bureaus will repair, renovate, modernize, or construct housing for wildland fire personnel. For a list of projects planned to be funded using the 2025 request, see Table 8, below (Plans may be amended based on enacted funding for 2024 and 2025.):

**Table 8: Construction and Deferred Maintenance Plan Summary
Wildland Fire Management
FY 2025
(Dollars In Thousands)**

Project Title	State	Bureau	Total Project Cost	Funded to Date	2025 Request	Remaining to be Funded
Muskrat Fire Crew Quarters Repair	UT	BLM	231	0	231	0
Kanab New Fire Crew Quarters (Phase 1 of 2)	UT	BLM	5,743	0	712	5,031
Twin Falls Interagency Dispatch Replacement (Phase 1 of 2)	ID	BLM	7,594	0	4,850	2,744
El Portal Wildland Fire Barracks Construction (Phase 2 of 2)	CA	NPS	8,725	5,250	3,475	0
Frenchglen Fire Crew Quarters Replacement (Phase 1 of 3)	OR	BLM	6,123	0	1,185	4,938
Denali C-Camp Wildland Fire Dormitory Construction	AK	NPS	3,688	0	3,688	0
Crab Orchard Tiny Homes Construction	IL	FWS	250	0	250	0
Minnesota Valley Tiny Homes Construction	MN	FWS	250	0	250	0
Contingency	N/A	DOI	N/A	N/A	359	N/A
TOTAL	N/A	DOI	32,604	5,250	15,000	12,713

Note: This table displays the Wildland Fire Management funding planned to be allocated for projects with the 2025 budget request for Facilities Construction and Maintenance. It is premised on enactment of both the 2024 and 2025 budget requests. However, Interior may change allocations for these purposes depending on funding enacted for 2024 and 2025, changes in project plans and cost estimates, the availability of other funding, and re-prioritization determined to be necessary to optimize the use of these appropriations to meet the program's highest priorities.

Joint Fire Science Program



The Joint Fire Science Program, which Interior and the USDA Forest Service fund and administer together, provides funding for wildland fire research and science to inform policies and decisions at local, regional, and national levels.

Activity: Other Operations
Subactivity: Joint Fire Science Program

Category	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Fixed Costs (+/-)	2025 Internal Transfers (+/-)	2025 Program Changes (+/-)	2025 Request	Change from 2024 Level (+/-)
Dollars (in Thousands)	4,500	4,500	+0	+0	-500	4,000	-500
<i>FTE/ A</i>	4	4	+0	+0	+0	4	+0

A/ Direct and allocated federal FTE

Program Changes

The 2025 budget request provides \$4,000,000 for Interior’s share of funding for the Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP), a program change of -\$500,000 below the 2024 Annualized CR level. The request provides funding for 4 federal FTE, the same as the 2024 level.

Summary of 2025 Program Change for JFSP

Program Change	Dollars in Thousands	FTE/ A
Wildland Fire Research	-500	+0
TOTAL Program Change	-500	+0

A/ Direct and allocated federal FTE

- **Wildland Fire Research** (-\$500,000/+0 federal FTE) – The 2025 budget request reduces new funding for JFSP, which is also receiving BIL funding each year through FY 2026, by -\$500,000. Using the request, JFSP will support the President’s priorities to increase research on wildland fire, including climate science and resilience to climate change.

Research priorities for JFSP include the following:

- **Workforce Health and Well-Being:** Research the effects of wildland firefighting and other management activities on the physical and mental health and well-being of firefighters and other

personnel. Topics may include the effects of critical incident stress, line-of-duty hazards, and smoke emissions, including strategies that can address and mitigate these factors.

- **Climate Science:** Study the effects of climate change on wildland fire—both wildfire and prescribed fire—through smoke emissions, changes in carbon storage and cycling, and changes in albedo. Albedo is a measure of how much light that hits a surface is reflected without being absorbed. It is readily measured by satellite remote sensing.

Complex issues need quantification and clarification: for example, in Alaska tundra, wildfires increase absorption of sunlight, leading to melting of permafrost; while in the Continental United States (CONUS), wildfires tend to increase reflectivity, leading to decreased rainfall and drought. Carbon cycling is also complex due to tradeoffs between short and long-term effects of fire, and accounting of below-ground storage and above-ground biomass. Prescribed fire use is thought to benefit long term carbon storage and may lessen the abrupt changes in albedo in most CONUS ecosystems, but additional research is required to confirm its beneficial use under these scenarios.

- **Resilience to Climate Change:** Determine what management actions can help make ecosystems more resilient to the effects of climate change (i.e., “harden” ecosystems). For example, JFSP is funding research into the feasibility of planting species or genotypes that are more drought and heat tolerant (from different parts of species’ range).
- **Environmental Justice:** Examine differences in how wildland fire—including smoke emissions and downstream water quality and debris flow—affects different populations and research potential strategies to address inequities.

Program Overview

JFSP, which Interior and USDA established in 1998, funds research and science that responds to the needs of the wildland fire community. JFSP competitively funds wildland fire science research projects and delivery to answer emerging questions and fill knowledge gaps about managing wildland fire, fuels, and fire-impacted ecosystems.

JFSP works across agency and programmatic boundaries to identify wildland fire research priorities that transcend agency-specific needs. In doing so, JFSP supports valuable cross-agency partnerships to address complex fire science questions that require multiple disciplines, funding sources, integration, and coordination to address. Results from JFSP research studies help agencies:

- Plan and implement fuels treatments;
- Support fire management decisions;
- Better understand the role of fire in various ecosystems;
- Restore lands affected by fire;
- Use the latest science to inform policy; and
- Meet regulatory requirements.

Results from JFSP’s research studies are delivered to the fire management community through the Fire Science Exchange Network (FSEN). This research includes new science on firefighter safety, fuels

management, co-management of risk within the WUI, and post-fire recovery. The 15 regional members of FSEN translate the science to ensure it is useful and actionable by managers and officials. Members also engage managers to identify new research and emerging management needs. In addition, JFSP promotes future workforce development through JFSP's core research funding and the Graduate Research Innovation (GRIN) program. Together, these efforts support hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students who are the next generation of wildland fire, fuels, and natural resources scientists and managers.

Graduate Student Research Advances Wildfire Science



A wildland firefighter uses a drip torch to carefully ignite a prescribed burn in a conifer forest. (Photo by BLM.)

Every year, JFSP invites current master's and doctoral students to apply for Graduate Research Innovation (GRIN) awards. The awards focus on scientific studies related to wildland fire and are designed to help students currently enrolled in a U.S. university who want to expand upon their thesis or dissertation research.

The award helps build future scientists who study wildland fire, allowing them to gain more professional experience. The science and data produced by these students also help Interior and its partners tackle current and future issues affecting wildland fire management, such as climate change.

In 2023, JFSP funded 21 GRIN awards for students throughout the country. The funding, which was distributed to 16 academic institutions, supported a wide range of research, including on vegetation management and fire behavior, the changing fire environment, emissions and air quality, fire effects and post-fire recovery, and prescribed fire impacts.

Program Activities

The 2025 budget request for JFSP supports an investment portfolio that includes:

- **Science Delivery and Knowledge Exchange:** During 2022, JFSP began to implement the findings of the 2021 FSEN evaluation that will enhance the program’s ability to meet end-user wildland fire science needs;
- **Research:** JFSP will execute high-priority research to meet the needs of the wildland fire management and policy communities in collaboration and coordination with USGS and USDA Forest Service research. Examples of these high-priority issues include the effects of climate change on wildfire, the effects of wildfires on climate change, using prescribed fire and other fuels management to increase climate resilience, carbon cycling, and greenhouse gas and smoke emissions;
- **Assessments/Syntheses:** JFSP will conduct assessments to ascertain the state of scientific understanding or management practice and syntheses to capture current scientific understanding and summarize in a manner useful to managers on high priority issues and topics to the wildland fire management and policy communities (e.g., short- and long-term tradeoffs between prescribed fire and wildfire across multiple geographic and temporal scales); and
- **Workforce Development:** JFSP will support management- and policy-relevant research through the GRIN program and other initiatives that support workforce development for the wildland fire community.

