



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

and Performance Information
Fiscal Year 2023

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 given the impacts of climate change, drought, altered fire regimes, and increased population and development. The average wildfire has become larger, costlier, and more complex, and wildfire “season” has grown to be almost year-round. Furthermore, climate change has contributed to more frequent and severe wildfire activity, and wildfire itself contributes to climate change through the release of carbon emissions into the atmosphere.

In the United States, based on a ten-year average, more than 62,000 wildfires burn 7.5 million acres every year.¹ At the height of last year’s fire season, every geographic area was experiencing large wildfires for extended periods. In 2021, 58,985 wildfires burned over 7.1 million acres of land; this is in line with the average number of wildfires that burned over the past ten years and about 95 percent of the average number of acres burned. However, what made 2021 unique is how early the Nation reached Preparedness Level 4—June 22, 2021—and the highest Preparedness Level of 5 on July 14, 2021, as well as how long the Nation stayed at either Preparedness Level 4 or 5—99 days—which is a record for the highest number of consecutive days at either of those Preparedness Levels.



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.

The Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture (USDA)—through its U.S. Forest Service—are integral parts of a larger wildland fire management community that works collaboratively to implement a cohesive fire management framework that ensures wildland firefighter and public safety

¹National Interagency Coordination Center Wildland Fire Summary and Statistics Annual Report, 2021 (https://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/intelligence/2021_statsumm/annual_report_2021.pdf), page 12

while mitigating loss from wildfire. 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 comprises the Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) and 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, some other bureaus and offices play an integral role in supporting the program. Furthermore, collaboration with other Federal agencies, Tribal Nations, States, local communities, and the private sector is essential to providing a unified and coordinated response to wildland fire. Military and international partners provide additional wildfire suppression support, especially when existing resources are insufficient to meet the increased demands of a severe fire season.

Wildland Fire Management Governance & Coordination

The Federal interagency Wildland Fire Management program is closely coordinated and integrated with Tribal Nation, State, and local programs using interoperable equipment, training, and standards. The program is guided by a common policy and approach, implemented through agency line organizations, and operates within the context of the statutory mission of each agency. A number of governance structures are used 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 Nation, 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 is instrumental in the development and implementation of the *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*, which remains the foundation of Federal wildland fire management policy.

The *National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*, developed in 2014, 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. Restore and maintain landscapes;
2. Fire-adapted communities; and
3. Wildfire response.

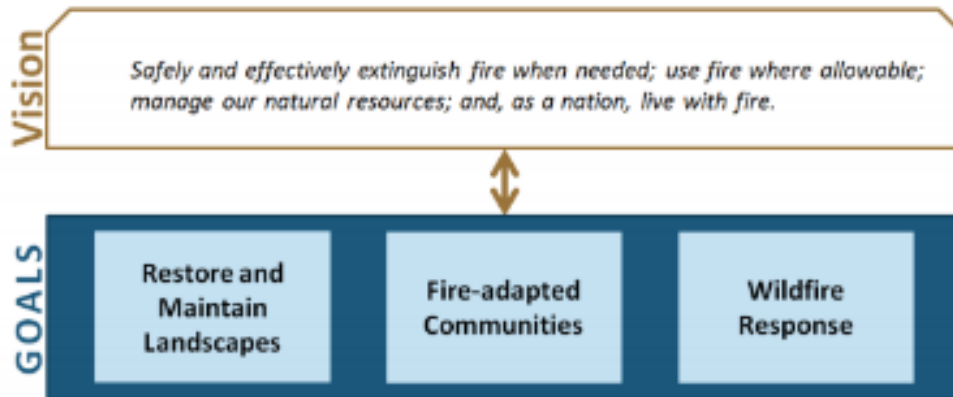


Diagram of National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy vision and goals.

In the Department of the Interior, OWF is the principal office responsible for developing, managing, and overseeing wildland fire management policy, planning, budget, program accountability, and review. In carrying out these responsibilities, OWF ensures that implementation of the program is consistent across the Department and adheres to the laws and directives established by Congress and the President, Administration priorities, the Department's Strategic Plan, and wildland fire policies and directives. Furthermore, OWF is responsible for developing and managing many of the information technology systems that the wildland fire management community uses for tracking and using data, planning, and responding to wildfires.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

President Biden signed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) on November 15, 2021, making this once-in-a-generation investment in the Nation's infrastructure and economic competitiveness a reality. This landmark investment will rebuild America's critical infrastructure, tackle the climate crisis, advance environmental justice, and drive the creation of good-paying union jobs. By addressing long-overdue improvements and strengthening our resilience to the changing climate, this investment in our communities across the country will grow the economy sustainably and equitably so everyone gets ahead for decades to come.

The BIL provides a total of \$1,458,000,000 over five years (FY 2022 through FY 2026) for Interior's Wildland Fire Management activities. The funding is "no year" funding but specific amounts are available in each of the five years.

For FY 2022, \$407.6 million is available. The BIL's funding is intended to strengthen the resilience of communities and ecosystems to the threat of wildfire by making historic investments in forest and rangeland restoration, hazardous fuels management, science, technology and equipment, and post-wildfire restoration activities; and by investing in Federal wildland firefighters. More information on how

"We have been presented with a unique opportunity to collaborate and advance our shared priorities to build a better America. The infrastructure law invests in areas where we, working closely together, have a chance to make a better future for the people we serve in the areas of wildfire, drought, legacy pollution clean-up, and restoration of the outdoors that we all love."

– Secretary Deb Haaland

Interior's Wildland Fire Management program is affected by the BIL is included in the "Program Activities" and "Other Exhibits" sections.

The America the Beautiful Initiative

Interior plays a critical role in the America the Beautiful, the Administration's Initiative to meet the President's ambitious goal to work with States, Tribes, private landowners, local communities and other partners to conserve 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030 to help address the climate crisis and its impacts on nature. This initiative will help strengthen the economy, address the interconnected climate and biodiversity crises, and advance environmental justice.

In 2023, America the Beautiful builds on these and other broadly supported actions to advance land and water conservation in a manner that is faithful to the Initiatives' shared principles—locally-led, guided by science, honoring Trust and sovereignty, and respecting landowners. Implementing this initiative continues to rely on broad engagement, including hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts, Tribal Nations, States, territories, local officials. These important partners and stakeholders drive the strategies that reflect the priorities of all communities.

Climate Science Approach Unifies Fire Management in South Florida



South Florida National Parks and Preserve Fire and Aviation Management prescribed fire. (Photo by NPS.)

It's no secret that wildfires across the United States are worsening. With communities expanding into fire-dependent lands, they are also becoming more vulnerable to climate change and these catastrophic fires.







South Florida National Parks and Preserve is taking steps to combat these challenges. It developed a cohesive fire management strategy. In the winter of 2020, the first step to fully execute this vision began by standardizing procedures. South Florida National Parks and Preserve was then recognized to better facilitate a united approach to fire management.

Under its cohesive strategy, the prescribed fire program was then redesigned to conduct additional burns under moderate fire conditions. This approach builds resiliency within the fire-adapted and fire-dependent ecosystems of south Florida by breaking up fuel continuity and reducing hazardous fuels. In 2021, prescribed fire was applied to more than 140,000 acres within this framework. The expanded use of prescribed fire helps reduce the severity of wildfires, lowering their cost and risk to communities.

Wildland Fire Management Program & Budget Overview

Interior’s Wildland Fire Management program is committed to addressing the effects of climate change and the severity of wildfires on public health, resources, and communities. In addition, the program works to restore and maintain resilient landscapes, protect lives and properties, create fire-adapted communities, and ensure safe and effective responses to wildfires. Interior strives to achieve a cost-effective, technically sound, and evidence-based wildland fire management program that safely meets resource management goals. The program 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.

The **Wildland Fire Management appropriation** funds the following program activities:

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 the range of actions taken to directly extinguish wildfires, prevent the movement and growth of unwanted fire, and manage fire for resource benefits.
	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.
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 the infrastructure used to support firefighters, safeguard the public, and improve capability to protect values at risk from damage by wildfire.
	Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP)	Delivers dedicated wildland fire research and science to inform fire management policies and decisions at local, regional, and national levels.

Interior uses the Wildland Fire Management appropriation to fund the Administration’s priorities for wildland fire management and increasing the country’s resilience to the adverse effects of climate change.

The **Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund appropriation** makes available to Interior’s Wildland Fire Management program additional funding for emergency wildfire response and suppression when Suppression Operations funding in the Wildland Fire Management appropriation is inadequate to

meet the needs. Unobligated balances of funding in the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund carry forward into the next year.

Total 2023 Budget Request

Budget Authority (Dollars in Thousands)	2021 Actual	2022 CR at Annual Rate	2023 Request
Current, Wildland Fire Management (14X1125)	\$992,623	\$992,623	\$1,199,630
Transfer from Reserve Fund (14X0130)	\$28,000		
Net Other Transfers ^(a)	\$4,003	-\$2,038	-\$1,313
Total Current, Wildland Fire Management (with Transfers) without Supplemental	\$1,024,626	\$990,585	\$1,198,317
Supplemental ^(b)		\$507,600	\$262,600
Total Current, Wildland Fire Management (with Transfers) with Supplemental	\$1,024,626	\$1,498,185	\$1,460,917
Current, Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund (14X1130)	\$310,000	\$310,000	\$340,000
Transfer to Suppression (14X1125) ^(c)	(\$28,000)	-	-
Total Current, Reserve Fund (with Transfers)	\$282,000	\$310,000	\$340,000
Total Current, Wildland Fire Management Program	\$1,306,626	\$1,808,185	\$1,800,917
Staffing			
FTE Employees ^(d) - Total Current with Supplemental, including Reimbursable	3,777	4,105	4,915

(a) Transfers reflect the amount of funding received from the USDA Forest Service. In FY 2021, the Forest Service transferred \$4.0 million for interagency projects. In FY 2022 and FY 2023, the amounts reflect funding the Wildland Fire Management program will transfer to the Office of Inspector General's office as required by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (P.L. 117-58).

(b) Supplemental funding in FY 2022 and FY 2023 includes the amounts provided for Disaster Relief (P.L. 117-43) and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (P.L. 117-58).

(c) During FY 2021, \$28.0 million in FY 2021 appropriations was transferred from the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund to the Wildland Fire Management account, yielding a total FY 2021 actual funding level of \$1,024,626,000. Another \$232.0 million (for a total \$260.0 million) was transferred from the Reserve Fund in FY 2021 from FY 2020 balances.

(d) Except where indicated, all references to "FTE" are Federal Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees. This document also includes some estimates of Tribal FTE personnel. The FTE amounts in this table include both direct, allocated, and reimbursable FTE employees, which explains the difference from the FTE levels displayed in Table 2: Summary of Requirements, on page 17 and elsewhere in this document.

2023 Priorities

The 2023 budget request for the Department of the Interior's Wildland Fire Management program—including both the Wildland Fire Management account and the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund—is more than \$1.5 billion. The total includes \$1.2 billion for the Wildland Fire Management account and \$340.0 million for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund. The 2023 budget request supports the following Administration priorities:

Modernize the wildland fire workforce framework and increase firefighters' compensation.

- To manage an effective wildland fire management program, it is critical to take a proactive and cooperative approach that mitigates the negative effects of wildfires while actively managing the use of fire to achieve resource management goals. However, the wildland fire management workforce framework that was established in the 1950s must be revised to more effectively meet these objectives and manage current conditions.
- Reforming wildland fire management requires a workforce that is fairly compensated, available year-round to respond to wildland fire, and cared for both physically and mentally. It also requires that firefighters have all the necessary tools to accomplish their mission safely, effectively, and efficiently.
- The 2023 budget request increases funding for Preparedness by +\$130.1 million (+37.5 percent) from the 2022 CR. This includes strong investments to increase firefighters' compensation and maintain the President's commitment that no firefighter makes less than \$15 per hour, convert more firefighters to permanent positions, and expand the number of Wildland Fire Management personnel.

Meet the challenges of wildfire risk and climate change through collaboration and applied science.

- Collaboration with Federal, State, and local entities and Tribal Nations is critical to efficiently and effectively reduce wildfire risk to firefighters, communities, and landscapes. These collaborative partnerships ensure a coordinated approach to wildland fire management that enables resources, assets, and capabilities to be shared and optimized to achieve program goals.
- Wildland Fire Management will provide a technically-sound and science-driven program to help reduce losses from wildfire, restore or maintain landscape and ecosystem resiliency, provide safer conditions for firefighters, and help all communities (including the underserved) live with wildland fire.
- Post-fire rehabilitation objectives are achieved by actions such as reseeding vegetation to control fire-prone invasive species and maintain carbon storage, restore wildlife habitat, repair minor facilities damaged by wildfire, and monitor efforts to ensure effectiveness.
- The 2023 budget request increases funding for Fuels Management by +\$84.4 million (+38.4 percent) from the 2022 CR. The increased funding will be used to mitigate the hazards from wildfires and

increase resilience to climate change. The request also increases funding for the Joint Fire Science Program by +\$1.0 million (+33.3 percent) to increase scientific research on climate and wildfire.

Support and incorporate Tribal Nations' sovereignty and well-being in Wildland Fire Management.

