

Fire Organizations and Administration: Report of Futuring Group 3¹

Futuring Group 3 identified 12 trends that determine the way fire administrators must plan and budget for efficient wildland/urban fire protection organizations in the future. Five key visions and associated strategies were also identified.

IDENTIFIED TRENDS

1. Operating with reduced budgets, requiring better cost accountability.
2. More public and political involvement in the management process.
3. More interagency cooperation and consolidation.
4. Inability to organize and manage the large amount of available data.
5. Less political support for programs.
6. Difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified and talented people.
7. An increase in the diversity of the work force (Affirmative Action).
8. Technological advances in equipment that requires high quality training for our personnel.
9. A changing society, from production-oriented to service-oriented.
10. Continued urbanization of the wildlands.
11. Changes in agency missions (expansion).

12. Influx of more trained and educated professional management specialists into wildland fire management.

KEY VISIONS AND ASSOCIATED STRATEGIES

Job Selection Training and Promotion

Job selection, training, promotion, and career opportunities have moved beyond affirmative action strategy to the point where all such actions are based solely on qualifications and abilities.

Strategies

- Continue and increase emphasis on affirmative action by all agencies and accountability to insure that desired results are achieved.
- Conduct outreach recruitment in the areas where the targeted populations live.
- Start training in the lower levels of education.

Values at Risk

Continued urbanization of wildlands would greatly increase the values at risk in wildland fire management. The mission of all wildland fire agencies would include structural protection, emergency medical service, and natural resource management.

Strategy

- Adjust agency operating policies to present demands of emergency and resource management.

Operating Budgets

While operating budgets would not increase substantially, they would at least be adjusted

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for inflation. Consolidations, cooperation, and co-locations would significantly reduce duplicate efforts, thus allowing modest program expansion. Cost accountability would encourage the use of good program budgeting and implementation of productivity measurement standards.

Strategies

- Consolidate, co-locate, and increase cooperation where appropriate and where needed.
- Establish measurable standards of productivity.
- Develop good cost accounting systems and procedures.

Fire Service Coordination

"One voice" would represent all fire services (NWCG, N.F.A., etc. unified) and recognize the national fire problems. Together they would have the support of the state

legislators and the U.S. Congress to reduce national fire losses.

Strategies

- Establish and maintain strong liaison between national wildland fire groups and municipal and volunteer organizations.
- See to it that the unified group actively lobbies for improved service to the public.

Technical Advances and Productivity

Technological advances in equipment and apparatus and highly trained personnel would allow us to be very effective with fewer personnel.

Strategy

- Keep abreast of current technology by sharing among agencies.