STATUS OF THE ACTION PLAN FROM THE 2008 NWCG FUELS MANAGEMENT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Report to the NWCG Fuels Management Committee

By

The Fuels Workforce Development Task Team

Task Team Deliverable #1 of 3

March 21, 2014

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Executive Summary:

Early in 2003, the National Interagency Fuels Coordinating Group (NIFCG), a working group within the larger National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), identified the need for a dedicated rapid-paced fuels and prescribed fire specialist development program in order to keep up with the increased demand for the national interagency fuels program. The development effort was tied to the Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards & Guide (IFPM) which described the competencies for Prescribed Fire/Fuels Specialist positions. The result of this effort was the Prescribed Fire/Fuels Specialist Development Project Report completed in 2005, known as the "Range Report" after the committee Chairman. This report is described as a recipe for how to develop a Fuels Specialist from Entry Level through Journeyman and Expert over the course of a career.

The NIFCG followed up the Range Report in 2007 by securing a contractor to conduct an assessment of the interagency fuels management workforce, make recommendations on aligning the fuels management training academies, and develop a career path framework for the fuels management workforce. The resulting document called the "NWCG Fuels Management Workforce Development Plan" was completed in 2008 and is known as "The Bonner Report" after the lead author/investigator Peter Bonner. This report is described as a blueprint for creating an employee development system that can produce the quantity and quality of Prescribed Fire/Fuels Specialists needed to meet interagency demands. Beginning in 2009, the NWCG member agencies began to act upon many of the recommendations generated in this report.

In 2012, the NWCG Fuels Management Committee established an interagency Task Team to evaluate fuels workforce development efforts and report on progress since 2008. Specifically, the FMC was interested in progress on the action plan from the original Bonner report (2008) and requested recommendations to update the action plan to ensure continued improvement in fuels workforce development. This report represents fulfilment of that particular task.

The Task Team found that many of the recommendations had been explored and progress had been made in almost every category. However, very few recommendations acted upon can be considered finished or concluded. The majorities of the recommended actions are still in progress and continue to inform discussions aimed at defining future action. Speculation as to factors for the limited progress include a) lack of consistent staff or leadership with the capacity to sustain progress over time, b) different course of action was taken after further study of proposed action, and c) inability to garner resources for workforce development initiatives due to competing interests. The Task Team recognizes that many underlying assumptions made in the Bonner report are no longer valid which limits the continued usefulness of the action plan as a management guide. The Task Team recommends that the 2008 action plan be withdrawn and a fresh set of actions developed to guide future workforce development actions.

Background:

Following the South Canyon Fire in 1994, an interagency team was formed to investigate the fatalities and contributing factors. The subsequent 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Policy and Program Review, signed by both Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior, directed Federal wildland fire agencies to establish fire management qualifications standards to improve firefighter safety and increase professionalism in fire management programs. This included establishment of standards for Prescribed Fire/Fuels Specialists.

The National Fire Plan came into existence in 2000 with the direct result of expanding fuels programs throughout the federal land management agencies which required a more robust workforce to accomplish. Early in 2003, the National Interagency Fuels Coordinating Group (NIFCG), a working group within the larger National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) structure, identified the need for a dedicated rapid-paced fuels manager development program in order to keep up with the increased demand for the national interagency fuels program. The development effort needed to be tied to the Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards & Guide (IFPM) which described the competencies for the Prescribed Fire/Fuels Specialist and 13 other fire positions. The result of this effort was the Prescribed Fire/Fuels Specialist Development Project Report completed in 2005, known by the more familiar name of the "Range Report" after the group's chairman, Phil Range.
This report is essentially the recipe for how to make a Fuels Specialist by developing them from Entry Level through Journeyman and Expert over the course of a career.

The NIFCG followed up the Range Report by securing a contractor to conduct an assessment of the interagency fuels management workforce, make recommendations on aligning the fuels management training academies, and develop a career path framework for the fuels management workforce. The resulting document called the "Fuels Management Workforce Development Plan" was completed in 2008 and is known as "The Bonner Report" after the lead author/investigator Peter Bonner. This report was the recipe for building a system for producing the quality and quantity of Prescribed Fire/Fuels Specialists needed to meet interagency demands.