- BIA primarily provides wildland fire management for Indian trust lands; however, all Wildland Fire Management bureaus and offices work closely with Tribal Nations and their partners to fulfill Interior's trust responsibilities. The Department recognizes and promotes self-governance by supporting Tribal Nations who directly manage some or all program elements and activities.
- The Burned Area Rehabilitation program is an important source of funding for the longer-term stabilization and repair of damage to Tribal lands caused by catastrophic wildfires, and this work helps uphold Interior's trust responsibilities.
- Within the Fuels Management activity, dedicated funding for fuels treatments on Reserved Treaty Right Lands reflects Interior's trust responsibilities by supporting Tribal Nations' participation in collaborative strategic Fuels Management projects on non-Tribal lands to protect Tribal natural resources that are at high risk from wildfire. The FY 2023 budget request increases this funding by +\$5 million (+50 percent).
- The 2023 budget request maintains funding for Tribal workforce development and Tribal contract support in the Preparedness activity at the 2022 CR levels (\$6.0 million and \$9.0 million, respectively) and provides an additional \$5.0 million for Tribal contract support costs in the Fuels Management activity (+\$5.0 million from the 2022 CR).

Use information and technology to improve Wildland Fire Management efficiency, effectiveness, and collaboration.

- The 2023 budget request increases funding for information and technology for Fuels Management by +\$4.0 million above the 2022 CR level.
- Applications and data in the Wildland Fire Information and Technology (WFIT) portfolio provide the capability to plan, analyze, and monitor the landscape for variables that affect wildland fire management and support incident management operations.
- During 2023, the Wildland Fire Management program will continue the transition to a formal data management organization, accelerating the development and maintenance of foundational data catalogs, standards and processes that will streamline access to data for analysis, decision making, and evaluations.

- Interior is also working to increase collaboration among all wildland fire management partners, including through tools to increase the sharing of information on efforts by various partners (e.g., Federal, State, and local) to reduce hazardous fuels.

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 Federal 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 the 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 good 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>.

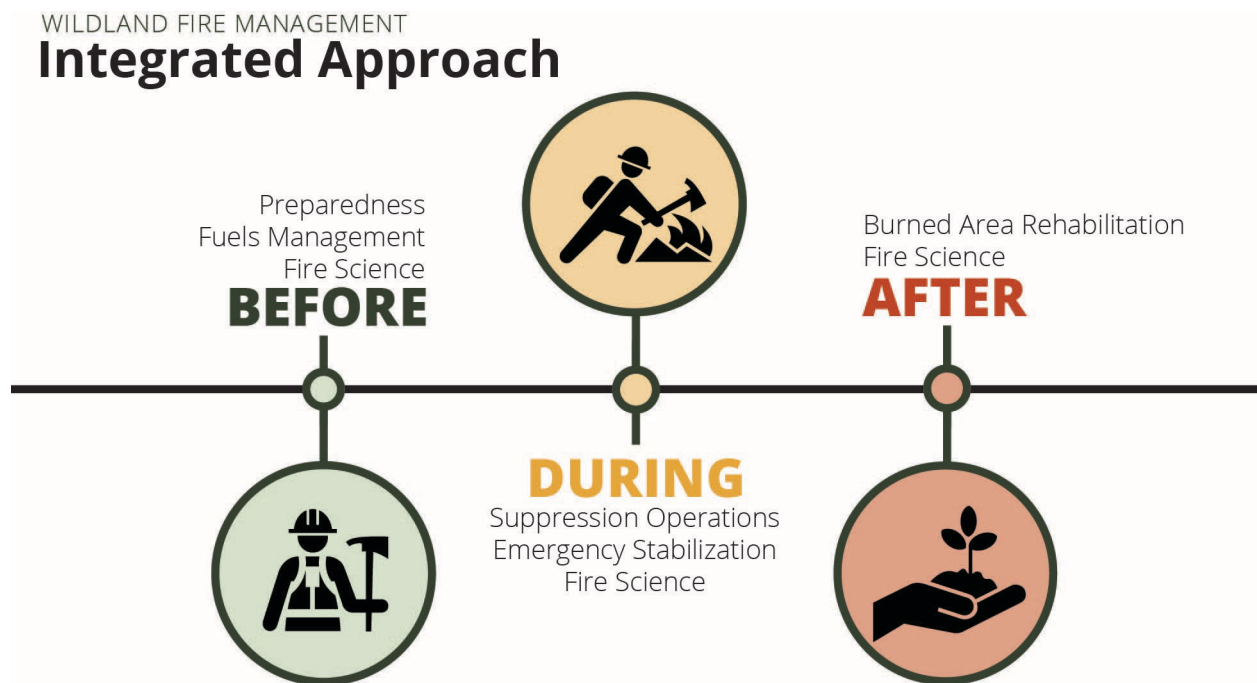
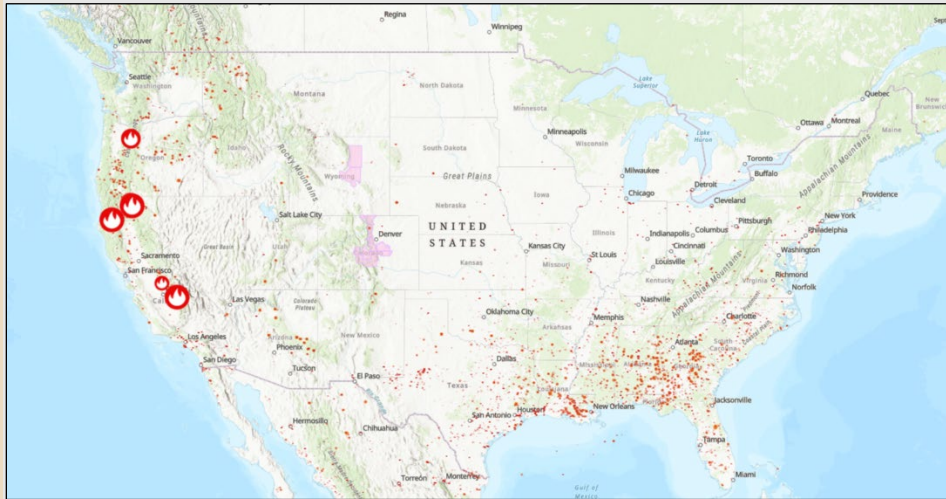


Diagram of an integrated approach to wildland fire management that includes preparedness, fuels management, and fire science before a wildfire starts; suppression operations, emergency stabilization, and fire science during a wildfire; and burned area rehabilitation and fire science after a wildfire ends.

Wildfire Open Data is Driving Innovation And Improving Public Safety



The wildland fire open data site features a variety of maps with local and national information. (Image courtesy of the Wildland Fire Interagency Geospatial Services.)

Launched in April 2020, NIFC's wildland fire open data site makes information on wildfire activity across the United States publicly available. During its first year, the most popular dataset—providing information on wildfire perimeters—was accessed 3 billion times.

Demand for this information continues to grow. During the record-setting 2021 wildfire season, the perimeter dataset was accessed 1.2 billion times in July and August alone.

A diverse range of companies, nonprofits, and public groups are using the data this site provides, including universities, mapping services, insurance providers, and even local hiking groups.

Access the open data site at <https://data-nifc.opendata.arcgis.com/>.

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Budget Summary Tables

Budget at a Glance

Table 1: Wildland Fire Management Budget at a Glance

(Dollars in Thousands)

Appropriation: Wildland Fire Management	2021 Actual	2022 CR at Annual Rate	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	2023 Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request
Preparedness	347,105	347,105	+13,825	+0	+116,229	477,159
<i>Baseline Capacity</i>					<i>[+8,438]</i>	
<i>Increase Firefighters' Compensation</i>					<i>[+20,000]</i>	
<i>Increase Staffing and Continue Workforce Transformation</i>					<i>[+87,791]</i>	
Suppression Operations	383,657	383,657	+0	+0	+0	383,657
Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund Transfer [^]	+28,000					
Fuels Management	219,964	219,964	+6,343	+0	+78,037	304,344
<i>Baseline Capacity</i>					<i>[+4,380]</i>	
<i>Capacity for Fuels Management Treatments</i>					<i>[+58,657]</i>	
<i>Increase Investments in Outcome Measures and Information Technology</i>					<i>[+5,000]</i>	
<i>Tribal Contracts and Reserved Treaty Rights Lands Projects</i>					<i>[+10,000]</i>	
Other Operations	41,897	41,897	+0	+0	-7,427	34,470
Burned Area Rehabilitation	20,470	20,470	+0	+0	+0	20,470
Facilities Construction and Maintenance	18,427	18,427	+0	+0	-8,427	10,000
<i>Facilities Construction and Maintenance Projects</i>					<i>[-8,427]</i>	
Joint Fire Science Program	3,000	3,000	+0	+0	+1,000	4,000
<i>Enhance Wildland Fire Research</i>					<i>[+1,000]</i>	
TOTAL, Wildland Fire Management	1,020,623	992,623	+20,168	+0	+186,839	1,199,630
Net Other Transfers*	+4,003	-2,038			-1,313	-1,313
TOTAL, Wildland Fire Management (with Transfers) w/o Supplemental	1,024,626	990,585	+20,168	+0	+185,526	1,198,317
Supplemental, Disaster Relief		100,000			-100,000	0
Supplemental, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law		407,600			-145,000	262,600
TOTAL, Wildland Fire Management (with Transfers) w/ Supplemental	1,024,626	1,498,185	+20,168	+0	-59,474	1,460,917
Appropriation: Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund (14X1130)						
Suppression Operations	310,000	310,000	+0	+0	+30,000	340,000
Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund Transfer to Suppression [^]	-28,000					
TOTAL, Suppression Reserve Fund	282,000	310,000	+0	+0	+30,000	340,000
TOTAL, ALL DEPARTMENTWIDE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT	1,306,626	1,808,185	+20,168	+0	-29,474	1,800,917

*Transfers reflect the amount of funding received from the USDA Forest Service. In FY 2021, the Forest Service transferred \$4.003 million for interagency projects. For FY 2022 and FY 2023, the amounts reflect the funding the Wildland Fire Management program is required to transfer directly to the Office of the Inspector General, as required by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

[^] During FY 2021, \$28.0 million in FY 2021 appropriations was transferred from the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund to the Wildland Fire Management account, yielding a total FY 2021 actual funding level of \$1,024,626,000. Another \$232.0 million (for a total \$260.0 million) was transferred from the Reserve Fund in FY 2021 from FY 2020 balances.

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Summary of Requirements

Wildland Fire Management											
Table 2: Summary of Requirements											
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>											
	2021 Actual	2021 FTE	2022 CR at Annual Rate	2022 FTE	Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-) Amount	2023 Request	2023 FTE	Change from 2022 (+/-) Amount	Change from 2022 (+/-) FTE
Wildland Fire Management											
Preparedness	347,105	2,038	347,105	2,173	+13,825	+0	+116,229	477,159	2,701	+130,054	+528
Total, Preparedness	347,105	2,038	347,105	2,173	+13,825	+0	+116,229	477,159	2,701	+130,054	+528
Suppression Operations	383,657	515	383,657	515	+0	+0	+0	383,657	515	+0	+0
Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund Transfer [^]	+28,000										
Total, Suppression Operations	411,657	515	383,657	515	+0	+0	+0	383,657	515	+0	+0
Fuels Management	219,964	935	219,964	1,128	+6,343	+0	+78,037	304,344	1,410	+84,380	+282
Total, Fuels Management	219,964	935	219,964	1,128	+6,343	+0	+78,037	304,344	1,410	+84,380	+282
Other Operations											
Burned Area Rehabilitation	20,470	46	20,470	46	+0	+0	+0	20,470	46	+0	+0
Facilities Construction and Maintenance	18,427	4	18,427	4	+0	+0	-8,427	10,000	4	-8,427	+0
Joint Fire Science Program	3,000	4	3,000	4	+0	+0	+1,000	4,000	4	+1,000	+0
Total, Other Operations	41,897	54	41,897	54	+0	+0	-7,427	34,470	54	-7,427	+0
Total, Wildland Fire Management	1,020,623	3,542	992,623	3,870	+20,168	+0	+186,839	1,199,630	4,680	+207,007	+810
Net Other Transfers*	+4,003		-2,038				-1,313	-1,313			
Total, Wildland Fire Management (With Transfers) Without Supplemental	1,024,626	3,542	990,585	3,870	+20,168	+0	+185,526	1,198,317	4,680	+207,007	+810
Supplemental											
Disaster Relief Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill			100,000 407,600				-100,000 -145,000	262,000		+262,000	
Total, Wildland Fire Management (with Transfers) With Supplemental	1,024,626	3,542	1,498,185	3,870	+20,168	+0	-59,474	1,460,917	4,680	-37,268	+810
Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund											
Suppression Operations	310,000	0	310,000	0	+0	+0	+30,000	340,000	0	+30,000	+0
Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund Transfer to Suppression [^]	-28,000										
Total, Suppression Operations Reserve Fund	282,000	0	310,000	0	+0	+0	+30,000	340,000	0	+30,000	+0

*Transfers reflect the funding received from the USDA Forest Service. In FY 2021, the Forest Service transferred \$4.003 million for interagency projects. In FY 2022 and FY 2023, the amounts reflect funding the Wildland Fire Management program will transfer to the Office of Inspector General's office as required by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

[^] During FY 2021, \$28.0 million in FY 2021 appropriations was transferred from the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund to the Wildland Fire Management account, yielding a total FY 2021 actual funding level of \$1,024,626,000. Another \$232.0 million (for a total \$260.0 million) was transferred from the Reserve Fund in FY 2021 from FY 2020 balances.

Notes on Personnel: The FTE amounts in this table include direct and allocated Federal FTE. Elsewhere in this document, there are estimates of Tribal FTE. The FTE amounts in this table do not include reimbursable FTE, which explains the difference from the FTE displayed in the Budget Summary table on page 9.

