

# **Wildfire Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Shared Stewardship**

Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment Interim Committee

September 15, 2020

Brian Cottam, Director/State Forester  
Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands





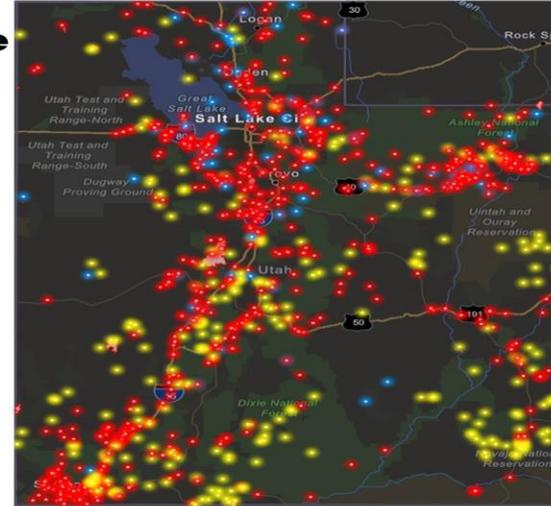
# 2020 Wildfire Season

Statistics as of September 7, 2020

**1,275 wildfires reported statewide**

**At least 1 ignition everyday  
since April 18th**

**Compared to 856 in 2019  
and 1,285 in 2018  
at this time**



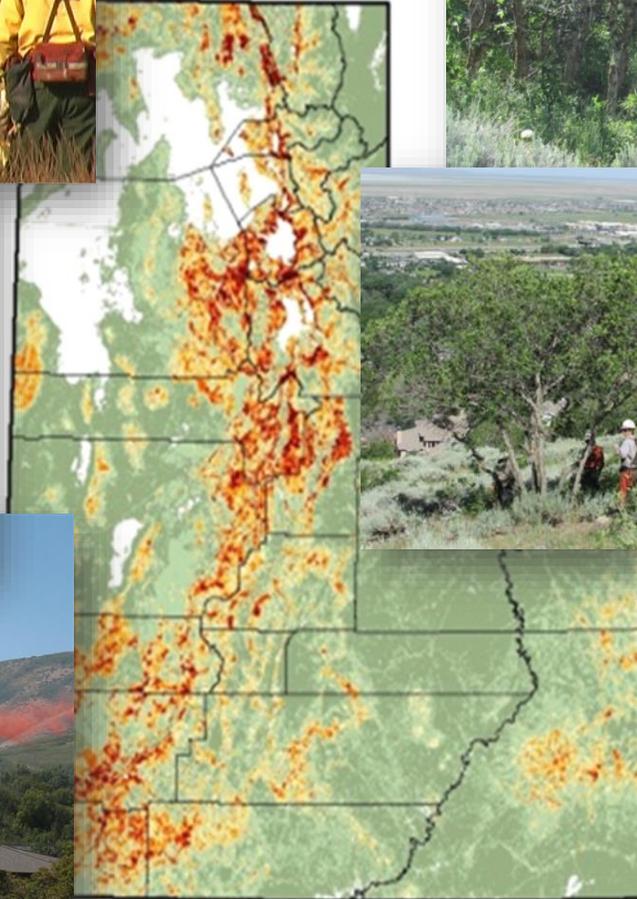
**963 or 75% of those  
starts were human  
caused**

**Compared to 566  
in 2019 and 614 in 2018  
at this time**

**The Canal Fire was the largest this year at 78,065 acres**

**Approximately  
225,010 total acres  
burned so far this  
year in  
Utah**





**REDUCE THE RISK OF WILDFIRE!**



# Wildfire Risk Reduction Goals

as found in 65A-8-103 and the National Cohesive Strategy

Improving wildfire prevention, preparedness and mitigation through:

- *Restoring and maintaining landscapes*
- *Creating fire-adapted communities*
- *Improving wildfire response*



# Mitigating Catastrophic Wildfire in Utah

**Wildland Fire  
Policy  
(CWS)**

**Wildfire  
Risk Assessment  
(UWRAP)**



**Catastrophic  
Wildfire  
Reduction  
Strategy  
(CatFire)**

**Watershed  
Restoration  
Initiative  
(WRI)**

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# Watershed Restoration Initiative

- Landscape scale
- Watershed and land health
- Multiple benefits (wildlife habitat, fire mitigation, sage grouse, etc.)