In 2012, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's - Fuels Management Committee (a.k.a. FMC), which replaced the NIFCG as the national coordinating body for fuels related issues among federal land management agencies, began a cursory look at where the initiatives started by the Range and Bonner Reports had progressed. It was apparent that there were some actions/recommendations that had already been implemented, some that either failed or were not implemented at all, and some that had been started but had not come to completion. It was also apparent that in the 5 to 7 years since these reports were commissioned that some of the underlying assumptions, conditions, and organizations had undergone change and it was time to re-examine these reports and the issue of workforce development for the prescribed fire/fuels specialist in light of these changes in order to come up with current recommendations for action that are relevant for today's workforce.

In January of 2013, the FMC formed the Fuels Workforce Development Task Team, an interagency group tasked with review of previous workforce development initiatives, exploration of new information and programs not previously considered, with the ultimate goal of providing recommendations for action by the NWCG partner agencies that support fuels workforce development. The written NWCG-FMC Tasking is found in Appendix A – a summary excerpt and the four specific tasks defined for the Task Team to complete follow:

> *"The overarching goal of this continuing initiative by the FMC is to make it easier for any employee who has fuels management responsibilities to understand what competencies are needed to perform in their current or desired job and where to go in order to gain the requisite knowledge and skills. The end-state is seen as a workforce with a higher overall skill-set and a reduction in the time necessary to reach competency due to a better defined and more focused development program."*
>
> *Individual Tasks:*

1. *Review Action Plan from 2008 NWCG Report (Bonner) and Provide Status Report to FMC*
2. *Review 2005 NWCG Report (Range) and Update as Necessary*
3. *Review 2008 NWCG Report (Bonner) and provide recommendations for action by NWCG partner agencies to support fuels workforce development*
4. *Assist FMC with communicating findings and recommendations to internal and external audiences*

This report represents the completion of Task #1 in the above list.

Task Team Process

After the initial tasking document was approved by the FMC to create the Task Team, members were sought out and the team was formed in March 2013. The following individuals make up the core of the Fuels Workforce Development Task Team.

Frankie Romero, FS - NIFC (FMC Liaison & Team Chair)
Sandy Gregory, BLM - Nevada State Office (Fuels/Rx SME)
Marty Cassellius, BIA - Midwest Region (Fuels/Rx SME)
Tessa Nicolet, FS – Southwest Region (Fuels/Fire Ecology SME)
Mike Dueitt, FWS – PFTC (Fuels/Rx/NAFRI SME)
Jim Shultz, NPS – NIFC (Fuels/Rx/Training SME)
Russ Babiak, FWS – NIFC (Training/Qualifications SME)

Additional Support to the Core Team was Provided By:
Kim Ernstrom, NPS - WFRD&A (Support/NIFTT SME)
Alex Viktora, FS – NAFRI/LLC (Support/NAFRI SME

Task Team Schedule of Activities

- May – June, 2013: Advisory Group Weekly Webinar Series
- July – September, 2013: Monthly Calls
- October, 2013: Task Team Workshop, Boise, ID
- January, 2014: Present Initial Findings/Recommendations to FMC
- February, 2014: Develop Action Plan
- March, 2014: Present final recommendations and Action Plan to FMC

In addition to the core task team members, an advisory group was also identified. These were individuals or groups who the FMC believed had pertinent knowledge and insight to inform the Task Team on current progress in implementing the recommendation from the Bonner and Range Reports and current or future issues related to fuels workforce development. The Task Team reviewed this list and provided additional input and suggestions for seeking out persons or entities that could provide such insight to this process.

The Task Teams' work began in May 2013 with initiation of a webinar series where advisory group members presented information on a weekly basis on a variety of related topics. The advisory group consisted of both federal and non-governmental experts who presented information on a variety of topics from NWCG Training, to developments in fire behavior modeling, to social science and the role of academia in training fuels professionals, and other related topics. These webinar series were recorded

and posted on a Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Community page so that task team members who could not attend could catch up with the material at a later date.

July through September saw limited progress other than monthly conference calls to share information and to coordinate schedules for a planned workshop. The week-long workshop was held in October 2013 in Boise, Idaho where Core Team Members met to pursue their assigned tasks.

Workshop Findings - October 2013

One of the key products of the 2008 Bonner Report was the Fuels Management Workforce Action Plan, a table of recommended actions or interventions that the contractor proposed the agencies pursue. In reviewing the Fuels Management Workforce Action Plan (Bonner report 2008), it was evident that several of the proposed "Actions/Interventions" from the report remain relevant and pertinent to today's workforce. However, of the 23 numbered items listed in the 2008 Action Plan, several have been partially addressed while many remain largely unaddressed. Appendix B of this report contains a copy of that table that has been updated by the Task Team to reflect the current status of each action item. The status in the right hand column is color-coded to categorize progress.

