

# **THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE AREA**

## **INTERAGENCY FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANNING**

**AND**

## **COORDINATION GUIDE**



**INCORPORATING**

**Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest  
Gallatin National Forest  
Custer National Forest  
Grand Teton National Park**

**Shoshone National Forest  
Bridger-Teton National Forest  
Caribou-Targhee National Forest  
Yellowstone National Park**

**Prepared Under the Direction of  
The Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee**

Revised March 2000  
Revised April 1995  
(Original Publication 1990)

# GREATER YELLOWSTONE COORDINATING COMMITTEE



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TO: GYA Fire Management Officers  
GYA Regional Fire and Aviation Staff

Date: March 2000

Enclosed is the Interagency Fire Management Planning and Coordination Guide for the National Forests and Parks in the Greater Yellowstone Area. Its purpose is to provide coordinated direction for fire management issues and operational procedures that must be addressed and implemented throughout the GYA. It is responsive to policy changes that result from the National Fire management Policy Review and will provide effective coordination of wildland fire use, wildland fire suppression activities and prescribed fire programs. Please attach it to your unit fire policy and operational documents and consider it an integral part of your normal working procedures.

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Supervisor, Targhee National Forest

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Superintendent, Grand Teton National Park

**Marvin O. Jensen, for**

Michael V. Finley  
Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) is made up of parts of six National Forests and two National Parks. Contiguous portions of these Parks and Forests encompass roughly 12.0 million acres of Federal reservations, plus state lands, National Wildlife Refuges, public lands (Bureau of Land Management) and privately owned lands. This vast area lies within three states - Montana, Idaho and Wyoming and includes all or parts of 12 counties.

The Greater Yellowstone Area is world-renowned for its scenery, wildlife, wilderness, rivers, hunting, fishing, outdoor recreation opportunities, geologic, and thermal features. Other resources, although not as well known, are critically important to the people living in and adjacent to this area. Activities such as timber harvesting, firewood gathering, livestock grazing, mining, oil and gas development, outfitting and tourism associated with recreation are important segments of local economies.

Since their inception, National Forests and National Parks have been managed differently, as specified in their original Congressional mandates. National Parks were founded upon the principles of preservation, public enjoyment, and non-interference with natural processes. National Forests were established on conservation principles; the wise multiple-use of natural resources. The National Park Service, an agency of the United States Department of the Interior, is responsible for administration of the National Park System. The Forest Service, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, is responsible for administration of National Forests. In the early 1960's, Forest and Park Managers in the GYA recognized the need for coordination on a number of issues and programs which crossed jurisdictional boundaries.

The Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (GYCC) was born of this need and consists of the following: The Agency Administrators of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Custer, Gallatin, Shoshone, Caribou-Targhee, and Bridger-Teton National Forests and the Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. A member (an Agency Administrator of a GYA Unit) will be designated annually by the GYCC to serve as the Fire Management Representative. The Representative's role will be to serve as the primary link between the GYA Fire Management Advisory Group (FMAG) and the GYCC.

The events of the 1994 fire season created a renewed awareness and concern among Federal land management agencies and constituents about safety, the impacts of wildland fire, and the integration of fire and resource management. As a result of those concerns and in response to specific recommendations in the report of the South Canyon Fire Interagency Management Review Team (IMRT), the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review was chartered and completed in 1995. The Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture convened this review to reaffirm and ensure that uniform Federal policies and cohesive and cooperative interagency and intergovernmental fire management programs exist.

The review represents the latest stage in the evolution of wildland fire management and recommends policy changes that associate suppression and management of wildland fires into a single direction achieving multidimensional objectives. This policy directs Federal agencies to achieve a balance between suppression to protect life, property, and resources, and fire use to regulate fuels and maintain healthy ecosystems. Most of the previous barriers and constraints to expanded fire use are removed through this policy.

The 1995 Report provides nine guiding principles that are fundamental to the success of the Federal wildland fire management program and implementation of review recommendations. They are:

- Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.
- The role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent will be incorporated into the planning process.