Program Activities

The 2023 budget request for the Department of the Interior’s Wildland Fire Management program—including both the Wildland Fire Management account and the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund—is \$1,539,630,000 and 4,680 direct and allocated Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees, a program change of +\$216,839,000 and +810 FTE from the 2022 CR. Within these totals, the request for the Wildland Fire Management account is \$1,199,630,000 and 4,680 FTE, a program change of +\$186,839,000 and +810 FTE from the 2022 CR (after including fixed cost increases, the total increase is +\$207.0 million, or 20.9 percent). The request for the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund is \$340,000,000 and 0 FTE, a program change of +\$30,000,000 and 0 FTE from the 2022 CR. (These amounts do not include supplemental funding provided for FY 2022 and FY 2023 for disaster relief [P.L. 117-43] and by the BIL [P.L. 117-58]. For more information on the BIL, see the “Other Exhibits” section.)

The most important resource for Wildland Fire Management is people. Wildland firefighters do difficult, dangerous work. With the growing complexity, severity, and duration of wildfires, the work is even more challenging. That is why the President announced compensation increases for wildland firefighters in June 2021, and Congress and the President enacted firefighter compensation and workforce reform measures in the BIL.

The 2023 budget request reflects the importance of increasing America’s efforts to manage wildland fire. Further, it supports the President’s agenda for improving wildland firefighters’ compensation, so more people choose to undertake and continue this important career. Wildland firefighting in today’s environment demands increasingly sophisticated skill sets. The Federal government must provide a level of pay and benefits that reflects these factors and is competitive with the compensation provided by State and local entities. 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.

In addition, the 2023 budget request supports key Administration priorities related to addressing the effects of climate change. Climate change and other factors, such as prolonged drought, have contributed to more frequent and severe wildfire activity. Further, wildfire itself contributes to climate change through the release of carbon emissions into the atmosphere. Interior’s Wildland Fire Management program contributes to efforts to manage adaptation to climate, build resilience to its effects through conservation and hazard mitigation, and explore ways to address it through climate science. Through all Wildland Fire Management, Interior commits significant budget and human resources to these initiatives.

Wildland Fire Management Appropriation

Preparedness (\$477,159,000/2,701 FTE)

Preparedness activities support an interoperable approach to wildland fire management that promotes efficiencies, supports partnerships, and sustains core capabilities. The 2023 budget request increases funding for Preparedness by +\$130.1 million (+37.5 percent) from the 2022 CR. The budget provides +\$13.8 million more than the 2022 CR for fixed costs and +\$116.2 million more than the 2022 CR to

increase firefighters' compensation, convert more firefighters from temporary to permanent positions, increase the number of firefighters, and maintain baseline capacity. The request provides funding for +528 FTE and +20 Tribal FTE above the 2022 CR.

Suppression Operations (\$383,657,000/515 FTE)

The 2023 budget request 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). In addition, through the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund (see below), the 2023 budget request makes available another \$340.0 million if annual suppression operations funding needs exceed the resources available through this activity.

Fuels Management (\$304,344,000/1,410 FTE)

The 2023 budget request increases funding for Fuels Management by +\$84.4 million (+38.4 percent) from the 2022 CR. (The 2023 budget request continues this proposal from the 2022 budget request.) The budget provides +\$6.4 million for fixed costs and +\$78.0 million more than the 2022 CR to conduct fuels treatment and advance America's resilience to climate change. The request provides funding for +282 FTE and +294 Tribal FTE above the 2022 CR.

Burned Area Rehabilitation (\$20,470,000/46 FTE)

The 2023 budget request provides \$20.5 million for Burned Area Rehabilitation, the same as the 2022 CR. 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 naturally.

Facilities Construction and Maintenance (\$10,000,000/4 FTE)

The 2023 budget request reduces funding for wildland fire management Facilities Construction and Maintenance by -\$8.4 million from the 2022 CR. The request reflects the availability of unobligated balances of funding for these activities. Using the requested funding, Interior will continue to provide for safe, functional, and energy efficient facilities that are essential to the Wildland Fire Management mission to protect lives, property, and resources from wildfire.

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

The 2023 budget request increases funding for the Joint Fire Science Program by +\$1.0 million (+33.3 percent) from the 2022 CR. The Department of the Interior and USDA Forest Service jointly 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.

Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund Appropriation**Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund** (\$340,000,000/0 FTE)

The 2023 budget request increases funding for the Reserve Fund by +\$30.0 million (+9.7 percent) from the 2022 CR. These resources are available to Interior's Wildland Fire Management program for emergency wildfire response and suppression when Suppression Operations funding in the Wildland Fire Management appropriation is inadequate to meet the needs.

Conservation Corps Program Offers Women Experience in Wildland Fire



All-women conservation corps fire crew at Yosemite National Park. (Photo by NPS.)

Women are traditionally underrepresented in firefighting positions, especially leadership roles. Within NPS, women make up less than five percent of wildland fire leadership at the local level and less than two percent at regional and national levels.

In the summer of 2021, NPS created two all-women conservation corps fire crews at Yosemite and Grand Teton national parks. The crews were employed through a partnership with the California and Montana conservation corps. This pilot initiative was funded with a \$200,000 grant from the National Park Foundation.

The crews, comprised of six women each, focused on fuels management projects to decrease the risk to local communities from severe wildfires, maintaining healthy park ecosystems, and creating opportunities for safe fire response. The program provided the women with hands-on training that qualified them for several types of positions.

These types of initiatives allow for a more robust, resilient workforce. By increasing diversity, NPS will bring new perspectives and innovative ideas to its work addressing complex challenges such as climate change, extended drought, and more intense fire seasons.

In August, after completing their commitment to the conservation corps, many of the crew members from both teams were hired as firefighters. While the program started small, NPS is looking to build on its success and expand in future years.

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PREPAREDNESS



The Preparedness activity provides an integrated and coordinated framework for wildfire response. Preparedness funds the core firefighting resources and manages the capacity of assets and operations to respond to fire activities across the United States.

Activity: Preparedness

Subactivity: Preparedness

	2021 Actual	2022 CR at Annual Rate	2023 Request				
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
Dollars <i>(in Thousands)</i>	347,105	347,105	+13,825	-	+116,229	477,159	+130,054
<i>FTE*</i>	<i>2,038</i>	<i>2,173</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>+528</i>	<i>2,701</i>	<i>+528</i>
<i>Tribal FTE</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>310</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>+20</i>	<i>330</i>	<i>+20</i>

*Direct and allocated Federal FTE

Program Changes

The FY 2023 budget request for Preparedness is \$477,159,000 and 2,701 FTE, a program change of +\$116,229 and +528 FTE from the 2022 CR. The request increases Tribal FTE by +20 from the 2022 CR.

Summary of FY 2023 Program Changes for Preparedness

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE*
<u>Program Changes:</u>		
Baseline Capacity	+8,438	+0
Increase Firefighters' Compensation	+20,000	+0
Increase Staffing and Continue Workforce Transformation	+87,791	+528
TOTAL Program Changes	+116,229	+528

*Direct and allocated Federal FTE; some estimates of Tribal FTE are included elsewhere in this document.

- **Baseline Capacity** (+8,438,000/+0 FTE) – The 2023 budget 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 continue to fulfill the Wildland Fire Management program’s mission. The budget includes

\$8.4 million in the Preparedness activity that reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in 2022. This request, in combination with the 2023 fixed costs amounts, will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without adversely impacting program activities.

- **Increase Firefighters' Compensation** (+\$20,000,000/+0 FTE/+0 Tribal FTE) – The 2023 budget request provides an increase of \$20.0 million for firefighters' compensation. This funding builds on the President's 2021 compensation increases for wildland firefighters and complements \$120 million in BIL funding for firefighter salaries and expenses. The Federal government must provide a level of pay that reflects these factors and is competitive with the compensation provided by State and local entities. 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.
- **Increase Staffing and Continue Workforce Transformation** (+\$87,791,000/+528 FTE/+20 Tribal FTE) – The 2023 budget request increases the number of Preparedness personnel by 528 FTE to ensure the Department of the Interior is prepared to respond to the growing threat of wildfires timely and effectively. The budget provides funding for Interior to build on the workforce transformation begun in 2021 and increase staffing levels to continue developing a professional, year-round wildland fire workforce to meet the demands of longer, larger, costlier, and more complex wildfires.

Program Overview

The Preparedness activity provides for the firefighting resources and assets to protect the public, communities, watersheds, and natural and cultural resources from the detrimental effects of wildfires. The Wildland Fire Management program manages a fire response framework for efficient wildfire response locally, regionally, and nationally. As conditions change during a fire season, or as 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.

Preparedness funds firefighting assets such as aviation resources, engines, and equipment, along with firefighters and services that provide the capacity to fight wildfires safely and effectively. Interior shares fire resources 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.

Through the Preparedness activity, Interior's Wildland Fire Management program strives to increase efficiencies and partnerships to maintain core capabilities. For example, Preparedness helps to eliminate administrative and operational redundancy through the use of combined positions and reduced contract costs. 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 fires burn across land ownerships, jurisdictions, and administrative boundaries.

Program Activities

The 2023 budget request continues to support an interoperable approach to Wildland Fire Management Preparedness that increases efficiencies, supports partnerships, and maintains core capabilities. Preparedness efforts help reduce the risk of large fire potential and lower the cost of more intensive fire response.

The 2023 budget request for Preparedness:

- Supports 2,701 FTE (+528 more than the 2022 CR) who make up Interior’s core firefighting capacity—to increase preparedness to respond to the growing threat from wildfires and climate change;
- Funds 330 Tribal Nations FTE (+20 more than the 2022 CR);
- Increases firefighters’ compensation, building on the President’s 2021 compensation increases for wildland firefighters and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law’s funding;
- Increases the number of firefighters and continue the workforce transformation to a more permanent workforce, which Interior began in 2021 and which the BIL supports;
- Funds other core firefighting resources and operations necessary to respond to fire activity across the United States, including fire engines, planes, helicopters, and other firefighting equipment and resources; as well as support personnel and operations of the National Interagency Fire Center, the National Interagency Coordination Center, and Predictive Services (see also Tables 3A, 3B, and 3C, below); and
- Maintains the 2022 CR level of funding 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 wildfire 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 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.

Additionally, Interior recognizes the importance of developing and adopting advanced or emergent technologies to support the preparation for and response to wildfire incidents. (See also the wildland fire workforce framework in the “Other Exhibits” section.)

The National Interagency Fire Center's Role in Wildland Fire Management



Interior's BLM—in cooperation with other Interior bureaus and OWF, the USDA Forest Service, and the Department of Commerce's National Weather Service—hosts the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho. Through NIFC, partners work together to share operating costs, exchange support, and jointly coordinate Wildland Fire Management support operations.

NIFC's important services and activities include the following:

- **The National Incident Coordination Center** is a focal point for the mobilization of firefighting resources. It provides fire outlook assessments and tracks daily wildland fire activity.
- **The Great Basin Cache** serves as one of 11 national fire warehouses for supplies and equipment. It has the capacity to equip from 8,000 to 10,000 firefighters.
- **The National Multi-Agency Coordinating group** coordinates the movement of wildland firefighting resources and other activities supporting wildfire response.
- **The National Incident Radio Cache** provides emergency communication services to support wildland fire incidents. It is one of the largest radio caches in the world and has equipment to support about 32,000 firefighters, or 53 major disasters, at one time.
- **National Predictive Services** evaluates indicators of burn probability, fire potential, long-term drought, and weather trends to forecast areas that may experience increased or severe wildfire activity.

Preparedness Resources Tables

Table 3A provides the total number of personnel employed within the Preparedness program and the type and number of resources utilized (staffed or contracted). FY 2021 data is actual implementation, while FY 2022 and FY 2023 are estimates.

Table 3A: Estimated Government Preparedness Resources, Fiscal Years 2021-2023

Firefighting Asset	Resource Type	2021	2022	2023 Request
Personnel	All Personnel	4,635	4,821	5,130
	<i>FTE</i>	2,038	2,173	2,701
	Smokejumpers	148	151	155
	Type 1 Hotshot Crews	18	18	18
Equipment	Engines	635	649	655
	Other Heavy Equipment	94	96	117
Aviation	Water Scoopers	6	6	6
	Single Engine Air Tankers	35	35	35
	Helicopters Type 1	1	1	1
	Helicopters Type 2	9	9	9
	Helicopters Type 3	30	31	31
	Smokejumper Plane	7	7	7
	ASM/Lead Plane	4	4	4
	Air Tactical	13	13	13
	Utility	5	5	5

This table provides estimates for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023. Actual figures will depend on the timing and implementation of specific budget actions.

Firefighter Safety: Rollover Protection



Installation of a roll cage in a BLM wildland fire engine at NIFC in Boise, Idaho. (Photo by BLM.)

Following a fatal traffic accident in July 2016 that tragically took the lives of two BLM firefighters when their fire engine rolled over, the BLM National Fire Equipment Program began extensive research on rollover protection systems.

The program established a standard for rollover protection systems to be installed in heavy wildland fire engines. The safety features include seats with side impact airbags, seatbelt pre-tension systems, and internal roll cages.

In 2021, Interior awarded the first contract to retrofit 14 heavy engines with the new rollover protection system. This system will greatly improve the crashworthiness of off-road wildland fire engines. Moving forward, an industry-standard rollover protection system will be added to each contract so that the system is part of manufacturing rather than an addition after the engines are delivered.

Integrating additional cab protection in all BLM wildland fire apparatus—including crew carriers, water tenders, and dozer transports—remains a priority.

