Wildland Fire Communication Plan
Centennial Edition
2016-2020

...To promote and regulate the use of the...national parks...which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

- The National Park Service Organic Act - August 25, 1916
  16 U.S.C. 1 2 3, and 4

Wildland Fire Communication Plan
Centennial Edition: 2016-2020

Branch of Wildland Fire
Boise, Idaho

Produced by Fire Communication and Education
National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, DC

Contents

Right: A law enforcement ranger greets visitors during a prescribed fire at Wind Cave National Park. NPS / J.M. JOHNSON

The National Park Service Wildland Fire Management Program manages wildland fire to protect the public; park communities and infrastructure; conserve natural and cultural resources; and maintain and restore natural ecosystem processes.

National Park Service Wildland Fire Management Strategic Plan – 2015 - 2019

Executive Summary

The 2016-2020 "Centennial Edition" National Park Service (NPS) Wildland Fire Communication Plan is an update to the 2009 Wildland Fire Communication Plan.

It was created as a supporting document to the *2015 - 2019 Wildland Fire Strategic Plan* and is in force from 2016-2020.

A variety of sources influenced this plan, including the NPS *A Call to Action*, the *Wildland Fire Strategic Plan*, *NPS Interpretation Business Plan*, and 100-plus collective years of institutional knowledge from fire communication and education specialists and wildland fire leadership nationwide. A 2016 employee survey, interviews from 2014, and a communication plan survey conducted in 2008 aided in the direction of the plan.

To ensure that the communication plan remains relevant, logical, measurable and achievable, the Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) model was used during the development. As examples, the project team looked at how budget, Service First Agreements, reports by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and Incident Management Team succession planning influences the future direction of the NPS Wildland Fire Program, not just what is occurring today.

Within this document, there are eight sections covering key topics that guide the reader to understand the current situation analysis, plan objectives, audience engagement, and audience identification. Broad key messages are included with additional information in Appendix A.

The communication plan provides strategies to help define a path to reach identified objectives using tactics that relate directly to those objectives. Challenges with ever evolving communication technology could either help or inhibit communication, but the strategies remain the same. Specific tools are not listed as they may soon become obsolete, and they may even be tools that haven't been authorized or even thought of at the time this communication plan was approved. Because this is a five-year plan, evaluation should take place at both the local and national level.

The *2016-2020 NPS Wildland Fire Communication Plan* is not designed to tell a program how to communicate, but to provide tools for effective communication about National Park Service wildland fire management. It provides a broad perspective and is not intended as a directive telling a unit or program how it must be done. This is a guidance document to assist regional- and local-level staff in developing specific communication strategies and messaging at the appropriate level. Appendix B provides information about additional resources, as wildland fire communication is dynamic and evolving.

Introduction

Every employee has an opportunity to tell the story of wildland fire management as it relates to the National Park Service. This extends beyond senior managers and officials, those designated to serve as official spokespeople, or subject matter experts who have been recognized as designated communicators. By virtue of association with the NPS, all employees are ambassadors for the bureau.

Each time an NPS employee speaks or writes about his or her role—whether it is with other employees, partners or external audiences—the message that is conveyed becomes a story about the National Park Service.

This communication plan empowers employees to consistently communicate about the spectrum of wildland fire management activities of the National Park Service, including protection of life and property, conserving natural and cultural resources, and maintaining the role of fire in ecosystems.

As the NPS moves forward into its second century, the wildland fire management program's future evolution will emphasize adaptability and the need to meet the challenges ahead.

Situation Analysis

The Situation Analysis presents what is known about the current environment in which outreach will be conducted, including social, economic, and related factors, and the expected goal for outreach. - RM-18, Chapter 21, Page 4.

The NPS has a rich history of engaging the public in learning about nature and ecology through interpretive education, public outreach programs, media stories, and more recently, the use of social media.

The Wildland Fire Management Program embraces that tradition and supports the theme: Preserving America's Special Places.

Understanding of fire management practices and the nuances of ecosystem fire management have evolved through time.

The need for resilient landscapes, fire adapted communities, and safe and effective wildfire response is part of a multi-faceted wildland fire program.

