

September  
2023

# WILDFIRE CRISIS STRATEGY (WCSS)

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Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest

# What is WCS?

Basically, a shift from reactive to proactive management

- 10-year program
- (1) Treating up to an additional 20 million acres on the National Forest System in the West, over and above current treatment levels
- (2) Treating up to an additional 30 million acres on other Federal, State, Tribal, and private lands in the West; and
- (3) Developing a plan for long-term maintenance beyond the 10 years
- Collaborative, Science-based

2

## HIGH-RISK FIRESHEDS

Community exposure is a central factor in the strategy to confront the wildfire crisis. Other factors include Tribal and State plans, watersheds, equity, climate forecasts, and partner priorities.





## CONFRONTING THE WILDFIRE CRISIS: MILESTONES IN DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

### HISTORIC FIRE YEAR

More than **7.4 million acres burned**—more than twice the average annual area burned for the previous 17 years.



### 2000 ◀ NATIONAL FIRE PLAN

A **national plan was created** with five goals, including reducing hazardous fuels on the Nation's forests and grasslands.

### 2001 ◀ 10-YEAR STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A **strategy was adopted** for reducing wildfire risk, followed by an **implementation plan** for preventing and suppressing wildland fires, restoring ecosystems, and helping communities protect themselves from wildfire.

### WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS ▶

A study published by the Rocky Mountain Research Station estimated that **73 million acres** on the National Forest System were at **moderate to high risk of catastrophic wildfire**.

2002

### EMMITSBURG 13 MEETING

Partners in the wildland fire community met to **discuss a common strategy** for coping with rising fire year severity and growing wildfire risk.



### 2003 ◀ HEALTHY FORESTS RESTORATION ACT

Congress **passed legislation** to reduce wildfire risk by adding new categorical exclusions to extend the area of fuels and forest health treatments on Federal lands in the West.



2008

### 2010 ◀ COLLABORATIVE FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PROGRAM

The program has **funded more than 20 large-scale projects nationwide** with goals to restore forest health and reduce wildfire risk across shared landscapes.

### INCREASING THE PACE OF RESTORATION AND JOB CREATION ON OUR NATIONAL FORESTS PUBLISHED ▶

The Forest Service **renewed its commitment** to restoring forests on a landscape scale by **expanding** collaborative partnerships, **improving** and **accelerating** stewardship contracting, and other means.

2012

### 2014 ◀ NATIONAL COHESIVE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

A **national strategy was adopted** with three central goals: restoring fire-adapted ecosystems on a landscape scale, building fire-adapted human communities, and responding safely and effectively to wildland fire.



2014

2018

### ◀ OMNIBUS BILL/"CASE FOR CHANGE"

Due to rising wildfire risk, Congress asked the Trump administration to "review and update the National Fire Plan, as needed." In response, the Forest Service launched "The Case for Change," which led to **creation of a year-round workforce for wildfire response**.

### OMNIBUS BILL/"FIRE FUNDING FIX" ▶

Congress **passed legislation** providing a long-term funding fix that established 2015 as the baseline for firefighter appropriations and off-budget funding that reduced the need to borrow funding from nonfire programs.

2020

### JOHN PHIPPS TESTIMONY

The Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry called for changing the trajectory of fuel builds by **scaling up fuels and forest health treatments** by at least two to three times.



### ◀ "THOUGHT PIECE"

At the request of Congress, the Forest Service **delivered a "thought piece" paper on how to greatly scale up fuels treatments** and the projected costs of doing so.

### ◀ PARTNER ENGAGEMENTS

Forest Service leadership met with member of the National Association of State Foresters, American Forest Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, American Forests, and other organizations to **agree on a common vision for the future of America's forests**.

### OMNIBUS BILL ▶

The **Consolidated Appropriations Act** directed the Forest Service and U.S. Department of the Interior to provide "an estimate of the **federal investment required to treat and restore all acres classified as being at high or very high risk** on the 2018 Wildfire Hazard Potential Map."

### INFRASTRUCTURE BILL ▶

The **Senate passed a bipartisan bill investing** about \$5.6 billion in natural-resources-related infrastructure, including a 5-year investment of about \$3 billion in restoring ecosystems and reducing wildfire risk.

2021

### ◀ "NATIONAL FIRE PLAN 2.0" VISIONING

The Forest Service **engaged** National Forest System directors and others in **analyzing** the Nation's wildfire crisis in the West and **planning** for reducing wildfire risk.



### WHITE PAPER

Rocky Mountain Research Station drafted a White Paper outlining a **10-year plan to reduce wildfire risk in the West**, including up to **\$20 billion in new Federal spending** on the National Forest System and up to **\$30 billion on other lands**.



### 2021 ◀ LEAD EXECUTIVE NAMED

Chief Randy Moore named **Brian Ferebee to lead a team** that will operationalize the 10-year strategy, if funded.

