Our Pathway Forward

Managing our Nation’s resources is the primary mission of the Forest Service. Supporting wildland firefighting is one of our fundamental duties. Providing the appropriate workforce to meet this responsibility is done through sound workforce and succession planning.

Due to an increase in retirements and fewer Forest Service personnel volunteering for fire-related assignments, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), through an OIG audit, evaluated whether the Forest Service had adequately planned for the timely replacement of its critical fire management personnel.

Facing this complex challenge, Fire and Aviation Management’s Firefighter Workforce & Succession Planning Team was created. After faithfully responding to each of the OIG’s recommendations, the team recently received notification that all responses to the audit were accepted (see link to the FW&SP website noted below for all documents related to this audit). The next step is implementation of decisions made as a result of the audit.

The Forest Service is in the midst of updating the five-year rolling workforce plan that will address ten mission critical occupations in fire, for a complete listing, go to:

The process within workforce planning that will address the gaps in the fire program contains six steps:

1. Taking an overview of the agency’s demographics -- the National Leadership Council will implement a national approach to recruitment and hiring in an effort to improve diversity within the agency, as the workforce plan is implemented.
2. Identifying the gaps – current data and workforce planning templates are being utilized to pinpoint the gaps and prompt leaders to consider alternative methods of getting work done (the analysis used originated from historical and current data sources from human resources and the fire organization).
3. Developing talent pools – from within and outside the agency, utilizing Fire Aviation Management Career Advancement Tool (FAMCAT), HRM Center of Learning, National Advanced Fire and Resource Institute (NAFRI) and Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program (WLFAP).
4. Developing fire workforce succession strategies – workforce recruitment templates are completed for fire positions and needs (numbers for recruitment will feed into the regions, stations, areas and DC, for the national workforce plan in 2013).
5. Focusing on retention, learning and recruitment strategies – aimed at improving the diversity of the applicant pool and ultimately the workforce.
6. Documenting, monitoring and evaluating – in an attempt to revise efforts to improve the results (progress and results of annual and long-term planning will be captured in AgLearn and the Incident Qualification and Certification System).

Links to sites mentioned in this document can be found on the Firefighter Workforce and Succession Planning website at:
http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/people/workforce_succession_planning/index.html

We will be ready...