The NPS faces challenges and opportunities as it coordinates with other federal bureaus and

agencies. The NPS shares with other federal agencies one mission: to protect the public. The NPS has an additional mission to preserve, maintain, and restore the land that it manages. The NPS endorses the use of fire to meet ecological objectives when conditions allow.

In an ever-evolving world of online and non-traditional communications tactics, there is a need to use appropriate and relevant strategies for reaching the public as well as partners and employees. Key audience members now have many options for finding information—both online and through other sources. Communicators need to strategize how best to reach specific audiences using all available tools. While the NPS cannot solve these challenges alone, by working closely with other agency leaders solutions can be found. Continuing efforts to inform the public about the NPS approach to wildland fire management, while not contradicting the interagency approach, will further strengthen our ability to cut through the noise of competing media messages.

Although the mission of the NPS continues unchanged, some underlying conditions affecting how the wildland fire management program is managed will continue to shift. Working more closely than ever with other agencies, the NPS embraces landscape-scale fire management and opportunities to work with those partners to manage fire across political and jurisdictional boundaries. There is an ever-growing need for unified messages, when appropriate, to provide efficiency across jurisdictions and reduce confusion for the public.

Trends in changing visitation and recreational usage play a role in how we communicate and educate visitors. With changing demographics of visitors, the way we communicate and how we communicate is just as important as what we communicate with the current and next generation of park stewards. This can be seen in visitor surveys and in the 2014 document *Achieving Relevance in our Second Century*, a five-year interdisciplinary strategy for interpretation, education, and volunteers.

Trends and predictions identified in the *2015–2019 National Park Service Wildland Fire Strategic Plan* outline several challenges and concerns that will have an impact on how we communicate with key audiences. These include fluctuating budgets, increased use of information technology in wildland fire management processes, and how NPS staff

This communication plan empowers employees to consistently communicate about the spectrum of wildland fire management activities of the National Park Service

communicates these changes. Additionally, environmental, economic, political, and social conditions such as climate change, increasing population in the wildland-urban interface, and organized incident management responses need to be understood by our audiences. Above all else, NPS staff must continue to emphasize that life safety in firefighting activities for both the public and firefighters always remains the highest priority.

Objectives

The objectives outline exactly what the plan aims to accomplish. Objectives should be specific and measurable, which also helps in gauging the success of the implementation efforts. - RM-18, Chapter 21, Page 5.

The objectives below provide direction to help identify, mitigate, and solve the most commonly observed strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing the NPS Wildland Fire Program.

- Prior to, during, and after an incident or project, targeted audiences will be able recall a local, regional, or national key message about the incident or project.

- Increase support for and understanding of fire management activities through the ongoing dialogue with targeted audiences throughout the year.

- Empower effective park communications by encouraging parks to include a communication and education plan in updated park-level fire management plans.

- Maximize outreach effectiveness by engaging employees and partners in the shared responsibility of fire communications over the course of the year.

- Create advocates for NPS wildland fire management by sharing authentic, relevant, and diverse stories on an ongoing basis.

- Coordinate strategic communications with interdisciplinary NPS wildland fire management ambassadors at the national, regional, and park levels, over the next five years.

- Inform audiences so that they will be able to articulate a local, regional, or national key message about how science is used to inform NPS wildland fire management.

- Recognize through regular conversation and information sharing that NPS employees across all disciplines contribute value to NPS wildland fire management.

Audience Engagement

When considering audiences, education is necessary to the success of wildland fire management programs. Fire is an important topic for the public and NPS employees. Public understanding is key to the Service's ability to effectively manage wildland fire. Though fear of fires in wildland areas–whether naturally caused or human caused–is an understandable response to extreme fires and losses, there is more to the story of wildland fire. Understanding of the integral role of wildland fire in many ecosystems will help neighboring landowners and park visitors appreciate and support land management efforts achieved through fire management.

Public education efforts need to be clear about both the risks and benefits of wildland fire. Often a person's perception of fire is shaped by extreme fire events and the negative representation of fire in the media and other outlets. The NPS can help residents, park visitors, and neighbors understand the broader context by sharing comprehensive information about fire and the management challenges facing federal, state, tribal, and local fire management organizations. In addition, national parks have the opportunity to showcase the benefits of wildland fire and its natural role in ecosystems by showing results on the ground.

