



## Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition Operating Principles

The Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition (GSFFC) is a collaborative partnership of organizations, advisors, and supporters in the community who are working to restore resiliency and forest health in the mountains and watersheds east of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The following operating principles guide the GSFFC in its collaborative planning, discussions, deliberations, and work.

### **Purpose**

(1) The purpose of the collaborative is to support and enhance the work of its partners, not to hinder, obstruct, disrupt, or replace partners' work. To the extent possible, the GSFFC will organize its work schedule, meetings and activities so that they integrate into the flow of work of its partners and advisors.

(2) The GSFFC is a learning organization, and strives to adapt and evolve to changing circumstances, technologies, processes and challenges. The organization strives to broaden the perspectives and possibilities of its partners and advisors, for the benefit of the human and ecological communities in the Fireshed.

(3) The GSFFC supports transparency in all of its decisions, activities, and plans. The operations of the organization will be carried out in public forums, and all activities and products are available to all partners, advisors, contacts, and other interested members of the public. All parties are encouraged to offer feedback to the collaborative, and feedback will be thoughtfully considered by the partners and advisors, with changes made as appropriate.

(4) The GSFFC recognizes and upholds the independence of its partners and advisors, and supports independent and critical thought.

(5) The GSFFC coordinates forest health, resiliency and restoration activities among partners within its working area, and partners should use the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed brand in advertising and discussing work carried out in the defined Fireshed working area, to solidify in the public's mind the collaborative work being conducted in the Fireshed.

### Chair

The **Chair** is the titular leader of the GSFFC. The chair facilitates meetings of the Coalition, implementing the GSFFC guidelines for decision-making. The chair can assign tasks to partners and advisors, ensures that action items are completed in a timely fashion, and oversees the activities of GSFFC committees and coordinators. The **Chair-Elect** assists the current chair and serves as chair in the subsequent year after being selected.

The chair serves a one-year term, beginning in January each year. The chair position will rotate through partnering organizations, with each partner given an opportunity to serve as chair. At the last general meeting of the Coalition each year, the chair-elect will be verified as the new chair, and a new chair-elect will be selected for the following year by general consensus of the partners present. The new chair-elect will be selected from a partner organization that has not served as chair in recent years. If more than one partner is nominated and willing to serve as chair-elect in a given year, the organization that has gone the longest without a representative as chair will serve as the



next chair-elect. If a consensus cannot be easily reached, the Coalition can take a vote at the meeting among the partners who are present to select the next chair.

### Manager

One partner will serve as **Manager** for the GSFFC. The manager, or someone designated by the manager, is responsible for communicating about all-Coalition meetings, including notifying all partners and advisors of upcoming meetings; preparing meeting agendas for all-Coalition meetings and sending them to all partners and advisors prior to the meeting; taking notes at all-Coalition meetings and preparing minutes for each meeting, and sending them out to all partners and advisors; maintaining and regularly updating a list of all partners, advisors and contacts; and carrying out other tasks that ensure the smooth operations of the GSFFC.

The manager is chosen from one of the partnering organizations of the GSFFC, and once named, the manager may serve as long as the incumbent is willing to continue in the position. When a manager leaves the position, the sitting chair will issue a call for volunteers, and the chair then selects the new manager. The chair may seek advice from partners and advisors in making the selection.

### Participants

(1) A **Partner** is an organization that supports the vision and mission of the GSFFC, having either signed onto the Resiliency Strategy or provided a letter expressing an appropriate level of commitment, should a signature not be permitted by that organization. Partners agree with the Operating Principles and commit to participating in GSFFC meetings and serving on committees. All partners have voting status on formal decisions made by the GSFFC. Initially, founding organizations supporting the plan, strategy, and operating principles are considered partners. Other organizations wishing to join the Coalition as partners must first join the Contact List and then express interest in partnership. They become Partners upon signing the Resiliency Strategy or providing a commitment letter.

Each partnering organization designates one member to represent them in formal decisions, with larger organizations choosing representation based on their internal structure. For example, the entire organization may be a partner, represented by one member, or each major unit within an organization, such as a district or branch that represents a significant number of people, may be a partner, with one person selected to represent the unit. If the organization chooses the latter option, the selected representatives are expected to participate regularly in Coalition activities, primarily representing their unit. If a representative cannot attend a meeting, she or he can send a delegate from their organization to serve as representative.

If any partner objects to a new organization's admission, concerns should be expressed to the Chair, who may consult with partners for input and resolve conflicts using the established conflict resolution process. In disputes over membership, organizations willing to join as Partners should be given deference due to the Coalition's value of inclusivity.

(2) **Advisors** are individuals or organizations that are supportive of the vision and mission of the GSFFC that are willing to commit time to participate in GSFFC meetings. Advisors may participate on committees as well. Advisors can participate in and contribute to Coalition meetings and activities but do not have voting status on formal decisions made by the Coalition. Advisors may be individuals who are participating actively but who do not represent a partner organization, or advisors may be



representatives from organizations that want to participate actively in Coalition activities but do not want to sign onto the Coalition's plan and strategy, or do not want the commit to partner status.

(3) **Contacts** are community members who have expressed an interest in the activities of the GSFFC and who have provided contact information. The GSFFC will communicate periodically with Contacts to keep them updated on GSFFC activities and to solicit their support when necessary. Joining the Contact List is also the first step for organizations interested in joining the GSFFC as Partners.

### Committees

The GSFFC operates through a committee structure. Each team has a chair who coordinates the committee's activities. Currently, the GSFFC has two standing committees and one ad-hoc committee. New committees can be created as necessary by proposal and affirmation at a meeting of the Coalition.

