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**WILDLAND FIRE  
MITIGATION AND  
MANAGEMENT  
COMMISSION**

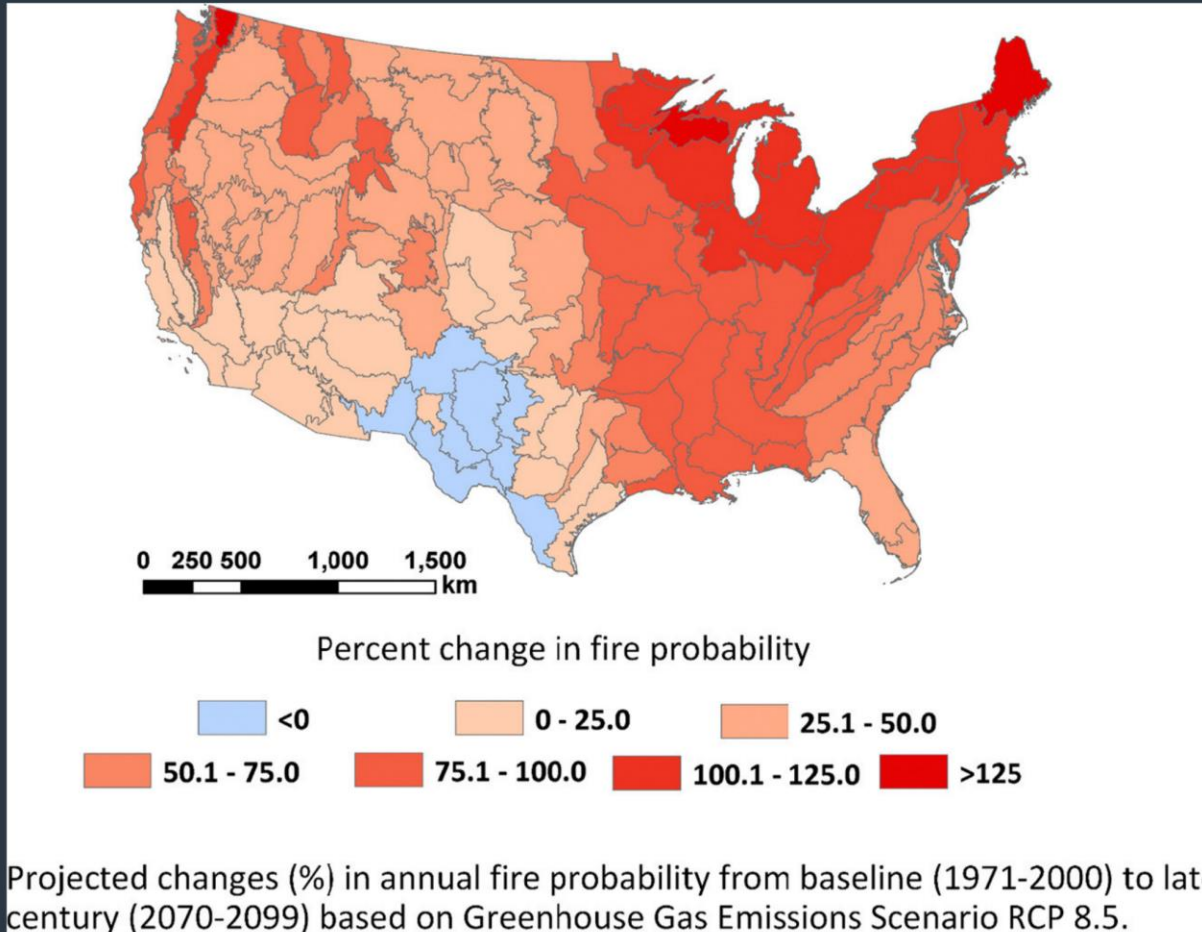
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# **DEFINING THE CRISIS**

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# The Changing Face of Wildfire



***Robust projections  
of future fire  
probability for the  
conterminous  
United States  
Credit: Patrick Gao,  
et al., 2021***

# Defining the Crisis



Between 2000 and 2019, nearly **2,000 communities** were threatened by wildfire.



Between the years of 2005 and 2022, nearly **100,000 structures were destroyed** by wildfire.



The western United States alone has witnessed a **246 percent increase in structures lost** to wildfires when comparing the decade from 1999-2009 to 2010-2020.