As an organization, it's important to have knowledge of key audiences in order to address their needs and concerns (Cortner et al, 1984). Current research demonstrates the value of face-to-face communication, the importance of building relationships before, during, and after events, and ensuring two-way conversation is part of messaging (McCaffrey, S., Olsen, C., 2012).

It's imperative that communicators speak with their audiences rather than talk at them. When it comes to wildland fire, a personalized message is preferred and more effective than the use of non-personal methods (McCaffrey, 2004). By understanding audiences communicators are able to facilitate meaningful intellectual and emotional connections to wildland fire.

It's important to use active dialogue, custom-tailored messaging, and appropriate mediums to share information. The cookie-cutter method doesn't work. Through understanding various social, economic, and political dynamics, better messaging will foster comprehension and acceptance of wildland fire and its

Resource management is a key internal audience for this communication plan.

Top photo credit: NPS/G. TARLETON

management (McCaffery, S. et al., 2015). Addressing the needs of various communities will also address their issues and perceived risks (Cortner et al, 1984). Subsequent sections in the Wildland Fire Communication Plan address the challenge of who, what, and, how to communicate about wildland fire.

Citations for this section:

Cortner et al, 1984; Carpenter et al., 1986; DeBano et al., 1998; Glasscock, 1972; Hall, 1972; Jacobson, 1999; Monroe, 2000; Omi and Laven, 1982; Shelby & Speaker, 1990; Shindler, 1997; Taylor and Daniel, 1984; Taylor and Mutch, 1986; Winter and Cvetkovich, 2003; Winter and Fried, 2000

McCaffrey, 2004; Toman and Shindler, 2005; Toman et al., 2006

Cortner et al, 1984; Monroe et. al, 1999; Monroe, 2000; Abrams, J. & Lowe, K., 2005

McCaffery, S., Olsen, C., 2012, Research perspectives on the public and fire management: a synthesis of current social science on eight essential questions, Gen. Tech. Rep. NRS-104. Newtown Square, PA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station. 40 p.

McCaffery, S., Toman, E., Stidham, M., Shindler, B., 2015, Social science findings in the United States, In: Paton, D., ed. Wildfire hazards, risks, and disasters. Watham, MA: Elsevier: 15-34. Chapter 2.

Key Audiences

Defining the audience(s) is one of the most important elements of communication planning. Every group or organization that might be affected by the fire management activity should be identified to ensure communication is appropriate for that audience. - RM-18, Chapter 21, Page 5.

This plan addresses both internal and external audiences. Key audiences are listed below. To ensure consistent communication, the National Park Service must communicate effectively with both internal and external audiences. Understanding of and engagement about wildland fire management by these key audiences will have a ripple or cascading effect within and outside of the bureau, effectively reaching other important audiences.

The goal is to inform and engage end users so that they can effectively communicate about

the NPS Wildland Fire Management Program. Survey results from the *2008 Wildland Fire Communication Plan* demonstrated that widespread knowledge appears to lead to widespread support. Using two-way conversations with active dialogue and listening, both senders and receivers of messages can ensure that mutual understanding is achieved.

The list of key audiences below is an umbrella list; local/regional needs may be different or more extensive. It's also important to note that lists from park public affairs officers and other PIOs may have additional contacts, depending on the nature of the incident or program goals.

Key audiences include:

Internal audiences:
All National Park Service employees, with emphasis on the following:

- Facilities Management staff
- Interpreters and educators
- Natural and Cultural Resource staff
- Park superintendents and leadership teams
- Public information officers, Public affairs officers
- Park cooperating associations, volunteers-in-parks, and concessions staff
- Staff with ICS qualifications
- Visitor and Resource Protection staff

External audiences:

- Advocacy groups
- Chambers of Commerce
- Elected officials
- Local/gateway communities
- Media
- Park visitors
- Partner agencies
- Scientific community
- Students/educators
- Tourism offices

Key Messages

The cornerstone of any communication effort is a set of consistent, compelling messages for use in all proactive and reactive communication. Messages should be actionable where appropriate so that, in addition to educating, they will motivate the audiences to act on what they have learned. - RM-18, Chapter 21, Page 6.