The GSFFC committees include:

(1) **Communications Committee** – Responsible for overseeing various procedural aspects of GSFFC planning and strategy, acting as a central hub for coordinating communication among committees, partners, and advisors involved in collaborative efforts. This includes managing public relations efforts, both internally and externally, to raise awareness about GSFFC activities and foster communication with Tribal communities. Additionally, the committee fosters collaboration with other organizations engaged in sustainable forest fire management, exchanging information and coordinating efforts to address shared challenges. Working closely with the Monitoring and Implementation Committee and the Executive Committee, the Communications Committee ensures timely dissemination of information regarding treatments, prescribed burns, wildfires, and GSFFC activities through appropriate channels.

(2) **Implementation and Monitoring Committee** – Responsible for coordinating partner actions to mitigate wildfire risk in the Fireshed and enhance forest health. This includes conducting risk assessments, prioritizing treatments, and devising implementation strategies based on expertise from the Monitoring and Implementation Committee. Treatment Implementation entails monitoring treatment execution, and optimizing collaboration opportunities among partners. Communication and Public Outreach efforts involve coordinating with the Communications Committee to effectively disseminate project information, facilitating communication among stakeholders, and ensuring relevant updates are shared. Monitoring and Evaluation activities focus on assessing project outcomes, evaluating treatment effectiveness, and recommending adjustments as needed. Partnership Development aims to foster collaboration, identify strategic partnerships, and facilitate coordination among partners involved in treatment processes.

(3) **Steering Committee (Ad-hoc)** – Responsible for providing nimble oversight and addressing specific challenges as they arise. The Executive Committee forms at the discretion and by consensus of the GSFFC. Meeting independently of quarterly gatherings, this committee addresses identified issues and proposes solutions for collective agreement within the GSFFC. Comprising dedicated volunteers, the committee dissolves upon resolution of the specific issue.



## Meetings

Meetings of the Coalition will be scheduled by consensus, based on necessity. Ordinarily, a date for each meeting will be agreed upon at the previous meeting, or will be announced at least one month prior to the scheduled date. Generally, the Coalition should meet at least quarterly (four times per year) in order to keep all partners and advisors updated and to move projects forward.

The purpose of All-Coalition meetings is to conduct business among the partners and advisors. Others, including members on the contact list, organizational members with an interest in the activities of the Coalition, and individual members of the public, may attend meetings as observers, and may participate in meetings at the discretion of the chair. The goal of meetings is to be inclusive; however, if there are time constraints, the chair should prioritize completing the scheduled business.

If an outside group would like to address the GSFFC at one of its meetings, the group can contact the chair or manager and make arrangements. When contacted, the chair and manager may allocate time during the meeting for a presentation by the outside group, and discussion among partners who are present at the meeting. If the matter requires further attention, the chair may refer the matter to a standing committee, or may appoint an ad hoc committee to work with interested parties to address the issue, and report back to the Coalition.

Meetings of committees will be scheduled by the committee chair as necessary to discuss information and decide on issues pertinent to their purposes.

## Decision-making

As a collaborative organization, one of the primary functions of the GSFFC is to provide a forum for partners and advisors to share information about the activities of their organizations, and to coordinate activities with a common purpose. At times, the GSFFC will make decisions about the operations of the collaborative organization, and decisions should be guided by the following values and processes.

The values and processes for decision-making apply to the activities and operations of the GSFFC as a collaborative organization, and not to independent decisions and plans made by any of its partners or advisors.

### Decision-making Values

Decisions regarding GSFFC operations should be:

(1) **Participatory and Collaborative:** The Chair should ensure that all partners have an opportunity to provide meaningful input to plans and decisions of the collaborative. Advisors also should be given a chance to provide input to decisions at meetings and activities.

If the GSFFC will make a decision that is of extraordinary importance to the communities in the Fireshed, to the City or County of Santa Fe, or to the State of New Mexico, partners should consider seeking input from the public that will be affected as well.

(2) **Strategic:** The GSFFC should aim to make decisions that are strategic, that represent the values and capacities of the partners, and that provide optimal outcomes.



(3) **Enabling:** Decisions made by the GSFFC should enable positive actions by partners and communities in and near the Fireshed.

#### Decision-making Process

(1) **Consensus:** When possible, the GSFFC should strive to make decisions by consensus, and should carefully consider dissenting views and work to incorporate dissent into the decisions and plans of the Coalition.

(2) **Majority:** If consensus is impossible, the GSFFC will make decisions by a majority vote, after discussion and debate on the issue at hand. All partners should strive to conform to the final decision.

(3) **Representative:** The GSFFC should strive to make decisions that are representative of the partnering organizations, and should avoid decisions or plans that contradict the goals, purposes, or policies of any partner.

#### Conflict Resolution

(1) If a disagreement or conflict arises among partners regarding an activity, process, policy or decision of the GSFFC, the partners should first attempt to resolve their differences through a discussion among the parties.

(2) If they cannot resolve their differences, the issue should be brought before the most relevant committee for a discussion in which partners can consider the effects of the conflict on the mission and goals of the GSFFC and on communities in the Fireshed, and work to resolve the conflict among partners

(3) If a discussion before a standing committee is unacceptable to parties to the dispute, the Chair of the GSFFC can appoint a committee of mediators to facilitate a discussion among the parties to try to resolve the dispute.

(4) If the conflict persists, the issues will be brought before the entire Coalition of partners for debate and discussion, followed by a vote (either public or by secret ballot as circumstances dictate) of all partners on how to resolve the dispute.

(5) The parties should abide by the decision made by the Coalition.

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