

# 29<sup>th</sup>



## North American Forest Commission



Alberta, 18–22 September 2017

### Fire Management Working Group

The Fire Management Working Group was established in 1961, at the first NAFC session. Annual meetings have since rotated among the member countries. A consistent and active membership resulted in an impressive list of accomplishments. The 1992 annual meeting ratified the original Working Group charter, reaffirmed in 2005 and most recently revised in November 2016.

#### Objectives

1. Exchange experiences and technological advances regarding prevention, wildland fire management and fire use.

2. Provide mutual aid and technical exchanges, between Canada, Mexico and the United States, in the development of strategies and appropriate actions to resolve technical problems in the North American region.

3. Actively support and participate in international fire management programs with fire management agencies throughout the world by developing and promoting activities that support international cooperation and development.

> Training on fire danger mapping software implementation between Canada and Mexico (2017)

- North American wildland fire emissions modeling

#### 2. Providing Mutual Aid

- Suppressing fires in the wildland-urban interface
- Interagency resource sharing
  - > Mexican and US resources involved in Canada: 2016 Ft. McMurray fire and 2017 wildland fires in British Columbia
- Implementing the incident command system
- Improve deployment protocols of international assistance between North American countries

#### 3. Supporting International Fire Management

- International development in fire management:
  - > 6th International Wildland Fire Conference, South Korea (2015)
  - > Indonesia, Malaysia, Chile and Southern Caucasus fire-danger rating system training
  - > FMWG- International Liaison Committee (ILC) Meeting: planning 7th International Wildland Fire Conference
  - > Mexico/USA support to Latin American countries in fire management activities

#### Current Activities/Impacts

##### 1. Exchanging Science & Technology

- Interagency training:
  - > Ongoing information exchanges on fire science, management and fire danger rating
  - > New Zealand and Australia Study tour (2016)
  - > Mexico/ USA First Women Fire Management Workshop (2017)
  - > Mexico/USA fire management exchanges

- Developing Mexico's fire management system

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- > Collaboration with others Regional Forestry Commissions and FAO (2016)
- > Mexico/Chile Incident Command System Training (2017)
- > Fire Management Training to “Mesoamerican Environmental Sustainability Strategy” members (2016)
- Development of a global early-warning system for wildland fire
- International resource sharing
  - > Recent fire seasons in Canada necessitated engagement with NAFC partners as well as with New Zealand and Australian fire management agencies
  - > Mexican wildland firefighters deployment to Chile (2017)



### Impacts

The management of wildland fire events is important for public safety and ecosystem management in North America and globally. Wildland fire is also a global phenomenon of increasing concern given a clear pattern of greater intensity and frequency over recent decades; projections for further increases and an increasingly challenging fire management

environment are common to projections of the future in regions around the world.

Wildland fire suppression alone in North America incurs an average direct cost of over 3 \$ billion annually (e.g., average from recent years: Canada 0.75B\$, US(federal costs only) ~2 B\$), although the actual amount can greatly exceed the average during extreme fire years. In addition, the overall costs of wildfire go beyond direct suppression costs and include substantial costs associated with human health and safety, property and infrastructure damage, and resource losses.

Modern wildland fire management agencies focus on more than just response to wildfire events; considerable effort goes into strategic planning and preparedness, which allows more effective and efficient response when major wildfire conflagrations develop.

Given expectations of the increasingly challenging wildfire activity across much of North America (and globally) and an increasingly inverse relationship between suppression costs (steeply rising) and needed capacity (declining in absolute terms), Canada, Mexico and the United States have benefited from active collaborations that share scientific knowledge, training, and suppression resources.

The FMWG has focused on developing this engagement through proactive development of MOU's to facilitate effective multi-national engagement. All three countries have exchanged resources during significant wildfire events in recent years.

As a result, public safety and security has been strengthened and forest and infrastructure losses mitigated through such collaborations.

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### Publications & Links

For more information on activities, publications and links to other activities related to the Fire Management Working Group please visit the NAFC-FMWG website:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/global/nafc/fire/aboutus.htm>

Information about the Global Wildland Fire Network:

<http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/GlobalNetworks/NorthAmerica/NorthAmerica.htm>

### Membership

**The Fire Management Working Group consists of members of fire management organizations of Canada, Mexico, and the United States of America. Each country's delegation consists of a delegation head, members, and observers.**

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