JFSP will continue to manage ongoing research projects and execute new research that meets Wildland Fire Management priorities. It will also continue its funding and oversight of the FSEN and its activities, support workforce development programs, and exercise leadership and coordination among the Wildland Fire Management community.

BIL provides Interior additional funding each year through FY 2026 for JFSP research. For more information on BIL-funded JFSP accomplishments and plans, see the FY 2025 BIL spend plan in the “Other Exhibits” section of this justification.

WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS RESERVE FUND



The Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund (Reserve Fund) makes available to Interior additional funding for emergency wildfire response and suppression when funding in the Wildland Fire Management account is inadequate to meet the needs. The Reserve Fund resources help to ensure there will be no delay in meeting wildfire suppression needs year-round.

Activity: Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund Subactivity: Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund

Category	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR	2025 Fixed Costs (+/-)	2025 Internal Transfers (+/-)	2025 Program Changes (+/-)	2025 Request	Change from 2024 Level (+/-)
Dollars <i>(in Thousands)</i>	340,000	340,000	+0	+0	+20,000	360,000	+20,000
<i>FTE/ A</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>+0</i>	<i>+0</i>	<i>+0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>+0</i>

A/ Direct and allocated federal FTE

Program Changes

The 2025 budget request provides \$360,000,000 for the Reserve Fund, a program change of +\$20.0 million above the 2024 Annualized CR level.

Summary of 2025 Program Change for the Reserve Fund

Program Change	Dollars in Thousands	FTE/ A
Suppression Operations	+20,000	+0
TOTAL Program Change	+20,000	+0

A/ Direct and allocated federal FTE

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141) amended the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act and established the Reserve Fund through a so-called discretionary spending “cap adjustment.” This change was in recognition of the fact that funding in the Wildland Fire Management account for Suppression Operations based on the ten-year average of suppression obligations consistently falls short of what is needed to fully fund operational needs (see also the “Suppression Operations” section of this justification).

Under this law, Interior and USDA may access a total of \$2.75 billion in funding for FY 2025. The split between the two departments is proposed in each year's budget, and funding may be transferred between them.

Before Interior may access this funding in a given fiscal year, the Secretary must notify the House and Senate Appropriations Committees that, within 30 days of the notification, Interior will have obligated all resources available for Suppression Operations in the Wildland Fire Management account. Unobligated balances in the Reserve Fund carry forward from one year to the next. Interior will access reserve funding appropriated for previous years before accessing reserve funding appropriated for the budget year. At this time, based on funding made available by the FY 2024 CRs (P.L. 118-15, 118-22, and 118-35), Interior's Reserve Fund balance is \$818.6 million, including \$330.0 million appropriated for FY 2022, \$340.0 million appropriated for FY 2023, and \$148.6 million made available for FY 2024 through March 8, 2024. The 2024 Annualized CR level for the Reserve Fund is \$340.0 million.

The Sec. 104 reporting requirement in Division O, Title I of P.L. 115-141, as amended, requires Interior and USDA to prepare an annual report to Congress on wildfire suppression spending in fiscal years when the respective Department obligates Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund resources that have been transferred to the Wildland Fire Management account. The report is due no later than 90 days after the end of such fiscal year. The 2025 budget request proposes a General Provision (Sec. 436) that substitutes "180 days" for the current "90 days" after the fiscal year to submit the report. In addition, the General Provision inserts the following before the semicolon in Sec. 104(b)(4), "and shall include an accounting of all spending in the first two quarters of the succeeding fiscal year that is attributable to suppression operations in the report year." For more information on this General Provision, see the budget justification for the Office of the Secretary.

Other Exhibits

Appropriations Language

Appropriations Language Sheet

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT-WIDE PROGRAMS

Wildland Fire Management

(Including Transfers of Funds)

For necessary expenses for fire preparedness, fire suppression operations, fire science and research, emergency rehabilitation, fuels management activities, and rural fire assistance by the Department of the Interior, \$1,279,510,000, to remain available until expended, of which not to exceed \$15,000,000 shall be for the renovation or construction of fire facilities: Provided, That such funds are also available for repayment of advances to other appropriation accounts from which funds were previously transferred for such purposes: Provided further, That of the funds provided \$287,606,000 is for fuels management and post-fire activities: Provided further, That of the funds provided \$20,470,000 is for burned area rehabilitation: Provided further, That persons hired pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 1469 may be furnished subsistence and lodging without cost from funds available from this appropriation: Provided further, That notwithstanding 42 U.S.C. 1856d, sums received by a bureau or office of the Department of the Interior for fire protection rendered pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1856 et seq., protection of United States property, may be credited to the appropriation from which funds were expended to provide that protection, and are available without fiscal year limitation: Provided further, That using the amounts designated under this title of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior may enter into procurement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements, for (1) fuels management and post-fire activities or (2) training and monitoring associated with such activities: Provided further, That activities for the purposes specified in the preceding proviso may occur on Federal land, or on non-Federal land when such activities benefit resources on Federal land or Federally-recognized Tribal land: Provided further, That not to exceed 15 percent of funds provided for fuels management and post-fire activities may be used for activities on non-Federal land: Provided further, That the costs of implementing any cooperative agreement between the Federal Government and any non-Federal entity may be shared, as mutually agreed on by the affected parties: Provided further, That notwithstanding requirements of the Competition in Contracting Act, the Secretary, for purposes of fuels management activities, may obtain maximum practicable competition among: (1) local private, nonprofit, or cooperative entities; (2) Youth Conservation Corps crews, Public Lands Corps (Public Law 109-154), or related partnerships with State, local, or nonprofit youth groups; (3) small or micro-businesses; or (4) other entities that will hire or train locally a significant percentage, defined as 50 percent or more, of the project workforce to complete such contracts: Provided further, That in implementing this section, the Secretary shall develop written guidance to field units to ensure accountability and consistent application of the authorities provided herein: Provided further, That funds appropriated under this heading may be used to reimburse the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service for the costs of carrying out their responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) to consult and conference, as required by

section 7 of such Act, in connection with wildland fire management activities: Provided further, That the Secretary of the Interior may use wildland fire appropriations to enter into leases of real property with local governments, at or below fair market value, to construct capitalized improvements for fire facilities on such leased properties, including but not limited to fire guard stations, retardant stations, and other initial attack and fire support facilities, and to make advance payments for any such lease or for construction activity associated with the lease: Provided further, That the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may authorize the transfer of funds appropriated for wildland fire management, in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$50,000,000 between the Departments when such transfers would facilitate and expedite wildland fire management programs and projects: Provided further, That funds provided for wildfire suppression shall be available for support of Federal emergency response actions: Provided further, That funds appropriated under this heading shall be available for assistance to or through the Department of State in connection with forest and rangeland research, technical information, and assistance in foreign countries, and, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, shall be available to support forestry, wildland fire management, and related natural resource activities outside the United States and its territories and possessions, including technical assistance, education and training, and cooperation with United States and international organizations: Provided further, That of the funds provided under this heading, \$383,657,000 shall be available for wildfire suppression operations, and is provided as the average costs for wildfire suppression operations to meet the terms of section 251(b)(2)(F)(ii)(I) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended: Provided further, That of the amounts made available under this heading, \$831,816,000 is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: Provided further, That such amount shall be available only if the President designates such amount as an emergency requirement pursuant to such section 251(b)(2)(A)(i).

