
**Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre
(CIFFC)**

2013 - 2018 Strategic Plan

September 11, 2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) is the not-for-profit corporation owned and operated by the federal, provincial and territorial wildland fire management agencies to coordinate resource sharing, mutual aid, and information sharing. The CIFFC strategic plan is evolving, emerging from actions already initiated and the need to react to new developments. This strategic plan arises out of a workshop attended by members of the CIFFC Council of Directors (CoD), chairs of Working Groups (WGs) and Community of Practices (CoPs), the Board of Trustees (BoT), Canadian Forest Fire Centre staff, and Canadian Council of Forest Ministers' (CCFM) Wildland Fire Management Working Group (WFMWG). In preparation for this workshop, the 2008-2013 CIFFC Strategic Plan was analysed (see Appendix 1 for key accomplishments) and surveys were conducted within the wildland fire community to determine CIFFC's perceived future challenges and opportunities.

The basic elements of the CIFFC 2013-2018 Strategic Plan include: mission, vision, values, strategic directions, and strategies. Strategic directions identify the CIFFC's plan to better achieve its mission and vision. The five strategic directions, which fit into two categories: 1) sustaining operations, and 2) managing change, are:

- facilitate improved efficiency in delivery of mutual aid between member agencies;
- provide coordinated national standards, specifications and certification programs to support safe and effective national wildland fire management;
- develop, maintain and staff a state-of-the-art Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg;
- provide national leadership on Canadian wildland fire issues (internal); and
- share wildland fire operational knowledge and resources internationally (external).

Twelve strategies (outlined in Appendix 2) were originally identified as the steps CIFFC could take to realize the strategic directions and ultimately its vision and mission. Consultations with the CoD helped the Strategic Planning Task Team find synergies and pare this number down to a more tenable seven. Five of the seven strategies included in this cycle are identified for immediate action and 180-day implementation plans with specific actions will be drafted for these. They are:

- enhance governance structure within CIFFC;
- create a more financially stable structure;
- build the necessary capacity to meet Canada's Mutual Aid and Resource Sharing (MARS) Agreement needs;
- invest in science to support resource sharing; and

- develop an Information Management/Information Technology (IM/IT) strategy.

The sixth strategy, to confirm where prevention/mitigation best fits, will be addressed within the five year strategic plan and the seventh, to monitor all risk emergency management, is identified for examination.

PREAMBLE

In addition to coordinating resource sharing, mutual aid, and information sharing, CIFFC also serves as a collective focus and facilitator of wildland fire cooperation. CIFFC maintains a critical strategic role in wildland fire management across Canada and internationally and provides a forum for pan-Canadian cooperation and coordination in long-range fire management planning, program delivery and human resource strategies.

CIFFC's 2008-2013 Strategic Plan focussed on enhancing its core mutual aid mandate, emphasising national mutual aid training, developing strategies to address emerging issues, and building on CIFFC's mutual aid capacity through international projects.

As part of the process of identifying and addressing emerging wildland fire challenges arising from changes in wildland fire environment, a 2013-2018 Strategic Planning Workshop was conducted in Wakefield, QC on the 13th and 14th of June 2012. The workshop was facilitated with the contracted help of Delta Partners of Ottawa who also prepared a preliminary report.

To make the 2013-2018 Strategic Planning Workshop successful, it was important to include individuals who have the best sense about where CIFFC needs to go and who will be the ones implementing the agreed-upon directions. In attendance were most members of the CIFFC's CoD, chairs of all WGs and CoPs, representatives of the BoT, Canadian Forest Fire Centre staff, and representatives of the CCFM's WFMWG.

In preparation for the workshop, a review of the implementation status of strategic directions from the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan was done (Appendix 1) and the BoT, CoD, members from CIFFC, and the wildland fire community were surveyed on their views of future challenges/opportunities facing CIFFC. Both exercises provided background material and helped shape discussions during the workshop for what to consider for the next five-year and subsequent strategic planning cycles. Appendix 2 provides the 12 strategies identified through this process.