Sources: Headwaters Economics, 2020, 2023c; Higuera et al., 2023

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# **COMMISSION BACKGROUND**

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# The Commission (in brief)



Established by statute (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law)



Tasked with making recommendations to mitigate and manage wildland fire



50 members from diverse geographies and backgrounds



Completed two reports to Congress

# The Commission



Established by statute (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law)

- Significant spending on wildfire risk reduction through land management
- Commission as a part of the focus on wildfire risk reduction

***The Commission is a product of Congress and its report is to Congress.***

# The Commission

50

50 members from diverse geographies and backgrounds:

- 14 federal members
- 36 state, NGO, academic, and other seats
- Backgrounds in wildland fire, emergency management, community preparedness, public health and more
- Members with experience in both policy and practice
- Nonpartisan composition



# The Commission



Completed two reports to Congress:

- Aviation report released in Feb. 2023 and publicly available
- Final report released in Sept. 2023
- Final report includes additional context on discussions
- Recommendations were by unanimous consensus

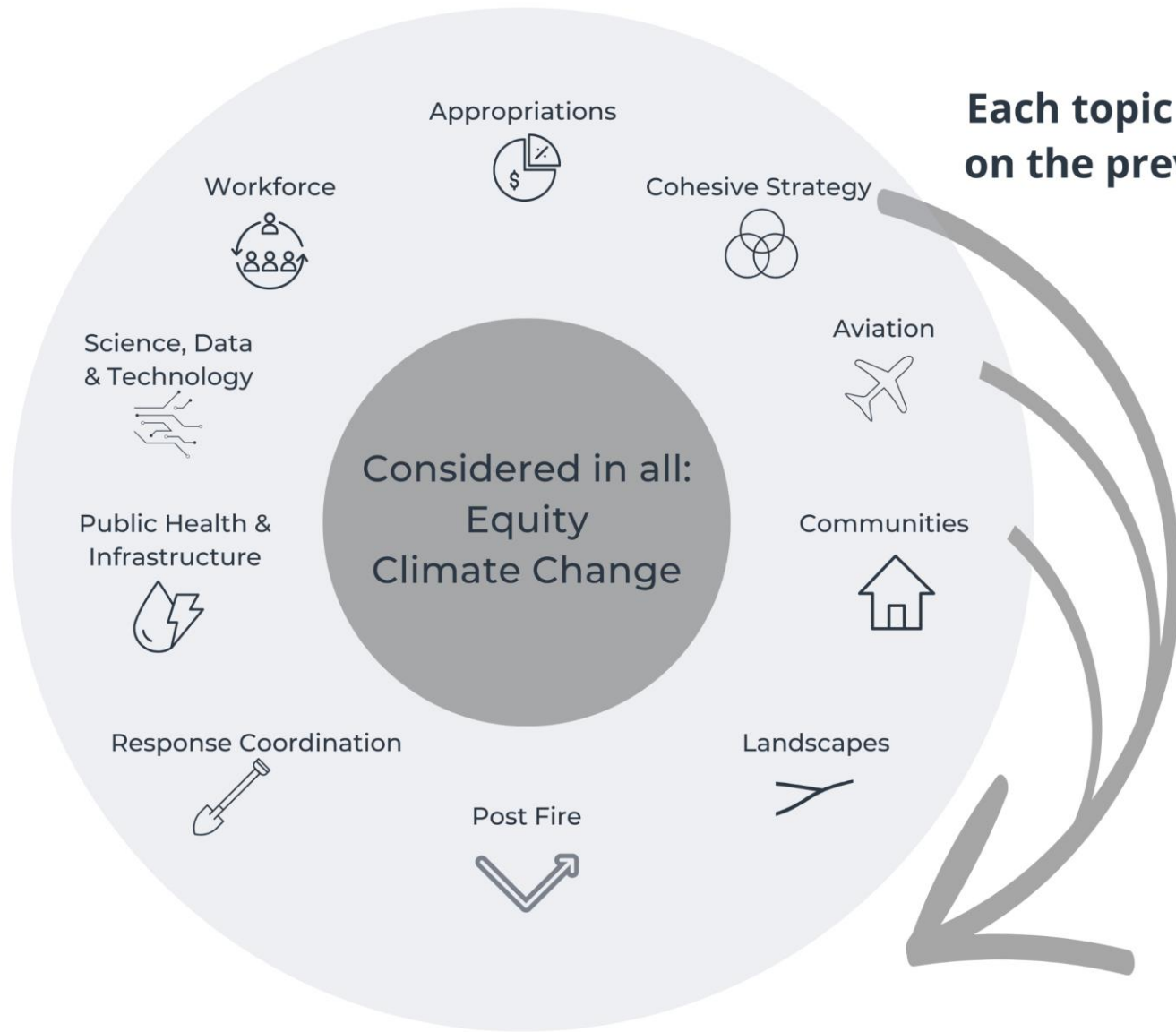
# Commission Process

## **The Commission used workgroups accomplish the tasks set forth by Congress**

- Ten workgroups
- Most members participated in three

## **Workgroups guided the work process**

- Report structure only loosely follows workgroups
- Provided an opportunity for cross-cutting themes to emerge
- Provided time for in-depth look at key topics