- Green = Action Item is considered to be complete or significant progress made having very nearly reached completion;
- Purple = Action Item has seen progress and continued activities may or may not be ongoing but the status is either not fully understood or is known to be good progress but still short of the intended goal;
- Red = Action Item has not seen substantive progress made and does not appear to be likely. In some cases activities may still be ongoing in pursuit of the action or in some cases no action or an entirely different course of action has been pursued. Regardless of the presence or absence of activity, these Action Items can be considered to be largely unaccomplished as described in the original report.

Generally speaking, many of the action items have seen progress but many developments were dependent on other actions defined in the Bonner Report that have not come to fruition. A key factor to the lack of steady progress towards proposed changes in the action plan appears to be the lack of consistent leadership that is assigned the sole task of following through with the recommendations of the original Action Plan. The responsible entities identified for taking action in many cases are coordinating groups or collectives such as fire directors, or "the academies". On the surface this makes sense that these bodies would be the key for initiating action. A downfall however appears to have been a the lack of a dedicated staff or entity responsible for pursuing the full collection of proposed activities, charting their progress, and providing consistent leadership in the pursuit of the entire suite of actions. These coordinating groups that work largely in a collateral duty mode simply do not have the capacity to pay attention over the long-term and are easily distracted by the next crisis. They may be able to review, direct, and encourage action, but without a staff or entity identified to keep focus on the goals, the ability to sustain effort over time appears to have diminished after the first year or two.

In some cases, the proposed action was not acted upon as described but further analysis of the action resulted in a more detailed understanding of the issue and a course of action was selected that addressed the underlying problem but did not implement the action as described by Bonner. This appears to be an acceptable outcome in that a more informed decision was made after the proposed action prompted further analysis even though the action taken was not that originally planned.

The Task Team observed that those action items which did not exhibit progress often were those which required a reallocation of resources, which implies that in the end, the competing interests outweighed the desire to pursue these workforce development goals. The recommendation by the Task Team is that future studies aimed at improving workforce development should be predicated by a description of our willingness to invest. If the underlying goal is to improve the outcome without incurring any additional cost, this would narrow the range of options considered making both the investment in the study and the subsequent pursuit of the action items more streamlined and productive. If however we enter into the study with a commitment that resources will be made available if the return is acceptable, then direct the study to consider actions within some range of investment so that they can better direct their efforts towards realistic alternatives. In the future, unless there is a genuine desire to allocate additional resources towards the pursuit of workforce development goals, then it is probably a more productive use of available resources to narrow the study to just those actions that can be accomplished with the resources available.

Conclusions:

Progress has been made in a number of areas identified in the 2008 Action Plan, but this status report also identifies a number of items that have not reached their intended end state as well as many which either never initiated or initiated but made little if any real progress. As a whole, these action items are dated in that a number of underlying assumptions are no longer be valid and the organizational landscape and a number of previously unforeseen changes have come about since the 2008 report was submitted. Rather than continue to pursue the actions found in the 2008 Bonner report, the Task Team recommends that FMC no longer considered the Bonner Report Action Plan as a viable suite of inter-related actions. Instead it is recommended that a fresh set of proposed actions be developed using this status report as historical reference to inform choices for future activities aimed at improving workforce development efforts related to fuels management.

APPENDIX A – FMC Tasking

NWCG Fuels Management Committee –

Fuels Workforce Development Task Team Tasking

Originally Approved January 2013;
Additional Modifications Made and Approved October 2013

Background:

The overall objective of Workforce Development as it relates to Fuels Management is to recruit fuels management practitioners from a broad spectrum of educational and experiential backgrounds and provide them career-long training, mentoring, and work experience opportunities that support professional development. At present, many of our employees with fuels management responsibilities come from a technical background in fire suppression and are provided with marginal guidance and support for acquiring the writing, research and analysis skills necessary for advancement. On the other hand, we also have employees who come from academic backgrounds who do not have the field experience or qualifications to perform the technical aspects required to be successful in fuels management. The NWCG Fuels Management Committee (FMC) has previously taken action to develop tools and action plans to promote workforce development for fuels management practitioners. These products, while still useful, were created a number of years ago and are in need of review and update. FMC requests the help of this work group to assist in the review and update of these products.

