



TAHOE FIRE AND FUELS TEAM

OPERATING CHARTER

Contents

Mission and Purpose	3
Mission:	3
Purpose:	3
Scope	3
Guiding Principles	4
Organizational Structure	4
Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC)	4
Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT).....	5
Roles and Responsibilities	8
Meetings and Decision-Making	9
Meetings:	9
Decision-Making:.....	9
Communications	9
Charter Review and Amendments	10
APPENDIX A: Background and Evolution of the TFFT	10
Formation and Early Focus (2008–2014)	10
Evolution of Mission and Scope (2014–Present)	10
Today’s Context	11
APPENDIX B: Organization Chart	12
Appendix D: Working Groups – General Guidelines	13
Fire Public Information Team (Fire PIT)	14

Mission and Purpose

Mission:

The mission of the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT) is to advance resilient communities and landscapes across the Lake Tahoe Basin by aligning cross-jurisdictional wildfire resilience efforts, applying best available science, and engaging communities in collective stewardship.

Purpose:

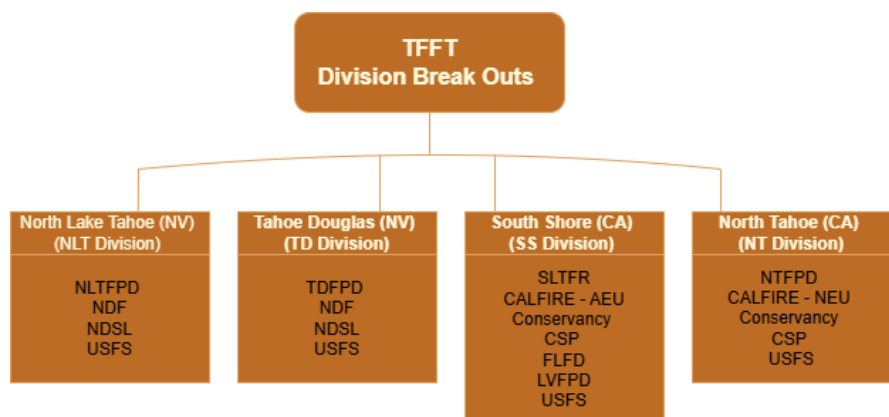
The TFFT serves as the collaborative platform for aligning, prioritizing, and coordinating cross-agency efforts to reduce hazardous fuels, improve forest health, and build resilience to wildfire across the Lake Tahoe Basin and surrounding areas. The TFFT serves as the collaborative group to communicate and coordinate Lake Tahoe Basin vegetation management and wildfire awareness priorities, regardless of jurisdiction, agency, or other external pressures.

Recognizing that wildfire is inevitable, the TFFT focuses on minimizing wildfire impacts through strategic action, collaboration, and long-term planning. Priorities, needs, and activities are identified in the Lake Tahoe Basin Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Strategy and Wildfire Prevention Strategy (Strategy), which serves as a foundational and guiding document for TFFT activities.

Scope

The primary scope of the TFFT is the Lake Tahoe Basin, which is divided into four geographic divisions for coordination purposes:

- North Lake Tahoe (NV)
- Tahoe-Douglas (NV)
- South Shore (CA)
- North Tahoe (CA)



Historically, these Divisions operated under an “Operations Section,” following the traditional Incident Command Structure. As TFFT’s membership, priorities, and collaborative needs evolved, the team transitioned from that model to an “Implementation Coordination Working Group”. This standing working group brings together the Basin’s primary implementers to coordinate project delivery, share resources, (personnel, equipment, and supplies), provide training opportunities, and ensure efficient, strategic implementation of identified projects.

While the immediate focus is within the Tahoe Basin watershed, the TFFT actively develops and maintains relationships beyond that boundary. This approach addresses the realities that wildfire, evacuation needs, environmental stewardship, and resource concerns do not adhere to administrative lines. It also recognizes that consistency and collaboration across a broader regional area are vital for long-term resilience.

Guiding Principles

- **Collaboration:** Operate across jurisdictional boundaries, aligning priorities, and making decisions in the best interest of the Basin as a whole.
- **Trust and Respect:** Maintain open communication, listen for understanding, and respect the authorities and missions of participating agencies.
- **Science-Informed Action:** Incorporate best available science and creative innovations to increase pace and scale across the landscape.
- **Shared Commitment:** Balance competing needs, focus on outcomes, and resolve differences in a timely and productive manner.
- **Accountability:** Maintain clear roles, responsibilities, and regular review of priorities, accomplishments, and lessons learned.
- **Community Trust:** Build credibility and trust with the public through consistent engagement, clear communication, and openness in decision-making.