**WRI helps meet the wildfire risk reduction goal of “restoring and maintaining landscapes.”**



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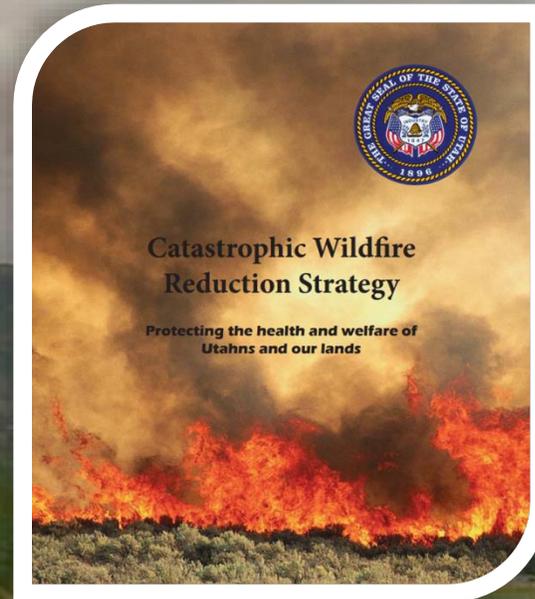
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# Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy

“...develop a comprehensive and systematic strategy to reduce the size, intensity and frequency of catastrophic wildland fire in Utah...”

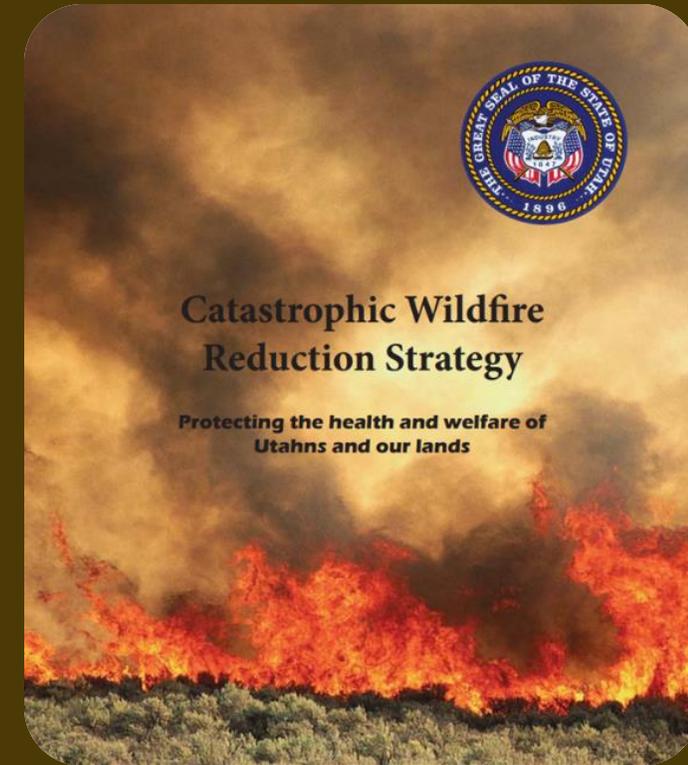
*Governor Herbert,  
following the 2012 fire season*

*Completed and  
Presented to  
Governor Herbert  
December 2013*



# CatFire Recommendations

1. Statewide Coordination of Mitigation Resources
2. Catastrophic Fire Reduction Fund
3. Regional Collaborative Working Groups to Prioritize Needs
4. Technical Committees to Address Specific Statewide Concerns
5. Adopt Key National Cohesive Strategy Recommendations
6. Increase Public Understanding and Participation
7. Report Annually to Governor and Legislature



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# Wildland Fire Statutes



**Enrolled Copy** S.C. 1

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE WILDLAND FIRE PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS, AND SUPPRESSION POLICY**

2014 GENERAL SESSION  
STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Evan J. Vickers**  
House Sponsor: Joel K. Briscoe

**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**  
This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor expresses support for the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy and strongly urges its implementation.