> The goal is to empower employees and stakeholders to engage in active dialogue with key audiences to foster an understanding of and support for the spectrum of National Park Service wildland fire management activities for mutual benefit.

Table 1 identifies the key messages for National Park Service wildland fire management. These messages are designed to meet the following criteria:

- **Coincide with and not contradict interagency messages.** NPS wildland fire messages are designed to complement interagency messages. The NPS wildland fire messages also are designed to be fluid. Key messages in this plan do not address specific policy issues. NPS staff will rely on policy-related messages as they are needed and developed.

- **Allow for customization.** These messages are a guide, not a script. Users are encouraged to provide additional, local detail to ensure the messages engage audiences in a relevant, credible way.

- **Include a call to action.** In addition to educating, messages should motivate audiences to act on what they have learned.

- **Answer the questions what, why, and how.** Categorizing messages in this way will help users recall the messages during appropriate situations.

These messages, with supporting points, are included in Appendix A.

Table 1

Question	Key Message
What	The National Park Service Wildland Fire Management Program commits to safety, science, and stewardship each and every day.
Why	Many healthy ecosystems depend on wildland fire as a natural process.
	Science tells the story: wildfire seasons are changing because of recent, rapid changes in climate.
How	The National Park Service works with neighbors and other partners to balance the risks and benefits of wildland fire in an ever-changing environment.

Goal

The goal is to empower employees and stakeholders to engage in active dialogue with key audiences to foster an understanding of and support for the spectrum of National Park Service wildland fire management activities for mutual benefit.

Strategy

Strategies define the general path to reach the identified objectives without providing specific directions. Strategies should tie directly back to objectives. Tactics identify the specifics of exactly how strategies will be implemented. - RM-18, Chapter 21, Page 7.

The strategies of the plan are to:

- Leverage existing expertise to lend credibility to NPS wildland fire management.

- Capitalize on opportunities afforded by leveraging advances in evolving technology in addition to traditional methods.

- Lend credibility to messaging by telling authentic stories.

- Engage audiences using active dialogue.

- Embrace adaptability and resilience to meet the challenges ahead.

- Enlist influential community involvement to consistently communicate.

- Use skillsets to create products that increase and multiply efforts.

Tactics

Tactics are the specific activities you will complete as you implement your plan. Each tactic should directly relate to your strategies and support your objectives. This section should be detailed and can be divided with different tactics for each audience. Be as creative as possible with tactics and consider your audiences and how they may be influenced. - RM-18. Chapter 21, Page 7.

This section includes broad recommendations for ways to meet objectives using a mix of traditional and evolving outreach methods. Supplemental tactics may be incorporated based on changing opportunities, successes, and lessons learned.

Key Tactics

- Integrate national key messages and adapt them regionally and locally.

- Utilize an array of communication tools and tactics before, during, and after projects, incidents, periods of increased fire danger, and wildland fire related education opportunities throughout the year.

- Use a variety of methods, such as news releases, fire stories, interpretive programs,

Key Tactics

- **Integrate national key messages and adapt them regionally and locally.**

- **Utilize an array of communication tools and tactics before, during, and after projects, incidents, periods of increased fire danger, and wildland fire related education opportunities throughout the year.**

- **Use a variety of methods, such as news releases, fire stories, interpretive programs, newsletters, NPS content management system, social media, etc., to showcase the broad spectrum of NPS wildland fire management activities and to highlight successes for key audiences.**

- **Engage interdisciplinary stakeholders in discussions and work together to develop localized outreach strategies to reach internal and external audiences with wildland fire messages.**

- **Maintain consistent communication with internal audiences, including collateral duty militia, to share relevant information regarding policy, training opportunities, annual qualification requirements, etc. through email, meetings, and use of internal newsletters (e.g. NER's Monday Mashup, IMR InterCOMM, the MRE (Mega-Region Exclusive, disseminated by the Fire Communication and Education Specialist in the Northeast Region), Naturally Speaking, relevant social media groups).**

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- Engage interdisciplinary stakeholders in discussions and work together to develop localized outreach strategies to reach internal and external audiences with wildland fire messages.