Note.—A full-year 2024 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the Budget was prepared; therefore, the Budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2024 and Other Extensions Act (Division A of Public Law 118–15, as amended). The amounts included for 2024 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.

Appropriations Language Citations

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
DEPARTMENT-WIDE PROGRAMS****Appropriation: Wildland Fire Management (Including Transfers of Funds)**

1. *For necessary expenses for fire preparedness, fire suppression operations, fire science and research, emergency rehabilitation, fuels management activities, and rural fire assistance by the Department of the Interior, \$1,279,510,000, to remain available until expended, of which not to exceed \$15,000,000 shall be for the renovation or construction of fire facilities:*

This language provides funding for fire preparedness, suppression operations, fire science and research, emergency rehabilitation, fuels management, and rural fire assistance. The language further provides that such funding is available until expended. Of the total amount, \$15,000,000 is the maximum amount Interior may use for the construction and maintenance of fire facilities.

2. *Provided, That such funds are also available for repayment of advances to other appropriation accounts from which funds were previously transferred for such purposes:*

This language authorizes appropriations to be used to repay treasury accounts and transfers for previous fires and incidents.

3. *Provided further, That of the funds provided \$287,606,000 is for fuels management activities:*

This language provides funding for fuels management activities.

4. *Provided further, That of the funds provided \$20,470,000 is for burned area rehabilitation:*

This language provides funding for burned area rehabilitation.

5. *Provided further, That persons hired pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 1469 may be furnished subsistence and lodging without cost from funds available from this appropriation:*

This language allows Interior to feed and house firefighters hired pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 1469 with this appropriation.

6. *Provided further, That notwithstanding 42 U.S.C. 1856d, sums received by a bureau or office of the Department of the Interior for fire protection rendered pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1856 et seq., protection of United States property, may be credited to the appropriation from which funds were expended to provide that protection, and are available without fiscal year limitation:*

This language allows Interior bureaus and offices to retain funds they receive as reimbursement for wildfire protection services they provide to other entities, rather than having to submit them to the U.S. Treasury, and makes these collected amounts available for Interior's use until expended.

7. *Provided further, That using the amounts designated under this title of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior may enter into procurement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements, for (1) fuels management and post-fire activities or (2) training and monitoring associated with such activities:*

Provided further, That activities for the purposes specified in the preceding proviso may occur on Federal land, or on non-Federal land when such activities benefit resources on Federal land or Federally-recognized Tribal land:

These two provisos modify current authority that allows Interior to enter into procurement mechanisms (i.e., contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements) for fuels management activities and training and monitoring for such activities, to be conducted on Federal land or on adjacent non-Federal land if such activities benefit resources on Federal land. The proposed new language expands the purpose of the authority to include not only benefiting Federal resources, but also Federally-recognized Tribal land. The proposed new language also removes the “adjacency” requirement in recognition of the fact that certain treatments on non-adjacent lands can also benefit resources on Federal land or Federally-recognized Tribal land. The proposed new language also expands the authority to not only apply to fuels management activities, but also post-fire restoration activities. These proposed changes and the proposed new proviso immediately following this one are intended to increase Interior’s flexibility to engage in cross-boundary fuels management and burned area rehabilitation, including with non-Federal partners, to support the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*. Among other benefits, these changes will support underserved communities that may be unable to share costs for work that has multiple jurisdictional benefits.

- 8. *Provided further, That not to exceed 15 percent of funds provided for fuels management and post-fire activities may be used for activities on non-Federal land:***

This proposed new proviso is intended to provide a limitation on the percentage of funding that Interior may use for activities on non-Federal land. It is proposed in concert with the changes in the proviso immediately preceding this one.

- 9. *Provided further, That the costs of implementing any cooperative agreement between the Federal Government and any non-Federal entity may be shared, as mutually agreed on by the affected parties:***

This language allows Interior to enter into cost-shared cooperative agreements.

- 10. *Provided further, That notwithstanding requirements of the Competition in Contracting Act, the Secretary, for purposes of fuels management activities, may obtain maximum practicable competition among: (1) local private, nonprofit, or cooperative entities; (2) Youth Conservation Corps crews, Public Lands Corps (P.L. 109–154), or related partnerships with State, local, or nonprofit youth groups; (3) small or micro-businesses; or (4) other entities that will hire or train locally a significant percentage, defined as 50 percent or more, of the project workforce to complete such contracts:***

This language authorizes the Secretary to use contracting arrangements with the Youth Conservation Corps; local private, nonprofit, or cooperative entities (e.g., small businesses) that may hire or train a significant percentage (50 percent or more) of the project workforce to complete projects.

- 11. *Provided further, That in implementing this section, the Secretary shall develop written guidance to field units to ensure accountability and consistent application of the authorities provided herein:***

This language directs Interior to formulate and distribute guidance for field staff to use these contracts.

- 12. *Provided further, That funds appropriated under this heading may be used to reimburse the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service for the costs of carrying out their responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) to consult and conference, as required by section 7 of such Act, in connection with wildland fire management activities:***

This language allows Interior to use these appropriated funds to reimburse FWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service for consultation services necessary for compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

- 13. *Provided further, That the Secretary of the Interior may use wildland fire appropriations to enter into leases of real property with local governments, at or below fair market value, to construct capitalized improvements for fire facilities on such leased properties, including but not limited to fire guard stations, retardant stations, and other initial attack and fire support facilities, and to make advance payments for any such lease or for construction activity associated with the lease:***

This language authorizes Interior to enter into leases with local governments for properties necessary to provide firefighting facilities and to provide payment in advance for any construction activities if necessary.

- 14. *Provided further, That the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may authorize the transfer of funds appropriated for wildland fire management, in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$50,000,000, between the Departments when such transfers would facilitate and expedite jointly funded wildland fire management programs and projects:***

This language allows Interior and USDA to transfer funds up to \$50,000,000 annually between the departments to expedite joint wildland fire management programs or projects.

- 15. *Provided further, That funds provided for wildfire suppression shall be available for support of Federal emergency response actions:***

This language allows Interior wildland fire management personnel and services to be used in support of federal emergency responses.

- 16. *Provided further, That funds appropriated under this heading shall be available for assistance to or through the Department of State in connection with forest and rangeland research, technical information, and assistance in foreign countries, and, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, shall be available to support forestry, wildland fire management, and related natural resource activities outside the United States and its territories and possessions, including technical assistance, education and training, and cooperation with United States and international organizations:***

This language allows Interior's wildland fire management personnel and services to be used to assist foreign countries with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, in support of forestry, wildland fire

management, and related natural resource activities, including technical assistance, education, training and cooperation outside the United States.

- 17. *Provided further, That of the funds provided under this heading \$383,657,000 shall be available for wildfire suppression operations, and is provided as the average costs for wildfire suppression operations to meet the terms of section 251(b)(2)(F)(ii)(I) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended:***

This language provides funding for wildfire suppression based on the ten-year average of suppression operations costs, as reported in the FY 2015 President's budget.

- 18. *Provided further, That of the amounts made available under this heading, \$831,816,000 is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985:***

This language provides that \$831,816,000 of the amounts for Interior's Wildland Fire Management account are designated as emergency (i.e., "shifted base").