In this document, the term "CIFFC" is used as the entire collective of CIFFC from the BoT, CoP, WGs, CoPs, Task Teams (TTs), and staff at the Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg.

VISION

To be the global leader of safe wildland fire resource sharing, cooperation and mutual aid.

MISSION

To provide timely, effective and efficient support to member agencies for the enhancement of national wildland fire preparedness, safety and response capability while fostering a culture of continuous improvement in wildland fire management programs and policies by facilitating interagency and international cooperation.

VALUES

CIFFC's organizational value statements are an important strategic component, particularly in an interagency corporation. These values provide guidance for performance and conduct; they form the foundation of the CIFFC cooperative network.

CIFFC values:

- a safety first attitude and culture in ourselves and our workforce;
- excellence and efficiency in all activities;
- the maximization of combined benefits to all member agencies;
- transparent, consultative, and fiscally responsible decision making;
- environmentally and socially responsible business practices;
- integrity and respect in all dealings among member agencies, staff, clients, and partners;
- resolution of issues through discussion and cooperation to achieve common goals; and,
- ownership of work and responsibility for decisions.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

CIFFC strategic directions are key components in realizing its vision and mission and reflect the overall results and direction sought by the CIFFC community between 2013 and 2018. They fit into two categories:

1. *Sustaining operations* is about upholding excellence in safety, CIFFC operations and standards across geographic, organizational, and agency boundaries; it includes linking policy to practice.
2. *Managing change* is about effectively preparing for, adapting to and reacting to impacts and the evolving needs of CIFFC member agencies.

Sustaining Operations

The three strategic directions linked with sustaining operations are:

Strategic Direction 1

Facilitate improved efficiency in delivery of mutual aid between member agencies

The quality of CIFFC's internal activities comes from a wholesale commitment and desire to maintain a national presence across a country of diverse wildfire management. In this spirit, CIFFC will continue to work toward more efficient coordination of resource sharing within CIFFC, across Canada and as the primary contact and liaison between CIFFC members and other countries. CIFFC will be effective at providing timely responses to urgent needs and at meeting challenging wildland fire management objectives nationally and internationally.

Strategic Direction 2

Provide coordinated national standards, specifications and certification programs to support safe and effective national wildland fire management

By way of its unique national perspective; model of networking and information sharing; proven leadership; and, ability to comprehend member agency needs, issues, concerns and strengths, CIFFC will lead standards and certification program development and sharing to maximize value and to ensure safe and effective mutual aid and wildland fire management practices. CIFFC will identify and revise curriculums for training courses and safety standards that are critical to resource sharing. It will continue to have a key leadership role with respect to member agencies, TTs, WGs and CoPs and will ensure continuity in daily resource sharing operations of the Canadian fire community through key skill development, proper mentoring, and identification of safety issues.

Strategic Direction 3

Develop, maintain, and staff a state-of-the-art Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg

The centre will strive to provide the best in resource and mutual aid expertise in Canada by employing measures to recruit, maintain, and retain national level expertise in staffing at the centre and on CIFFC WGs and TTs. CIFFC's long-term financial stability is critical to supporting strategic priorities and major initiatives of CIFFC and to delivering excellence to member agencies. Where capacity exists, it will provide funding or intellectual capacity for wildland fire projects of national interest and value. Enhanced information management standards, security and capabilities combined with continued use of the latest communication technologies will improve data sharing and support decision making with its member agencies.

Managing Change

The two strategic directions linked with managing change are:

Strategic Direction 4

Provide national leadership on Canadian wildland fire issues (internal)

CIFFC will provide national leadership through contribution of knowledge, experience and focus on Canadian wildland fire issues. CIFFC will continue to seek council from its national leaders to identify priorities and build internal networks and relationships within the fire community in Canada. CIFFC will coordinate member agency engagement in larger Canadian/Wildland Fire Management goals such as: improved response capacity; cooperative strategic planning, implementation and prioritization in consultation with member agencies and key stakeholders.