Table 3B is an extension of Table 3A. It identifies additional Preparedness resources funded through agreements between BIA and individual Tribal Nations. FY 2021 data is actual, while FY 2022 and FY 2023 levels are estimates.

Table 3B: Estimated Tribal Preparedness Resources, Fiscal Years 2021-2023

Asset	Resource Type	2021	2022	2023 Request
Personnel	All Personnel	409	428	456
	<i>Tribal Staff Equivalent</i>	290	310	330
	Type 1 Hotshot Crews	4	4	4
Equipment	Engines	82	87	92
	Other Heavy Equipment	18	20	20
	Helicopters Type 3	0	0	0

This table provides estimates for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023. Actual figures will depend on the timing and implementation of specific budget actions.

Table 3C displays Preparedness expenditures across the different general cost categories. The 2021 column displays actual budget data from Interior's financial accounting system. The 2022 and 2023 Request columns display estimated cost category allocations.

Table 3C: Estimated Preparedness Program Costs, Fiscal Years 2021-2023

(Dollars in Thousands)

General Cost Category	2021	2022	2023 Request
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 205,111	\$ 245,560	\$ 295,584
Travel and PCS Move	\$ 2,657	\$ 4,660	\$ 7,160
General Contracts and Agreements	\$ 38,623	\$ 63,501	\$ 88,501
Aviation Contracts and Use	\$ 38,270	\$ 39,270	\$ 39,270
Tribal Contracts and Agreements	\$ 27,399	\$ 32,399	\$ 48,173
Fire Vehicle and Equipment Fleet	\$ 6,924	\$ 7,424	\$ 9,424
Supplies and Materials	\$ 21,476	\$ 21,976	\$ 22,976
Other ¹	\$ 7,375	\$ 7,875	\$ 8,125
Total Program Cost	\$ 347,835	\$ 422,665	\$ 519,213

¹*This category includes primarily expenditures in utilities and rental payments.*

Note: 2022 and 2023 estimates include BIL funding: \$75,560,000 for 2022 and \$42,054,000 for 2023.

From the Front Lines to the Fire Line



The Folsom Lake Veterans' Crew at the Dixie Fire in California. (Photo by BLM.)

It just makes sense to match veterans' skills with wildland firefighting. From teamwork to decisive leadership; risk mitigation to management; logistics to emergency medicine, many of the skills veterans learned in the military translate to wildland firefighting.

BLM launched a Veteran Fire Crews program in 2012 to provide more jobs for veterans while benefiting from their vast experience and increasing the number of wildland firefighters available during increasingly severe wildfire seasons.

The Folsom Lake Veterans' Crew in California combines military veterans with seasoned wildland firefighters to form this type 2 initial attack hand crew, which is responsible for constructing fire lines and capable of separating into smaller squads to conduct initial wildfire suppression activities.

This crew provides an opportunity for veterans to learn about the wildland fire management field and gain critical skills that will prepare them for a full career in wildland firefighting.

SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS



The Wildland Fire Management program prepares thoroughly so that, when the need for fire suppression arises, personnel and other resources are ready to go on a moment’s notice. The Suppression Operations activity comprises the range of actions taken to directly extinguish wildfires, prevent the movement and growth of unwanted fire, and manage fire for resource benefits.

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

Activity: Suppression Operations

Subactivity: Suppression Operations

	2021 Actual	2022 CR at Annual Rate	2023 Request				
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
Dollars (in Thousands)	383,657	383,657	-	-	-	383,657	-
<i>FTE*</i>	515	515	-	-	-	515	-

*Direct Federal FTE

Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Suppression Operations is \$383,657,000 and 515 FTE, which reflects no program changes from the 2022 CR.

The request fully funds Suppression Operations at the ten-year average of suppression obligations as reported in the 2015 President’s budget, in accordance with Division O of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115-141): \$383.7 million. In addition, through the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund (Reserve Fund), the 2023 budget request makes available another \$340.0 million. Interior may access the Reserve Fund if the costs of suppression operations exceed the resources available through this activity. Suppression Operations and Reserve Fund resources, in combination, help to ensure that sufficient funds are available for suppression needs at all times. For more information on the Reserve Fund, see that section of the request.

Program Overview

When wildfires occur, the Department of the 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 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 fire management plans. Responses may include the following:

- Suppressing wildfires that threaten lives, communities, and values at risk;
- Managing wildfires to accomplish resource benefit;
- 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 in periods of prolonged high fire danger or when wildfire seasons start earlier than normal or last longer than normal.

Program Activities

The 2023 budget request for Suppression Operations supports wildfire suppression and response throughout the United States. It provides funding for 515 FTE—including seasonal and temporary workers—who provide increased response capacity.

Annual Suppression Operations obligations fluctuate from year to year. In calculating the ten-year average, obligations are adjusted 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. As previously noted, pursuant to Public Law 115-141, funding for Suppression Operations is now 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 4 below.

Table 4:
SUPPRESSION OBLIGATIONS 2012-2021
 (Dollars in Thousands)

Fiscal Year	Net Nominal Suppression Obligations	GDP Inflatior [2012=1.00]	GDP Deflator [2021=1.00]	Adjusted Obligations [2021=1.00]	Rolling 10-Year Average
2012	465,832	1.0000	0.8725	533,890	427,501
2013	399,199	1.0159	0.8864	450,361	429,780
2014	326,194	1.0316	0.9001	362,399	427,333
2015	417,545	1.0368	0.9046	461,563	434,261
2016	371,729	1.0442	0.9111	408,005	420,268
2017	508,103	1.0622	0.9268	548,237	415,856
2018	528,350	1.0857	0.9473	557,743	423,785
2019	440,708	1.1044	0.9636	457,348	442,929
2020	510,947	1.1254	0.9819	520,345	467,305
2021	648,317	1.1461	1.0000	648,317	494,821

As illustrated in Figure 1 below, the trend over the past 28 years indicates a significant rise in costs, with obligations doubling during this time period.

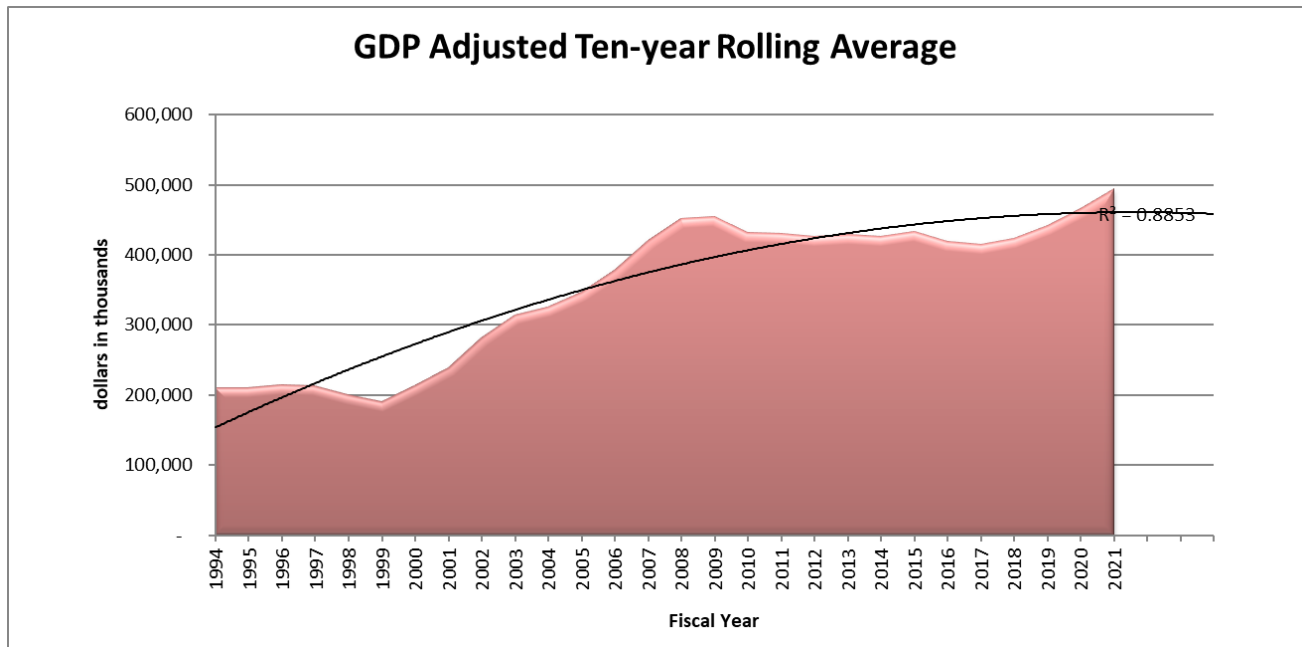


Figure 1: Trend in Department of the Interior Suppression Obligations Ten-year Average, 1994-2021

This rise in costs is attributable to several compounding factors such as climate change (increasing annual fire workload and severity); population growth and increased development in the wildland-urban interface (increasing wildfire exposure and incident complexity); and escalation in costs of 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 result in higher frequency of large fires and greater wildfire severity in forests; and
- Population growth and home construction in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) complicates landscape protection and response efforts while also creating additional sources of ignition.

Interior's Wildland Fire Management program is continuing to work closely with the USDA Forest Service 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 be simultaneously suppressed in one spot and allowed to burn in another to achieve resource benefits, including the reduction of fuel load. These operations balance the expenditure of Suppression Operations funding with the risk a wildfire poses to firefighters, the public, and natural and cultural resources.

International Cooperation to Contain a Wildfire on the U.S.-Canada Border

Smoke rising from the 2021 Bear Creek Fire along the Canadian border. (Photo by NPS.)

The Bear Creek Fire was unique during the busy 2021 fire season. Discovered at the end of July in North Cascades National Park, Washington, it was burning less than two miles from the international border with Canada. That area had no contemporary fire history. Further complicating the situation, the United States was already at the highest preparedness level, meaning resources were stretched thin across the country.

North Cascades National Park looked beyond its borders to collaborate with other federal agencies and international partners to contain this wildfire. The logistics of international cooperation were simplified by the British Columbia & NW United States Wildfire Response Border Arrangement. Established in May 2014, these operating guidelines helped to solidify international coordination and communication in some of the most wild, rugged terrain bordering the two countries.

Communication flowed easily between response personnel on either side of the border, from initial reporting of the fire, to sharing of fire models, to the release of public information.

The Bear Creek Fire burned for nearly three months and scorched 1,023 acres. Intergovernmental collaboration was essential to prevent the fire from spreading further. As climate change propels more frequent, extreme wildfires, they are likely to start along this stretch of the U.S.-Canada border more often. The Bear Creek Fire demonstrated that prior planning has successfully streamlined international cooperation, which will serve both countries well in the protection and preservation of our natural and cultural resources in the coming years.

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FUELS MANAGEMENT



The Fuels Management program represents a strategic investment in managing vegetation to reduce the intensity, severity, or negative effects of wildfire. It 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 risk of wildfires and contribute to greater resilience to climate change.

Activity: Fuels Management

Subactivity: Fuels Management

	2021 Actual	2022 CR at Annual Rate	2023 Request				
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
Dollars (in Thousands)	219,964	219,964	+6,343	-	+78,037	304,344	+84,380
<i>FTE*</i>	935	1,128	-	-	+282	1,410	+282
<i>Tribal FTE</i>	409	598	-	-	+294	892	+294

*Direct Federal FTE

Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Fuels Management is \$304,344,000 and 1,410 FTE, a program change of +\$78,037,000 and +282 FTE from the 2022 CR. The request increases Tribal FTE by +294 from the 2022 CR.

Summary of FY 2023 Program Changes for Fuels Management

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE*
<u>Program Changes:</u>		
Baseline Capacity	+4,380	+0
Capacity for Fuels Management Treatments	+58,657	+282
Increase Investments in Outcome Measures and Information Technology	+5,000	+0
Tribal Contracts and Reserved Treaty Rights Lands Projects	+10,000	+0
TOTAL Program Changes	+78,037	+282

*Direct and allocated Federal FTE; some estimates of Tribal FTE are included elsewhere in this document.

- **Baseline Capacity** (+4,380,000/+0 FTE) – The 2023 budget 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 continue to fulfill the Wildland Fire Management program’s mission. The budget includes \$4.4 million in the Fuels Management activity that reflects the incremental amount needed to cover the fixed costs associated with mission operations in 2022. This request, in combination with the 2023 fixed costs amounts, will allow the program to meet must pay requirements without adversely impacting program activities.
- **Increase Capacity for Fuels Management** (+\$58,657,000/+282 FTE/+294 Tribal FTE) – To help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and advance the Administration’s goal to mitigate and increase resilience to climate change, the budget requests an increase of \$58.7 million from the 2022 CR to increase the capacity of the Fuels Management program, consistent with the goals and funding provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The additional funds provided by the 2023 budget request will support the management of additional vegetation—totaling an estimated 300,000 acres—and more than 80 risk assessments, post-treatment monitoring, contract preparation, and administration 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.

Interior will invest further in personnel, science, and technology that will lead to better-informed and more effective land management decisions; partnerships to address climate adaptation, conservation, and ecological resilience; and clean energy technology and infrastructure. Current studies and new research funded by the Joint Fire Science Program will further inform the effects of climate on wildfire, the effects of wildfire on greenhouse gas emissions, the effects of wildfire smoke on human health, and carbon cycling (see Other Operations, below).