- Maintain consistent communication with internal audiences, including collateral duty militia, to share relevant information regarding policy, training opportunities, annual qualification requirements, etc. through email, meetings, and use of internal newsletters (e.g. Northeast Region's Monday Mashup, Intermountain Region's InterCOMM, the MRE (Mega-Region Exclusive, disseminated by the Fire Communication and Education Specialist in the Northeast Region), Naturally Speaking, and relevant social media groups).

Additional Recommended Tactics

- Facilitate opportunities to engage targeted audiences in opportunities for two-way conversations via community meetings, one-on-one contacts, interpretive programs, etc.

- Include a fire information and/or prevention plan (if needed under RM-18) as an appendix to the park's fire management plan that adapts national efforts for local audiences.

- Work with interdisciplinary partners to disseminate unified messaging and take advantage of opportunities to engage in strategic outreach with target audiences.

- Coordinate with key staff and stakeholders to develop tiered NPS wildland fire communication implementation and action plans at the regional and park levels.

- Incorporate the best available science in NPS wildland fire outreach products and activities in a straightforward, understandable way.

- Keep regional and national Offices of Communication informed and updated on any potential issues that might rise to a higher level.

Tiered Implementation

The national office of Wildland Fire Management encourages regions and parks to be creative and execute outreach tactics relevant to reach internal and external audiences for each area. It is critical that regional and park level programs tier their program efforts to mirror the national messages and the methods to meet their specific needs.

Guidance for regional and park level implementation can be found at:

- Reference Manual 18, Communication and Education - Chapter 21 – http://go.nps.gov/rm18

- Templates for regional and park level program reviews can be found at: http://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol_ref_NPS_prgrmRvw.html

- Additional resources and information may be found on the NPS Fire Communication and Education Google Site: http://go.nps.gov/fire-commed

One of the additional recommended tactics includes facilitating opportunities to engage targeted audiences in opportunities for two-way conversations via community meetings, one-on-one contacts, interpretive programs, and more.

Facilitate opportunities to engage targeted audiences in opportunities for two-way conversations via community meetings, one-on-one contacts, interpretive programs, etc.

Evaluation

Establish a plan for measuring the success of the communication effort. Refer back to the objectives to determine what evaluation tactics will be necessary. The evaluation stage can range from basic to complex, depending on the scope of the project. The findings of the evaluation can improve the selection and implementation of future program strategies and tactics. - RM-18, Chapter 21, Page 7.

Key objectives of this plan are listed below followed by sample evaluation points. It is important to note that these are written as examples of evaluations and are not site- or area-specific. Evaluation will vary, depending on the program and area covered. Each evaluation may not be easily quantifiable. The mechanism for measuring success at the national, regional, and local levels depends on the metrics that they are compared against. Examples of metrics include: a reduction in the number of letters that a superintendent receives over a year or a 10 percent increase in shares on social media for wildland fire related stories.

As this is a five-year plan, in addition to evaluating these points at the local level, there should be evaluation at the regional and/or national level. It is important to note that these evaluations may be difficult to quantify and may be subjective. Time should be taken to determine which ones can be measured quantitatively based on staffing, ability, and time. Evaluations determined to be subjective should be noted by the unit using this communication plan for discussion on a specific recurring basis such as annually or bi-annually. Please assist in evaluation by providing feedback about the plan to NPS Fire Communication and Education staff at any level.

Evaluations should be ongoing throughout the life of the document, by staff at all levels. Parks and programs should feel empowered to utilize these points where they see fit in their own plans.

- Prior to, during, and after an incident or project, targeted audiences will be able recall a local, regional, or national key message about the incident or project.
  - ◇ Quantifiable and more difficult to measure, qualitatively. The recall of key messages can be demonstrated through direct letters and messages, public media, interactions in-person or online, two-way dialogue, or through repeated

engagement in the NPS wildland fire management program.