- 19. *Provided further, That such amount shall be available only if the President designates such amount as an emergency requirement pursuant to such section 251(b)(2)(A)(i).***

This language provides that the \$831,816,000 in the proviso immediately preceding this one will only be available if the President designates the amount as an emergency pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

Appropriations Language Citations

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
DEPARTMENT-WIDE PROGRAMS****Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund**

(Including Transfers of Funds)

In addition to the amounts provided under the heading "Department of the Interior—Department-Wide Programs—Wildland Fire Management" for wildfire suppression operations, \$360,000,000, to remain available until transferred, is additional new budget authority in excess of the average costs for wildfire suppression operations for purposes of section 251(b)(2)(of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended: Provided, That such amounts may be transferred to and merged with amounts made available under the headings "Department of Agriculture—Forest Service—Wildland Fire Management" and "Department of the Interior—Department-Wide Programs—Wildland Fire Management" for wildfire suppression operations in the fiscal year in which such amounts are transferred: Provided further, That amounts may be transferred to the "Wildland Fire Management" accounts in the Department of Agriculture or the Department of the Interior only upon the notification of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations that all wildfire suppression operations funds appropriated under that heading in this and prior appropriations Acts to the agency to which the funds will be transferred will be obligated within 30 days: Provided further, That the transfer authority provided under this heading is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law: Provided further, That in determining whether all wildfire suppression operations funds appropriated under the heading "Wildland Fire Management" in this and prior appropriations Acts to either the Department of Agriculture or the Department of the Interior will be obligated within 30 days pursuant to the preceding proviso, any funds transferred or permitted to be transferred pursuant to any other transfer authority provided by law shall be excluded.

Note.--A full-year 2024 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the Budget was prepared; therefore, the Budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2024 and Other Extensions Act (Division A of Public Law 118–15, as amended). The amounts included for 2024 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.

Appropriations Language Citations

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
DEPARTMENT-WIDE PROGRAMS**

**Appropriation: Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund
(Including Transfers of Funds)**

1. *In addition to the amounts provided under the heading “Department of the Interior-Department-Wide Programs-Wildland Fire Management” for wildfire suppression operations, \$360,000,000, to remain available until transferred, is additional new budget authority in excess of the average costs for wildfire suppression operations for purposes of section 251(b)(2) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended:*

This language makes available funding for wildfire suppression operations costs in addition to funding provided under the Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Management appropriation. The language further provides that such funding is available until transferred and that \$360,000,000 is the amount of this additional new budget authority for Interior for FY 2025.

2. *Provided, That such amounts may be transferred to and merged with amounts made available under the headings “Department of Agriculture-Forest Service-Wildland Fire Management” and “Department of the Interior-Department-Wide Programs-Wildland Fire Management” for wildfire suppression operations in the fiscal year in which such amounts are transferred:*

This language provides that the amount of additional new budget authority for Interior and USDA wildfire suppression operations (\$360.0 million for Interior) may be transferred to and merged with suppression operations funding provided in the same fiscal year through the Wildland Fire Management appropriation.

3. *Provided further, That amounts may be transferred to the “Wildland Fire Management” accounts in the Department of Agriculture or the Department of the Interior only upon the notification to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations that all wildfire suppression operations funds appropriated under that heading in this and prior appropriations Acts to the agency to which the funds will be transferred will be obligated within 30 days:*

This language requires that, before this funding is transferred to the Wildland Fire Management account of the Department of the Interior (or USDA, likewise), the Department must notify both the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations that all funding for suppression operations appropriated under the Wildland Fire Management appropriations heading in FY 2025 or prior years will be obligated within 30 days of the notification.

4. *Provided further, That the transfer authority provided under this heading is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law.*

This language provides that the transfer authority under this heading is in addition to any other transfer authority available to Interior.

5. ***Provided further, That in determining whether all wildfire suppression operations funds appropriated under the heading “Wildland Fire Management” in this and prior appropriations Acts to either the Department of Agriculture or the Department of the Interior will be obligated within 30 days pursuant to the preceding proviso, any funds transferred or permitted to be transferred pursuant to any other transfer authority provided by law shall be excluded.***

This language provides that any funds transferred or permitted to be transferred pursuant to any transfer authority other than the authority provided under this Reserve Fund shall be excluded for the purposes of determining whether all wildfire suppression operations funds appropriated for “Wildland Fire Management” in this and prior appropriations laws will be obligated within 30 days of the notification to Congress described in proviso 3, above.

Justification of Fixed Costs

**Table 9: Justification of Fixed Costs
Wildland Fire Management**
(Dollars In Thousands)

Fixed Cost Element	2024 Annualized CR or Change	2024 Annualized CR to 2025 Request Change	Description
Change in Number of Paid Days	+2,644	+0	The number of total paid days for FY 2025 is 261 (2088 hours), which is the same number of days as FY 2024.
Pay Raise	+33,327	+15,303	The FY 2025 President's Budget includes one quarter (October-December 2024) of the 5.2% pay raise for 2024 and three quarters (January-September 2025) of the estimated 2.0% pay raise for 2025.
FERS Employer Contribution Increase	+1,144	+0	The estimates do not reflect increases to the employer contribution for FERS or Law Enforcement FERS for FY 2025.
Departmental Working Capital Fund (WCF)	+127	-40	The estimates reflect final decisions of the Working Capital Fund Consortium on the FY 2025 Working Capital Fund Central Bill.
GSA and Non-GSA Rents	+14	+55	This estimate reflects the FY 2025 President's Budget Exhibit 54s as submitted. The amounts reflect changes in the costs payable to the General Services Administration (GSA) and others for office and non-office space as estimated by GSA, as well as the rental costs of other currently occupied space. These estimates reflect Main Interior Building (MIB) rent, Security, Federal Reserve Parking, and Operations and Maintenance, distributed by bureau and office, based upon MIB occupancy levels provided by the Office of Facilities and Administrative Services. Costs of mandatory office relocations (i.e., relocations due to external events for which there is no alternative but to vacate the currently occupied space) are also included.
Account Total, Fixed Costs	+37,256	+15,318	N/A

Employee Count By Grade

Table 10: Employee Count by Grade
Office of the Secretary
Office of Wildland Fire
 (Total Employment)

Employee Count by Grade	2023 Actual	2024 Annualized CR Estimate	2025 Request Estimate
Executive Level V	0	0	0
SES	1	1	1
Subtotal Executive Level/SES	1	1	1
SL - 00	1	1	1
ST - 00	0	0	0
Subtotal Senior Level	1	1	1
GS/GM - 15	8	8	8
GS/GM - 14	14	17	18
GS/GM - 13	11	11	11
GS - 12	1	0	0
GS - 11	2	3	3
GS - 10	0	0	0
GS - 9	1	0	0
GS - 8	0	0	0
GS - 7	0	0	0
GS - 6	0	0	0
GS - 5	0	0	0
GS - 4	0	0	0
GS - 3	0	0	0
GS - 2	0	0	0
GS - 1	0	0	0
Subtotal General Schedule	36	39	40
Other Pay Schedule Systems	0	0	0
Total employment (actuals & estimates)	38	41	42

Note: This exhibit only displays personnel counts in the Office of Wildland Fire. The Wildland Fire Management appropriation funds thousands of firefighters and support personnel whose numbers are not in this table. Those personnel are included in the "Employee Count by Grade" exhibits in the BIA, BLM, FWS, and NPS budget justifications.

