

Tactics and Equipment: Report of Futuring Group 5¹

Futuring Group 5 identified nine trends and their implications to the wildland/urban interface fire problem, with specific emphasis on fire suppression equipment and tactics.

KEY TRENDS

1. Increased area and exposure of "urban/wildland interface."
2. Greatly increased number of expected fires.
3. Increased requirements for suppression requirements with fewer personnel and less equipment ("doing more with less").
4. Greater accountability for actions and decisions.
5. Improved predictive skills (fire behavior, suppression and tactical effectiveness).
6. Increased capabilities through technological advances.
7. More sophisticated equipment.
8. Increased sharing of both firefighting and nonfirefighting resources and information.
9. Tactics increasingly influenced by regulation.

VISIONS AND STRATEGIES

Considering these trends and their implications to fire management agencies responsible for the protection of wildland/urban

interface communities and developments, several vision statements were developed which encapsulate current shortcomings and needs to effectively cope with forthcoming wildland/urban interface problems.

Minimizing Fire Risks

Wildland/urban interface communities, structures, and landscapes would be carefully constructed to minimize fire risks. Homeowners, local governments, and private sector interests would acknowledge and accept their responsibilities for maintaining safe environments. Fire services will be trained, equipped, and funded to adequately protect lives, property, and resources to sustain the living and recreational environments that have drawn people into urban/wildland interface areas.

Strategies

- Determine minimum national standards for cross-training.
- Devise local codes, legislation for development.
- Establish incentives structures involving different insurance rates, taxes, etc.
- Inform public of problems by using mass media.
- Provide multiple use equipment, for structural and wildland fires.

Sharing Resources

Efficiencies would be gained through fully shared resources:

- All suppression resources (both urban and wildland) would be available and will be allocated/deployed through a coordinated

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system (coop agencies, etc. in place) to any national or international incident.

- Equipment, personnel, information, and systems are shared extensively with non-fire functions to allow multi-functional cost sharing and enhanced over-all benefits to the public (cross functional use of fire weather, etc.)

Strategies

- Consolidate jurisdictions.
- Fully implement an incident command system (ICS).
- Establish additional new interagency dispatch centers.
- Develop long-range weather forecasts for resource allocation.
- Continue to establish interagency communications systems.

Improving Suppression Capabilities

Fire suppression capabilities will be improved through the adoption/implementation of

state-of-the-art technology. Technologies in computer electronics will reduce suppression/dispatch times by aiding the firefighters with onboard computer access to behavior projections, locational information, etc. Advent of more efficient chemicals and foams compatible with all urban/wildland fire suppression equipment will reduce resource losses.

Strategies

- Develop an improved system for technology transfer (both national and international).
- Support continued development of new technology for fire suppression.
- Implement training for use of new technology.
- Expand existing technology.
- Develop guidelines for effective use of technology.