- Increase support for and understanding of fire management activities through ongoing dialogue with targeted audiences throughout the year.
  - ◇ Program areas should see an increase in community support for programs through attendance at public meetings, responses to public scoping, letters or messages from audiences, and documented personal interactions.

- Empower effective park communications by encouraging parks to include a communication and education plan in updated park-level fire management plans.
  - ◇ As a unit updates its fire management plan, a fire information plan is included.

- Maximize outreach effectiveness by engaging employees and partners in the shared responsibility of fire communications over the course of the year.
  - ◇ Verbal and written messages to fire communication staff by employees and partners demonstrate the effectiveness of engagement. Absence of interaction or negative messages demonstrates the lack of effectiveness and communication methods must be re-evaluated.

- Create advocates for NPS wildland fire management by sharing authentic, relevant, and diverse stories on an ongoing basis.
  - ◇ Quantifiable and more difficult to measure qualitatively, advocacy can be demonstrated through letters and messages, interactions in-person or online, two-way dialogue, or through repeated engagement in NPS wildland fire management activities.

- Coordinate strategic communications with interdisciplinary NPS wildland fire management ambassadors at the national, regional, and park levels, over the next five years.
  - ◇ Easily quantifiable, direct and indirect communication can be measured by number of interactions, increases in communication products, demonstrated NPS wildland fire management advocacy, and overall support for the program.

- Inform audiences so all will be able to articulate a local, regional, or national key message about how science is used to inform NPS wildland fire management.
  - ◇ Demonstrated through two-way dialogue interactions, oral and written

communication products such as websites, news articles, social media, etc., and further engagement of the science community with targeted audience such as interpretive programs, symposiums, presentations, and scientific demonstrations.

- Recognize through regular conversation and information sharing, that employees across all disciplines contribute value to NPS wildland fire management.
  - ◇ Quantifiable and qualitative measurements are needed. Employee engagement can be demonstrated through letters and messages, interactions via two-way dialogue, or through repeated engagement in NPS wildland fire management activities. Increase the communication with these groups on training, learning, and participation opportunities.

Through regular conversation and sharing information, recognize that our employees across various disciplines contribute value to NPS wildland fire management. NPS/T. FARRELL

APPENDIX A: Key Messages and Supporting Points

These messages are designed to answer the questions what, why, and how. Categorizing messages in this way will help users recall the messages during appropriate situations.

Question	Key Message	Supporting Points Use local or regional examples
What	1. The National Park Service Wildland Fire Management Program commits to safety, science and stewardship each and every day.	• ***Safety*** is our core value. 　1. Safety of firefighters and the public is the number one priority of all NPS wildland fire management activities. 　2. The NPS approach is designed to increase safety for firefighters through less exposure on the fireline, increase effective use of available resources, and help reduce the hazardous accumulation of overgrown vegetation. 　3. We all have a hand in a safe fire season. • The NPS works with interagency partners and neighboring communities to preserve natural and cultural resources, restore the land to more natural conditions, and maintain already healthy ecosystems. 　1. The fire management program balances the risks and benefits of wildland fire in the national parks. Communicating the need for fire prevention, suppression and for ***using fire as a tool to protect people, communities and values at risk*** is a requirement for effective wildland fire and land management. 　2. Changing environmental conditions and increasing numbers of large fires require more flexibility and use of a wider variety of responses, enabling the service to increase public and firefighter safety and effectiveness. • ***Fire is a management tool*** used to accomplish specific objectives in a plan such as removal of excess vegetation or stimulating plant growth and regeneration. 　1. It is necessary to have the right response at the right time for the right reasons. 　2. ***Naturally occurring fires***, such as those caused by lightning, are either suppressed or are closely monitored in a specific area, based on the fire management plan for the area. 　3. Sometimes it may be necessary and/or beneficial for land managers to ignite fires in a closely monitored and confined area to reduce hazardous fuel loads near developed areas, manage landscapes, and achieve ecological benefits. These fires are referred to as "prescribed fires." 　4. A fire program also may include non-fire treatments in situations where prescribed fire is not feasible or to prepare the land before natural or prescribed fire can be applied safely and effectively.