- Fire management plans, programs, and activities support land and resource management plans and their importance.
- Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities.
- Fire management programs and activities are economically viable, based upon values to be protected, costs, and land and resource management objectives.
- Fire management plans must be based on the best available science.
- Fire management plans and activities incorporate public health and environmental quality considerations.
- Federal, Tribal, State, and local interagency coordination and cooperation are essential.
- Standardization of policies and procedures among Federal agencies is an ongoing objective.

The Report also recommends a set of 13 Federal wildland fire policies in the areas of: safety, planning, wildland fire, prescribed fire, preparedness, suppression, prevention, protection priorities, interagency cooperation, standardization, economic efficiency, wildland/urban interface, and administration and employee roles.

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of this document is to address fire management issues and operational procedures, which in the view of the GYCC, must be addressed and implemented on an area-wide basis in a consistent manner.

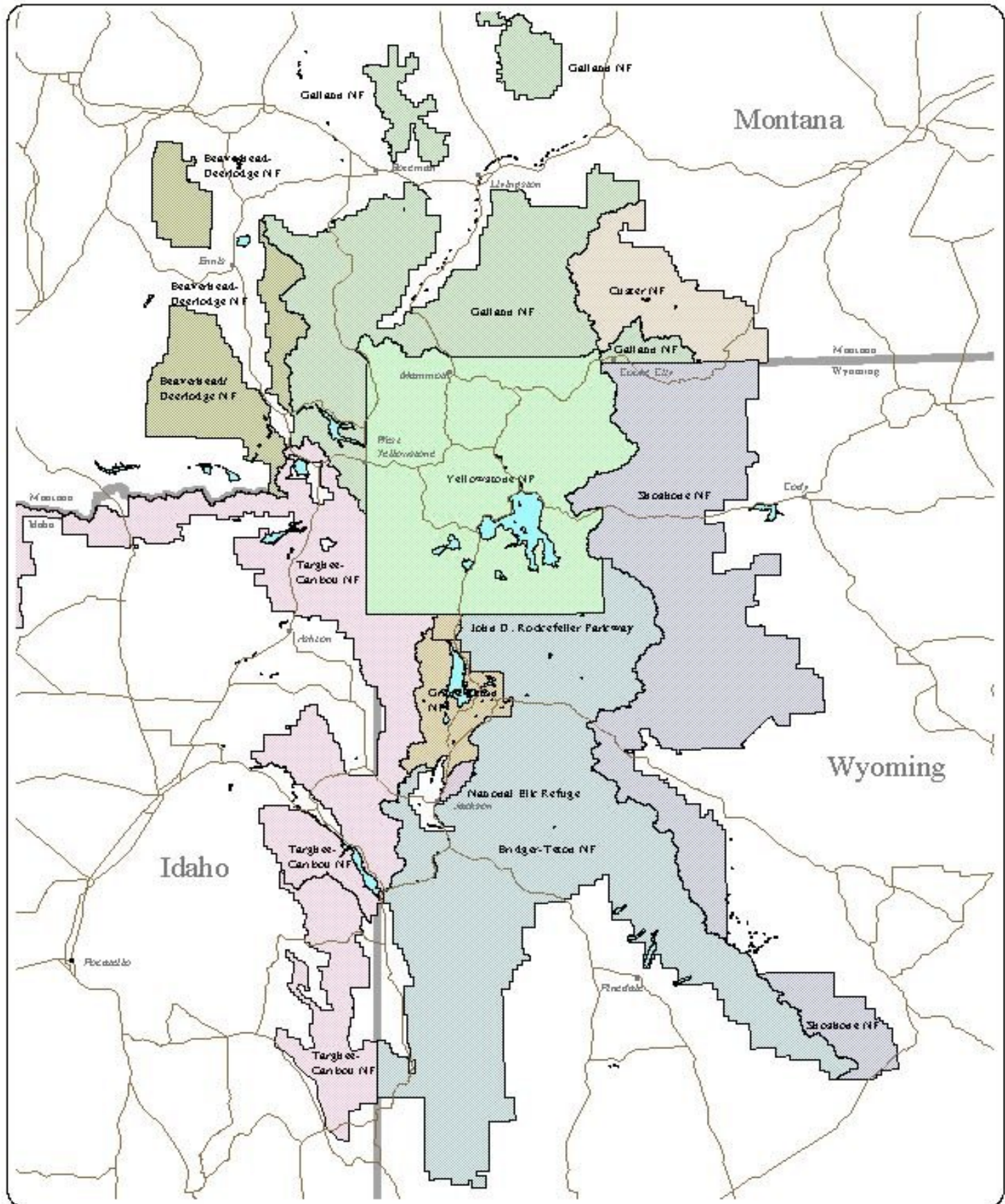
### **OBJECTIVES**

The specific objectives of this document are to:

1. Coordinate fire management planning within the Greater Yellowstone Area.
2. Provide for specific operating principles and procedures to assure effective interagency coordination and management of wildland fires and prescribed fires occurring in the Greater Yellowstone Area.
3. Define the role of the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee in fire management within the Greater Yellowstone Area.

This is not a comprehensive planning document. It will not achieve levels of fire management planning required for individual units, nor is it designed to serve as a “master” fire management plan for the Greater Yellowstone Area. The responsibility to conduct professional level fire management planning remains with individual units, commensurate with their departmental and agency policies and guidelines.

# The Greater Yellowstone Area: Federal Administrative Units



Legend	
	Major Lakes
	Major Roads
	State Boundaries
	NF National Forest
	NP National Park
	NM National Monument
	NR National Refuge

Approximate Scale 1:2,200,000

0 20 40 Kilometers

This map was made from the Greater Yellowstone Data provided by the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee and the Gallatin National Forest. Map by H. Shaver, April 20, 2000. Version 1.0, grandadministrative boundaries.gp



## **AREA ADDRESSED BY THIS DOCUMENT**

A multitude of issues which cross the jurisdictional boundaries of individual Parks or Forests face the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee: fire management, geothermal development, fisheries and wildlife management, and more. Unfortunately, not all issues fit a fixed definition of exactly what land base constitutes the GYA or what many refer to as the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Certain organizational, logistical, and topographic realities, require that this be more clearly defined for purposes of fire management.

This document will be viewed as addressing all of the Greater Yellowstone Area as defined in the GYCC Aggregation Document and the Lander Ranger District of the Shoshone National Forest and the Kemmerer Ranger District and the southern portions of the Big Piney and Pinedale Ranger Districts of the Bridger-Teton National Forest and that area north of I-90 of the Gallatin National Forest.

## **PLANNING AND COORDINATION**

### **GENERAL**

Individual units within the GYA are required to have fire management plans that meet agency standards and national policy. Individual fire management plans will incorporate the GYA operating principles contained in this document. In addition, the GYCC has agreed to continue several specific operational procedures which will ensure a high level of interagency fire management planning and coordination in the GYA.

These include:

1. To conduct an annual spring and fall meeting of all GYA Fire Management Officers (FMO's).
2. Maintaining the interagency peer review process for new and revised NPS fire management plans and that portion of USFS land use plans that focus on wildland fire use.
3. Operate and apply the GYA Fire Situation Report.
4. Adhere to the GYA Preparedness Plan.
5. Utilize the GYCC Fire Management Advisory Group (FMAG) to serve as professional level consultants to the GYCC.
6. Maintain a consistent process for the management of prescribed fires and wildland fires in the GYA as described in the *Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy Implementation Procedures Reference Guide*.

A key component of individual fire management plans, and a cornerstone of coordinated fire management in the GYA, is conducting comprehensive joint planning along the boundaries of neighboring land management units and completion of mutually acceptable fire management plans. Each unit will work closely with their neighboring units in the development and/or revision of the individual plan/plans as per this document.

## **COORDINATION MEETING OF GYA FIRE MANAGEMENT OFFICERS**

Fire Management Officers from each GYA unit will meet each spring and fall to review fire management planning status and operational procedures. Discussions will include topics such as preseason conditions, fire season potential, operational reviews, situation and status reporting, mobilization and preparedness plans, prescribed fire, review of cooperative agreements, review of Coordination Guide for currency, land management planning, data base coordination, education, and media coordination.