**Highlighted Provisions:**  
This resolution:

- expresses the Legislature's strong desire to reduce catastrophic wildfires;
- expresses support for the recommendations in the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy;
- strongly urges the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands to implement the recommendations in the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy in partnership with the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Steering Committee and guided by the report's recommendations;
- strongly urges the state forester to report to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee regarding progress on implementing the strategy, particularly the progress of the "Regionally Significant Projects"; and
- strongly urges the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands to coordinate the development of a Comprehensive Statewide Wildland Fire Prevention, Preparedness, and Suppression Policy.

**Special Clauses:**  
None

**Enrolled Copy** S.B. 56

**WILDLAND FIRE POLICY**

2015 GENERAL SESSION  
STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Evan J. Vickers**  
House Sponsor: Joel K. Briscoe

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**  
This bill modifies the responsibilities of the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands.

**Highlighted Provisions:**  
This bill:

- requires the director of the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands to:
  - coordinate the development of a state-wide wildland fire policy; and
  - report to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee on the director's recommendation for a state-wide wildland fire policy;
- describes the goals of a state-wide catastrophic wildfire reduction strategy; and
- states that the division may use funds to promote wildfire prevention, wildfire mitigation, and wildfire preparedness.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**  
None

**Other Special Clauses:**  
None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

**AMENDS:**

65A-8-103, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2011, Chapter 342

**ENACTS:**

65A-8-103.5, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**Enrolled Copy** S.B. 122

**WILDLAND FIRE POLICY UPDATES**

2016 GENERAL SESSION  
STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Evan J. Vickers**  
House Sponsor: Joel K. Briscoe

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**  
This bill modifies procedures surrounding the management of wildland fire.

**Highlighted Provisions:**  
This bill:

- defines terms;
- requires a municipality to abate uncontrolled wildfire on private or municipality-owned land within its boundaries, under certain circumstances;
- authorizes a municipality, county, or certain special districts to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands;
- states that a city, town, county, or special district that enters into a cooperative agreement may be eligible to have the costs of catastrophic wildland fire suppression paid by the state;
- states that a city, town, county, or special district that does not enter into a cooperative agreement shall be responsible for wildland fire suppression costs within its jurisdiction;
- describes the requirements to enter into a cooperative agreement; and
- makes technical changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**  
This bill appropriates:

- to the Department of Natural Resources -- Forestry, Fire, and States Lands, as a one-time appropriation:

**Enrolled Copy** S.B. 122

**WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION FUND**

2016 GENERAL SESSION  
STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Evan J. Vickers**  
House Sponsor: Joel K. Briscoe

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**  
This bill modifies the Wildland Fire Suppression Fund.

**Highlighted Provisions:**  
This bill:

- creates a source of funding for the Wildland Fire Suppression Fund;
- modifies the structure of the Wildland Fire Suppression Fund; and
- makes technical changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**  
This bill appropriates:

- to the Wildland Fire Suppression Fund, as a one-time appropriation:
  - from the Mineral Bonus Account, \$2,000,000.

**Other Special Clauses:**  
None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

**AMENDS:**

59-21-2, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2012, Chapters 212 and 242

63J-1-314, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2013, Chapter 295

63J-1-315, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2015, Chapter 283

63J-3-103, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2014, Chapter 63

63N-3-106, as renumbered and amended by Laws of Utah 2015, Chapter 283

# Wildland Fire Policy

- The State assumes suppression costs of large and extended-attack wildland fires on all lands other than federal;
- In exchange, local government provides effective initial attack and implements prevention, preparedness and mitigation activities that reduce wildfire risk.