Organizational Structure

Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC)

Purpose: Provides strategic direction and support for the TFFT, while coordinating with TFFT to inform priorities, decisions, and needs.

Responsibilities:

- Provide overall strategy and guidance for TFFT, in coordination with TFFT leadership.

- Assist in identifying and securing funding opportunities and advocate for resources to meet goals.
- Maintain accountability for the priorities and activities identified in the Strategy.

Membership: Executives from the signatory agencies to the Strategy.

MAC Membership:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Fallen Leaf Fire Department | • Nevada Division of State Parks |
| • Lake Valley Fire Protection District | • Nevada Division of Forestry |
| • Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District | • Nevada Division of State Lands |
| • South Tahoe Fire Rescue | • California State Parks |
| • North Tahoe Fire Protection District | • California Tahoe Conservancy |
| • North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District | • Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California |
| • CAL FIRE – Amador-El Dorado Unit | • Tahoe Resource Conservation District |
| • CAL FIRE – Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit | • Tahoe Regional Planning Agency |
| • USFS – Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit | |

Leadership:

- A Chair and Vice Chair are elected for a minimum two-year term, with the option to extend based on consensus from MAC members.
 - MAC leadership is nominated and voted on by other MAC members, and any MAC member can serve as Chair or Co-Chair.
 - In the event of a Chair or Co-Chair resigning responsibilities, the position(s) may be filled in a special election, with the new officer to serve the balance of the term.
 - To ensure balanced leadership and strategic alignment, the Chair and Co-Chair should represent both a fire agency and a non-fire agency.

Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT)

Purpose: Provide a collaborative space and coordination to plan and implement vegetation management projects and wildfire awareness and resilience within the Tahoe Basin in collaboration with active partners. Provides support to fund, plan, and coordinate wildfire mitigation and forest resiliency projects.

Responsibilities:

- Advance community safety and resilience by reducing the risk of severe wildfire, protecting critical infrastructure, and strengthening the Basin’s capacity to withstand wildfire impacts.
- Organize a strategic, multi-year plan focused on implementing the Strategy.

- Develop and implement a Basin-wide work plan that is informed and supported by the Strategy and current CWPP.
- Ensure the Work Plan projects are aligned with the priorities determined by the MAC and TFFT Leadership and utilize those priorities to rank projects when funding and other resources require prioritization.
- Coordinate fuel treatments and forest management across jurisdictions.
- Integrate best available science and innovations.
- Maintain strong connections with stakeholders, communities, and partner organizations. Build trust with the communities in the Basin to protect them from the impacts of wildfire.
- Remain flexible and adaptive to shifts in priorities, social and political conditions, and partner needs to continue to be a leader in wildfire resiliency effectiveness.

Membership:

- **Signatory Members:** Agencies and organizations with direct responsibility for land and resource management, fire response, and public safety. Core members provide leadership, make decisions on planning and implementation, coordinate cross-jurisdictional activities, and are accountable for achieving the objectives identified in the TFFT Work Plan. Core members are those whose executives are signatory to the Strategy.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ▪ Fallen Leaf Fire Department | ▪ Nevada Division of State Parks |
| ▪ Lake Valley Fire Protection District | ▪ Nevada Division of Forestry |
| ▪ Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District | ▪ Nevada Division of State Lands |
| ▪ South Tahoe Fire Rescue | ▪ California State Parks |
| ▪ North Tahoe Fire Protection District | ▪ California Tahoe Conservancy |
| ▪ North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District | ▪ Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California |
| ▪ CAL FIRE – Amador-El Dorado Unit | ▪ Tahoe Resource Conservation District |
| ▪ CAL FIRE – Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit | ▪ Tahoe Regional Planning Agency |
| ▪ USFS – Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit | |

- **Collaborating Members:** Stakeholders providing subject matter expertise, data, public engagement, and other critical support. Support members are invited to TFFT coordination meetings, retreats, and other events, but are not signatory to the Strategy.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| ▪ El Dorado County, CA | ▪ Lahontan Regional Water Quality Board |
| ▪ Placer County, CA | ▪ California Conservation Corps |
| ▪ Douglas County, NV | ▪ Lake Tahoe Community College |
| ▪ Washoe County, NV | ▪ Great Basin Institute |

- Carson City, NV
- Public Utilities Districts
- Liberty Utilities
- NV Energy
- Nevada Department of Transportation
- CalTrans
- Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District
- Carson City Fire Department
- California Conservation Corps
- Nevada Tahoe Conservation District
- University of Nevada Reno, Extension
- University of California, Cooperative Extension
- National Forest Foundation
- Tahoe Fund
- Keep Tahoe Blue
- Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation
- Tahoe Community Foundation
- Tahoe Science Advisory Council