- **Increase Investments in Outcome-Based Measures and in Information Technology** (+\$5,000,000/+0 FTE) – The 2023 budget request includes a total requested increase of \$5.0 million for investments in outcome-based performance measures and in information technology. Within the total requested increase, \$1.0 million will fund the development and initial implementation of new Fuels Management outcome data collection, management, and analysis. While legacy fuels metrics focus primarily on quantifying amounts of work accomplished (e.g., acres), Interior is working to move beyond general acreage targets (i.e., outputs) to outcome-based measures in order to improve program management and oversight. This initiative will support the development of outcome-based measures and will help to advance strategic implementation of the Fuels Management and meet Evidence Act requirements. The remaining \$4.0 million increase is for Interior’s investments in data collection and planning, information-sharing, services, and reporting and tracking that supports Fuels Management. (The 2023 budget request continues these proposals from the 2022 budget request.)

- **Increase Tribal Contract Support and Reserved Treaty Rights Lands Projects** (+\$10,000,000/+0 FTE) – The 2023 budget request includes an increase of \$5.0 million, for a total of \$15.0 million for Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) projects. RTRL enables Tribal Nations to participate in collaborative projects with non-Tribal landowners to enhance the health and resiliency of priority Tribal Nation natural resources at high risk from wildfire. In addition, the 2023 budget request provides \$5.0 million for Tribal contract support in the Fuels Management activity. This new Fuels Management contract support is in addition to \$9.0 million in Preparedness base funding for Tribal contract support. (The 2023 budget request continues these proposals from the 2022 budget request.)

Program Overview

The strategic management of burnable vegetation (known in the wildland fire management community as “fuels”) before a wildfire occurs is an effective approach to reduce the negative effects from wildfires to highly valuable 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 risks 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 meet full regulatory compliance. Community assistance activities enhance and facilitate these efforts.

Fuels projects most effectively mitigate the potential losses and impacts from wildfires when prioritized and coordinated across land ownerships. Interior continues to support the implementation of work to achieve the following goals of the Cohesive 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.

Taking On the Dual Threat of Invasive Plants And Wildfires



NPS uses prescribed fire in south Florida to target non-native invasive plants. (Photo by NPS.)

Many U.S. communities, natural landscapes, and cultural resources face a dual threat posed by the combination of invasive species and wildfire. What is the connection between these two threats?

Invasive plants such as cheatgrass, buffelgrass, and salt cedar can fuel wildfires, accelerate their spread, and increase the likelihood of unusually severe wildfires. The cycle is perpetuated by wildfires, which provide a blank canvas for non-native species to invade or even re-invade. Often, invasive plants have an advantage over native vegetation because invasive plants can get an early foothold after a wildfire.

To address these issues, Interior's Wildland Fire Management program is working across the Department and with other Federal agencies to coordinate geospatial mapping and aggressive invasive plant management.

Together, these measures will help reduce the spread of invasive plants. With fewer invasives to fuel them, wildfires should burn less frequently and at a lower intensity, in turn reducing opportunities for invasives to get a new foothold.

Program Activities

The Department of the 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 FY 2023 budget request for Fuels Management:

- Supports 1,410 FTE (+282 from the 2022 CR) and 892 Tribal FTE (+294 from the 2022 CR) to plan, implement, and monitor fuels treatments in an integrated approach with resource management and stakeholders to ensure projects meet full regulatory compliance and Departmental objectives, including increasing firefighter and public safety;
- Increases capacity to implement high-priority prescribed fires, mechanical, chemical, and biological treatments; to reduce wildfire risk and promote resilience to climate change on an estimated 1.6 million acres of Interior Department and Tribal Nation lands; and to perform more than 1,000 risk assessments, post-treatment monitoring, contract preparation, and administration actions necessary to apply scientific principles to wildfire risk mitigation;
- Increases funding for the RTRL program to \$15.0 million (+\$5.0 million from the 2022 CR), which provides dedicated funding to BIA to enable Tribal Nations to participate in collaborative projects (The 2023 budget request continues this proposal from the 2022 budget request.);
- Increases Tribal contract support by providing \$5.0 million (+\$5.0 million more than the 2022 CR) in Fuels Management funding for BIA to assist firefighting organizations managed by Tribal Nations (The 2023 budget request continues this proposal from the 2022 budget request.);
- Increases Interior's investments in outcome-based performance measures, data management, information-sharing, and collaboration among partners (The 2023 budget request continues these proposals from the 2022 budget request.); and
- Helps to mitigate the impacts from potential wildfire emissions by promoting and maintaining land in the desired condition.

During 2023, 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.² 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.

²The 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/>

Managing Hazardous Fuels on Reserved Treaty Rights Lands



A Northern Pueblos Tribal fuels crew member conducts a prescribed burn on Tesque Reserved Treaty Rights Lands adjacent to the Santa Fe National Forest. (Photo by BIA.)

Treaties recognize and establish a unique set of rights, benefits, and conditions for Tribal Nations that agreed to cede millions of acres of their lands to the U.S. Government in exchange for guarantees and protections. For many Tribal Nations, these areas fall under the management of Federal agencies. In other cases, Tribal Nations share management rights with Federal agencies. These are known as “Reserved Treaty Rights Lands.”

The 2023 budget provides \$15.0 million for Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (+\$5.0 million more than the 2022 CR) to enable Tribal Nations to participate in collaborative projects with non-Tribal landowners to enhance the health and resiliency of important Tribal resources at high risk from wildfire.

In 2021, hazardous vegetation that could fuel wildfires was treated on more than 20,250 acres. BIA also approved seven new Reserved Treaty Rights Lands projects, bringing the total of approved projects since 2015 to 85.

OTHER OPERATIONS

Other Operations is a category of program activities that consists of three sub-activities:

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

Activity: Other Operations (Dollars in Thousands)

Subactivity	2021 Actual	2022 CR at Annual Rate	2023 Request				
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
Burned Area Rehabilitation	20,470	20,470	-	-	-	20,470	-
Facilities Construction and Maintenance	18,427	18,427	-	-	-8,427	10,000	-8,427
Joint Fire Science Program	3,000	3,000	-	-	+1,000	4,000	+1,000
TOTAL, Other Operations	41,897	41,897	-	-	-7,427	34,470	-7,427
<i>FTE*</i>	54	54	-	-	-	54	-
<i>Tribal FTE</i>	9	12			+3	15	+3

*Allocated Federal FTE

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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

	2021 Actual	2022 CR at Annual Rate	2023 Request				
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
Dollars (in Thousands)	20,470	20,470	-	-	-	20,470	-
FTE*	46	46	-	-	-	46	-
Tribal FTE	9	12	-	-	+3	15	+3

*Allocated Federal FTE

Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) is \$20,470,000 and 46 FTE, which reflects no program change from the 2022 CR. The request increases Tribal FTE by +3 from the 2022 CR.

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, the Department of the Interior works on 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.

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.

Some examples of BAR actions include the following:

BAR Actions	Some FY 2021 Accomplishments
Reforestation	Replanted more than 1,000 acres affected by the Sarpy Fire that burned on the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations. The surface wildfire was ignited by a burning underground coal seam in 2020.
Invasive Species Control and Removal	Treated more than 68,000 acres of invasive species burned by wildfires from Alaska to Hawaii and Florida to Montana to support recovery of desired vegetation.
Minor Repairs	Repaired 17 administrative and recreation assets damaged by five wildfires that burned in California, Colorado, and Nevada.

Program Activities

The 2023 budget request provides \$20.5 million (the same level as the 2022 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 46 FTE to evaluate and implement priority rehabilitation projects at the local and national levels. The 2023 budget request for BAR will fund BAR treatments for an estimated 700,000 burned acres. The Department of the Interior (including the U.S. Geological Survey [USGS]) will continue to work cooperatively with the USDA Forest Service and various 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.

Burned Area Rehabilitation for Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge



The Central Maui Fire burned near the Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge visitor center. (Photo by FWS.)

Known for their lush, tropical, humid climate, the Hawaiian Islands typically do not conjure images of wildfires, but wildfires do occur on the islands.

Over the last several years, Maui has experienced one of the worst droughts on record since 2006 and an increased threat of severe wildfire activity. The Central Maui Fire started on July 11, 2019. It was driven by strong north trade winds toward the town of Kihei. By the time it was fully contained on July 28, the fire had burned 10,000 acres of abandoned sugar cane fields, forced thousands of residents from their homes. The fire burned 84 acres within Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge.

The refuge includes one of the last remaining intact wetlands in Hawaii, which provides essential breeding and foraging habitat for three endangered endemic water birds and thousands of migratory shorebirds.

In response to the fire, the FWS assembled a burned area rehabilitation team to provide recommendations to improve burned landscapes unlikely to recover naturally to desired conditions.

After the initial assessment, Keālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge immediately began following the recommendation to repair the ungulate fencing and remove the deer and pigs that migrated into the area. Those repairs were completed in January 2020. A second recommendation—to remove standing dead trees—was completed in May 2021. Finally, the refuge is managing invasive plant species by removing plants by hand, as well as using mowers and herbicide. Refuge staff contracted with a local nursery to receive 1,000 native plants per month for three years. Dense plantings of native species within the 80-acre swath will establish a corridor of drought- and fire-resistant vegetation.

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Facilities Construction and Maintenance



The Facilities Construction and Maintenance subactivity provides 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.

Activity: Other Operations

Subactivity: Facilities Construction and Maintenance Program

	2021 Actual	2022 CR at Annual Rate	2023 Request				
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
Dollars (in Thousands)	18,427	18,427	-	-	-8,427	10,000	-8,427
FTE*	4	4	-	-	-	4	-

*Allocated Federal FTE

Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for Facilities Construction and Maintenance is \$10,000,000 and 4 FTE, a program change of -\$8,427,000 and -0 FTE from the 2022 CR.

Summary of FY 2023 Program Changes for Facilities

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE*
<u>Program Changes:</u>		
Facilities Construction and Maintenance Projects	-8,427	-0
TOTAL Program Changes	-8,427	-0

*Allocated Federal FTE; some estimates of Tribal FTE are included elsewhere in this document.

- **Facilities Construction and Deferred Maintenance Projects (-\$8,427,000/-0 FTE)** – The 2023 budget reduces by \$8.4 million the funding for construction and maintenance projects identified in the five-year Deferred Maintenance and Capital Improvement plan. The budget reduces new funding in light of the unobligated balances of funding for Facilities Construction and Maintenance from prior years.

At the requested level, Interior will continue to complete deferred maintenance on buildings and facilities in disrepair 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.

Program Overview

The Facilities Construction and Maintenance subactivity provides 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 staff 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 national 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 submission.

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

- 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 fires small and reduce the threats to communities, structures, municipal watersheds, other infrastructure, and wildlife habitat; and
- Providing fire facilities that are sufficient to maintain readiness and provide full support for 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 a 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 fire program. As facilities are replaced or upgraded, efficiencies in design translate to lower operating costs and energy use, reducing agencies' carbon footprint. The emphasis on energy conservation and sustainability is a major area of importance for all projects.

Program Activities

The 2023 budget request provides \$10.0 million for Facilities Construction and Maintenance, a program change of -\$8.4 million from the 2022 CR. The planned accomplishments using FY 2023 funding include nine projects in six States with the highest critical health, safety, and resource protection ratings at this time.

The bureaus and the Department monitor design and construction of all Facilities Construction and Maintenance projects to ensure they are completed within scope and budget. The Wildland Fire Management bureaus jointly evaluate Departmental project priorities on an annual basis. Out-year priorities are adjusted and updated based on objective criteria applied during the annual evaluation process. This subactivity provides 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.

See Table 5 on the next page for a detailed list of projects to be funded by the 2023 budget request.

Table 5:

**FY 2023 WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT
CONSTRUCTION/DEFERRED MAINTENANCE PLAN SUMMARY**
(in dollars)

Project Title	State	Bureau	Total Project Cost	Funded to Date	2023 Request	Remaining to be Funded
White Earth Fire Station Replacement (Phase 1 of 2)	MN	BIA	\$3,175,000	\$0	\$175,000	\$3,000,000
Billings Air Tanker Base Wareyard Repair	MT	BLM	\$225,000	\$0	\$225,000	\$0
Bonneville Hotshot Fire Station Construction (Phase 1 of 2)	UT	BLM	\$9,002,000	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$8,002,000
San Carlos Fire Station Replacement (Phase 2 of 2)	AZ	BIA	\$2,500,000	\$500,000	\$2,000,000	\$0
Doyle and Palomino Valley Fire Station Renovation (Phase 1 of 2)	NV	BLM	\$2,287,000	\$0	\$300,000	\$1,987,000
Ekalaka Fire Station Replacement (Phase 1 of 2)	MT	BLM	\$4,500,000	\$0	\$500,000	\$4,000,000
Pawaki Fire Station Renovation	AZ	BIA	\$900,000	\$0	\$900,000	\$0
Miles City Fire Dispatch Center Repair	MT	BLM	\$321,000	\$0	\$321,000	\$0
Boise District Air Operations Center at National Interagency Fire Center (Phase 2 of 2)	ID	BLM	\$4,800,000	\$500,000	\$4,300,000	\$0
Architectural and Engineering Design		DOI	\$279,000	\$0	\$279,000	\$0
TOTAL			\$27,989,000	\$1,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$16,989,000

Joint Fire Science Program



The Joint Fire Science Program—co-administered by the Department of the Interior and the USDA Forest Service—funds wildland fire research and science to inform fire management policies and decisions at local, regional, and national levels.