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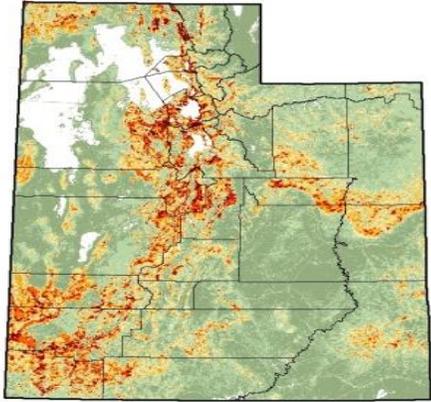
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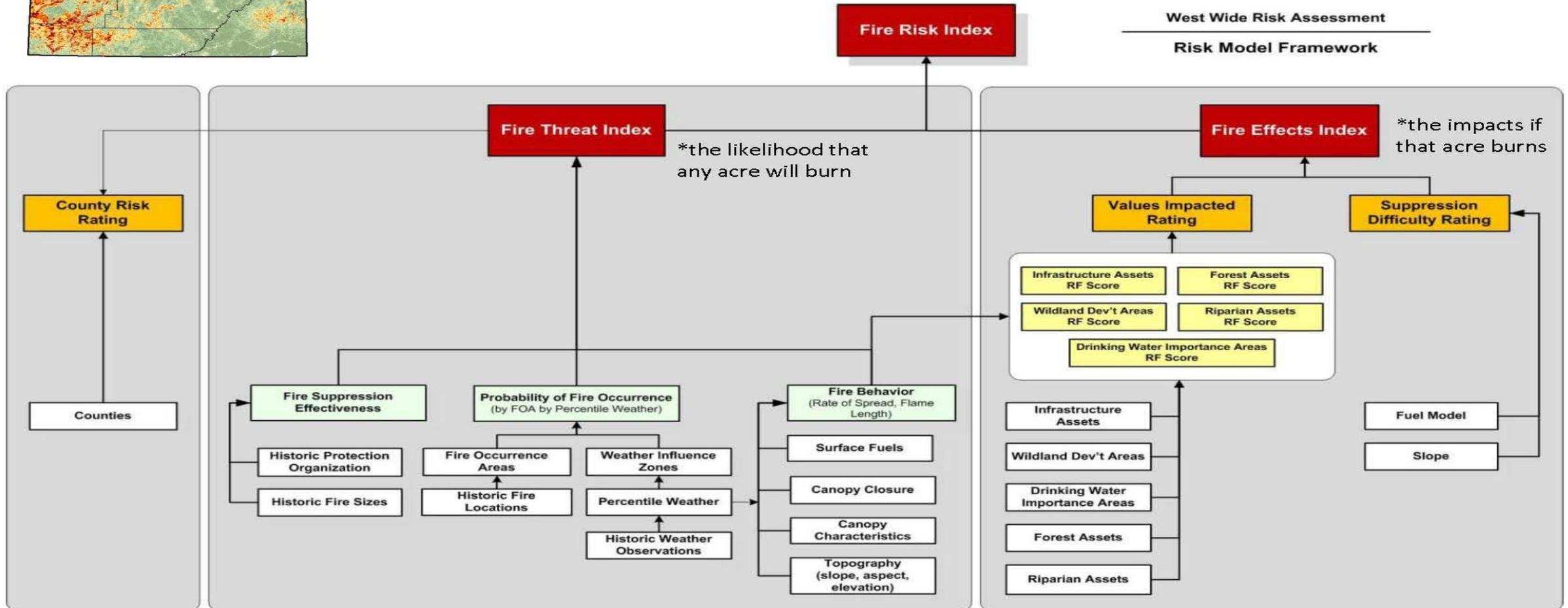


**Watershed  
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# How We Measure Wildfire Risk

## UWRAP Data Structure



Based on the Interagency West Wide Risk Assessment



# UTAH DNR WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT PORTAL

FORESTRY

HOME

ABOUT

SUPPORT

CONTACT

▼ Hi, Brian

## APPLICATIONS

Public Viewer



Professional Viewer



### Cooperative Wildfire System

- Coordination with Local Government
- Identification of Threat and Risk
- Annual Participation Commitment

### CatFire

- Planning CatFire Projects
- Prioritizing CatFire Funding
- Tracking Project Progress