Leadership Roles:

- **Leadership Steering Committee:** The three-person Steering Committee provides operational direction, strategic guidance, and continuity for TFFT. It is composed of the Incident Commander, Deputy Incident Commander, and Plans Section Chief.
 - **Incident Commander (IC):** Provides overall operational direction for TFFT. Serves a minimum two-year term, with reappointment permitted, and with a term offset from the MAC Chairs to ensure leadership continuity. The IC is nominated and approved by the MAC.
 - **Deputy Incident Commander (Deputy IC):** Supports the IC and assumes responsibilities as needed. Serves a minimum two-year term, with reappointment permitted. The Deputy IC is nominated and approved by the MAC.
 - **Plans Section Chief:** Serves as a member of the TFFT Leadership Team and provides Basin-wide strategic planning by integrating regulatory requirements, ensures project tracking and reporting, supports strategic long-term planning and funding coordination, and advises on policy and regulatory discussions as needed. Appointed by the IC with no term limit.
- **Program Manager:** Leads the day-to-day TFFT operations, coordination, and communications. Serves as the primary representative of the TFFT and acts as the Incident Commander’s designee. Provides direct coordination with partners, ensures alignment across TFFT and MAC, and maintains continuity through leadership transitions. This position is empowered to guide implementation of TFFT priorities and ensure consistent representation of the team’s mission and direction.
- **Program Coordinator:** Provides the primary oversight for Fire PIT operations and leads Basin-wide public outreach and community engagement efforts. Supports the Program Manager in executing TFFT operations, fundraising, coordination, and communications. This position maintains situational awareness across projects and partners, ensuring alignment and continuity in daily operations.

In order to maintain balanced leadership and strategic alignment, TFFT leadership should reflect a mix of fire and non-fire professionals and include representation from both states. This approach parallels the intent of the MAC leadership structure while allowing TFFT Leadership to come from any participating agencies or organizations. The goal is to ensure diverse perspectives and broad Basin-wide representation in decision-making.

Roles and Responsibilities

MAC Members

- Participate actively in meetings and decision-making.
- Approve annual Work Plan, review accomplishments, and support collaborative priorities.
- Advocate for resources and policy support.

TFFT Members

- Contribute expertise, data, and staff to Basin-wide efforts.
- Participate in planning and operational meetings.
- Maintain accountability within their respective agencies and organizations for assigned deliverables and communications.

Fire Public Information Team (Fire PIT) Members

- Regularly update fellow TFFT partners on public information and education events and/or resources. Provide details if resources are available for sharing or event participation.
- Contribute expertise and capacity to develop and implement collaborative wildfire resilient and forest health communication efforts across the Basin.
- Provide metrics to measure communications strategies effectiveness.
- Participate in Fire PIT monthly coordination meetings, as well as larger TFFT coordination meetings, as applicable.
- Maintain accountability to collaborate effectively.

Working Group Members

- Participate actively in discussions, providing subject matter expertise and input.
- Support implementation of Work Plan objectives and assigned tasks.
- Share relevant information and coordinate with respective agencies or organizations.

All Members

- Be respectful and collaborative.
- Maintain focus on advancing the mission.
- Participate in regular review and adjustment of priorities.

Meetings and Decision-Making

Meetings:

- MAC: Bi-monthly, alternating months with TFFT meetings, starting in January.
- TFFT Coordination: Bi-monthly, including an annual retreat.
- Fire PIT: Monthly, not to coincide with MAC and TFFT meetings.

Decision-Making:

The TFFT operates by consensus. When consensus is not possible, one vote per core member may be called. Operational decisions follow ICS protocols, with final authority resting with the Incident Commander.

Communications

- All members are responsible for sharing TFFT information and priorities within their respective organizations.
- The Fire PIT serves as the communication and public engagement arm of the TFFT.
- Public announcements and external messaging are developed through the Fire PIT and approved by the Incident Commander (or designee) for Basin-wide messaging. Member agencies retain authority for their own organizational communications.
- Presentations, briefings, or other external representation of TFFT lessons learned, projects, or priorities must be coordinated with TFFT leadership to ensure accurate and consistent messaging.
- Use of the TFFT name, logo, or other branding in presentations, publications, or external materials must be coordinated with TFFT leadership to ensure consistent and accurate representation.
- The TFFT promotes a culture of transparency, accountability, and continuous learning by capturing and sharing lessons learned and best practices across the Basin.