# Commission Process

## **Solicited outside opinions**

- Public comment portal
- Over 500 submissions, many focused on workforce issues

## **Worked with Subject Matter Experts**

- Over 125 SMEs and agency staff
- Seated on workgroups
- Panel discussions
- Materials review
- Connection to live and emerging research

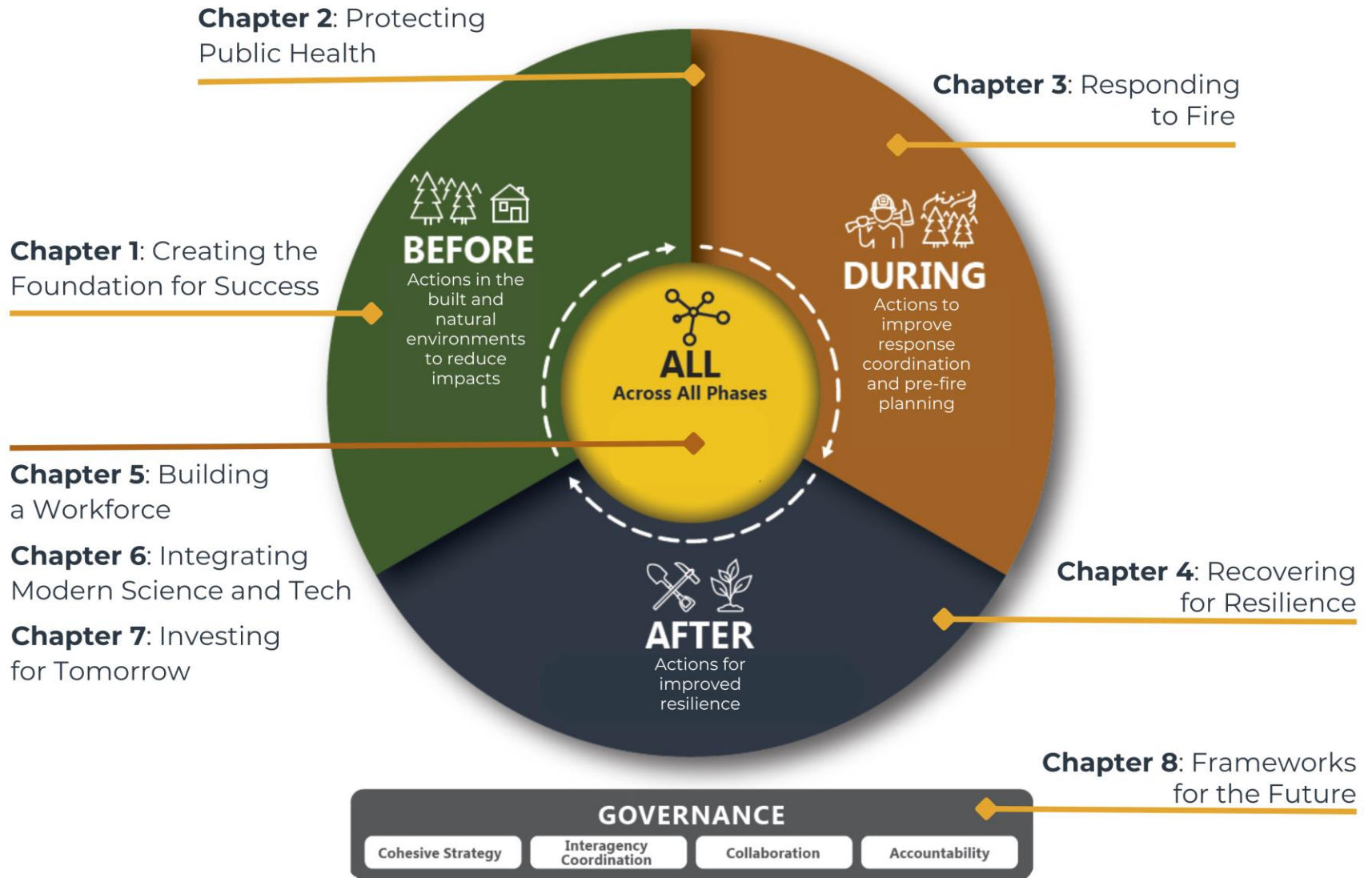
# Commission Process

## Process resulted in final report to Congress

- Each recommendation reached full consensus
- Recommendations organized around the fire cycle, but also include key crosscutting elements



# Report Organization





# Summary

## Key Takeaways

- Report contains 148 consensus recommendations in 340 pages which can be summarized in seven key themes
- Report is comprehensive but not exhaustive