Key assignments to be made at the spring meeting include Peer Review Group membership and GYCC Fire Management Advisory Group (FMAG) membership. An annual set of "Goals and Objectives" will be developed by the GYA FMO's at the spring meeting. The purpose of the "Goals and Objectives" will be to strengthen interagency coordination and to monitor progress on key GYA Fire Management issues. A brief Annual Report will be prepared by the Fire Management Advisory Group providing highlights of the GYA Fire Season and status of progress on the Annual Goals and Objectives.

Individual GYA units will coordinate and host the meeting on a rotating basis. Participation by Forest Supervisors, Park Superintendents, and Regional Staff members is encouraged.

## **GYA INTERAGENCY PEER REVIEW PROCESS FOR FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANS**

To complement the normal agency review and approval procedure, a GYA peer review process will be maintained for the purpose of reviewing individual fire management plans. The process will occur as follows:

1. A three-person (minimum number) Peer Review Team will be appointed annually at the Spring GYA FMO meeting. Team membership will include at least one fire specialist and one wilderness/resource specialist.
2. When individual NPS fire management plans, or that portion of USFS land use plans that focus on wildland fire for resource benefits, are ready for review, they will be sent to the members of the GYA Peer Review Team for a detailed evaluation; to be followed by a meeting of the Review Team and the Forest or Park FMO. This process must occur in a timely fashion and prior to or concurrently with normal agency review.

Implementation of individual NPS fire management plans, or that portion of USFS land use plans that focus on wildland fire for resource benefits, may occur only after completion of the normal agency approval process and approval of all applicable agreements.

## **GYA SITUATION REPORT**

Current information on the fire situation in each GYA unit is critical for responsible fire management planning and implementation. Sharing of fire situation information between units in the GYA will be coordinated by the Bozeman Interagency Dispatch Center (BZC). This report will be consolidated into the GYA Situation Report and be electronically available each day. The GYA Situation Report will provide each unit with a description of fire activity, resource availability, and potential for continued fire activity to facilitate coordinated planning and public information efforts.

## **GYA FIRE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP (FMAG)**

In order to enhance coordinated management of large, potentially large and/or complex fire incidents within the GYA, a GYCC Fire Management Advisory Group (FMAG) is established. Participants in this group shall consist of a minimum of three GYA FMO's from two agencies. Other federal, state, and local officials will be consulted as needed. This group, including a chairperson and a co-chairperson, will be selected for a two year term, at the annual spring FMO meeting. The FMAG will be activated by any one of the following conditions:

1. Discretion of any GYA Agency Administrator.
2. GYA in Preparedness Level III or higher, regardless of number of fires.

The Chairperson will monitor the GYA Situation Report on a daily basis during the fire season and will activate the group when any one of the criteria is met. Once activated, the FMAG will assess the overall fire situation in the GYA on a daily basis and make recommendations to the affected Agency Administrator(s) and the GYCC. The FMAG's recommendations will be based on local, regional, and national fire situation; resource availability; current and projected fire behavior; potential threat to life and property; air quality impacts; and social, economic, and political impacts of GYA fire management activities. The FMAG will not function as a Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group per se, but will provide input into Geographical MAC Groups. The Chairperson, or the Co-Chairperson, will be the primary link to the MAC Group.

FMAG function is to:

1. Serve as professional level consultants to the GYCC and provide advice on appropriate management strategies for wildland fire use and prescribed fire as requested.
2. Recommend to the GYCC when wildland fire use or prescribed fire may pose unacceptable risk.
3. Recommend to the GYCC when the totality of the fire circumstances warrants representation by the GYA in a Geographic MAC Group.
4. Recommend to the GYCC the coordination for preparedness planning, severity operations, fire restrictions, etc.
5. Establish periodic coordination conference calls as necessary.
6. Coordinate the agendas, guest speakers, and assure logistics are completed for the bi-annual meetings.
7. Assure documentation of meetings and conference calls are completed through the formatted proceedings and notes.
8. Leads and finalizes the development of annual goals and objectives.
9. Completes the end of season report and presents results, issues, and expectations to the GYCC.
10. Conducts briefings to the GYCC as necessary.