Task Team Goal:

The overarching goal of this continuing initiative by the FMC is to make it easier for any employee who has fuels management responsibilities to understand what competencies are needed to perform in their current or desired job and where to go in order to gain the requisite knowledge and skills. The end-state is seen as a workforce with a higher overall skill-set and a reduction in the time necessary to reach competency due to a better defined and more focused development program.

Objectives:

1. Review the 2008 NWCG Fuels Management Workforce Development Plan and update Action Plan Status identifying accomplishments as well as pending and untouched action items
2. Review the Prescribed Fire and Fuels Specialist Development Project Report (2005) with a focus on:
    a. New technology/science (e.g. ArcFuels, IFTDSS, WFDSS, etc)
    b. Upcoming training architecture (Wildland Fire Institute)

c. Updated Agency Standard Position Descriptions
d. Logical and attainable career ladders with multiple entry points that allow for career development from the most basic entry level up through professional as well as transition in/out of fuels management and other related career paths in fire & aviation or related fields.
    i. Career ladders should allow technicians with solid firefighting experience opportunities to obtain the background in biological sciences to meet the education requirements for GS-401 General Biology professional positions
    ii. Career ladders should provide employees who meet the educational requirements but lack the requisite field experience and qualifications avenues to gain the requisite training, experience, and qualifications to perform as fuels professionals.
e. Current and expected changes in NWCG courses and course content (e.g. Rx 301/341, S-495, etc.)
f. Mentoring and on-the-job training opportunities across all agency and tribal work-units.
g. Equivalency for KSA's gained through academic pursuits so that agencies do not subject employees with college degrees to duplicate training.
h. Identification of gaps where KSA's are not adequately covered by existing training sources. Make recommendations for addressing identified gaps.
i. Simplify Career Development Guide if possible.
j. Reduce time to proficiency not by lowering performance standards, but by improving efficiencies in the delivery of training and increasing opportunities for accomplishing experiential learning and performance based skills assessments. Note: relationship to Evolving Incident Management (EIM) tasking from NWCG Board to OWDC.

3. Review the NWCG Fuels Management Workforce Development Plan (2008) to provide recommendations for action by the NWCG partner agencies to support fuels workforce development.
4. Assist FMC with communicating findings and recommendations from this effort to internal and external audiences
    a. Promote fuels career ladders both internally and externally (Universities with applicable degree programs)
    b. Utilize NWCG and agency external affairs to assist in development

Deliverables:

1. Written report to FMC on the status of the Action Plan from the 2008 NWCG Fuels Management Workforce Development Plan. Proposed Target Date: Spring 2014
2. Written report to FMC with recommendations for action by NWCG partner agencies to advance fuels workforce development having considered 2005 NWCG Report (Range), 2008 NWCG Report (Bonner) along with any other relevant information you may find. Proposed Target Date: Spring 2014
3. Power Point presentation and 1 page Briefing Paper to be use in communicating the findings and recommendations for management action to leadership. Final Deliverables Due: Fall/Winter 2014

Coordination with FMC:

1. Report progress to FMC on a quarterly basis or sooner if significant milestones are reached.

2. Inform the FMC when all deliverables have been provided by the Task Team which signals that the Team's mission has been accomplished.

Task Team Membership:

FMC Co-Lead:	Frankie Romero (Boise, ID)
FMC Co-Lead:	Mark Jackson (Boise, ID)
US Forest Service Fuels SME:	Tessa Nicolet (Payson, AZ)
Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels SME:	Marty Cassellius (Bloomington, MN)
Bureau of Land Management Fuels SME:	Sandy Gregory (Reno, NV)
National Park Service Fuels SME:	Jim Shultz (Boise, ID)
US Fish and Wildlife Service Fuels SME:	Mike Dueitt (Tallahassee, FL)
Training/Qualifications SME:	Russ Babiak (Boise, ID)

Advisory Members:

Training Branch/Wildland Fire Institute:	Mark Cantrell (Boise, ID)
WFRD&A/NIFTT:	Kim Ernstrom (Boise, ID)
Association for Fire Ecology Representative:	Andi Thode (Flagstaff, AZ)
The Nature Conservancy Representative:	Matt Jackson (Lansing, MI)
S-495 Cadre Member:	Laurie Kurth (Washington, DC)
USFS Training/Qualifications:	Evans Kuo (Boise, ID)
Fire Behavior Sub-Committee	Tami Parkinson (Boise, ID)
USFWS Training/Qualifications, IFPM	Kevin Conn (Boise, ID)
Technical Fire Management	Reid Kenady (Duvall, WA)

