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States Report Increase in Community Wildfire Protection Plans

Capacity building and assessment tools continue to improve

Washington D.C., November 26, 2007 – Drought conditions, the build-up of hazardous fuels, and more homes in fire-prone landscapes are changing how we experience wildfire in America. The record-setting wildfires that burned in the South this spring, in the Mountain West this summer, and last month's California blazes are the latest in an unbroken string of ever worsening fire seasons. As fire worsens, preparedness must improve. State Forestry agencies help communities collaborate with landowners and federal, state, and local officials to prepare Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs), which help to reduce risk and damage and increase the ability to successfully suppress fires.

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) continually surveys all states to determine progress in identifying communities-at-risk for wildfire and their development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans. NASF survey results for fiscal year 2007 (ending September 30) indicate that the number of communities covered by a CWPP has increased from 3,264 to 4,762, a 46 percent increase from FY2006. A single CWPP may cover multiple communities.

An enhanced capability for community risk assessment has identified more communities at risk, so while progress is being made there is still much to accomplish. The NASF report also demonstrates the number of communities that increased capacity (12,080) and the number of communities that have reduced risk (3,814).

The FY2007 data was collected through the U.S. Forest Service's National Fire Plan Operations & Reporting System (NFPORS); forty-nine states reported for this year's survey. To view the NASF report, visit <http://www.stateforesters.org/reports/2007/NASF-finalCAR-report-FY07.pdf>

Communities can work with their state forestry agency to develop a CWPP; for a listing of all state forestry agencies, visit <http://www.stateforesters.org>.

The National Association of State Foresters is comprised of the directors of state and territorial agencies and the District of Columbia. Through public-private partnership, NASF seeks to advance sustainable forestry, conservation, and protection of forest lands and their associated resources.

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