Activity: Other Operations

Subactivity: Joint Fire Science Program

	2021 Actual	2022 CR at Annual Rate	2023 Request				
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
Dollars (in Thousands)	3,000	3,000	-	-	+1,000	4,000	+1,000
FTE*	4	4	-	-	-	4	-

*Allocated Federal FTE

Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for the Department of the Interior for the Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) is \$4,000,000 and 4 FTE, a program change of +\$1,000,000 and +0 FTE from the 2022 CR.

Summary of FY 2023 Program Changes for Joint Fire Science Program

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE*
<u>Program Changes:</u>		
Enhance Wildland Fire Research	+1,000	+0
TOTAL Program Changes	+1,000	+0

*Allocated Federal FTE; some estimates of Tribal FTE are included elsewhere in this document.

The increase will support the President’s priorities to increase research on wildland fire, including climate science and resilience to climate change. JFSP will use the increase to fund science research such as the following:

- 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 grants could fund 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 issues—affects different populations and potential strategies to address inequities among populations.

Program Overview

JFSP, which was established in 1998, is an interagency partnership between the Department of the Interior and the USDA Forest Service. The program responds to the needs of the wildland fire community by competitively funding fire science research projects and science delivery to answer emerging questions and fill knowledge gaps on 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 forms 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.



JFSP is unique in supporting a national collaboration network of 15 regional fire science exchanges: the Fire Science Exchange Network.

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 wildland-urban interface, and post-fire recovery. The 15 regional members of FSEN translate the science to ensure it is useful and actionable by managers and officials, and they 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 fire, fuels, and natural resources scientists and managers.



Program Activities

The 2023 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 fuel 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;
- **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; and
- **Environmental Justice:** Examine differences in how wildland fire—including smoke emissions, and downstream water quality and debris flow issues—affects different populations and potential strategies to address inequities among populations.

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.

Scientists Help Re-introduce Healthy Fire in Florida Forests



A duff workshop offered by the Southern Fire Exchange in 2019. (Photo by the Southern Fire Exchange.)

When fire was re-introduced to long-unburned tree stands, fire managers at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida noticed large-scale mortality in overstory pines. They wanted to restore the pines but were hesitant to apply prescribed fire until the cause of the tree mortality was identified.

Research funded by JFSP found the amount of duff—shed vegetation on the forest floor—and its moisture content were a strong influence on tree mortality after a fire.

The Southern Fire Exchange worked with fire scientists to share this information through a local workshop and field tour. Together, fire scientists and managers formulated burn guidelines based on rainfall and drought conditions, duff moisture, and site preparation techniques such as lightly raking the duff.

This research brought awareness to the complexity of fire and forest floor interactions. It refocused local prescribed fire objectives from reducing mid-story vegetative cover to gradually removing the duff layer on top of sensitive roots.

This project illustrates how fire science was able to help land managers in the south bring fire back to the forest.

WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS RESERVE FUND



The Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund (Reserve Fund) makes available to the Wildland Fire Management program additional funding for emergency wildfire response and suppression in severe fire years. The Reserve Fund resources help to ensure there will be no delay in meeting wildfire suppression needs.

Activity: Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund

Subactivity: Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund

	2021 Actual	2022 CR at Annual Rate	2023 Request				
			Fixed Costs (+/-)	Internal Transfers (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2023 Request	Change from 2022 (+/-)
Dollars (in Thousands)	310,000	310,000	-	-	+30,000	340,000	+30,000
<i>FTE</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Program Changes

The 2023 budget request for the Reserve Fund is \$340,000,000 and 0 FTE, a program change of +\$30,000,000 and +0 FTE from the 2022 CR.

Summary of FY 2023 Program Changes for Reserve Fund

Request Component	(\$000)	FTE
<u>Program Changes:</u>		
Increase Interior's Portion of Suppression Reserve Funding	+30,000	+0
TOTAL Program Changes	+30,000	+0

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 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 was falling short of what was needed to fully fund operational needs (see also the Suppression Operations section).

Under this law, the Department of the Interior and USDA may access a total of more than \$2.55 billion in FY 2023, as well as additional new budget authority to suppress wildfires annually through FY 2027. The split between the two agencies is proposed in each budget, and funding may be transferred between them.

Before Interior may access this funding in a given year, the Secretary must notify the House and Senate Appropriations Committees that, within 30 days, Interior will have obligated all resources available for Suppression Operations in the Wildland Fire Management account. Unobligated balances in the Reserve Fund are carried over from one year to the next. Interior will access reserve funding appropriated for previous years before accessing reserve funding provided in the budget year.

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, \$1,199,630,000, to remain available until expended, of which not to exceed \$10,000,000 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 \$304,344,000 is for fuels management 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 fuels management activities, and for training and monitoring associated with such fuels management activities on Federal land, or on adjacent non-Federal land for activities that benefit resources on 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 is provided as the average costs for wildfire suppression operations to meet the terms of a concurrent resolution on the budget.

Note.—A full-year 2022 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, 2022 (Division A of Public Law 117-43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.

WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT
 [(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)]

[For an additional amount for “Wildland Fire Management”, \$100,000,000, to remain available until expended, for necessary expenses related to wildfires]:[*Provided*, That of the amounts provided under this heading in this Act, \$55,000,000 shall be for hazardous fuels management activities: *Provided further*, That of the amounts provided under this heading in this Act, \$45,000,000, shall be for burned area recovery.] (*Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022.*)

WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT
 [(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)]

[For an additional amount for “Wildland Fire Management”, \$1,458,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That \$407,600,000, to remain available until expended, shall be made available for fiscal year 2022, \$262,600,000, to remain available until expended, shall be made available for fiscal year 2023, \$262,600,000, to remain available until expended, shall be made available for fiscal year 2024, \$262,600,000, to remain available until expended, shall be made available for fiscal year 2025, and \$262,600,000, to remain available until expended, shall be made available for fiscal year 2026: *Provided further*, That of the funds made available under this heading in this Act, the following amounts shall be for the following purposes for the following fiscal years—]

[(1)] \$1,055,000,000 for the Secretary of the Interior to carry out activities for the Department of the Interior, as authorized in section 40803 of division D of this Act, including fuels management activities, of which \$327,000,000, to remain available until expended, shall be made available for fiscal year 2022

and \$182,000,000, to remain available until expended, shall be made available for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2026;]

[(2) In addition to amounts made available in paragraph (1) for fuels management activities, \$35,600,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2026 for such purpose; and]

[(3) In addition to amounts made available in paragraph (1) for burned area rehabilitation, \$45,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2026 for such purpose:]

[*Provided further*, That up to \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2026 from funds made available in paragraphs (2) and (3) of the preceding proviso shall be for implementation of the Tribal Forestry Protection Act, as amended (Public Law 108–278): *Provided further*, That the Secretary may transfer the funds provided under this heading in this Act to any other account in the Department of the Interior to carry out such purposes: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated under this heading in this Act may be transferred to 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 up to 3 percent of the amounts made available under this heading in this Act in each of fiscal years 2022 through 2026 shall be for salaries, expenses, and administration: *Provided further*, That one-half of one percent of the amounts made available under this heading in this Act in each of fiscal years 2022 through 2026 shall be transferred to the Office of Inspector General of the Department of the Interior for oversight of funding provided to the Department of the Interior in this title in this Act: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 4112(a) of H. Con. Res. 71 (115th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018, and to section 251(b) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.] (*Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Appropriations Act.*)

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, \$1,199,630,000, to remain available until expended, of which not to exceed \$10,000,000 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, \$10,000,000 is the maximum 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 \$304,344,000 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 the Department of the Interior to feed and house firefighters 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 Department of the Interior bureaus and offices to retain funds they receive as reimbursement for fire protection provided to other entities, rather than having to submit them to the U.S. Treasury, and makes these collected amounts available for 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 fuels management activities, and for training and monitoring associated with such fuels

management activities on Federal land, or on adjacent non-Federal land for activities that benefit resources on Federal land:

This language allows the Department to enter into procurement mechanisms (contracts, grants, and/or cooperative agreements) for firefighting, fuels management, and training for the benefit of federally held or adjacent lands.

8. *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 the Department of the Interior to use cost-shared cooperative agreements.

9. *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 indicates that the Secretary may utilize contracting arrangements with the Youth Conservation Corp., local/private/non-profit entities, small businesses, or any other entity that may hire or train a significant percentage (50 percent) of the project workforce to complete projects.

10. *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 the Department to formulate and distribute guidance for field staff to use these contracts.

11. *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 the Department to use appropriated funds to reimburse FWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service for consultation services necessary for compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

12. *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 allows the Department 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.

13. *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 the Department of the Interior and USDA to transfer funds up to \$50,000,000 annually between agencies to expedite joint wildland fire management programs or projects.

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

This language allows the Departmental wildland fire management personnel and services to be used in support of Federal emergency responses.

15. *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.

16. *Provided further*, That of the funds provided under this heading, \$383,657,000 is provided as the average costs for wildfire suppression operations to meet the terms of a concurrent resolution on the budget.

This language provides funding for fire suppression based on the ten-year average of suppression operations costs, as reported in the FY 2015 President's budget, to meet the terms of a concurrent resolution on the budget.

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, \$340,000,000, to remain available until transferred, is additional new budget authority in excess of the average costs for wildfire suppression operations for purposes of a concurrent resolution on the budget: 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.

Note.—A full-year 2022 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, 2022 (Division A of Public Law 117- 43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 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, \$340,000,000, to remain available until transferred, is additional new budget authority in excess of the average costs for wildfire suppression operations for purposes of a concurrent resolution on the budget:

This language makes available funding in addition to funding provided under the Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Management appropriation for wildfire suppression operations costs. The language further provides that such funding is available until transferred. The language provides that \$340,000,000 is the maximum amount of this additional new budget authority for FY 2023.

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 the Department of the Interior and USDA wildfire suppression operations 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 likewise USDA), 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 2023 or prior years be obligated within 30 days of the transfer.

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 the Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Management.

Justification of Fixed Costs

Wildland Fire Management
Table 6: Justification of Fixed Costs
(Dollars In Thousands)

Fixed Cost Changes and Projections	FY 2022 Total or Change	FY 2022 to FY 2023 Change	Description
Change in Number of Paid Days	+0	-2,131	This column reflects changes in pay associated with the change in the number of paid days between FY 2022 and FY 2023. The number of paid days in FY 2023 is one day less than FY 2022.
Pay Raise	+9,487	+22,149	The President's Budget for FY 2023 includes one quarter of a planned 2.7% pay raise for FY 2022 and three quarters of a planned 4.6% pay raise for FY 2023.
Employer Share of Federal Employee Retirement System	+3,320	+0	This column reflects no budgeted increase for the employer contribution to the Federal Employee Retirement System.
Departmental Working Capital Fund	+35	+115	The change reflects the final FY 2023 Central Bill approved by the Working Capital Fund Consortium.
Workers' Compensation Payments	+0	+0	The amount reflects final chargeback costs of compensating injured employees and dependents of employees who suffer accidental deaths while on duty. Costs for 2023 will reimburse the Department of Labor, Federal Employees Compensation Fund, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 8147(b) as amended by Public Law 94-273.
Unemployment Compensation Payments	+0	+0	The amounts reflect projected changes in the costs of unemployment compensation claims to be paid to the Department of Labor, Federal Employees Compensation Account, in the Unemployment Trust Fund, pursuant to Public Law 96-499.
Rental Payments	-24	+35	The amounts reflect changes in the costs payable to 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 costs include building security. Costs of mandatory office relocations, i.e., relocations in cases where due to external events there is no alternative but to vacate the currently occupied space, are also included.
Baseline Adjustments for O&M Increases	+0	+0	In accordance with space maximization efforts across the Federal Government, this adjustment captures the associated increase to baseline operations and maintenance requirements resulting from movement out of GSA or direct-leased (commercial) space and into Bureau-owned space. While the GSA portion of fixed costs will go down as a result of these moves, Bureaus often encounter an increase to baseline O&M costs not otherwise captured in fixed costs. This category of funding properly adjusts the baseline fixed cost amount to maintain steady-state funding for these requirements.