Strategic Direction 5

Share wildland fire operational knowledge and resources internationally (external)

CIFFC will provide its collective knowledge, experience, wisdom and focus towards supporting national direction on international issues respecting wildland fire and their connection to global and Canadian environmental management issues. While doing so, CIFFC will respect the jurisdictional autonomy of member agencies. Wildland fire management is anticipated to be forefront in the international arena especially as it is influenced by issues such as climate change and international agreements and conventions. CIFFC could be directly affected and/or severely constrained by some of these conventions. As well, the knowledge gained from such participation may lead to improvements in Canadian wildland fire mutual aid delivery. CIFFC's reputation internationally will continue to have an important influence on fire management decisions that result from an expected increase in resource demands including reliance on international resources. CIFFC's participation in the global wildfire community will be an opportunity to showcase and learn innovative wildland fire solutions.

STRATEGIES

Strategies are real things that CIFFC can achieve. The seven CIFFC will focus on in the 2013-2018 planning cycle are:

1. Enhance Governance Structure within CIFFC – For Immediate Action

CIFFC will make improvements to its current structure to create synergy through understanding the respective roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships between the various parts of CIFFC to ensure more cohesive planning at various levels of CIFFC. This will include identifying and prioritizing needs, creating a continuous learning environment and utilizing a development philosophy. Priorities will also be set for non-core issues. Synergies and efficiencies gained by closer relationships, communications and a better model will make for a stronger system to address mutual aid resource sharing needs and wildland fire management issues.

The relationship and linkages between CIFFC and the CCFM WFMWGs are important to CIFFC operations to achieve the cooperation required for great national leadership. CIFFC will work towards further enhancement of this relationship to limit duplication and maximize cohesiveness and effectiveness in national wildfire management needs.

2. Create a More Financially Stable Structure – For Immediate Action

In recent years, CIFFC has used a combination of member levies and a resource exchange fee surcharge on MARS exchanges to finance its operations. Financial projections indicate that an operational shortfall is imminent.

CIFFC will reassess its funding structure to address its operational and the strategic objectives to create a more stable and sustainable funding model ensuring transparency and sound operating and management principles.

3. Build the Necessary Capacity to Meet Canada's Mutual Aid and Resource Sharing (MARS) Agreement Needs – For Immediate Action

CIFFC recently identified a lack of capacity to fulfil MARS orders. Currently, CIFFC is constrained to supporting response efforts within various mutual aid agreements as those agreements address only suppression resources.

CIFFC will conduct an assessment of the benefits and costs of expanding the original intent of various international mutual aid agreements from suppression to one that encompasses detection,

prevention, mitigation and other options to address MARS needs shortfalls (e.g. opportunities for non-suppression staff exchanges and prescribed burning). CIFFC will also explore human resource strategies to build and access capacity within/between Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg staff and CIFFC agencies.

4. Invest in Science to Support Resource Sharing – For Immediate Action

Future success is dependent on depth in fire science research, associated technologies, and scientifically upheld decision support tools and models to aide complex and critical decision making, resource sharing, and suppression activities.

CIFFC will develop a five-year plan to help address the integration of fire science research into future decision and operational tools for use in wildfire management activities.

5. Develop an Information Management/Information Technology (IM/IT) Strategy – For Immediate Action

The constant demand for information to support effective and timely decision making is a challenge for CIFFC as it lacks an IM/IT strategy and the ability to meet member information needs. A cooperative focus on fire line information systems and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy regulations is necessary to address inconsistencies in training, data storage, information sharing needs and duplication.