Section 403 Compliance

**Table 11: Section 403 Compliance
Wildland Fire Management
External Administrative Costs**
(Dollars In Thousands)

External Administrative Costs

Description of Assessment	Bureau	Preparedness	Suppression	Fuels	BAR	Basis
Human Resource (HR) Fire Program Support	BIA	\$ 579	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	BIA Fire HR Program
Centrally Funded Initiatives including Working Capital Fund Direct and Central Bill and BLM Director's Priorities	BLM	\$ 6,288	\$ 0	\$ 3,229	\$ 0	Share of total BLM appropriated funds
National Operations Center (Procurement, HR, Information Technology [IT], data management services centrally provided for entire agency)	BLM	\$ 1,547	\$ 0	\$ 1,335	\$ 0	FTEs
Headquarters Support (General headquarters oversight, external affairs, IT, law enforcement, Equal Employment Opportunity [EEO], HR, resources, business practices)	BLM	\$ 1,431	\$ 0	\$ 1,264	\$ 258	Evaluation of support needed for subactivity
User Pay Cost Share: The non-resource management cost share collects costs from multiple, distributed accounts. The funds collected are used to pay FWS-wide charges that cannot easily be attributed to a specific program or sub activity.	FWS	\$ 2,900	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	Percentage based on FTE
Enterprise-Wide Cost Share: FWS assesses its resource management programs for costs that can be directly tracked back to users. This includes such items as software licenses, cell phone costs, identification cards, and the like.	FWS	\$ 1,700	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	Percentage based on FTE
Working Capital Fund Central Bill: Costs covered include administrative and contract support for the Boise Acquisition Office related to centralized aviation contracts.	BIA	\$ 218	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	The basis for distribution of costs includes elements such as aviation costs and utilization of contract support.

External Administrative Costs (continued)

Description of Assessment	Bureau	Preparedness	Suppression	Fuels	BAR	Basis
Working Capital Fund Central Bill: Costs covered include a variety of services including mail services, safety, security, property services, building management and services, and the finance branch.	OS	\$ 627	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	The basis for distribution of costs includes elements such as FTEs and square footage.
<i>Subtotal, External Administrative Costs</i>	All	\$ 15,290	\$ 0	\$ 5,828	\$ 258	N/A

Program Assessment Costs

Description of Assessment	Bureau	Preparedness	Suppression	Fuels	BAR	Basis
Office of Aviation Services (OAS) Central Bill (Administrative charges for OAS training, management, flight services, and safety)	BLM	\$ 0	\$ 4,987	\$ 0	\$ 0	Flight time by subactivity
<i>Subtotal, Program Assessment Costs</i>	All	\$ 0	\$ 4,987	\$ 0	\$ 0	N/A

Bureau Administrative Costs

Description of Assessment	Bureau	Preparedness	Suppression	Fuels	BAR	Basis
Preparedness Indirect for Tribal Programs	BIA	\$ 4,793	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	6 percent of Base Preparedness Allocation
Fuels Indirect for Tribal Programs	BIA	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 16,000	\$ 0	15 percent of Base and BIL Fuels Management/Reserved Treaty Rights Lands funding.
State Level Indirect (Administrative support at the state, district, and field office level: procurement, HR, IT)	BLM	\$ 15,373	\$ 0	\$ 9,529	\$ 0	Indirect support costs are limited to 10 percent of the statewide Preparedness and Fuels Management base program allocations.
<i>Subtotal, Bureau Administrative Costs</i>	All	\$ 20,166	\$ 0	\$ 25,529	\$ 0	N/A

Total Administrative and Assessment Costs

Description of Assessment	Bureau	Preparedness	Suppression	Fuels	BAR
<i>Total Assessments and Reserves</i>	All	\$ 35,456	\$ 4,987	\$ 31,357	\$ 258

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law FY 2025 Spend Plan

Introduction

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, or Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), is providing the Department of the Interior nearly \$1.5 billion to improve the wildland fire workforce and strengthen the resilience of communities and ecosystems to the threat of wildfire by making historic investments in the wildland fire management workforce, forest and rangeland restoration, hazardous fuels management, science, technology to improve the early detection of wildfires and wildfire response, and post-wildfire restoration activities. For FY 2022, \$407.6 million was made available. For FYs 2023 and 2024, \$262.6 million was made available each year; and for each of FYs 2025 and 2026, \$262.6 million will become available. The BIL funding for wildland fire management is available until expended.

This spend plan responds to a requirement in BIL (Public Law 117-58), which states:

Sec. 601. Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall submit to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations a detailed spend plan for the funds provided to the Department of the Interior in this title in this Act for fiscal year 2022, and for each fiscal year through 2026, as part of the annual budget submission of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, the Secretary of the Interior shall submit a detailed spend plan for the funds provided to the Department of the Interior in this title in this Act for that fiscal year.

Program Summary

BIL is providing Interior funding for the following wildland fire purposes:

- \$245 million for Preparedness for the wildland fire workforce², including increased compensation, conversions to permanent positions, and training and workforce development; information and technology investments for satellite and other detection and monitoring; and a pilot program to provide financial assistance to local governments for slip-on tankers to operate vehicles as fire engines;
- \$878 million for Fuels Management to support mechanical thinning and prescribed fire; establish fuel breaks and other control locations; and employ contractors, young adults, veterans, and tribal youth;
- \$325 million for Burned Area Rehabilitation to complete post-fire rehabilitation, mitigate the damaging effects of wildfires, and set landscapes on a path towards natural recovery and resilience; and
- \$10 million for the Joint Fire Science Program that Interior administers with the Department of Agriculture (USDA).

² In addition to this funding appropriated directly for Interior, the Department received \$6 million by transfer from the Department of Agriculture to support special pay supplements for federal wildland firefighters authorized and funded by BIL.

The enacted amounts, by actual or planned apportionments for each fiscal year, are shown in the following table:

Table 12: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding, FYs 2022-2026
Department of the Interior
Wildland Fire Management
by Year of Availability
 Enacted Amounts Available/ A
 (Dollars in Thousands)

Activity/Subactivity	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	All Years
Preparedness/ B	75,940	100,000	30,000	22,910	16,150	245,000
Fuels Management	252,560	126,886	168,000	165,554	165,000	878,000
Other Operations: Burned Area Rehabilitation	76,000	33,714	62,600	72,686	80,000	325,000
Other Operations: Joint Fire Science Program	3,100	2,000	2,000	1,450	1,450	10,000
Total, Wildland Fire Management	407,600	262,600	262,600	262,600	262,600	1,458,000

A/ Figures reflect amounts made available in the fiscal year, not estimated allocations or obligations. Amounts are before transfers to the Office of Inspector General (0.5 percent of all appropriations) and FWS's Ecological Services office.

B/ In addition to this funding appropriated directly for Interior, the Department received \$6 million in FY 2022 appropriations by transfer from USDA to support FY 2023 special pay supplements for federal wildland firefighters authorized and funded by BIL. This table does not display that funding.

Preparedness

BIL is providing Interior a total of \$245.0 million over five years for Preparedness. Of this total, Congress appropriated \$120.0 million to Interior to increase the compensation of federal wildland firefighters. BIL directs Interior and the USDA Forest Service to increase compensation for firefighters. In September 2023, USDA Forest Service transferred to Interior \$6.0 million in FY 2022 BIL funding appropriated to USDA for the special payments for federal wildland firefighters authorized by BIL Section 40803(d)(4). This transfer allowed Interior to continue the pay supplements longer, until the FY 2024 Continuing Resolutions (CR)—Public Laws 118-15, 118-22, 118-35—provided authority to continue special pay supplements after the BIL funding for them was depleted. BIL also directs Interior and the USDA Forest Service, in coordination with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), to establish a wildland firefighter occupational series.

The other \$125.0 million in BIL Preparedness funding available over five years is for other activities intended to increase America's preparedness to respond to wildfire. They include support for workshops and training for firefighters, equipment, satellite detection and reporting, wildfire detection and monitoring, and a pilot program to support local governments in wildfire response through the acquisition of slip-on tanker units.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Supports Wildland Firefighter Training Modernization



The Ruby Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew monitors the fireline during the Dixie Fire on the Lassen National Forest. (Photo by BLM.)