Question	Key Message	Supporting Points Use local or regional examples
Why	2. Many healthy ecosystems depend on wildland fire as a natural process.	• Fire has helped shape wildlands for thousands of years and is important for the survival of many plants and animals. 　1. Fire reduces accumulation of vegetation that can inhibit new plant growth. 　2. Some plants and animals are fire adapted. Periodic fire stimulates growth, reproduction of plants, and provides wildlife habitat. 　3. Excess vegetation and lack of fire in some areas is threatening plant and animal life. • Fire behaves differently throughout the country. 　1. Every wildfire season is different due to annual and/or seasonal variations. There is not a single one-size-fits-all answer. 　2. In addition to fuels (vegetation), fire behavior is affected by weather and terrain. 　3. Virtually all vegetation types in the United States can experience wildland fire. Wildfire happens, be ready.
Why, cont.	3. Science tells the story: wildfire seasons are changing because of recent, rapid changes in climate.	• Social and cultural approaches to wildland fire over the past century have focused on preventing and suppressing the majority of wildfires. This has led to a dangerous build-up of vegetation in our wildlands. • The NPS Wildland Fire Management Program is grounded in science. We continue to learn and now have a more comprehensive understanding of the essential role fire plays in our environment. • When paired with the right terrain and weather conditions, dense build-up of vegetation leads to fires that burn hotter, last longer, and spread faster. As a result, these fires become difficult to manage and can threaten areas of residential development and other values vulnerable to wildfire. • On the issue of climate change: unique events are happening in national parks. For example (in your unit or area).
How	4. The National Park Service works with neighbors and other partners to balance the risks and benefits of wildland fire in an ever-changing environment.	• The NPS is working with other agencies, tribes, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), local fire departments, and communities to understand and accept what it means to live in a fire-prone area and to realize the benefits of managing fire in the wildlands while protecting lives and resources. 　1. The NPS and other agencies and tribes are managing public and tribal lands through overarching fire management plans and programs. 　2. The NPS and other agencies and tribes also are working with local governments and property owners to make their land and property more defensible against wildfire.

Question	Key Message	Supporting Points Use local or regional examples

How, cont.		• People who live, work, and play in fire-prone lands assume a certain level of risk and responsibility due to the condition of the surrounding environment.
		
		  1. People can live with fire, if aware and actions are taken to be prepared for local fire conditions.
		
		    a. Before a fire starts, contact your local park or other local, state, or federal agencies, or tribal fire management organization to determine your community's fire conditions and learn tips to reduce the community's fire vulnerability.
		
		    b. The more populated and closer a community is to fire-prone areas, the greater the need for proactive fire management.
		
		  2. Smoke from prescribed fire is a sign that steps are being taken to reduce risks and realize benefits of fire. The more the NPS and other land management agencies can plan and manage fire, the more we can reduce smoke impacts.
		
		• Fire burns where conditions are right. Fire does not acknowledge jurisdictional boundaries of federal, state, and local agencies; tribes; or private landowners.

APPENDIX B: References and Additional Information

Readers of this communication plan may not be exclusively National Park Service staff or they may be new to the bureau. Below is a curated list of bureau-centric terms and definitions that are used throughout this document. Links provided are accurate at the time of publication but have the potential to change.

InsideNPS

An internal NPS portal for news and information across the bureau. It serves as a daily newspaper that is directed to all employees of the NPS. It also houses documents, information, links, policy, and reference manuals for the bureau. It is the intranet clearinghouse for many national and regional documents. Quite often, this is a default homepage of employees on their computers or a direct link from their unit's intranet page. It can only be accessed via the Department of the Interior (DOI) network. The homepage is managed by the NPS Office of Communications.
http://inside.nps.gov/

NPS Fire & Aviation Management InsideNPS Site

This is a portal for internal information and content for the Division of Fire and Aviation. Posted there are Director's Orders, Reference Manuals, memos, and other material.
http://go.nps.gov/inside-fire

NPS Fire & Aviation Management Communication and Education InsideNPS Site

These pages house example documents, contact list for NPS Fire Communication and Education Specialists, fire season messages, talking points, links to specific manual chapters, and tools that can be used at the regional, zone, or unit level.
http://go.nps.gov/inside-fce