APPENDIX B – Status Update of 2008 Fuels Management Workforce Action Plan (From Bonner 2008; Status Updated as of October 2013)

Appendix B of this report contains a copy of the Action Plan from the 2008 NWCG Fuels Management Workforce Development Plan completed by ICF International (Peter Bonner, Lead Author) that has been updated as of October, 2013 by the NWCG Fuels Workforce Development Task Team to reflect the current status of each action item. The status in the right hand column is color-coded to categorize progress.

- Green = Action Item is considered to be complete or significant progress made having very nearly reached completion.
- Purple = Action Item has seen progress and continued activities may or may not be ongoing but the status is either not fully understood or is known to be good progress but still short of the intended goal.
- Red = Action Item has not seen substantive progress made and does not appear to be likely. In some cases activities may still be ongoing in pursuit of the action or in some cases no action or an entirely different course of action has been pursued. Regardless of the presence or absence of activity, these Action Items can be considered to be largely unaccomplished as described in the original report.

Fuels Management Workforce Action Plan (From Bonner 2008; Status Updated October 2013)

Action / Intervention	Responsibility	Dependencies	Expected Result	Start	Status
I. Establish Fuels Management/PFFS Career Path					
1. Revise Range Report Fuels Management Career Path Guide so that training revision efforts are prioritized and scheduled over time; distribute guide to PFFS employees	ICFI	• NWCG • TWT • Fire Directors	• Increased recruiting and retention in fuels management • Accelerating qualifications achievement	FY08	COMPLETE – Range Report was distributed widely in 2009. While complete, it was noted by the Task Team that this effort did not sustain over time and that at present, the Range Report is not widely recognized and has been of limited utility as a career development tool.
2. Revise training programs according to Range Report priorities; track emerging areas and integrate into training revision/development	NIFCG	• NWCG	• Fuels outcomes tied to training programs • More qualified PFFS employees	FY09	ONGOING PROGRESS – The transition from Rx-300 Prescribed Fire Burn Boss into two separate courses Rx-301 Prescribed Fire Implementation and Rx-341 Prescribed Fire Plan Preparation is complete. A number of other Gaps identified in the Range report have not yet been addressed and there is still not a consistent process or structure for tracking of emerging gaps or a well-defined process for adjusting training to address those gaps when identified.
3. Set management/leadership expectations on fuels management identification and support: • Establish mentoring in performance goals of senior fuels management professionals within IFPM (FMO/Deputy FMO/designees in larger units)	Fire Directors	• NWCG	• Improvements in closing qualification gaps • Improvement in recruiting and retention	FY09	ONGOING – Actions have been taken to pursue but the ability for management/leadership to support fluctuates wildly with budget appropriations which are outside of management's control. Additional

• Identify and foster development of employees interested in transition to fuels from suppression, resource mgt., or other positions • Support travel and presentations at related academic programs .					restrictions imposed on the agencies such as travel caps further narrows management's discretion to move resources to augment specific functions, especially training and workforce development where travel may be involved. Mentoring/coaching programs are implemented by the individual agencies to varying degrees but none appear particularly robust. Recent rulings regarding use of certain occupational series for "professional" work has confounded the situation which has not helped streamline the process of fostering employee transition from suppression oriented positions to fuels.
4. Hold annual training and workshop event at FUTA or other location as a focus for integration of fuels management across other disciplines (e.g., resource mgt., environment, suppression, biology, etc.) and to identify emerging challenges with simultaneous webcast and extensive report outs to senior leadership.	NIFCG/ Academies	• Agency funding support	• Integration and collaboration across geography and disciplines	FY09	ONGOING - PFTC Resource Specialist Workshop *partially* fills this role; probably need to engage resource functions for continued support as reduction in fuels budgets and travel caps has hampered participation.