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## Shared Stewardship

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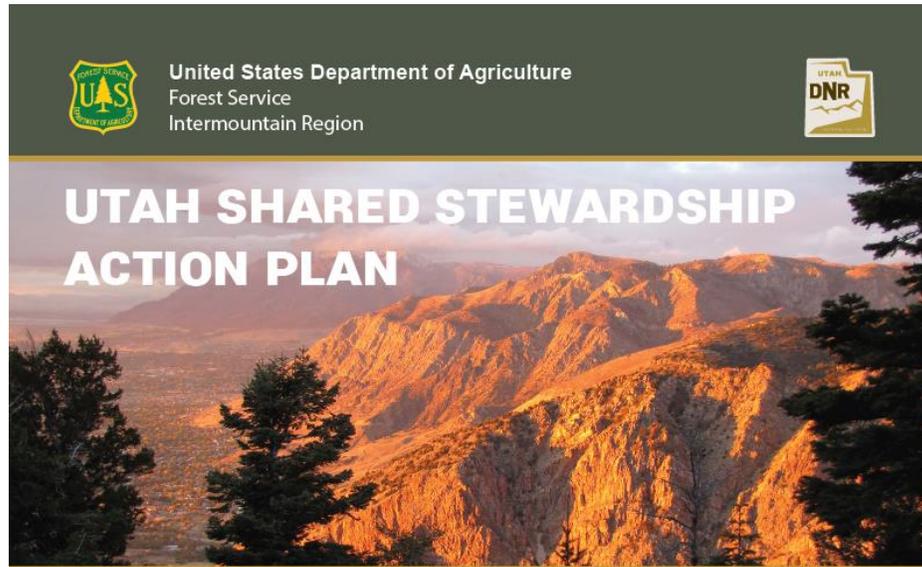


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# Utah Shared Stewardship



## INTRODUCTION

On May 22, 2019, Utah Governor Gary R. Herbert and USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue signed the Agreement for Shared Stewardship between the State of Utah and the USDA Forest Service Intermountain Region. This agreement establishes six mutual commitments that support the national vision and framework for Shared Stewardship. We are committed to:

1. Existing partnership, programs, and initiatives that have been successful in Utah.
2. Working together to identify and map shared priorities for protecting at-risk communities and watersheds across all lands.
3. Making joint decisions and sharing resources for immediate and ongoing work in priority areas.
4. Engaging local communities in dialogue and learning about active management and desired landscape-scale outcomes, including capacity building and economic development opportunities.
5. Shared planning efforts, including the integration of Utah's Forest Action Plan and the Forest Service's Five-Year Vegetation Management Plans.
6. Co-managing wildfire risks and supporting each other in decisions that we have made together.



## SHARED STEWARDSHIP ACTION PLAN

Following the signing of the Utah Agreement for Shared Stewardship, the State and Forest Service worked collaboratively to develop a Utah Shared Stewardship Action Plan to guide our efforts, which consists of the elements described below:

### 1. Accelerate planning

The Forest Service will expedite National Environmental Policy Act analysis and documentation for forest management projects that reduce community wildfire risks and stimulate forest-based economic development. This will increase the amount of on-the-ground forest management work available for funding and implementation in priority areas.

### 2. Increase the pace of implementation

The State and Forest Service will combine resources to increase the amount of forest management work that is funded and implemented in agreed upon priority areas.

### 3. Focus on economic development

The State and Forest Service will support a concerted economic development initiative to increase forest-related economic opportunities in Utah.

### 4. Provide more training

The State and Forest Service will increase fire prevention outreach and education efforts in an effort to curtail the number of human caused fires. The Forest Service will also continue its efforts to educate employees on the topic of the 2001 Roadless Rule and forest management activities that can be performed utilizing the rule's exceptions.

### 5. Convene stakeholders and leverage their interests

The State and Forest Service will collaborate with a broad spectrum of partners to develop informed plans for forest management projects that meet the goals of Shared Stewardship in Utah. Collaboration with partners will help build support for priority projects and increase project funding opportunities.

## FUNDING

An initial 4-year investment to support the Shared Stewardship Action Plan was agreed to by the State and the Forest Service. This investment is subject to Congressional appropriation and State legislative approval:

| Year         | State                    | Forest Service                                      |
|--------------|--------------------------|---|
| 2019         | \$2 million <sup>1</sup> | \$2 million match                                   |
| 2020         | \$1.5 million (optional) | \$2.5 million plus <sup>2</sup> \$1.5 million match |
| 2021         | \$1.5 million (optional) | \$2.5 million plus <sup>2</sup> \$1.5 million match |
| 2022         | \$1.5 million (optional) | \$2.5 million plus <sup>2</sup> \$1.5 million match |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>\$6.5 million</b>     | <b>\$14 million</b>                                 |

<sup>1</sup>Appropriated by the State during the 2019 Utah Legislative Session <sup>2</sup>USFS funds contingent on State of Utah match



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**“From Utah today has come one of the most progressive state programs for coping with exurban settlement and fire.”**



Stephen Pyne  
To the Last Smoke, v. 6, The Interior West: A Fire Survey  
2018





# **Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands**

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