The Interior Department is continuing efforts to transform its wildland fire workforce. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), responsible for federal wildland firefighter training, received Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to create a performance-based training system to further develop professional wildland firefighters.

Over the next five to seven years, through the Incident Performance and Training Modernization effort, NWCG will evaluate more than 100 wildland fire incident positions to develop an integrated training and qualification system that empowers self-directed learning and shifts to more on-the-job experiences. These changes will assist firefighters as they gain practical experience on the fireline while reducing redundant training and unnecessary qualification barriers.

This effort involves collaboration among federal, tribal, and state firefighting agencies. By harnessing a diverse array of subject matter experts to actively participate in the analysis and development for each wildland fire position, this effort will support a practical qualification system based on a firefighter's duties plus the experience they gain on active firelines and during project work.

Modernizing the wildland fire workforce training and qualification system will provide the support and career trajectories needed to continue fostering a professional, year-round wildland firefighting workforce that is poised to meet current and future wildland fire challenges.

FY 2023 Activities and Accomplishments

The Department of the Interior:

- Allocated a total \$79.6 million for preparedness activities authorized by BIL during FY 2023, bringing the total allocations for Preparedness for FYs 2022 and 2023 to \$155.2 million.
- Worked with USDA Forest Service to provide special pay supplements to thousands of eligible federal wildland firefighters (5,120 in Interior), bringing the total number of affected Interior firefighters to 5,565 over FYs 2022 and 2023.
- Established a new federal wildland firefighter occupational series with USDA Forest Service and OPM.
- Launched a joint wildland firefighter mental health program with USDA Forest Service. A Public Health Service (PHS) officer of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) was assigned to Interior to facilitate implementation of the departments' plans. In April 2023, the departments hosted a three-day planning summit to spearhead the development of the joint program.
- Coordinated with HHS/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health on a wildland firefighter health and wellbeing assessment, in conjunction with USDA Forest Service.
- Allocated additional funding and enlisted the services of Interior Business Center's Acquisition Division to launch the BIL-authorized pilot program for Interior to provide local governments with financial assistance to purchase slip-on tanker units to operate vehicles as fire engines. Published a Notice of Intent requesting public feedback on the slip-on tanker program.
- Allocated additional funding to contract for a comprehensive competency gap analysis to inform training and career development opportunities.
- Allocated additional funding that expanded training available through the Wildland Fire Learning Management System to additional state, tribal, and local government users.
- Allocated funding for agreements with universities to expand wildfire detection in Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon, and for the Remote Automated Weather System program to complete a proof of concept to evaluate camera and smoke sensors.

FY 2024 Planned Activities and Milestones

The Department of the Interior:

- Allocated an additional \$18.4 million in BIL funding for Preparedness in November 2023, bringing the total allocated for Preparedness from FY 2022-2024 funding to \$173.6 million.
- From the remaining, unallocated \$37.3 million apportioned for Preparedness for FY 2023 and FY 2024, will allocate funding for other BIL preparedness initiatives.
- Will procure services for a comprehensive competency model and gap analysis to identify core competencies and gaps for federal wildland fire personnel to inform training and career development opportunities.
- Will expand investments in information technology that increases the opportunities for federal, state, tribal, and local wildland fire personnel to complete online training courses.
- Will implement the new federal wildland firefighter occupational series established in 2022 with USDA Forest Service and OPM. Eligible employees have the option to elect in to the new series,

and wildland firefighter position vacancies are being advertised in the new occupational series, including temporary firefighter positions.

- Will continue working with USDA Forest Service on the new joint mental health program, while also building out a comprehensive approach to health and wellbeing. The program will identify and implement external contract needs to provide clinical care and hire additional HHS PHS officers as case managers to assist firefighters in finding resources and clinical care.
- Will take steps with USDA Forest Service to reduce exposure to line-of-duty environmental hazards. This is being completed through a group of interagency subject matter experts assembled at the request of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Risk Management Committee (RMC). The work group completed the following tasks to meet the objectives stated in BIL: (1) define what is an environmental hazard, (2) classify line-of-duty environmental hazards, (3) identify what mitigations and recommendations already exist, and (4) make recommendations for future development of mitigations for environmental hazards. A memo with these completed tasks has been drafted and is under review by the NWCG RMC.
- Will launch the BIL-authorized pilot program for Interior to provide local governments with financial assistance to purchase slip-on tanker units to operate vehicles as fire engines, including issuing one or more Notice(s) of Funding Opportunity. Based on responses to the Notice(s) of Funding Opportunity, Interior anticipates making the first round of awards during FY 2024.
- Will allocate funding for BIL's radio interoperability provision and plan for an initial acquisition during FY 2024. Interior is working through the National Multi-Agency Coordination Group and incident management team communications leaders to identify equipment needs.
- Will complete an agreement with USDA and the Department of Commerce (DOC)/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and USDA for improvements to satellite-based detection and reporting of wildfire starts in all areas in which either the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture has statutory responsibility for wildland fire protection and prevention.

FY 2025 Planned Activities

The Department of the Interior:

- Will allocate additional funding for BIL preparedness activities from FY 2025-apportioned funding (planned: \$22.0 million) and any carryover from prior years.
- Will continue working with USDA Forest Service on the new joint mental health initiative, with a focus in Phase 2 on program development, leveraging resources, and filling needs identified in Phase 1 (which began in FY 2023). Together with additional direction from section 5305 of the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 117-263), the departments will remain closely coordinated and continue taking a unified approach to building a comprehensive health and wellbeing program for wildland firefighters.
- Will evaluate the response to the initial round(s) of slip-on tanker pilot program funding opportunities and determine how much additional funding to allocate in FY 2025.
- Will continue work with USDA and NOAA on improvements to satellite-based detection and reporting of wildfire starts in all areas in which either the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture has statutory responsibility for wildland fire protection and prevention.

Fuels Management

The BIL is providing Interior a total of \$878.0 million over five years for Fuels Management. Of this total:

- \$250.0 million is available for planning and conducting prescribed fires and related activities;
- \$250.0 million is available for developing or improving potential control locations, including fuelbreaks;
- \$100.0 million is available for conducting mechanical thinning and timber harvesting in an ecologically appropriate manner or precommercial thinning in young growth stands for wildlife habitat benefits to provide subsistence resources;
- \$100.0 million is available for contracting or employing crews of laborers to modify and remove flammable vegetation on federal land and for using materials from treatments, to the extent practicable, to produce biochar and other innovative wood products, including through the use of existing locally based organizations that engage young adults, tribal youth, and veterans in service projects; and
- \$178.0 million is available for other fuels management work.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Helps Local Economy and Native Prairie in Devils Tower National Monument



Devils Tower looms in the background during a prescribed fire at Devils Tower National Monument in October 2022. (Photo by NPS.)

Devils Tower is an astounding geologic feature that protrudes out of the prairie surrounding the Black Hills in Wyoming. It is sacred to Northern Plains Indians, and it attracts more than 500,000 visitors annually who support the local economy.

Most of Devils Tower National Monument is covered in ponderosa pine forest dominated by well-spaced trees and low-growing grasses. Fire serves a critical role in this ecosystem to maintain the healthy, open forest by removing built-up low-growing vegetation. The park has used prescribed fire to maintain this healthy forest ecosystem since 1991.

BIL is helping continue the use of prescribed fire in the park and maintain the ecosystem surrounding this iconic rock formation. For example, in October 2022, NPS staff worked with local city partners to complete a prescribed fire near the west side of Devils Tower. Funded through BIL, the project removed the build-up of dead vegetation to encourage growth of native prairie grasses and flowering plants.