5. Focus new employee hiring on fuels and resource management skills. • Work with colleges/universities to build fuels management competencies for entry-level positions.	NIFCG	• Shifts in job descriptions and job standards to emphasize fuels management.	• More fuels management professionals and positions. • Designation of positions as fuels management job.	FY09	COMPLETE – Shown complete as of FY11 which aligns with OPM/HR actions to move fire management positions from 462 series into 401 series professional positions. Changes have occurred outside of fuels positions since 2011 (301 Administration Series) but generally speaking, most all fuels positions at or above the GS-9 level remain in the 401 series which requires 24 credit hours of applicable natural resources education which largely meets this requirement. Specific Fuel Specialist PDs are in place for most agencies; not much has changed as far as level or amount of fuels/fire ecology training our employees receive. However, talking to advisors from universities, it doesn't sound like the university systems have a coherent idea of what skills we as employers are looking for so they convey that they are struggling to figure out what they can do to meet our needs. In addition, the vast majority of fuels positions at and below the GS-9 level still reside in technician series (462) which does not have any positive education requirements so there is still room to grow in this area.

6. Encourage more training in fuels management disciplines – ecology, resource management, planning, preservation, etc. Encourage prescribed fire and fire use training in resource management disciplines					INCOMPLETE – No evidence of progress in the area of fuels management training beyond that which already available in 2008. PFTC Resource Advisor Workshop has addressed the bridge to bring prescribed fire and fire use information to other resource areas but the 30-40 attendees each year account for a very small portion of the specialists out there and is not really a significant contributor to agency-wide training for any of the participating agencies.
7. Incorporate fuels management into apprenticeship programs; focus on fuels management apprenticeships. (Ongoing)	NIFCG	• HR, Agency, and Bureau resources • Bureau mentors.	• Increased capacity for succession in fuels management jobs. • Increased expertise in fuels tasks.	FY09	ONGOING – The Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship Program (WFAP) has a 3-day unit on fuels management in their Advanced Academy and a 240 hr. experience requirement for fuels work as part of the overall program for all apprentices. Follow-up with apprentices at the local unit can be lacking however and "stick stacking" often meets many of these hours, which is part but not a complete experience in fuels work. Improvements are being discussed and further refinements of the WFAP to meet fuels workforce goals are still possible.

II. Training Academy Governance					
1. Establish single governance/oversight board for NAFRI, PFTC, TFM, and FUTA to streamline stakeholder input; provide for state/local/regional input	NIFCG	• NWCG	• Single entity responsible for success of the academies and for guiding direction	FY09	INCOMPLETE – PFTC & WFAP have been moved under the management oversight of the National Fire Training Centers construct. The positions associated with FUTA have been absorbed within the NFTC organization but FUTA itself is no longer a viable entity. These sub-entities under the NFTC umbrella generally have their own steering committees and there is not currently nor does there appear to be movement towards establishment of a single governing body over all of these individual entities. TFM is a contractor-delivered training program and as such, the Task Team questions the validity of this action in regards to fair business practices in establishing a "governing board" role in that relationship without similar consideration made to other business entities who may want to compete to provide those services.

2. Formalize roles/relationships of academy advisory board /academies to the Training Working Team, NIFCG, Agency Fire Directors, and other oversight/stakeholder groups	NIFCG	• NWCG	• Clear role and direction from stakeholders • Support from standing teams and groups	FY09	ONGOING – Efforts continue to clearly articulate roles/relationships in the various training delivery entities. The Wildland Fire Institute concept was moving toward this end but has now been set aside. The NWCG Training Committee has recently been established having grown out of the Operations, Workforce Development Committee and is in the process of defining their newly established role within NWCG. The NFTC assuming an oversight role over NAFRI, PFTC, and WFAP is a recent development as well that will need some more time to become established. The National Interagency Fuels Technology Transfer (NIFTT) entity has recently been absorbed within the Wildland Fire Research Development and Applications (WFRD&A) organization and that transition is still in progress. The Task Team is recommending establishment of a Fuels Center of Practice within the NAFRI/NFTC organization that is another area of flux and uncertainty that will need to be solidified before roles/relationships can be formally defined.