## **WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT**

### **WILDLAND FIRE PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT**

The *Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy, Implementation Procedures Reference Guide* are the approved management procedures for the GYA. Adoption of a standard methodology enables the NPS and USFS to apply a consistent approach to wildland fire management. Wildland Fire Implementation Plans (WFIP) will be completed to the necessary stages, for each wildland fire. Specific coordination understandings are included in the *Greater Yellowstone Area, Interagency Fire Management Agreement*. (Appendix A).

### **ABSENCE OF AN APPROVED FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

If an approved fire management plan for resource benefits is not present for a particular unit, then the only available option is suppression of the wildland fire and appropriate action will be taken immediately.

### **HUMAN-CAUSED FIRE**

Human-caused fires will not include resource benefits as a consideration and the fires will be suppressed.

### **APPROVED FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Offers full advantage of fire policy flexibility under approved fire management plans. It allows the NPS and USFS to manage wildland fires in a manner that may achieve resource benefits when the fire management plan meets National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements and contains appropriate prescriptive criteria and language to specify the full range of management responses. Strategies will include the best options to safely, economically, and effectively accomplish the stated objectives.

## **APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

The appropriate management response is defined as the specific actions taken in response to a wildland fire to implement protection and/or fire use objectives. It allows managers to utilize a full range of responses.

Management responses are programmed to accept resource management needs and constraints, reflect a commitment to safety, be cost effective, and accomplish desired objectives, while maintaining the versatility to vary intensity as conditions change.

### **WILDLAND FIRE USE**

Wildland fire use is defined as the management of naturally ignited wildland fires to accomplish specific, prestated resource management objectives, in predefined geographic areas, as outlined in fire management plans. Operational management is described in the Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP). This is the most complex of scenarios but offers full advantage of fire policy flexibility, under an approved fire management plan.

### **SUPPRESSION**

Suppression actions will consider values to be protected, least cost, resource damage caused by the suppression action and the first priority at all times, firefighter and public safety.

Management actions applied to a fire are identified in the fire management plan and can consist of aggressive initial attack to a combination of strategies. Objectives, environmental and fuel conditions, constraints, safety, and ability to accomplish objectives shall be considered to determine the appropriate management response. Each ignition will be responded to in a timely manner with appropriate forces utilizing safe and economically efficient tactics.

### **PRESCRIBED FIRE**

Fire has been a significant natural force in the evolution of the flora and fauna of the GYA ecosystem and continuation of these natural processes is desirable in much of the area. Prescribed fires are intentionally ignited by the units to accomplish a variety of management objectives ranging from hazard fuel reduction, to assisting in the reintroduction of fire to its natural role in the environment. A written approved prescribed fire plan must exist and NEPA requirements must be met prior to ignition. Trained, qualified, and experienced personnel must implement prescribed fires. Specific coordination understandings are included in the *Greater Yellowstone Area, Interagency Fire Management Agreement*. (Appendix A).

### **WILDLAND FIRE SITUATION ANALYSIS**

The Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) is a decision making process in which the agency administrator or representative describes the situation, establishes objectives and constraints, compares multiple strategic wildland fire management alternatives, evaluates the expected effects of the alternatives, selects the preferred alternative, and documents the decision.

Use of the WFSA is integral to successful management of both wildland and prescribed fires. It serves as a contingency when fire spread and behavior exceed suppression efforts, when there is an inability to accomplish wildland fire use objectives, or when prescribed fires can no longer be implemented in accordance with the approved plan. The WFSA document can be used to compare alternatives reflecting the full range of appropriate management responses and can assess alternatives for realizing protection and/or resource benefits opportunities.

If a prescribed fire or wildland fire use for resource benefits is converted to a suppression oriented response, a WFSA will be developed. After this decision is made, the fire will never revert back to the original status.

### **ROLE OF THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN LARGE FIRE INCIDENTS**

It is the role of the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (GYCC) to facilitate the coordinated management of the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA). The GYCC does not have line authority over individual Agency Administrators or units within the GYA. The GYCC is composed of the eight GYA Agency Administrators. Decisions and agreements made by the GYCC have widespread support and are implemented through normal preset lines of authority.