The park is divided into ten prescribed fire units. Each unit is burned about every 10 to 15 years. These prescribed fires return a critical natural process to the landscape, help improve ecosystem health, and reduce the chance of future extreme wildfires that could threaten the park.

FY 2023 Activities and Accomplishments

The Department of the Interior:

- Allocated a total \$295.9 million for fuels management authorized by BIL during FY 2023, bringing the total allocations for FYs 2022 and 2023 to \$377.5 million.
- Treated more than 1,000,000 acres of BIL-funded fuels management projects nationwide, more than a quadruple increase in acres treated using BIL funding from 2022 to 2023. This total includes nearly 550,000 acres treated with prescribed fire.
- Initiated a partnership with Interior's U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to develop science and research to meet Interior's unique fire management needs, including addressing fire risk and evaluating fuel treatments.
- Partnered with private landowners for fuels management treatments through the Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and the Coastal Program.
- Allocated funding for projects to support local partnership work to protect vulnerable communities from wildfire while preparing our natural landscapes for a changing climate.
- Allocated funding for work with USDA Forest Service to track the exchange of resources and associated expenditures for cross-boundary fuels management.
- Partnered with the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) and USDA Forest Service to support tribal outreach and workforce, with emphases on fuels management and post-fire rehabilitation. Both Interior and USDA Forest Service are providing funding to ITC for these purposes.
- Through an agreement with the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and USDA Forest Service, continued to support developing a tool to promote shared stewardship of lands to reduce wildfire risk, information about fuel treatment activities on federal and non-federal land, and enhance collaboration among wildland fire partners.
- Allocated funding for hiring two air quality specialists to advance efforts to increase the pace and scale of prescribed fire use.

FY 2024 Planned Activities and Milestones

The Department of the Interior:

- Allocated another \$110.3 million for fuels management in November 2023, allowing for fall prescribed fire implementation and providing time to build capacity by hiring additional staff and entering into new contracts to increase the amount of work. These allocations bring the total allocated to date from FY 2022-2024 funding to \$487.8 million.
- From the remaining, unallocated \$56.9 million apportioned for Fuels Management for FY 2024, will allocate funding for other BIL fuels management initiatives.
- Plans to treat more than 1,000,000 acres (estimate) of BIL-funded fuels management projects.
- Used BIL funding available early in the fiscal year to implement time-sensitive fuels management that could not be funded fully with appropriations available during the portion of the year covered by FY 2024 CRs.
- Is continuing to increase implementation of BIL-funded thinning, prescribed fire, installation of fuel breaks and other potential control locations, and other removal of flammable vegetation.
- In coordination with USDA Forest Service, will submit a BIL-required annual report to Congress on the number of acres of land on which projects carried out using the BIL's treatment funds improved the Fire Regime Condition Class.

FY 2025 Planned Activities

The Department of the Interior:

- Will allocate additional funding for BIL fuels management activities from FY 2025-apportioned funding (planned: \$155.8 million) and any carryover from FY 2024.
- In coordination with USDA Forest Service and NASEF, will begin to utilize the newly developed tool to promote shared stewardship of lands to reduce wildfire risk, increase sharing of relevant information on wildland fire management plans and activities, and enhance collaboration among wildland fire partners.
- In coordination with USDA Forest Service, will submit a BIL-required annual report to Congress on the number of acres of land on which projects carried out using the BIL's treatment funds improved the Fire Regime Condition Class.

Burned Area Rehabilitation

BIL is providing Interior a total of \$325.0 million over five years for Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR). These funds are supporting post-fire rehabilitation, mitigating the damaging effects of wildfires, and setting landscapes on a path toward natural recovery and resilience.

FY 2023 Activities and Accomplishments

The Department of the Interior:

- Approved allocations totaling \$89.4 million for post-fire rehabilitation and recovery efforts nationwide, bringing the total FY 2022 and 2023 funding allocated to \$109.2 million.
- Allocated funding for USGS to develop a biotic crust field guide.

- Allocated funding for the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) for Lake Cascade (Idaho) and Hiawatha (Washington) rehabilitation projects.
- Approved allocations for investments in strategic plant materials development for such things as nurseries, seed collection, and production. These investments will make seeds and plant materials available more quickly after wildfires, increase the likelihood of successful post-fire recovery, and provide important support that aligns with the Ecosystem Restoration Keystone Initiative to Plan, Design, and Implement the National Seed Strategy.

FY 2024 Planned Activities and Milestones

The Department of the Interior:

- Approved allocations totaling another \$7.5 million for post-fire rehabilitation and recovery in November 2023, including funding to increase the number of contracting officers to facilitate BAR implementation. This allocation brings the total approved allocations to date for FY 2022-2024 apportioned funding to \$116.7 million.
- From the remaining, unallocated \$54.8 million apportioned for BAR for FY 2024, may allocate funding for other BIL BAR initiatives.
- Used BIL funding available early in the fiscal year to implement time-sensitive post-fire seeding that could not be funded fully with appropriations available during the portion of the year covered by FY 2024 Continuing Resolutions.
- Through USGS, will expand support for emergency assessment of post-fire debris-flow hazards – such as the one completed for the 2021 KNP Complex Fire that burned through Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks.
- Is partnering with ITC and USDA Forest Service to support Tribal outreach and workforce, with emphases on fuels management and post-fire rehabilitation. Both Interior and USDA Forest Service are providing funding to ITC for these purposes.
- Will expand cross-boundary collaboration within Interior and with USDA Forest Service and non-federal partners including Tribal Nations—investing in infrastructure, plant materials, monitoring, and evaluation necessary to accelerate the pace and scale of rehabilitation and enhance program effectiveness.
- Will allocate additional funding to BOR to implement six burned area rehabilitation projects in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

FY 2025 Planned Activities

The Department of the Interior:

- Will allocate additional funding for BIL BAR activities from FY 2025-apportioned funding (planned: \$83.3 million) and any carryover from FY 2024.
- Use BIL funding available early in the fiscal year to implement time-sensitive post-fire seeding and recovery.
- Continue to expand cross-boundary collaboration within Interior and with USDA Forest Service and non-federal partners including tribal nations—investing in infrastructure, plant materials, monitoring, and evaluation necessary to accelerate the pace and scale of rehabilitation and enhance program effectiveness.

Joint Fire Science Program

BIL is providing Interior and USDA Forest Service a total of \$10.0 million each over five years for the Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP), which Interior co-funds and co-administers with the USDA Forest Service. JFSP is targeting BIL projects that can be initiated promptly. The funding is primarily supporting research projects conducted by university and college researchers and other research institutions, occasionally with partnerships between universities and federal researchers.

Consistent with the JFSP prospectus process, subject matter expert panels are reviewing and rating JFSP BIL research projects. They are recommending priority projects to an interagency board comprising senior managers and scientists from Interior and USDA Forest Service. The research projects are inherently collaborative efforts. Results are being disseminated through the Fire Science Exchange Network, which brings together local, state, tribal, and federal researchers and managers from the Interior bureaus, multiple USDA bureaus, DOC/NOAA, DOC National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Department of Defense, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. There is a potential to further enhance coordination through the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the National Science Foundation, and the National Academies.

FY 2023 Activities and Accomplishments

The Department of the Interior:

- Allocated \$2.0 million for additional JFSP research grants using BIL funding, on such topics as fuels management and fire behavior, changing the environment, emissions and air quality, fire effects and post-fire recovery, the relative impacts of prescribed fire versus wildfire, and human dimensions of fire. These allocations brought the total allocations of FY 2022-2023 apportioned funding for JFSP to \$5.1 million.
- Posted Notices of Funding Opportunity for JFSP research grants to be funded by BIL. Applications were due in December 2022.
- During FY 2023, funded 31 more JFSP BIL research projects, including Graduate Research Innovation (GRIN) awards.