### 2022 ◀ STRATEGY LAUNCHED

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack announced launch of **Confronting the Wildfire Crisis: A Strategy for Protecting Communities and Improving Resilience in America's Forests**.

Camp Fire, CA -  
2018



Almeda Fire,  
Southern Oregon  
2020



# But why WCS?

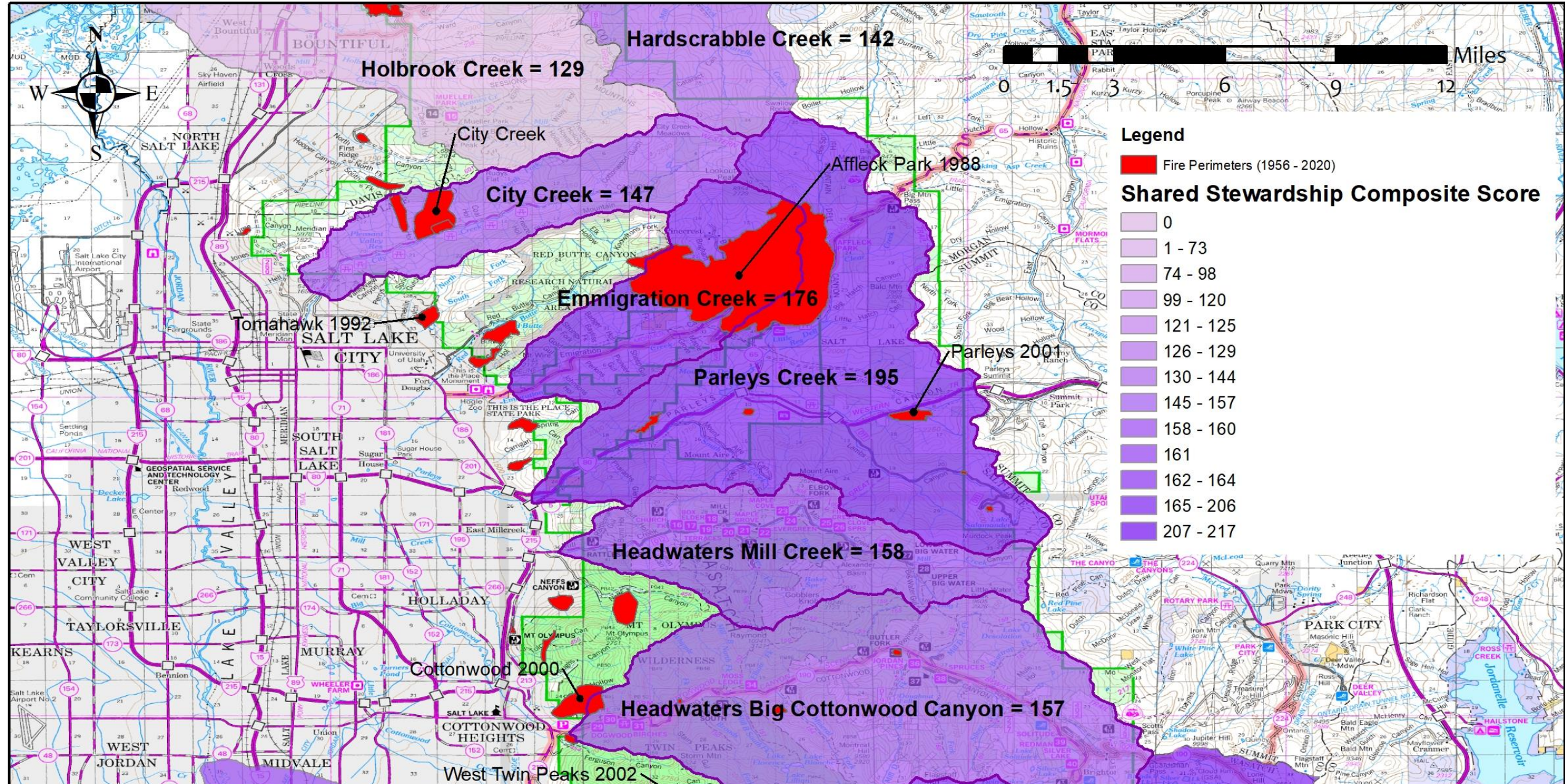
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Multifaceted sources of increased risk to well-being of the nation's people & forests

- Fire Suppression History and fuel accumulation
- Warming climate and Forest Health
- Major expansion of development into fire-prone areas
- Threats to watershed and recreation



# Shared Stewardship Priority Map



# What it looks like

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Parleys Canyon  
Phase 2 - 2022