In the event of complex fire incidents, the GYCC will continue to serve in its role as a facilitator of communication, coordination, and effective cooperation between the individual units of the GYA. Agreements reached by GYCC members will be implemented through normal lines of authority. While the entire GYCC membership will not function as a MAC Group, individual members or their designees, may participate in a MAC Group. Whenever an Area Command is established, it will operate under a

written Delegation of Authority clearly outlining both their geographic and functional role. This delegation will be signed by all Agency Administrators under whose authority the Area Command is operating. Area Command will re-delegate this authority to individual Incident Commanders consistent with individual WFSA's. Any Delegations of Authority between Agency Administrators and Incident Commanders in effect at the time an Area Command is established will be replaced by a new Delegation of Authority between the Incident Commander and Area Command. The GYCC may offer input and direction to MAC Groups and/or Area Command as necessary.

This document has outlined specific operational procedures for the GYCC to monitor the overall fire situation in the GYA during the fire season. These procedures will allow the GYCC to fulfill its role as a facilitator for coordinated management of the GYA, while maintaining the management integrity of each Department and legal responsibility of each Agency Administrator.

The Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee believes that guidelines and operational procedures outlined in this document will contribute greatly to a unified, coordinated approach to the Greater Yellowstone Area Fire Management Program.

APPENDIX A  
**INTERAGENCY FIRE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT**  
**00-IA-11011100-015**

Between the following Greater Yellowstone Area Agencies

**United States Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service**

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest  
Bridger-Teton National Forest  
Custer National Forest  
Gallatin National Forest  
Shoshone National Forest  
Targhee National Forest

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

Grand Teton National Park  
Yellowstone National Park

This Interagency Agreement is entered into between the above named administrative units of the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, hereafter referred to as the "Forest Service" and the above named administrative units of the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, hereafter referred to as "NPS" under the below listed authorities:

Economic Act of June 30, 1932 (31 U.S.C. 1535, Sec 601)

Memorandum of Understanding between United States Department of the Interior and United States Department of Agriculture, dated January 28, 1943

National Park Service Organic Act of August 1916 (16 U.S.C. 1)

Interagency Agreement Number 97-SIA-004 (Forest Service) and 1443-IA9560-97-002 (NPS) between United States Department of the Interior and United States Department of Agriculture, dated February 20, 1997 (FSM 1531.06c)

**I. PURPOSE AND STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFITS AND INTERESTS:**

The purpose of this agreement will be that adjacent land management agencies coordinate planning and joint management of fire activities, which cross multi-jurisdictional boundaries.

This agreement will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of fire management and dispatching actions through the interagency cooperative sharing of resources between the above named administrative units.

**THIS AGREEMENT WILL BE COMPRISED OF THREE PARTS THAT ARE SPECIFIC TO PARTIES AS IDENTIFIED AND HAVE THEIR INDIVIDUAL PURPOSES AND MUTUAL BENEFITS STATED AS NECESSARY.**