FY 2024 Planned Activities and Milestones

The Department of the Interior:

- Posted Notices of Funding Opportunity for JFSP research proposals to be considered for funding through BIL. Applications were due in September 2023. Funded projects will continue to support graduate students, science delivery, and research.
- Allocated an additional \$2.0 million for JFSP cooperative and interagency agreements, bringing the total allocations of FY 2022-2024 apportioned funding for JFSP to \$7.1 million.
- By the end of FY 2024, plans to have completed at least six (estimate) JFSP BIL GRIN projects.
- Plans to initiate about three to five projects from the applications due by September 2023.

FY 2025 Planned Activities

The Department of the Interior:

- Will allocate another \$1.5 million for BIL JFSP research agreements, bringing the total allocations of FY 2022-2025 apportioned funding for JFSP to \$8.6 million.
- Will post additional Notices of Funding Opportunity for JFSP research, science delivery, and workforce development, including student support that will be considered for funding through BIL.
- By the end of FY 2025, plans to have completed several more JFSP BIL-funded GRIN research projects.
- Will continue to support and manage the 15 regional projects that comprise the Fire Science Exchange Network.

Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission

BIL authorized Interior, USDA Forest Service, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to establish a Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission. The Commission was required by law to provide Congress a report with recommendations to prevent, mitigate, suppress, and manage wildland fires and rehabilitate lands following wildfires. The recommendations are to prioritize maximizing the protection of human life, community water supplies, homes, and other essential structures; facilitating efficient short- and long-term forest management in residential and nonresidential at-risk areas; and addressing other important topics, such as how to improve the capacity of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects. The recommendations also are to address post-fire rehabilitation and recovery.

FY 2023 Activities and Accomplishments

The Commission, working with the Department of the Interior, USDA Forest Service, and DHS/FEMA:

- Held several meetings, including meetings of work groups and the full Commission.
- Submitted the Aerial Equipment Strategy Report to Congress in January 2023.
- Submitted the Final Report of the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission to Congress on September 27, 2023.

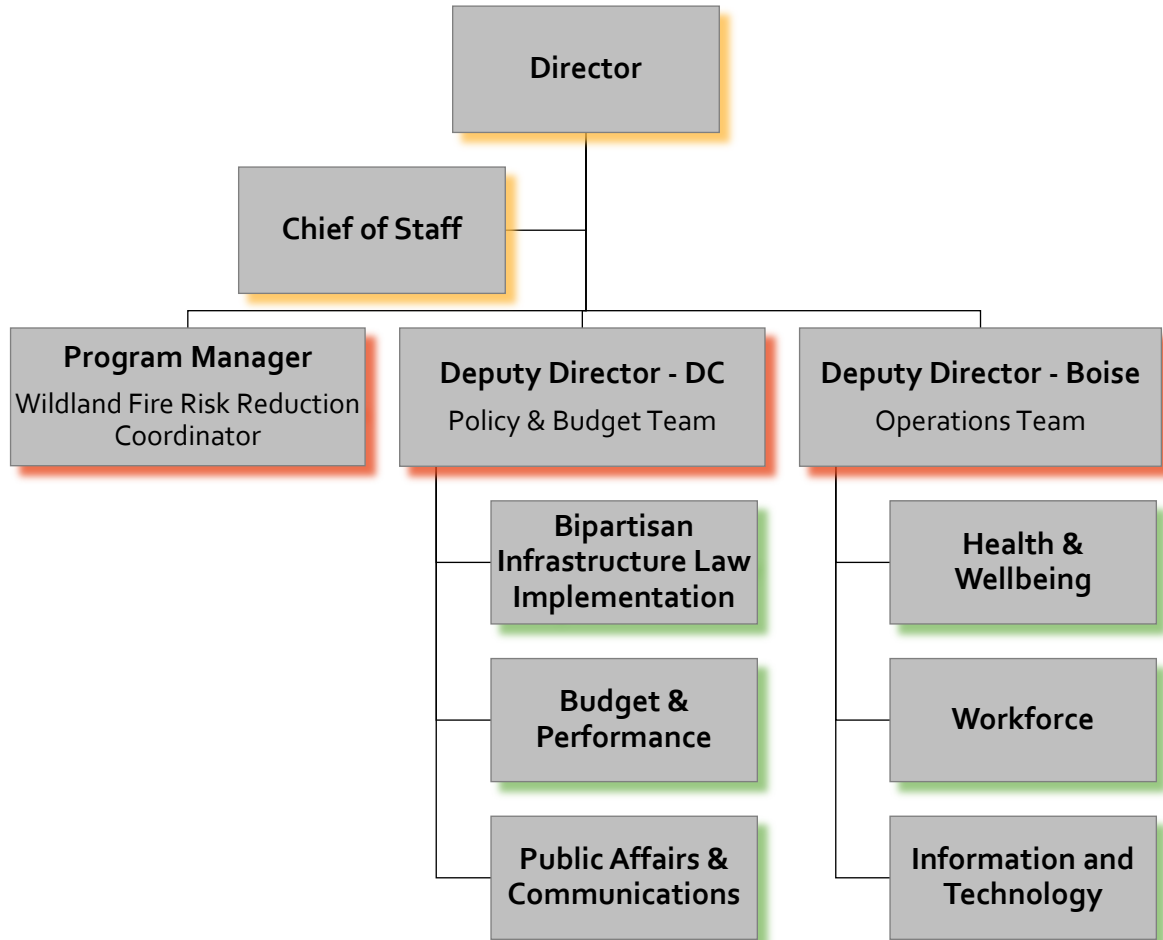
FY 2024 Planned Activities and Milestones

By law, the Commission will disband within 180 days of the issuance of its required reports (i.e., by March 25, 2024). Interior will work with Congress and its partners to consider the Commission's recommendations and plan how to implement them.

FY 2025 Planned Activities

Interior and its partners will continue implementing Commission recommendations.

Appendix A – Organization Chart, Office of Wildland Fire



Appendix B – Lists of Key Tables and Figures

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Appendix C – References

Key Acronyms

BAR	Burned Area Rehabilitation
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
FSEN	Fire Science Exchange Network
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent (employees; except where noted, refers to federal personnel)
FWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
FY	Fiscal Year (time span from October of one year through September of the next; the federal fiscal year begins three months before the corresponding calendar year)
GACC	Geographic Area Coordination Center
GRIN	Graduate Research Innovation program
JFSP	Joint Fire Science Program
NPS	National Park Service
OWF	Office of Wildland Fire
P.L.	Public Law (U.S. federal law)
RTRL	Reserved Treaty Rights Lands
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
WFIT	Wildland Fire Information and Technology
WFLC	Wildland Fire Leadership Council
WFM	Wildland Fire Management
WUI	Wildland-Urban Interface

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- Program Graphics
 - Preparedness, Suppression Operations, Fuels Management, Burned Area Rehabilitation: Luis Prado/Noun Project
 - Facilities: Graphic Engineer/Noun Project
- Forests and Rangelands – The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy: <https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy/>
- The National Interagency Fire Center: <https://www.nifc.gov/>
- The National Interagency Coordination Center – Predictive Services: <https://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/>
- Wildfire Risk to Communities: <https://wildfirerisk.org/>

For more information on Interior’s Wildland Fire Management budget, go to <https://www.doi.gov/wildlandfire/budget>