Charter Review and Amendments

The organizational chart and other operational components of this Charter will be reviewed annually at the TFFT Retreat to ensure they reflect current structure, responsibilities, and needs. The full Charter will undergo a comprehensive review every five years, or sooner if circumstances warrant.

TFFT Leadership and the MAC will complete all reviews and proposed updates. Amendments require MAC consensus.

APPENDIX A: Background and Evolution of the TFFT

Formation and Early Focus (2008–2014)

The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT) was formed in February of 2008 to implement the Lake Tahoe Basin Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy (Strategy). In the aftermath of the Angora Fire of 2007, the Governors of Nevada and California created the California-Nevada Tahoe Basin Fire Commission to assess and recommend ways to reduce catastrophic wildfire risk across the Basin. The final report, released in May of 2008, emphasized multi-jurisdictional collaboration as a critical component of fuels reduction and forest health efforts, shaping the foundation for the TFFT.

Initially, the focus was heavily aligned with hazardous fuels treatments and creating strategically placed shaded fuel breaks, primarily focusing on the “home ignition zone” and near-structure environment. The early work was largely driven by local fire protection districts and supported by state and federal land management agencies.

Evolution of Mission and Scope (2014–Present)

In December of 2007, the original Strategy was developed in coordination with the active land management and fire prevention entities in the Basin. The Strategy was updated in 2014, and again in 2017, to reflect changes in partnerships and to address revised priorities and advances in planning and implementation. The 2025 ten-year update reflects the Basin’s growing complexity:

- **From Fuels Reduction to Forest and Community Resilience:** Expanding focus from hazardous fuels treatments to holistic forest health and long-term resilience.
- **Broader Partnerships:** Incorporation of diverse stakeholders including conservation organizations, utilities, and private industry.

- **Modern Challenges:** Adapting to changing weather, longer fire seasons, and increasing public and political engagement.
- **Integrated Approaches:** Incorporation of the best available science, innovative treatments, and Fire Adapted Communities concepts.

