



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

News Release

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Bureau of Land Management transforms wildland firefighting workforce

BOISE, Idaho – The Bureau of Land Management is transforming its wildland firefighting workforce due to longer, more intense fire years and the need to actively manage and reduce fuels across a vast, more-flammable landscape caused by invasive plant establishment.

Historically, the BLM’s wildland fire workforce was seasonally based. However, a new model is needed to address the escalating workforce needs due to climate change intensifying fire activity. This model will also provide employees with career stability and upward mobility to promote work-life balance and long-term careers in wildfire or resource management.

The BLM received \$13 million in its 2021 fiscal year budget to begin workforce transformation, which involves adding 76 new firefighters and support personnel who sustain the wildland fire management mission. The BLM will also convert 428 existing seasonal positions to permanent and/or year-round positions. Overall, the U.S. Department of the Interior received \$29 million to carry out “DOI’s Plan to Transform the Firefighting Workforce.”

“The ultimate goal of workforce transformation is to attract and retain a diverse group of quality employees – dedicated people who will not only help manage fires and fuels in support of BLM’s multiple-use mission, but who have the potential to become the Bureau’s future leaders,” said BLM Deputy Director of Policy and Programs Nada Culver. “Our people are our most important resource, and this workforce transformation effort will result in more career opportunities and benefits for our wildland firefighters – those who work hard to keep the public safe and to protect our public lands.”

All wildland fire positions are being created or transformed in an effort to support suppression and fuels responsibilities in line with the Biden-Harris administration’s priorities. The BLM Fire program is planning to continue this transformation effort next fiscal year and beyond in hopes of fully transforming its workforce in the coming years.

“As a nation, we are coming to grips with the effects of climate change on fire activity. BLM leaders at many levels have worked hard over the years to lay the groundwork for a fire program workforce transformation,” said BLM Assistant Director of Fire and Aviation Grant Beebe. “The fire activity we’ve experienced in 2021 and previous years reinforces the need for transforming a

sizeable portion of our largely seasonal fire organization to permanent positions, though widespread change will not happen overnight.”

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This year, we invite everyone to reimagine your public lands as we celebrate 75 years of the BLM’s stewardship and service to the American people. The BLM manages approximately 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The agency’s mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America’s public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.