CIFFC will keep abreast and make better use of technological changes and advancements; encourage common platforms and standards across agencies; support changes in electronic processes that will lead to an improved records database management system; and, explore opportunities to pool expertise and effort to create seamless information flow.

6. Confirm Where Prevention/Mitigation Best Fits

CIFFC's core business may see an evolution towards a more sophisticated wildland fire risk model. Documentation and case studies on collaborative efforts to identify and implement proactive solutions to reduce risk of wildland fire losses through prevention/mitigation initiatives are needed.

CIFFC will monitor the need to integrate wildland fire prevention and mitigation into the existing risk management framework. This may be done by way of developing decision support tools and models, providing training, conducting risk analysis, undertaking risk prediction, and testing suppression technology specifically for risk prevention and mitigation. Measures will respect any

jurisdictional authority. There may be linkages to the strategy to assess the need to expand the MARS agreement.

7. Monitor All Risk Emergency Management

Some CIFFC agencies have adopted all risk into their operations and CIFFC has partnered with the 2nd generation development of Incident Command System training. Such relationships with other emergency management agencies can be an important factor in wildland fire operations particularly in a changing external environment characterized by increased demand, reduction in capacity and requirements to address human safety.

CIFFC will continue to foster relationships with other emergency management agencies. To help address Canada's wildland fire capacity needs, it will embark on collective planning for the sharing of resources, information, tools, risks and knowledge.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND STRATEGIES ALIGNMENT CHART

The following chart illustrates how strategic elements align. It is anticipated that as issues mature they will move from managing change to sustaining operations enabling a flexible and more appropriate approach to execution.

Strategies							Strategic Directions	
Monitor All Risk Emergency Management	Confirm Where Prevention/Mitigation Best Fits	Develop an IM/IT Strategy	Invest in Science to Support Resource Sharing	Build the Necessary Capacity to meet Canada's MARS Agreement needs	Create a More Financially Stable Structure	Enhance Governance Structure within CIFFC		
×	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	Facilitate improved efficiency in delivery of mutual aid between member agencies	SUSTAINING OPERATIONS
×	☑	☑	×	☑	☑	×	Provide coordinated national standards, specifications and certification programs to support safe and effective national wildland fire management	
×	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	Develop, maintain, and staff a state-of-the-art Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg	
×	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	Provide national leadership on Canadian wildland fire issues (internal)	MANAGING CHANGE
☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	×	Share wildland fire operational knowledge and resources internationally (external)	

NEXT STEPS

The CoD recommends to the BoT that the following five strategies be targeted for immediate action with the sixth and seventh to be addressed if resources allow:

- enhance governance structure within CIFFC;
- create a more financially stable structure;
- build the necessary capacity to meet Canada's Mutual Aid and Resource Sharing (MARS) agreement needs;
- invest in science to support resource sharing; and,
- develop an Information Management/Information Technology (IM/IT) strategy.

These five strategies will have 180-day action plans developed for each of them. To ensure completion, phase two action plans to move these five priority strategies forward may be needed.

CIFFC's CoD is responsible for determining priority, sequencing and dependencies of strategies and ensuring implementable action plans are built to address the challenges of the strategies and new issues and opportunities that arise. CIFFC's CoD and Executive Committee will define the role of CIFFC's Director in various plans' coordination and implementation. CIFFC's CoD, Executive Committee and Director will, if possible, seek opportunities to move forward more quickly than set out.

APPENDIX 1

Key accomplishments of the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan.

During the past five years significant progress has been made in meeting strategic goals and implementing actions. The 2008-2013 strategic plan and additional details highlighting achievements can be found at www.ciffc.ca Key accomplishments towards CIFFC's mission and vision are summarized as:

Strategic Direction 1: To enhance the coordination of mutual aid resource sharing to provide timely, efficient and effective response to member agencies.

Dialogue with the Compacts and mutual aid agreements has increased and initiatives to improve the efficiency and timeliness of MARS have been implemented.