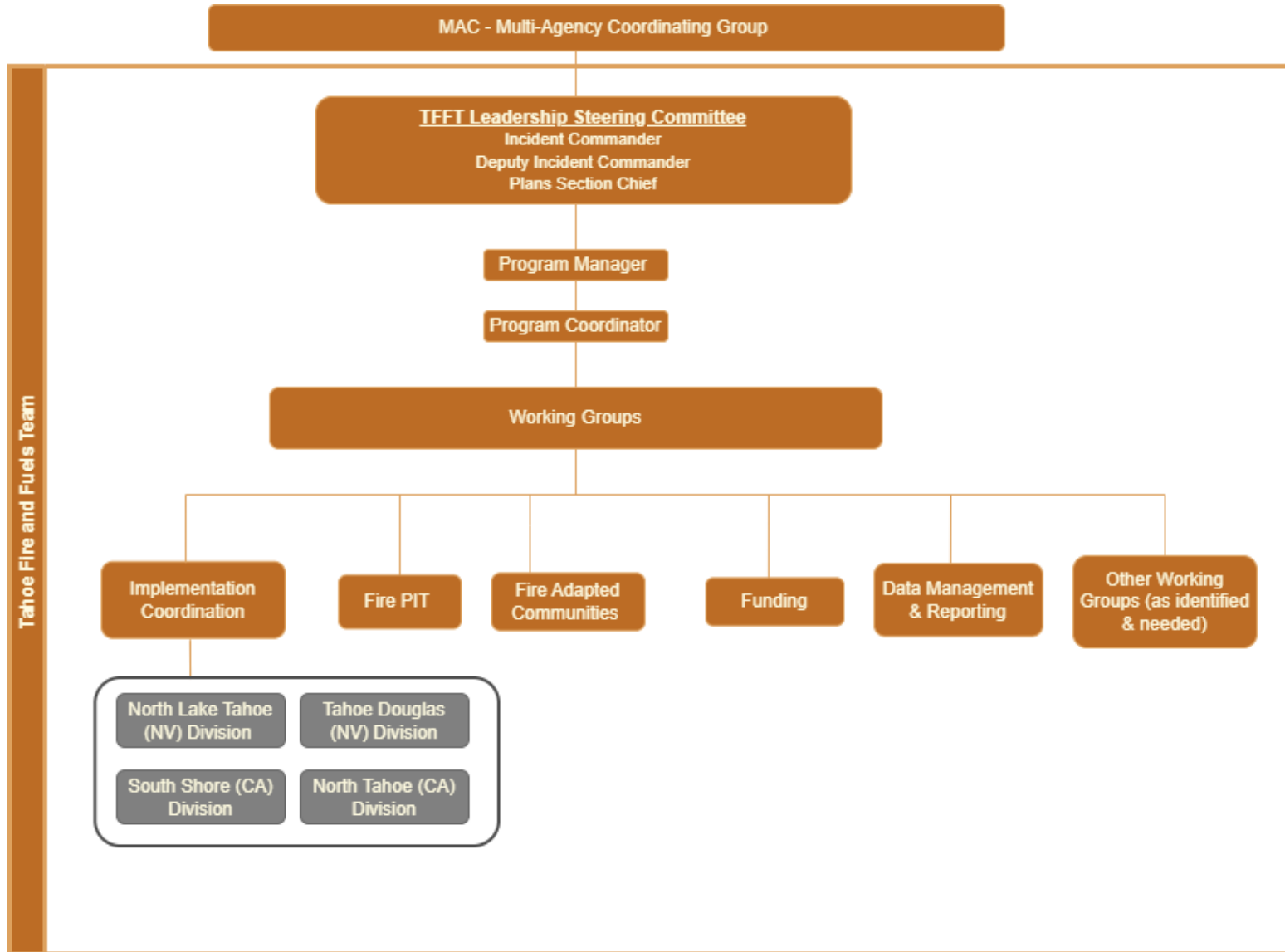
Today's Context

The TFFT operates in an environment where wildfire and forest health concerns know no boundaries, and the impacts of these disturbances extend well beyond the perimeter of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The growing understanding of climate-driven wildfire behavior has underscored the urgency of:

- Expanding collaboration across jurisdictions.
- Incorporating advances in forest and fire science.
- Engaging communities and stakeholders to build internal and external resilience.
- Advocating for sustained investments and aligning priorities across all partners

With these advances and the ongoing support of its multi-agency and multi-stakeholder coordination, the TFFT is positioned to continue serving as a model for collaborative, landscape-scale wildfire resilience and forest restoration.

APPENDIX B: Organization Chart



Appendix D: Working Groups – General Guidelines

Purpose: Due to the complexity of the relationships in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and the number of partners, active working groups are needed to ensure progress is met on identified priorities and objectives. Working groups may be long standing (Fire PIT) or formed of an immediate need based on current events. Examples of working groups may be:

- **Natural Resource Planning:** The group would focus on mentoring and streamlining the planning and permitting required to implement projects. Needs that have been identified that fit within this working group are project layout, determining objectives, and identifying when resource survey needs (cultural, botany, wildlife, etc.). This working group may also provide implementation experience and assistance with best practices to meet objectives.
- **Forest Industry:** This working group would focus on engaging with industry within the Tahoe Basin. This includes forest products at all levels, contractor relationships and communications, as well as engaging in regional efforts to establish an industry base in the area.
- **Advocacy:** This working group would focus on advocating for issues that impact the TFFT mission. This could be federal, state, or local issues and policies, funding needs, policy changes, and TFFT representation.
- **Science and Innovation:** This working group would focus on new and emerging science and tools that may help expand pace and scale to meet TFFT objectives.
- **Data Management:** This working group would be dedicated to managing TFFT data for reporting needs, as well as providing data for informational purposes to communicate more effectively.

Responsibilities: Working groups are subgroups of the larger TFFT organization. Which means that they acknowledge and adhere to the TFFT mission, with input and guidance from the MAC.

Membership: Working group membership depends on the need and duration of the working group activities. Ultimately, membership may expand and contract depending on the need and will be made up of subject matter experts.

Fire Public Information Team (Fire PIT)

Mission Statement: As the communications arm of the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, Fire PIT serves as a central forum for partners to connect resources and distribute public information and education on wildfire and forest management efforts in the Tahoe Basin servicing all partners and public audiences.

Purpose: The Fire PIT is a standing working group of communications and outreach specialists drawn from TFFT member agencies. The Fire PIT is led by two co-chairs appointed by the TFFT leadership. As needed, additional subgroups may be convened to support communications needs.

Responsibilities:

- Draft and share coordinated messaging – continue to develop and share Basin-wide guidelines for accurate and consistent information sharing.
- Develop and implement an annual outreach plan – utilize social science-based approaches to enhance community protection efforts in coordination with partners.
- Deliver Basin-wide community support – Provide consistent public education and outreach to create a widespread culture of wildfire prevention, preparedness, recovery, and forest resilience.
- Align with TFFT initiatives – collaborate with TFFT sections, working groups, and projects to ensure consistent, proactive communications and shared objectives are being achieved.

Membership: The Fire PIT is made up of the same members of the TFFT, but those respective agencies/organizations information or communications personnel. In addition, other specialists may be included to increase public engagement and enhance communication strategies.