***No single recommendation or sentence should be considered alone.***

***Themes provide a more accessible way to encapsulate the Commission's significant body of work.***

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# **THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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# Commission Themes



*Issues are interrelated and overlapped.*

# THEME: Supporting Collaboration

**“Solutions should not and cannot be accomplished by federal agencies alone, but must involve individuals, entities, and jurisdictions at every level of society.”**

# THEME: Reactive to Proactive

**“Only through significant investments in proactive planning, mitigation, risk reduction, and the workforce needed to accomplish these tasks can we break the current cycle of increasingly severe wildfire risk, damage, and loss.**

# THEME: Enabling Beneficial Fire

**“Beneficial fire – including prescribed burning, cultural burning, and wildfire managed for resource objectives – is necessary to restore fire-adapted ecosystems and reduce the risk of high-severity wildfires that pose a significant threat to communities.**

# Selected Recommendations

16

“Congress should acknowledge Tribal cultural burning in federal law, ensure it is not confused with prescribed fire, and grant agencies the authority to coordinate with Tribes on the conduct of Tribal cultural burning on federally administered lands”

- Grant agencies authority to coordinate with Tribes conducting cultural burning on federally administered land.

# THEME: Workforce

**“ [A] comprehensive, expanded, and sustainable workforce is a cornerstone of our ability to change our fire future. Without this robust workforce, many of the Commission’s recommendations become far less feasible and may, in fact, become impossible.**

# Selected Recommendations

56

## Improve training and coordination between structure fire departments and wildland fire management

- Support U.S. Fire Administration to:
  - Provide expanded community-based wildfire training and engagement of the nation's non-federal fire service.
  - Promote fire-adapted communities to build community resilience.
  - Improve coordination with wildland fire management as a critical and necessary partner in wildfire risk reduction.



# THEME: Informed Decision-making



***Climate change and rapidly changing ecosystems represent fundamental shifts in conditions that current fire behavior models, and indeed the current fire management system, are not designed to meet.***



# Selected Recommendations

104

Establish an interagency joint office to fulfill the mission of assessment and prediction of fire

- Known for ease of reference as the fire environment center
- Aggregation and expand services
- Provide real-time analytic and predictive services through a common operating environment
- Provide decision-support across risk reduction, response, and post-disaster recovery.
- Should assist in both the built and natural environments.

# Selected Recommendations

110

“Support the creation, chartering, or expansion of an existing venue to serve as a federal coordinating body for wildfire science that includes all relevant parties”

- Anticipate long-term strategic gaps and needs and set priorities.
- Facilitate improved relevance of research to managers.
- Should include a multitude of non-federal partners.
- Would help support the fire environment center.

# THEME: Investing in Resilience



***...the wildfire crisis needs to be funded, staffed, and acted upon like the national emergency that it is. To do less is to resign ourselves to tremendous costs and losses.***

# Selected Recommendations

124

“Congress should ensure balanced, robust funding for pre-fire mitigation and post-fire restoration is included as part of the wildland fire budget”

- Significant additional investments are needed.
- This should not be a reduction in spending on response and preparedness
- In time, investments in pre-fire risk reduction and proactive recovery should reduce the proportion of spending on response.

# Recommendations

## Key Takeaways

- Recommendations are both short and long term; immediately actionable and transformative
- Largely focused on congressional action but includes administrative action with congressional accountability role
- We offered a few examples to provide a sense of the style and structure of recommendations

***There is no single solution.***

# Key Concepts

**“There is a need for both incremental and fundamental change, but the Commission emphasizes that top-down, one-size-fits-all approaches and opportunistic half-measures will continue to fall short of desired outcomes.”**

# Key Concepts



***Taken together, these recommendations are intended to help lead the nation toward better wildfire outcomes including diminished loss of life and property, and functioning and resilient ecosystems.***

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**NEXT STEPS**

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# AUDIENCE: Committees of Congress

## Senate

- Energy and Natural Resources
- Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
- Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
- Environment and Public Works
- Appropriations

## House

- Natural Resources
- Agriculture
- Homeland Security
- Ways and Means
- Appropriations

# Report Available Soon!

Visit the Commission Website:

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/disaster-resource-center/wildland-fire/commission>

**Wildland Fire Mitigation  
and Management  
Commission**

**Aerial Equipment  
Strategy Report**

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**ON FIRE: The Report of the  
Wildland Fire Mitigation and  
Management Commission**



# Report Available Soon!

- Commission remains empaneled for 180 days.
- Commission is available, by Congressional request, to participate in further briefings, oversight hearings, informational discussions, and more.

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**THANK YOU**

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