



# Fire Program Review

Summary | June 2017

After the historic 2015 fire season, the Idaho Legislature appropriated \$150,000 to the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) to conduct a Fire Program Review.

Wildland Fire Associates (WFA) was awarded the contract in 2016 to evaluate the structure and function of IDL's fire management program and to provide recommendations for maintaining or improving the safety, effectiveness, and fiscal responsibility of the program. IDL requested that recommendations focus on policies, procedures, program structure, staffing, budget allocations and decision-making for wildland fire preparedness, suppression, and prevention.

WFA gathered information for their report by remotely surveying IDL fire management program employees, interviewing key employees, and by evaluating information and data provided by IDL staff, cooperating fire management entities, government officials, neighboring state fire management program staff, and others as necessary.

Short- (1-5 years) and long-term (5+ years) recommendations were to be supported by sufficient analysis and data and include cost estimates for implementation of each recommendation.

## SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Implement the fire program strategies and tasks identified in the IDL Strategic Plan.
2. Use the Idaho Fire Management Analysis System (IFMAS) or other modeling tool to determine Most Efficient Level (MEL) and allocation of firefighters, engines and aviation assets. Conduct model runs using current forest protective district boundaries and larger forest protective district boundaries to evaluate MEL and allocation of resource differences.
3. Ensure IDL representation on multi-agency coordination (MAC) groups, Great Basin Coordination Center (GBCC), Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NRCC), and the coordinating group functional committees.
4. Provide ongoing support for shop development projects, including refurbishing of Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) and Firefighter Property (FFP) equipment for fire service organizations and rangeland fire protection associations. Convert temporary mechanic position to permanent, full-time to handle workload and retain qualified mechanics.

## LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Consider combining the two six-person booster crews into a Type 2 initial attack crew.
6. Evaluate non-fire workload and consider options for seasonal staffing and possible conversion of some engine boss positions to permanent part-time or full-time based on analysis results.
7. Review the structural organization of the Fire Bureau and possible need for a Deputy Fire Bureau Chief to share the workload of representing IDL on the two GACCs and the various committees, and serve as back-up for the Bureau Chief during peak load times.
8. Develop a statewide fuels treatment program and hire a statewide fire/fuels specialist.
9. Create a training program to accelerate employee development and achievement of desired red card qualifications.
10. Improve internal communications.

## **NEXT STEPS**

IDL is in the process of reviewing the recommendations and determining short- and long-term action items.

The following actions have already been taken:

- Item #1 – The Fire Bureau and Operations staff have updated the strategies and tasks in the IDL Strategic Plan and have begun implementation of FY17 and FY18 action items.
- Item #2 – The Fire Bureau is reviewing various fire modeling tools and contractor options to determine the MEL of firefighters, engines, and aviation assets.
- Item #3 – The Fire Bureau is exploring short- and long-term representation options on the MAC, GACCs, and coordinating group functional committees.
- Item #4 – A FY19 Decision Unit has been submitted for a permanent, full-time mechanic position to meet the FEPP/FPP equipment refurbishment workload for fire service organizations and the rangeland fire protection associations.