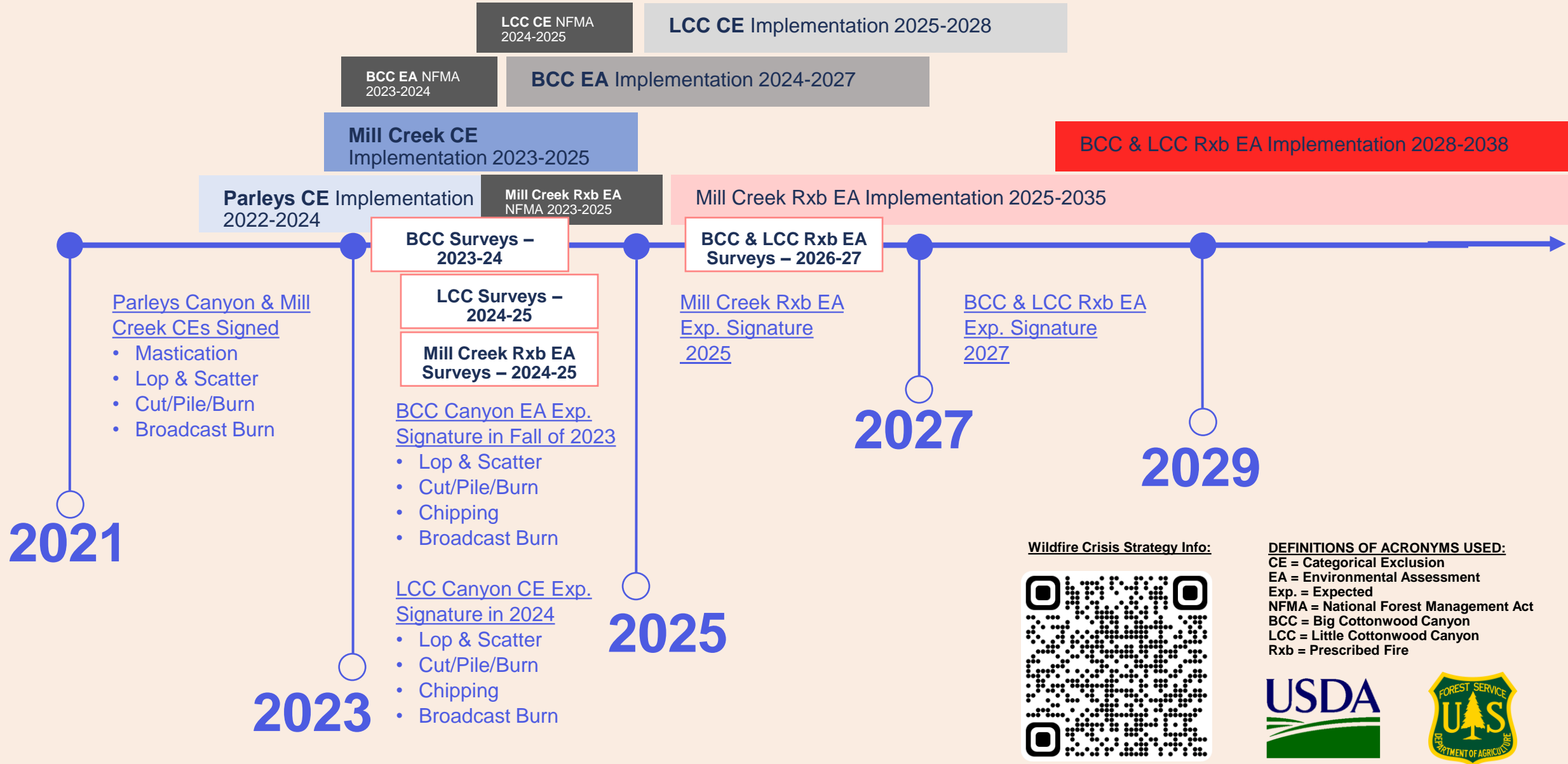
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# What it looks like

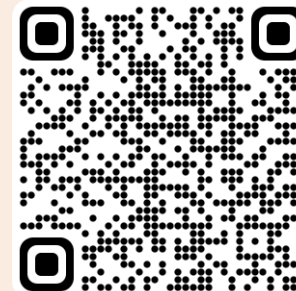




# CENTRAL WASATCH WILDFIRE CRISIS STRATEGY TIMELINE



Wildfire Crisis Strategy Info:



**DEFINITIONS OF ACRONYMS USED:**  
 CE = Categorical Exclusion  
 EA = Environmental Assessment  
 Exp. = Expected  
 NFMA = National Forest Management Act  
 BCC = Big Cottonwood Canyon  
 LCC = Little Cottonwood Canyon  
 Rxb = Prescribed Fire





Confronting the  
Wildfire Crisis  
Dashboard



WCS  
Intermountain  
Region Info

# Questions?

Scott Frost

Phone

435-602-3100

Email

Scott.frost@usda.gov