3. Ensure advisory board and academies create alliances with state, agency, and academic programs	Training Academies	• Selection of well-networked board members	• Cross-pollination of best practices • Training load leveling	FY09	INCOMPLETE – No progress in this area has been made as it is dependent on the establishment of the super-steering-committee described in an earlier action item which has not come to fruition. It is doubtful this will ever be acted upon unless such a master governing board is established for the NFTC.
4. Develop dual charter for the advisory: representing the interests of the academies and aligning and providing focus for academy training programs	Training Academies/	• Agreement from state/ local and national stakeholders	• Higher-profile public advocates for the academies • Sustainable support	FY08	NEARLY COMPLETE – Not exactly the way that the Bonner Report envisioned, but PFTC and WFAP are chartered and aligned within the NFTC organization and their roles and focus are well defined. NAFRI will be redefining its role soon as a subset of the NFTC organization
III. Training Academy Supply Relationships					
1. Define and clarify overlapping and conflicting stakeholder relationships; appoint one interagency oversight team (NIFCG or TWT) to provide advice, direction to the academies	Bureau/ Agency Leadership; NIFCG	• Role/ Relationship Clarity	• Clear direction from oversight/stakeholder groups	FY08	ONGOING – Individual steering committees currently fill this role; single oversight committee has not gained support, probably for a reason. NWCG Training Committee could provide this support?

2. Provide preference to participants coming from units supplying instructors/ coordinators	Advisory Board	• Agreement from agencies	• Improved voluntarism for instructors and willingness of units to provide funding	FY09	INCOMPLETE – This action was contingent upon the establishment of the Advisory Board and assumed that such a board would have jurisdiction over participant selection. Such an Advisory Board has not come to being and even if it were, the accepted practice for selecting course participants is heavily weighted towards the local units prioritization of their employees training needs thus the pool of potential participants is filtered before ever reaching the final participant selection phase. In the opinion of the Task Team, this is an internal NFTC/NAFRI/GATR issue that is particular to how those entities work with the home units and regions to prioritize trainees and really shouldn't be considered as an action requiring interagency action to resolve.

3. Develop forums to share best practices and refresher training across academies	Academies	• NIFCG	• Improved training course results/performance	FY09	ONGOING – Internal process within NAFRI, PFTC, WFAP and other entities involved with training delivery. Also through JFSP, the establishment of the Prescribed Fire Consortia has had a positive impact in disseminating information on lessons learned and best practices among prescribed fire professionals
4. Develop consistent metrics and evaluation criteria for learning transfer/performance	Academies	• Coordination with other training programs	• Clarity of performance results	FY09	ONGOING – NAFRI, PFTC, WFAP, NWCG and other entities are constantly evaluating the effectiveness of their learning transfer & performance in training delivery. Metrics vary and change year to year as more is learned but these entities typically do a good job of self-critique and adapting courses as needed

5. Develop selection process and criteria to draw the best instructors/coordinators from across the fuels/ fire community, region and unit instructors with compensation for overtime	Academies	• NIFCG/ Governing Board	• Improved training performance	FY09	INCOMPLETE – No apparent movement to advance this initiative. The dominant model for selection of instructors remains the collateral duties model where instructors are sought from throughout the fire and fuels management workforce with no compensation for the additional time and effort involved with taking on the role of an instructor or course coordinator (for those coordinators who do so as collateral duties). The incentive for accepting the role of instructor/coordinator is typically bound to a dedication to the students and the profession and individual recognition as a leader in the field, which are powerful incentives on an individual basis but relatively weak when the interests of the home unit to reach its goals come to bear. As workloads at home increase, there is increasing pressure on instructors to remain focused on their primary production-oriented duties rather than take on collateral duties to support training. The selection process is oriented towards instructor availability, not their skill or effectiveness as an instructor.

					The issue of overtime is an agency–specific pay issue that is outside the jurisdiction of the NWCG or any other coordinating group to decide but efforts to pursue support within each individual agency could help promote the concept?
IV. Training Academy Resources/Funding					
1. Develop business case for consistent funding source and resources led by Forest Service (or BLM) as lead agency	Governing Board /NIFCG	• Bureau/Agency Leadership	• Sustainability over time • Consistency of training and other offerings	FY08	INCOMPLETE – Probably not a realistic expectation that consistent funding is even possible given inherent flux in congressional appropriations and departmental allocations which can vary wildly from year to year. With that said, there remains a case to be made that a business model could help inform decisions on allocations and would be a beneficial tool. There have been cases made for individual entities such as PFTC, WFAP, etc., however there remains to be seen any effort to create an overall business plan for the collective entities that provide workforce development support

