



January 18, 2022

Wildfires have been growing in size and severity, placing homes, communities, infrastructure and natural resources at grave and growing risk. Climate change is causing hotter, drier and longer wildfire seasons. In addition, dangerous excess fuel loads have built up due to past fire exclusion practices and insufficient investment in risk reduction and resilience, particularly with rapid growth of homes and structures in the wildland-urban interface. The result has been an extraordinary increase in catastrophic wildfires, with devastating consequences on human health, the economy, community well-being, and the environment.

In times of crisis, Americans have always joined together, rising to every challenge. Now as we face the challenge of catastrophic wildfires, the land management agencies at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) are redoubling our efforts to work with partners to restore ecosystem health and resilience, vastly expanding our collective capacity to reduce hazardous fuels, accomplish natural resource restoration, invest in fire-adapted communities, and address the growing need for post-fire recovery and reforestation, all driven by sound science and collaborative decision-making.

As the primary Federal organizations responsible for managing the Nation's Federal forests and rangelands, USDA and DOI have worked collaboratively for many years to manage our lands together as one landscape – especially to address catastrophic wildfire risks that recognize no agency boundaries. These lands include the USDA Forest Service's National Forest System lands and lands administered by the four DOI land management agencies — the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the National Park Service (NPS).

In particular, our agencies, in collaboration with Tribal Nation, state, local partners and non-governmental partners, jointly prepared the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy which articulated our shared goals of (1) restoring fire-adapted ecosystems on a landscape scale; (2) building fire-adapted human communities; and (3) responding safely and effectively to wildland fire. In [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 14008](#), "*Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*" President Biden challenged us to double-down on our collaborative efforts to make our nation more resilient in the face of ever-worsening wildfires, droughts, floods, extreme heat and other risks to lives and livelihoods that are exacerbated by climate change.

In response to this imperative, the USDA is today releasing the enclosed Forest Service 10-year Strategy which builds on the vision and goals of the Cohesive Strategy and adds cutting-edge

Forest Service science undertaken and developed in recent years, which will help target Federal resources towards areas that are the most important to protect communities at risk, based on historic fire behavior.

Restoration efforts will also safeguard and enhance important ecosystem services benefits, such as filtering clean water, sequestering carbon, protecting old and mature forests, and providing wildlife habitat, all while protecting and providing a variety of other ecologic, economic, social, and cultural values.

As a next step, USDA and DOI will work together to target high-risk areas for priority wildfire mitigation attention, including as we implement the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that is providing an essential down payment on many elements of this work. We are also coordinating across the Administration through the President's Wildfire Resilience Interagency Working Group (IWG), co-led by USDA, DOI and the Office of Management and Budget and reporting to the cabinet-level National Climate Task Force, to bring an all-of-government response to this challenge.

Coordination across the Federal family creates new opportunities for problem-solving and allows Federal agencies to work with Tribes, states, local communities, private landowners, and other partners to bring additional resources to the table to address wildfire risks, increase resilience and protect people, communities, and natural resources. Additional collaboration will occur through the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission established by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (P.L. 117-58), co-chaired by USDA, DOI and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Throughout all of these joint efforts, we have and will continue to prioritize a commitment to consultation with Tribes and will engage Tribes to incorporate tribal capacity, expertise, and Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge. The Tribal Homelands Initiative established in our recent Joint Secretarial Order No. 3403, on *"Fulfilling the Trust Responsibility to Indian Tribes in the Stewardship of Federal Lands and Waters,"* related MOUs and direction from President Biden will guide our work.

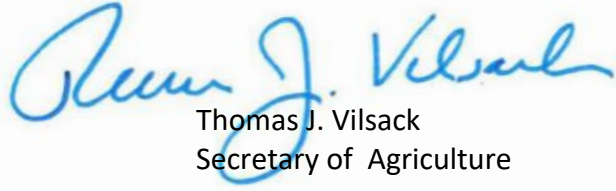
We are committed to ensuring that equity and inclusion of historically underserved communities is embedded in this work, including through implementing the principles and direction set forth by [E.O. 13985](#), *"On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government"* and efforts related to [Justice40](#).

We must act decisively to improve the health and resilience of our forests and rangelands and protect people and communities at risk. Through collaborative efforts and by working with Tribes, States, local communities, private and family landowners, and public and private sector partners across jurisdictional boundaries, we can restore fire-adapted ecosystems across shared landscapes and meaningfully change the trajectory of wildfire risk to people, communities, and natural resources.

We look forward to working together and with our partners to implement this important work.



Deb Haaland
Secretary of the Interior



Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture