

What is the Fire Emissions Joint Forum (FEJF)?

The FEJF is a group formed under the auspices of the Western Regional Air Partnership (WRAP), which was established to implement the recommendations of the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission (GCVTC Report, June 1996) and to address western regional air quality issues. The WRAP is a broad stakeholder-based partnership charged with developing visibility protection programs, specifically for Federally-protected Class 1 park and wilderness areas. WRAP members include Western Governors or their designees, state air quality agencies, federal/state/private land managers, tribes, the Environmental Protection Agency, environmental groups, industry, academia, and others. The FEJF will focus on western states (AZ, CA, CO, ID, MT, ND, NM, NV, OR, SD, UT, WA, and WY) although information from other states and/or neighbor countries (i.e., Canada, Mexico, Alaska, Hawaii) may also be used for developing the work products as appropriate.

The FEJF is guided by the recommendations contained in the GCVTC Final Report (1996), and the requirements of EPA's Regional Haze Rule (July 1999), concerning smoke effects from wildland and agricultural burning activities on public and private lands in the western states. This brochure outlines the mission of the FEJF, its membership, activities, and timelines, and in general terms, the role of fire and its effects on air quality in the West. For additional information, please see the links, "The Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission - Recommendations for Improving Western Vistas, June 10, 1996" and the FEJF Workplan and other documents located on the WRAP website (www.wrapair.org).

What is the mission of FEJF?

The FEJF's mission is to develop programs and tools relating to prescribed fire and air quality for the WRAP and related WRAP forums. The goal of the FEJF is to find ways to successfully meet the challenge of accomplishing both fire and land management goals with respect to prescribed burning, and clean air goals.

FEJF's work products will be presented to the WRAP as recommendations for WRAP approval. WRAP member states, tribes, and land managers are then expected to utilize the FEJF work products in developing or augmenting their respective programs. These work products include model smoke management and public education/outreach programs and emissions assessment tools.

What are FEJF's tasks?

The FEJF has organized into teams to develop consensus-based work products that address key areas related to fire and air quality. These areas correspond to the GCVTC Recommendations and Regional Haze Rule requirements. Team members include Forum and non-Forum members with special expertise. The key areas are:

1. Smoke Management Programs (SMPs)

1) assess the progress of current prescribed fire programs to address smoke effects; 2) assess existing smoke management programs and establish a clearinghouse of existing programs; 3) develop requirements for model basic and enhanced SMPs; and, 4) develop and recommend cooperative funding mechanisms for cross-jurisdictional agencies to use for funding SMPs.

2. Fire Emissions/Assessment

1) gather and review pertinent information on methodologies used to estimate fire emissions; 2) present information at workshops in order to obtain input from participants and evaluate existing information/methodologies related to fire emissions assessment; and to identify additional technical and institutional needs; 3) develop an Emissions Tracking System (ETS), and a process for states and tribes to adopt and implement an ETS; and, 4) develop annual emissions goals for all fire programs, where appropriate, for incorporation into SMPs.

3. Alternatives to Burning

1) develop criteria (including economic and social considerations) for the use of non-burning alternatives to fire; 2) identify non-statutory (for example, bureaucratic, social, economic) administrative barriers to the use of non-burning alternatives; 3) develop accountability mechanisms for use of alternative practices; and, 4) develop implementation plans.

4. Public Education and Outreach

1) coordinate with and assist other FEJF teams on developing public outreach materials for their work products; 2) compile public education/outreach materials from stakeholder groups and agencies, synthesize these materials, and recommend model program elements for others to use; 3) create a clearinghouse of existing and new information related to FEJF topics on the FEJF/WRAP website; and, 4) create appropriate means for public involvement in the FEJF process.

5. Natural Conditions

1) seek a common understanding of what constitutes natural conditions with regard to fire and air quality at Class 1 areas. Wildland and prescribed fire, including agricultural burning, is both human caused and naturally caused. The FEJF will work with its membership, other scientists and professionals involved in this issue, and other Forums to seek a common understanding of what constitutes natural conditions with regard to fire and air quality at Class 1 areas.



GCVTC's Recommendations regarding fire

The GCVTC recommended eight specific measures be developed to address the potential impacts of fire on air quality. These measures are to be developed in a stakeholder process similar to that used by the GCVTC, now incorporated into the FEJF, and are to be adopted by these stakeholders in developing their future smoke management programs and plans. Following is a summary of the recommendations:

1. **Plan for the visibility impacts of smoke**
2. **Implement an emissions tracking system for all fire activities**
3. **Improve integrated assessment of emissions**
4. **Enhance smoke management programs**
5. **Develop cooperative funding mechanisms**
6. **Promote public education programs**
7. **Establish annual emission goals for fire programs**
8. **Remove administrative barriers to the use of alternatives to burning**



What is the role of fire in ecosystems and agriculture and what are its effects on air quality and public health?

The GCVTC recognized that smoke from wildfire and prescribed burn activities can have a significant impact on visibility and regional haze, public health and public nuisance. The GCVTC also recognized the important role fire plays in maintaining the health of ecosystems and as a land management tool in many agricultural operations. The GCVTC Report states:

“Fire has played a major role in the development and maintenance of most ecosystems in the West. The long-term future of the West is dependent on healthy ecosystems that are capable of sustaining natural processes and human uses.”

Fire has not only been a natural part of ecosystems, but has also been an important management tool for as long as humans have systematically grown crops. Agricultural burning is used to stimulate new growth and trigger higher yields, control pests and weeds, reduce the need for herbicide and pesticide chemical treatments, reduce fire hazards, clear irrigation ditches and canals, and dispose of crop residue. Although some western states develop inventories of agricultural burning acreages and emissions, a regional emissions inventory currently does not exist.

FIRE EMISSIONS JOINT FORUM