Employee Count By Grade

Office of the Secretary – Office of Wildland Fire
Table 7: Employee Count by Grade
 (Total Employment)

Employee Count by Grade	2021 Actuals	2022 Estimate	2023 Estimate
Executive Level V	0	0	0
SES	1	1	1
Subtotal	1	1	1
SL - 00	0	1	1
ST - 00	0	0	0
Subtotal	0	1	1
GS/GM -15	6	7	7
GS/GM -14	15	15	15
GS/GM -13	6	9	10
GS -12	1	3	3
GS -11	1	3	2
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	30	37	37
Other Pay Schedule Systems	0	0	0
Total employment (actuals & estimates)	31	39	39

This exhibit only displays personnel counts in the Office of Wildland Fire (OWF). The Wildland Fire Management appropriation funds thousands of firefighters and support personnel who are not shown 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

**Wildland Fire Management
Table 8: Section 403 Compliance
(Dollars In Thousands)**

<i>Description of Assessment</i>	<i>Bureau</i>	<i>Preparedness</i>	<i>Suppression</i>	<i>Fuels</i>	<i>BAR</i>	<i>Basis</i>
<i>External Administrative Costs</i>						
Human Resource Fire Program Support	BIA	\$ 697	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	BIA Fire HR Program
Centrally Funded Initiatives includes Working Capital Fund Direct and Central Bill and BLM Director's Priorities	BLM	\$ 6,135	\$ -	\$ 3,156	\$ -	Share of total BLM appropriated funds
National Operations Center (Procurement, HR, IT, data management services centrally provided for entire agency)	BLM	\$ 2,421	\$ -	\$ 2,239	\$ -	FTEs
Headquarters Support (General headquarters oversight, external affairs, IT, law enforcement, EEO, HR, resources, business practices)	BLM	\$ 261	\$ -	\$ 69	\$ 217	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 Service-wide charges that cannot easily be attributed to a specific program or subactivity.	FWS	\$ 2,623	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	Percentage based on FTE
Enterprise-Wide Cost Share: The Service 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, ID cards and the like.	FWS	\$ 1,630	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	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	\$ 237	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	The basis for distribution of costs includes elements such as aviation cost and utilization of contract support.
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	\$ 540	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	The basis for distribution of costs includes elements such as FTEs and square footage.
Subtotal External Administrative Costs		\$ 14,544	\$ -	\$ 5,464	\$ 217	

<i>Description of Assessment</i>	<i>Bureau</i>	<i>Preparedness</i>	<i>Suppression</i>	<i>Fuels</i>	<i>BAR</i>	<i>Basis</i>
<i>Program Assessment Costs</i>						
Office of Aircraft Services Central Bill (Administrative charges for OAS training, management, flight services, safety)	BLM	\$ -	\$ 4,121	\$ -	\$ -	Flight time by subactivity
<i>Subtotal Program Assessment Costs</i>		\$ -	\$ 4,121	\$ -	\$ -	
<i>Bureau Administrative Costs</i>						
Preparedness Indirect for Tribal Programs	BIA	\$ 4,620	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	6% of Base Prep. Allocation
Fuels Indirect for Tribal Program	BIA	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,525	\$ -	14.5% of Base funding and Base RTRL funding
State Level Indirect (Admin support at the State, district, and field office level: procurement, HR, IT)	BLM	\$ 12,280	\$ -	\$ 7,300	\$ -	10% of State Base allocation
<i>Subtotal Bureau Administrative Costs</i>		\$ 16,900	\$ -	\$ 16,825	\$ -	
<i>Total Assessments and Reserves</i>		\$ 31,444	\$ 4,121	\$ 22,289	\$ 217	

Wildland Fire Workforce Modernization Framework

Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture Forest Service Wildland Fire Workforce Framework March 2022

Introduction

This report responds to Public Law 117-43, Division A, Title VII, Sec. 1701 (g):

“Not later than 45 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture shall jointly provide to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Senate Committee on Agriculture Nutrition and Forestry, the House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and the House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Reform, a framework to modernize the wildland firefighting workforce beginning in fiscal year 2022.”

The majority of the Federal government’s wildfire response apparatus is located within the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (FS) and the Department of the Interior (DOI). DOI’s Wildland Fire Management program comprises the Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) and four bureaus: (1) the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), (2) the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), (3) the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and (4) the National Park Service (NPS).

Wildland fire is generally a natural and essential component of a healthy ecosystem, but it can be destructive and costly in unhealthy ecosystems. The average wildfire has become larger³, costlier⁴, and more complex, and wildfire “season” has grown to be almost year-round. Wildfire itself contributes to climate change through the release of carbon emissions into the atmosphere.⁵

Climate change has led to severe drought conditions across the western United States that have contributed to more frequent and severe wildfires. For example, in the United States, based on a 10-year average for 2011-2021, more than 62,000 wildfires burn 7.5 million acres⁶ every year. In 2021, 58,985 wildfires burned over 7.1 million acres of land; this is in line with the average number of wildfires that burned over the past 10 years and about 95 percent of the average number of acres burned. At the height of last year’s fire season, every geographic area was experiencing large wildfires for extended

³<https://www.nifc.gov/sites/default/files/document-media/TotalFires.pdf>

⁴<https://www.nifc.gov/fire-information/statistics/suppression-costs>

⁵Source: <https://www.csl.noaa.gov/factsheets/csdWildfiresFIREX.pdf>

⁶National Interagency Coordination Center Wildland Fire Summary and Statistics Annual Report, 2021 (https://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/intelligence/2021_statsumm/annual_report_2021.pdf), page 12

periods. This was illustrated by how early the Nation reached Preparedness Level (PL) 4—June 22, 2021—and the highest PL of 5 on July 14, 2021, as well as how long the Nation stayed at either PL 4 or PL 5—99 days—which is a record for the highest number of consecutive days at either PL 4 or 5.

To manage an effective wildland fire program, it is critical to take a proactive and cooperative approach that mitigates the negative effects of wildfires while actively managing the use of fire to achieve resource management goals. However, the wildland fire management workforce framework from earlier decades must be revised to more effectively meet these objectives and manage current conditions. This requires a workforce that is fairly compensated, available year-round to respond to wildland fire, cared for both physically and mentally, and has all the necessary tools to accomplish their mission safely, effectively, and efficiently.

Strategic Direction

Human capital is the DOI and FS wildland fire organizations' greatest investment. To ensure this investment accomplishes the increasingly challenging and complex mission of managing wildland fire on DOI and FS lands, we must focus on:

1. Ensuring that compensation and benefits reflect the true value of the work that is performed
2. Ensuring an organizational culture that promotes a sustainable work-life balance
3. Establishing programs that enable employees to properly manage their health, wellbeing and resilience
4. Providing the resources that are needed to develop and support training, education and opportunities that ensure critical emergency response, business acumen and land management competencies
5. Ensuring that work is accurately described, and that a distinct occupational series reflects the true competencies and certifications that are needed to perform the work
6. Developing a robust recruitment strategy to provide a relevant and diverse candidate pool
7. Providing clear career paths from hiring to retirement.

Strategic Workforce Framework

Phase 1 – Beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, DOI and the USDA FS have individually contracted for Wildland Fire Workforce Assessments. These assessments will:

- Gather and review background documents including staffing patterns, pay and compensation, organizational charts, position descriptions and performance plans, budget plans, relevant reports, and other documents.
- Analyze workforce demographics across organizational, occupational, geographic, diversity and other dimensions.
- Identify key Departmental, agency staff, and labor representatives for interviews, as appropriate, to gather background information on prior studies or recommendations on how to recruit and retain wildland firefighters.
- Conduct interviews and other fact-finding methods.
- Analyze all data and information collected through research, interviews, and other sources to determine valid staffing needs for current and future workforce.

- Draft and finalize an Assessment Summary, highlighting baseline data on the current workforce in various dimensions including geographic location, pay and compensation, financial and nonfinancial incentives, diversity, occupational series and grade, and other factors that also focus on future workforce capacity needs.

Phase 2 – Complete the workforce analysis and draft the Departments’ wildland fire workforce plans.

Phase 3 – Departments will conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of wildland fire management recruitment strategy. Results of the evaluation will be disseminated to Departmental leadership and will be used to support recommendations that improve recruitment strategies and identify areas where efficiencies may be gained. Finalize the DOI and USDA FS Departmental Strategic Wildland Fire Workforce Plans.

Phase 4 – Continual monitoring, evaluation, and revision as necessary to incorporate changes and identify best practices, as the Departmental Strategic Workforce Plans for fire will be dynamic. Monitor, evaluate, and revise the workforce action plans. Identify best practices.

Workforce Reform Short Term Goals

1. **Wildland Firefighter Compensation and Benefits:** Evaluate the need for a market-based, special salary rate for wildland firefighters as well as exploring other compensation changes, like an increased base pay for leave and hazard pay for prescribed fire. This will be done in tandem with the increase in base pay that was directed in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).
Note: There is a need to develop, in partnership with the Office of Personnel Management, a new distinct wildland firefighter occupational series that adequately describes the duties performed by these positions.
2. **Conversion to a More Permanent Workforce:** As directed by the BIL, convert temporary wildland fire response positions to permanent, full-time positions available for fire response activities year-round. DOI and USDA FS began conversions with funding received in FY 2021 and will continue workforce transformation efforts through the BIL funding and FY 2022 and FY 2023 budget requests.
3. **Increase Firefighter Capacity:** Consistent with DOI’s and USDA FS’ FY 2022 and FY 2023 budget requests, and to meet the demands of nearly year-round wildfire activity, the workforce assessment in Phase 1 and the workforce analysis in Phase 2 will inform decisions to increase investment in core fighting capacity including hotshots, analysts, logistics (cache and dispatch), and base firefighters (engines, equipment operators, etc.). There would also be associated investment in the support of these individuals including equipment, vehicles, facilities, and agency administrative support functions. We will also be implementing robust succession planning to ensure these individuals would fill much-needed Incident Management Team capacity.

4. **Health, Well Being and Resilience:** Wildland firefighters work in an arduous, stressful environment that is physically and mentally taxing. They spend months away from family and friends, endure death and serious injury among their community, and face very real hazards every time they are deployed. The BIL requires the establishment of a program to recognize and address mental health needs and develop recommendations for mitigation strategies for wildland firefighters to minimize exposure due to environmental hazards. The FY 2023 Forest Service departmental budget requests, and funding within the BIL, further seek to address significant discrepancies within both the “hard” and “soft” infrastructure that supports the minds and bodies of our wildland firefighters when not on incident, to include mental health programs that take aim at the challenges faced by arduous and dangerous work on the fire line; and investing in the professional development and growth of our wildland firefighters now and for a post-firefighting career.

Workforce Reform Long Term Goals

1. **Administrative Program Support for Wildland Fire Operations:** The wildland fire system does not function autonomously. It is through the support and effort of many aspects of the USDA FS and DOI that our national wildland fire response operations are successful each year, including contracting, incident finance, and human resources. Assessment and analysis of core capacity needs could require additional investment in these critical administrative support functions.
2. **Modernization of Wildland Fire Information Technology:** The information technology systems, infrastructure, and tools that support our modern wildland fire response are falling behind what is currently available and being widely utilized by our partners and cooperators. It is necessary to invest in cutting-edge technologies such as hazardous fuels/risk mapping, satellite early detection systems, and unmanned aerial systems to provide our modern wildland firefighting workforce with the tools they need to maximize their effectiveness during response.
3. **Critical Response Infrastructure:** There are critical components of the wildland fire system that are absolutely necessary for a safe and effective fire response operation: dependable vehicles and fire engines, and hand-held radios. The investments in these system components have not kept pace with an increasing operational tempo, resulting in fewer vehicles that are shared among more responders. In addition, the interagency radio systems that provide essential and life-saving communications on the fireline are outdated and require significant annual maintenance. DOI and FS will coordinate to right-size the Federal wildland firefighting fleet and to invest in a modern radio platform for our firefighters.
4. **Wildland Firefighting Facility Improvement and Maintenance:** The wildland fire cache system that manages and distributes critical supplies to fire camps around the country, often in very remote areas, needs an overhaul. The cache facilities are often too small, underequipped, or understaffed—putting significant strain on the backbone of the wildland fire logistical support component of the system. The fire caches are not the only support facilities in need of support. There are also engine bays, helipads, airtanker hangars, and smokejumper facilities that need repairs or upgrades to meet the demands of our modern fire response equipment.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law FY 2023 Spend Plan

Introduction

President Biden signed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) on November 15, 2021, making this once-in-a-generation investment in the Nation's infrastructure and economic competitiveness a reality. This landmark investment will rebuild America's critical infrastructure, tackle the climate crisis, advance environmental justice, and drive the creation of good-paying union jobs. By addressing long-overdue improvements and strengthening our resilience to the changing climate, this investment in our communities across the country will grow the economy sustainably and equitably so everyone gets ahead for decades to come.

This spend plan responds to a requirement in the BIL (P.L. 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

The BIL provides a total of \$1.458 billion for Interior's Wildland Fire Management program over five years. This funding is provided as emergency appropriations and is available for obligation until expended. The BIL further specifies in which fiscal year amounts become available for obligation from FY 2022 through FY 2026, as reflected in Table 9 on the next page. For FY 2022, \$407.600 million is available. For FY 2023, \$262.600 million will be available.

BIL funding for Interior's Wildland Fire Management is intended to strengthen the resilience of communities and ecosystems to the threat of wildfire by making historic investments in forest and rangeland restoration, hazardous fuels management, science, technology to improve the early detection of wildfires, and post-wildfire restoration activities; and by investing in Federal wildland firefighters.

Following is a summary of the appropriations provided in the BIL and authorized purposes in Division D, Section 40803.

Preparedness – Workforce Reform: The BIL provides \$120.0 million over five years to increase the compensation of Federal wildland firefighters, convert more firefighters to permanent, year-round employment, and support the health and safety of firefighters. The BIL directs Interior and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service to increase compensation for firefighters in some geographic areas and to work with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to establish a wildland firefighter occupational series. Further, Interior and the USDA Forest Service are required to establish mitigation strategies for line-of-duty environmental hazards and firefighters' mental health.

Other Preparedness: The BIL provides another \$125.0 million over five years for other activities that will increase America’s preparedness to respond to wildland fire. They include support for workshops and training for firefighters, equipment, satellite detection and reporting, wildfire detection and monitoring, and a pilot program to support Tribal Nations and local governments in wildfire response.