NPS Fire Communication and Education Program Google Site

This site is meant for collaboration and sharing for those who are interested in keeping up-to-date with the program as well as contributing to the field of fire communication, education, and interpretation within the National Park Service.
http://go.nps.gov/fire-commed

Wildland Fire Strategic Plan

The latest plan, adopted in early 2015, is used as primary reference for this communication plan. The goals, objectives, and strategies identified in the Wildland Fire Strategic Plan define specific priority areas to focus efforts to achieve the mission. The purpose of the NPS Wildland Fire Strategic Plan is to position the NPS Wildland Fire Management Program for the future by identifying trends, reaffirming our values and establishing our priorities to meet the mission. This ultimately determines what values and priorities are communicated and interpreted by on the ground staff.
http://go.nps.gov/wfplans

Cohesive Strategy

The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy is a strategic effort to work collaboratively among all stakeholders and across all landscapes, using best available science, to make meaningful progress towards the three goals:
1. Resilient Landscapes
2. Fire Adapted Communities
3. Safe and Effective Wildfire Response
https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy

NPS Graphic Identity Program

This system-wide style guide provides exact standards for how produced products should look and feel. This program gives requirements on the use of the NPS Arrowhead, typefaces, and other elements to maintain consistency throughout the Service.
https://www.nps.gov/hfc/services/identity/

NPS Style Guide

Common to many businesses and corporations, a style guide sets the standards for how information such as text, graphics, and other media is displayed when preparing things such as brochures, information sheets, waysides, and exhibits. The Harpers Ferry Center in West Virginia maintains the guide. This is to be used as additional reference information when developing products. Additional non-fire specific and agency terms are also found in this guide.
https://www.nps.gov/hfc/products/pubs/pubs-04d.cfm

NPS Fire and Aviation Management Style Guide

Similar in nature to the NPS Style Guide. The purpose of this guide is to focus on NPS Fire and Aviation Management-specific standards and terms that are not included or inclusive of the NPS Style Guide.
http://go.nps.gov/inside-fire

NPS Content Management System (CMS)

Known as the NPS CMS, this is the online system that controls and maintains the functions and content display of the public-facing website www.nps.gov. All park, subject and organization pages are tied to this system. It is essentially an online website editing mechanism. It can be accessed inside the DOI network as well as externally.
Internal access: https://cms.nps.gov/login.cfm
External access: https://www.nps.gov/externalcms/

Call to Action

A national program focused on strategic actions and measurable goals revolving around the 2016 NPS Centennial. There are fourteen specific actions that are used by units and programs to match the work that they are doing with the overall vision developed by the bureau. The official name of the program is called A Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement. It is also sometimes seen referred to as C2A.
https://www.nps.gov/calltoaction/

APPENDIX C: Contributors to this Wildland Fire Communication Plan

The teams below, comprised of NPS employees with myriad experiences and geographic diversity, demonstrate the complexities of developing a wildland fire communication strategy that's national in scope. These teams gathered, studied, and discussed the variability and uniqueness of wildland fire environments across the lands managed by the National Park Service. Those discussions influenced development of the strategy, tactics, and even messages. The staff below have nearly 150 years of combined wildland fire and communication experience and expertise.

Writing, Editing, and Development Team

• **Mike Theune**, project lead, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

• **Tina Boehle**, NPS Division of Fire and Aviation Management

• **David Eaker**, Zion National Park, serving units in Utah and Colorado

• **Michelle Fidler**, Saguaro National Park, serving units in Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas

• **Morgan Warthin**, Alaska Regional Office

• **Mike Wilson**, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, also serving Channel Islands National Park and Cabrillo National Monument

Review Team

• **Katie Corrigan**, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, serving units in the Appalachian/ Piedmont Fire Management Zone

• **Mike Johnson**, Midwest Regional Office

• **Josh Manley**, Northeast Regional Office, serving units in the Northeast, National Capital, and Southeast Regions

• **Kat Kirby,** NPS Division of Fire and Aviation Management

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