Strategic Direction 2: To provide mutually beneficial opportunities through the development of international arrangements for mutual aid resource sharing and the exploration of cooperative international opportunities.

To support the core business, CIFFC is: finalizing agreements with Australia and Mexico; preparing to revisit and rewrite the Canada/US agreement (waiting on US law change); exploring opportunities with other countries and regions of the world; and representing Canadian operational agencies in global discussions on commonly agreed to standards and guidelines.

Internationally, a protocol to address requests to provide coordination for international wildland fire liaison has been drafted and work is being done with the Government of Canada through the Canadian Forest Service (CFS). CIFFC is endeavouring to develop and promote adoption of international standards that facilitate and enhance interagency resource exchanges; it maintains professional liaison with international partners, committees and groups (US Forest Service, US National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC), Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) and Fire Management Working Group (FMWG) for New Zealand and Australia as well as various United Nations Food And Agriculture Organizations (FAO) committees.

Strategic Direction 3: To maintain and enhance creative, dynamic and practical processes for the collection of wildland fire data, information management and communication among member agencies and others.

The Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg has upgraded computers and display systems. In addition, a new office location was researched and the Centre's operations were moved to a newer, more functional location in a safer region of Winnipeg. CIFFC is in the initial stages of

developing a plan that will define what members require from the website and web-based technologies and what that means in terms of service and maintenance.

The CIFFC display has been updated and staffs are attending member, Canadian and international meetings in order to showcase CIFFC.

Members' communication needs are being defined and appropriate systems of delivery identified.

Strategic Direction 4: To develop, coordinate and implement a comprehensive national wildland fire training initiative to facilitate interagency resource exchange, increase productivity and enhance safety.

A national training approach has been developed and detailed work plans and task analyses are underway through the Training WG. A Wildland Fire Training Manager (Coordinator) position at the Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg has been created and filled. Priorities have been set for training and work on several training packages is nearing completion.

Strategic Direction 5: To adopt value added technologies to improve and enhance the CIFFC Inc. response to mutual aid resource sharing, and information management.

To enhance capabilities for computer-based technology, the Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg has upgraded its equipment with a small business server and has developed an IT plan that includes a focus on hardware and software requirements.

Along with the development of tactics for information and web management, Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg is working with CFS and agencies to define the requirements and means for enhancing national data coordination and management.

The recently updated online situation report is one example of how Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg has explored tools to increase service efficiency. Web and information strategies will identify needs, requirements and the path forward.

Strategic Direction 6: To provide and maintain long range planning, program delivery, human resource strategies and financial sustainability to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.

To appropriately resource its fire priorities, CIFFC commits to an in-depth needs analysis of all future vacancies and is prepared for a future review of the delivery model.

Levies were recently adjusted based on the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan. The CoD have struck a Revenue Task Team and the BoT has approved project funding to study potential revenue options

including the CIFFC funding formula as part of ongoing efforts to attain more financial sustainability for existing and future program delivery.

Core CIFFC documents were reviewed and new policies were developed to address CIFFC's needs including revision of the administration manual, updating the bylaws, modifying the pension plan to address benefits and liabilities, establishing a code of conduct and a respectful workplace policy, and a conflict of interest and confidentiality policy. CIFFC has built a new annual performance appraisal and work plan system that will include development and training opportunities and continues to develop leadership capabilities within CIFFC and technical knowledge where required.

Strategic Direction 7: To develop and implement specific strategies to address current and emerging wildland fire issues.

CIFFC is providing support to the CCFM WFWMG on common projects via a re-establishment of the relationship and integrating work plans. The Wildfire Prevention CoP was created as part of examining the need for new WGs and CoPs to address emerging issues. The CoD has commenced certain improvements in the functioning of all WGs and CoPs but is continuing to assess their role and how they fit within the broader organization. Evaluation of member needs and preparation to dissolve groups and CoPs as appropriate continues.