**Table 9:
Wildland Fire Management
Bipartisan Infrastructure
Law Funding**

**Enacted Amounts Available
(dollars in 000s)**

Program/Activity	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	Total
Preparedness						
Workforce Reform	33,963	18,047	18,047	18,047	18,046	106,150
Other Preparedness	39,319	22,739	22,738	22,739	22,740	130,275
Administration	2,278	1,268	1,268	1,268	1,268	7,350
Office of the Inspector General	380	211	212	211	211	1,225
Subtotal, Preparedness	75,940	42,265	42,265	42,265	42,265	245,000
Fuels Management						
Fuels Management	243,721	150,886	150,888	150,887	150,888	847,270
Administration	7,577	4,692	4,690	4,691	4,690	26,340
Office of the Inspector General	1,262	782	782	782	782	4,390
Subtotal, Fuels Management	252,560	156,360	156,360	156,360	156,360	878,000
Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR)						
Burned Area Rehabilitation	73,340	60,072	60,071	60,072	60,070	313,625
Administration	2,280	1,867	1,868	1,867	1,868	9,750
Office of the Inspector General	380	311	311	311	312	1,625
Subtotal, BAR	76,000	62,250	62,250	62,250	62,250	325,000
Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP)						
Joint Fire Science Program	2,991	1,665	1,665	1,664	1,665	9,650
Administration	93	51	52	52	52	300
Office of the Inspector General	16	9	8	9	8	50
Subtotal, JFSP	3,100	1,725	1,725	1,725	1,725	10,000
Total	407,600	262,600	262,600	262,600	262,600	1,458,000

Fuels Management: The BIL provides \$878.0 million over five years to plan and implement fuels management. This work will protect vulnerable communities from wildfire while preparing our natural landscapes for a changing climate. The BIL funding is intended to support mechanical thinning;

prescribed fire; employing contractors, young adults, veterans, and Tribal Nations' youth; and other fuels management.

Burned Area Rehabilitation: The BIL provides \$325.0 million over five years to complete post-fire rehabilitation activities. These actions help mitigate the damaging effects of wildfires and set landscapes on a path towards natural recovery and climate resilience.

Joint Fire Science Program: The BIL provides \$10.0 million to Interior over five years to study and research wildland fire through the Joint Fire Science Program, which Interior and USDA jointly administer. The program will use the funding to conduct research on climate change interactions, smoke management concerns, impacts on diverse populations, and management actions that will make ecosystems more wildfire and drought resistant.

Funding for the Office of the Inspector General and Administration: The BIL requires that 0.5 percent of the appropriations be transferred to the Office of the Inspector General and provides that Interior may use up to 3.0 percent of the appropriations for “salaries, expenses, and administration.” These amounts are reflected in the table on the preceding page.

Preparedness

FY 2022 Accomplishments and Planned Activities

Interior's Wildland Fire Management program is taking a multi-phase approach to support implementation of the BIL's firefighter workforce and broader preparedness provisions. Interior is working with the USDA Forest Service, OPM, and other agencies to implement the provisions.

- **Workforce and Compensation**

- Workforce Assessment: Human capital is the most important investment for effective wildland fire management. Prior to enactment of the BIL, Interior decided to undertake an assessment of the wildland fire management workforce. This assessment will be valuable in implementing the BIL. Interior's Federal Consulting Group, which is assisting the Wildland Fire Management program, has contracted for a Wildland Fire Workforce Assessment, which is underway. This assessment will produce baseline information about wildland fire personnel, including geographic location, pay and compensation, diversity, classification, and other factors to inform the determination of sustainable and effective workforce capacity needs. The assessment is expected to be delivered to Interior by May 31, 2022.
- Coordinated, Interagency Workforce Working Groups: To lead toward the establishment of a wildland firefighter series by the BIL's deadline of 180 days post-enactment, Interior is participating in interagency working groups with OPM and the USDA Forest Service to review the current classification and establish a new job series for wildland fire personnel. In addition to position classification and job series, these groups are evaluating compensation.

- Compensation Increases for 2022: On June 30, 2021, the President announced compensation increases for the lowest-paid wildland firefighters. These increases were implemented over the summer for a six-month period running through December 31, 2021, and Interior will continue any necessary actions to sustain the President's commitment. For 2022, Interior and the USDA Forest Service issued guidance that no firefighter should be hired at a salary of less than \$15 per hour. (Subsequently, OPM issued guidance that applies to positions governmentwide.) Interior and the USDA Forest Service are working to implement compensation increases beginning in summer 2022.
- Pre-Planning Fire Response Workshops and Training: Interior and the USDA Forest Service, in coordination with stakeholders, will hold workshops and training for staff, non-Federal firefighters, and Tribal fire crews to effectively respond to wildfires and assist in increasing the pace and scale of vegetation treatments. Interior has assumed a leading role in the development and delivery of wildland firefighter training while USDA Forest Service is providing focused attention on the development of potential operational delineations through pre-planning fire response workshops.
- Mental Health and Line-of-Duty Environmental Hazards: In coordination with the USDA Forest Service, Interior is planning to establish programs and build capacity (including staff) to recognize and address mental health needs of firefighters and ensure access to appropriate resources. The near-term focus is on further defining firefighter mental health needs, identifying evidence-based primary prevention and early intervention strategies, and adding a few program staff to implement recommendations and plans. Similar work is being undertaken with respect to line-of-duty environmental hazards.
- **Equipment and Technology**
 - Satellite Detection and Reporting of Wildfires: Interior and the USDA Forest Service will jointly undertake an agreement with the Department of Commerce's (DOC) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) during 2022 to establish and operate a program that makes use of geospatial information to rapidly detect and report wildfire starts in geographic areas for which either Interior or USDA is financially responsible for wildland fire protection and prevention.
 - Radio Interoperability of Incident Management Teams: Interior is working to determine the most appropriate method to acquire technology for each Type 1 and Type 2 incident management team to maintain interoperability with respect to the radio frequencies used by any responding agency. Interior is consulting with the USDA Forest Service and other partners.
 - Pilot Program for Slip-On Tanker Units: Interior is working to develop and implement a pilot program to provide local governments and Tribal Nations financial assistance to acquire slip-on tanker units. The goal is to establish fleets of vehicles that can be converted quickly to be operated as fire engines.

- Wildfire Detection and Monitoring Equipment: Interior is working with partners to procure and place real-time wildfire detection and monitoring equipment such as sensors, cameras, and other equipment in areas at risk of wildfire or in areas undergoing post-fire rehabilitation.

FY 2023 Planned Activities and Milestones

- **Workforce and Compensation**

- Workforce Transformation: Interior will continue reviewing the results of the 2022 Workforce Assessment (see above) that will serve as baseline information about wildland fire personnel, including geographic location, pay and compensation, diversity, classification, and other factors to inform the determination of sustainable and effective workforce capacity needs. Interior will continue efforts to convert more firefighters to permanent positions. The 2023 budget request provides additional funding for conversions and to increase the total number of wildland firefighters (see also the Preparedness and Fuels Management sections).
- Firefighter Job Series: The Administration will continue to implement the new job series to be established by OPM in 2022. Interior and the USDA Forest Service anticipate coordinated implementation and planning efforts will assist staff during the transition period, and the job series is expected to take effect in 2023.
- Compensation Increases for 2023: Interior and the USDA Forest Service will continue compensation increases to be implemented in 2022. The 2023 budget request provides additional funding for increasing firefighters' compensation (see also the Preparedness section).
- Mental Health and Line-of-Duty Environmental Hazards: Building on earlier planning and staffing, Interior will establish adequate Critical Incident Stress Management response capacity in every Wildland Fire Management bureau. Interior also will prioritize additional responder-tailored mental health support services that extend beyond the scope of the Employee Assistance Program, through interagency national contract(s). In addition, Interior and the USDA Forest Service will develop and adhere to recommendations for mitigation strategies to minimize exposure to line-of-duty environmental hazards. The BIL deadline for developing recommendations and beginning to implement measures to address these issues is October 1, 2022 (the first day of FY 2023).

- **Equipment and Technology**

- Satellite Detection and Reporting of Wildfires: After having completed an agreement with and transferred funding to NOAA/DOC, in 2023, Interior and the USDA Forest Service will continue working with NOAA/DOC to establish and operate a program that makes use of geospatial information to rapidly detect and report wildfire starts in geographic areas for

- which either Interior or USDA is financially responsible for wildland fire protection and prevention.
- Radio Interoperability of Incident Management Teams: After having determined the most appropriate method to acquire appropriate technology, Interior will work in 2023 to acquire technology for each Type 1 and Type 2 incident management team to maintain interoperability with respect to the radio frequencies used by any responding agency. Interior is consulting with the USDA Forest Service and other partners.
 - Pilot Program for Slip-On Tanker Units: In 2023, after having completed planning and agreements for necessary services to support and run the program, Interior plans to begin implementing the pilot program to provide local governments and Tribal Nations financial assistance to acquire slip-on tanker units so vehicles can be converted quickly to be operated as fire engines.
 - Wildfire Detection and Monitoring Equipment: In 2023, Interior will have begun procurements and potentially the placement of real-time wildfire detection and monitoring equipment such as sensors, cameras, and other equipment in areas at risk of wildfire or in areas undergoing post-fire rehabilitation.

Fuels Management

FY 2022 Accomplishments and Planned Activities

During 2022, Interior, in consultation with USDA, is establishing a five-year monitoring, maintenance, and treatment plan, as required by the BIL. To implement the BIL's Fuels Management provisions, Interior is initially relying on the Wildland Fire Management bureaus' existing three-year programs of work to identify projects consistent with the BIL's requirements.

Interior is using the following criteria specified in the BIL to prioritize funding for projects that:

1. Already have completed National Environmental Policy Act compliance;
2. Reduce the likelihood of experiencing uncharacteristically severe effects from a potential wildfire by focusing on areas strategically important for reducing the risks associated with wildfires;
3. Maximize the retention of large trees, as appropriate for the forest type, to the extent that the trees promote fire-resilient stands;
4. Do not include the establishment of permanent roads;
5. Would commit funding to decommission all temporary roads constructed to carry out the project; and
6. Fully maintain or contribute toward the restoration of the structure and composition of old growth stands consistent with the characteristics of that forest type, taking into account the contribution of the old growth stand to landscape fire adaption and watershed health, unless the old growth stand is part of a science-based ecological restoration project authorized by the Secretary concerned that meets applicable protection and old growth enhancement objectives, as determined by the Secretary concerned.

Interior will collaborate across boundaries through new and existing partnerships with States, Tribal Nations, and local communities to implement these provisions of the BIL. Up to \$2.0 million is authorized annually through FY 2026 for implementing the Tribal Forest Protection Act. Interior is consulting and working with Tribal Nations on all aspects of the BIL's wildland fire management provisions. The Wildland Fire Management program is closely coordinating its work with the USDA Forest Service, the Interior resource management programs, and other stakeholders to leverage the BIL's complementary funding for cross-boundary ecosystem restoration.

To facilitate coordination, Interior's Wildland Fire Management program will collaborate with the USDA Forest Service and other partners to fund the development of a geospatial tool that supports and leverages local prioritization of fuels management projects; explores partners' planned and completed treatment areas; and tracks proposed, approved, and accomplished work. This tool will improve organizations' abilities to plan, prioritize, and carry out fuels management projects in ways that facilitate cross-jurisdictional collaborative action, increase transparency and trust, inform proactive decision-making, and help tell the story of shared wildfire risk across the country.

FY 2023 Planned Activities and Milestones

In 2023, Interior will continue efforts in alignment with the priorities outlined above while ramping up implementation of BIL-funded thinning, prescribed fire, installation of fuel breaks, and other removal of flammable vegetation. Interior will leverage United States Geological Service's (USGS) expertise in remote sensing, data storage, and monitoring to implement a statistically valid strategy to sample and compare changes in wildfire risk over time. Additionally, Interior will apply monitoring data collected to support forward-looking adaptation that expands the most effective work and supports the identification of new opportunities to work in areas and apply methods that may not have been considered previously.

By December 31, 2022, Interior and the USDA Forest Service will submit the 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 of the land.

Burned Area Rehabilitation

FY 2022 Accomplishments and Planned Activities

Funding in the BIL will dramatically expand opportunities to restore landscapes damaged by wildfire. This funding presents significant opportunities to coordinate across the Wildland Fire Management program, with Fuels Management, with the USDA Forest Service, and with the Interior resource management programs to leverage the BIL's complementary funding to address cross-boundary ecosystem restoration.

During 2022, Interior will add program support staff to support rapid project implementation as wildfires occur and take advantage of seeding and herbicide application windows of opportunity when they occur.

FY 2023 Planned Activities and Milestones

During 2023, Interior will implement immediate post-containment actions and actions within three years of wildfire containment using BIL funds. Additionally, USGS scientists 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. Finally, Interior will expand cross-boundary collaboration within Interior, with USDA Forest Service, and with non-Federal partners including Tribal Nations—investing in infrastructure, plant materials, monitoring, and evaluation necessary to accelerate the pace of rehabilitation and enhance program effectiveness.

Joint Fire Science Program

FY 2022 Accomplishments and Planned Activities

The Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) will target BIL projects under an interagency agreement with the USDA Forest Service. The funding will primarily benefit university and college researchers, occasionally with minimal to minor partnerships between universities and Federal researchers.

Consistent with the existing project selection process, subject matter expert panels will review and rate JFSP research projects. They will recommend priority projects to an interagency board comprising senior managers and scientists. The research projects are inherently collaborative efforts. Results are disseminated through the Fire Science Exchange Network, which is a colloquium of local, State, Tribal, and Federal researchers and managers.

Federal partners include several Interior bureaus, multiple USDA services, NOAA/DOC, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institute of Standards and Technology/DOC, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Department of Defense. 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 Planned Activities and Milestones

During FY 2023, JFSP will target additional projects using the second year of BIL funding.

Appendix A – Lists of Key Tables and Figures

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Appendix B – References

ACRONYMS

BAR	Burned Area Rehabilitation
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CR	Continuing Resolution (for appropriations)
DOI	U.S. Department of the Interior
FSEN	Fire Science Exchange Network
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent (employees)
FWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
FY	Fiscal Year (time span from October of one year through September of the next)
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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- 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>