V. Training Academy Demand Relationships					
1. Develop consistent needs assessment framework for use across the training academies	Academies/ NIFCG	Agency and Bureau Leadership	• Matches performance needs with training/ qualification needs enterprise wide	FY09	UNKNOWN – Needs Assessments are typically done at the Geographic Area Level and the training community typically monitors training needs and communicates those to the various delivery points. From the available information, it appears as if the NWCG Training/GATR's are in fact meeting the intent of this action but it is still unclear to the Task Team to what extent these are consistent across geographic areas and how exactly those needs are communicated down to the individual academies.
2. Streamline and quicken process to revise training courses to respond to emerging needs (communications, problem solving, analytical, interpersonal and technology acumen skills, fire use in suppression courses); have instructors post course changes to a shared website	NWCG/ Academies	• TWT; other stakeholder groups	• Better prepared PFFS employees • More relevant training and education	FY09	INCOMPLETE – There is a distinction between courses offered through the academies and NAFRI and those offered through NWCG. The latter are on a 5-year revision cycle, thus by design, NWCG courses are not intended to be updated regularly because these are typically courses that have

					multiple offerings and rely on more than one cadre to deliver thus consistency and quality control require limited adjustment of course content. Individual cadres may share and update information to a certain extent, but the content generally has to follow that as described in the instructor guide. In contrast, those courses offered by NAFRI and the academies are very limited in the number of offerings, maybe only one session offered per year or less in some cases, and usually by a single cadre. With consistency between offerings of little concern, materials can be updated and the course revised as technological and scientific advancements occur between course offerings. It is not expected that the NWCG courses outside of the NAFRI courses will see any streamlined process implemented

3. Demonstrate value of academies through a national training strategy for fuels management training to agency fire directors, state directors, FMOs, GATRs, and other decision influencers (Cost parity, agency acres burned, cross-pollination of best practices, innovation, emerging needs (e.g., AMR))	Academies	• Agency and Bureau Leaders	• Confidence in value and performance of the academies	FY09	INCOMPLETE - No coherent national strategy for fuels management workforce development has yet been formulated. Generally speaking, each academy and each delivery point is in the business of promoting their individual value in order to preserve their piece of the pie. There remains however a void when it comes to articulating the value of the whole of these entities as part of an overall workforce development strategy. There is also disagreement between the agencies on the relative value of the academies and other entities involved with workforce development, so our ability to come to agreement on an interagency strategy for fuels workforce development is questionable
VI. Training Academy Re-alignment/Focus					
1. Establish PFTC East (current PFTC) and PFTC West (FUTA) – (or FUTA East and FUTA West) • Offer specific qualification training modules on prescribed burning and fire use in PFTC East curricula • Focus on year-round access to prescribed fire qualifications at PFTC	NWCG/ Academies	• Agency and Bureau Leaders	• Stable, repeatable, and adequate training resources to meet qualification gaps	FY09	INCOMPLETE - Shown complete as of 2009 in some reports, namely later copies of the Bonner Report, but upon further review this is not really the case. Prescribed Fire Training Center has developed a clear mission and focus however,

• Expand PFTC East/FUTA offerings to include full range of basic and journeyman PFFS course needs • Focus PFTC West/FUTA on western states needs – center of excellence for western state/agency academies					the PFTC West concept did not find as much success as anticipated. The Fire Use Training Academy was transferred from a regional training model in the southwest to a national program and was envisioned to fill this "PFTC West" role. However, a culmination of factors has precluded this plan from coming together and at present, the FUTA has not achieved a clear focus or mission and is in the process of being absorbed within the NAFRI and WFLLC organizations which was not an action envisioned in the original report
2. Expand influence of academy courses by capturing best practices, lessons learned, and innovations from course participants	Academies		• Innovation in training and anticipating needs	FY08	ONGOING – NAFRI and PFTC actively engage in updates of their courses and employ best practices and lessons learned in those efforts. This is an ongoing effort internal to those entities like NAFRI and PFTC who are engaged in training delivery and is not in and of itself an interagency strategic issue that requires further action
3. Establish closer coordination/integration with NAFRI; develop clear progression of academy courses from apprenticeship, academic, PFTC/FUTA to NAFRI	Academies	• Academy Oversight Stakeholders	• Advanced skills anticipated by entry and journey level participants	FY08	ONGOING - Coordination/integration is largely complete; The NFTC structure has been established and the academies have been moved under

					the NFTC organization. The Task Team is proposing an addition to that NFTC structure to address fuels workforce development so there remains work to be done in this area. A clear progression from entry to expert level skills continues to be planned and executed so the individual roles of the various entities remain to be decided.