With respect to all risk response, CIFFC has strategically adjusted the organizational structure for all risk based on evolving needs by member agencies, ICS-Canada leadership, and CIFFC is working closer with the broader Canadian emergency management community towards this end.

APPENDIX 2

The list of strategies from the April 6, 2013 version of CIFFC's 2013-18 Strategic Plan.

1. Establish More Effective Governance – For Immediate Action
2. Create a Financially Stable Structure – For Immediate Action
3. Assess the Need for Expansion of the Mutual Aid and Resource Sharing (MARS) Agreement – For Immediate Action
4. Build on Science – For Immediate Action
5. Develop an Information Management/Information Technology (IM/IT) Strategy – For Immediate Action
6. Set Priorities for Non-Core Issues
7. Confirm Where Prevention/Mitigation Best Fits
8. Develop a Human Resources (HR) Strategy for the Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg
9. Share Landscape Fire Management Best Practices
10. Promote International Professional Exchange
11. Promote International Mutual Aid and Resource Sharing
12. Plan for Emergency Management – All Risk

APPENDIX 3

Definitions of CIFFC and CCFM groups referred to in the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan.

Board of Trustees (BoT): The Board of Trustees is the entity comprised of one Trustee appointed by each of the federal, provincial and territorial governments which is responsible for setting and approving corporate Bylaws, establishing strategic direction of CIFFC, and setting and approving long range planning of CIFFC, or approving policy, direction and planning as delegated to the Council of Directors. The Director of the Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg and the Chair of the Council of Directors are ex-officio members of the BoT. The Trustees are generally Assistant Deputy Ministers or their equivalents.

Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM): The Canadian Council of Forest Ministers is composed of fourteen federal, provincial and territorial ministers (elected officials). Each year members of the Council assume the responsibility of the chair for the Council.

Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre Inc. (CIFFC): The Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre is a cooperative venture that seeks to share wildland fire management resources and information among its federal, provincial and territorial members. It is a federally incorporated not-for-profit corporation wholly owned and operated by the federal, provincial and territorial agencies responsible for wildland fire management in Canada.

Community of Practice (CoP): A Community of Practice is for information sharing, has voluntary participation, can include partners/academia and is chaired by member agency staff.

Council of Directors (CoD) : The Council of Directors is the entity comprised of one Director appointed by each provincial and territorial government, a Director or designate from Natural Resources Canada (Canadian Forest Service) and a Director of Designate from Parks Canada which is responsible for the property and business of CIFFC. The Director of the Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg is an ex-officio member. There is a four member Executive Committee of the Council. The CoD approves the annual work plan for CIFFC, changes to the Manual of Administration, and establishment, mandate and work plans for CIFFC Working Groups and Communities of Practice. The property and management of the Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg is managed by the Director of the centre through the Executive Committee of the Council of Directors.

Executive Committee (of CIFFC): The Executive Committee of CIFFC is appointed by the Council of Directors from within its members. The Executive Committee consists of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Past-Chair and a Director-at-Large (Secretary). The Director of the Canadian Forest Fire Centre is an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.

Task Team: A Task Team has an approved mandate, a defined/desired output and specific timeline (with a beginning and an end). There are two (2) types of Task Teams:

Minor Task Team: A Minor Task Team generally originates from a WG or a CoP. It is comprised of in-kind human resources from within the submitting entity, and completed with minimal funding.

Major Task Team: A Major Task Team is assigned substantive projects originating from the Board of Trustees, Council of Directors, WG or CoP. Major tasks are completed with member agency and/or CIFFC Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg staff secondment or contract human resources. These tasks may require significant financial support.

Wildland Fire Management Working Group (WFMWG): A Working Group established by the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) to address long term strategic wildland fire management issues established under CCFM's Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy.

Working Group (WG): A Working Group is strategic, national in scope, long-standing, has a clear cost benefit, CIFFC Inc. members' participation and chaired by Canadian Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg staff.