## **II. IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED AND UNDERSTOOD BY AND BETWEEN THE PARTIES THAT:**

1. This Agreement supersedes the: "Interagency Fire Management Agreement" between Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, and Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Custer, Shoshone, Targhee, Bridger-Teton, and Gallatin National Forests dated April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1995; the "Mutual Aid Agreement" between Yellowstone National Park and the Gallatin National Park, dated January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1991; the "Interagency Agreement" between Yellowstone National Park and the Gallatin National Forest, dated September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1992; and the "Agreement" between the Gallatin and Custer National Forests, dated September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1995.
2. MODIFICATION. Modifications within the scope of this agreement shall be made by mutual consent of the parties, by the issuance of a written modification, signed and dated by all parties, prior to any changes being performed. The Forest service is not obligated to fund any changes not properly approved in advance.
3. ACCESS TO RECORDS. Give the Forest Service or Comptroller General, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all books, papers, or documents related to this agreement.
4. TERMINATION. Any party, in writing, may terminate this agreement in whole, or in part, at any time before the date of expiration. No party shall incur any new obligations for the terminated portion of this agreement after the effective date and shall cancel as many obligations as is possible. Full credit shall be allowed for each party's expenses and all noncancellable obligations up to the effective date of the termination.
5. OBLIGATIONS. Nothing herein shall be considered as obligating the Forest Service to expend or as involving the United States in any contract or other obligations for the future payment of money in excess of funding approved and made available for payment under this agreement and modifications thereto.
6. FUNDING OF EQUIPMENT. Federal funding under this agreement is not available for reimbursement of cooperator purchase of equipment.
7. IDENTIFICATION NUMBER – FEDERAL, STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES. Furnish their tax identification number, or if the cooperator is a federal agency, their agency locator code, upon execution of this agreement.
8. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS. Funding in the amount of \$0.00 is currently obligated for performance of this instrument through 30 September 2000. The Forest Service's obligation for performance of this agreement beyond this date is contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds from which payment can be made. No legal liability on the part of the Forest service for any payment may arise for performance under this agreement beyond 30 September 2000, until funds are made available to the Forest Service for performance and until it receives notice of availability. Contingent upon Forest Service approval of continuance of work, a written modification to this agreement shall be issued to include funding for the subsequent performance period as described in the approved operating or financial plan, or budget.
9. BILLING. The maximum total cost liability to the cooperators for this agreement is \$0.00, presently. Transfer of funds to the Forest Service will be through either a manual system billing or an On-Line Payment and Collection System (OPAC) billing. The Forest Service will prepare billing under either

system. The manual system shall contain the Agency Locator Code and Agreement number, as a minimum. The OPAC billing shall contain the following information:

FS Billing Document Number – Job Code – Instrument Number –  
Agency Location Code – Budget Object Code

A detailed list of charges incurred will be made available upon request. Any excess funds not used for the agreed costs shall be refunded to the cooperator upon expiration of this agreement.

10. PRINCIPLE CONTACTS. The principle contacts for this agreement are the Forest Fire Management Officers, who at present are:

- |                          |                |                                      |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bill Breedlove | Gallatin National Forest             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Wade Burlison  | Bridger-Teton National Forest        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Keith Birch    | Targhee National Forest              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Paul Mock      | Custer National Forest               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |                | Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Dave Sisk      | Shoshone National Forest             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Len Dems       | Grand Teton National Park            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Phil Perkins   | Yellowstone National Park            |

11. COMPLETION DATE. This instrument is executed as of the last date shown below and expires five (5) years from that date. At the end of that five-year period the agreement will be reviewed to determine suitability for renewal, modification or termination.

12. "Appropriate line officers" will be the Park Superintendent(s) and/or Forest Supervisors(s) of the involved agencies unless delegated in writing.

# **PART ONE**

## **AFFECTED AGENCIES:**

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest; Bridger-Teton National Forest; Custer National Forest; Gallatin National Forest; Shoshone National Forest; Targhee National Forest; Grand Teton National Park; and Yellowstone National Park.

## **BACKGROUND AND NEED**

One of the major recommendations of the 1989 Interior and Agriculture Fire Policy Review Teams was that adjacent land management agencies improve their coordinated planning and joint management of fire activities, which cross-jurisdictional boundaries. In response to this recommendation, the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee in June 1990 (revised 1992 and 1995) published "The Greater Yellowstone Area Interagency Fire Management Planning and Coordination Guide". The guide outlines operating principles and procedures for improving interagency fire management and coordination.

### **I. PURPOSE:**

To establish specific operating procedures for the coordinated management of various fire activities, which have crossed, are planned to cross, or have potential to cross the administrative boundaries of individual Greater Yellowstone Area units. These activities include, but are not limited to:

1. Allowing wildland fire use fires to cross administrative boundaries;
2. Joint management of wildland fires;
3. Execution of prescribed fires;
4. Joint training and fire prevention efforts.

### **II. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFITS AND FACTS:**

1. Safe and efficient management of wildland fire use fires and prescribed fires, require coordination and cooperation between the above agencies.
2. Lightning caused fires are a natural force that has always been operative in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.
3. Lands common to the boundary of the above agencies contain areas with high values at risk, including timber, recreational developments, and private holdings.

### **III. IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED AND UNDERSTOOD BY AND BETWEEN THE PARTIES THAT:**

#### **1. Management Coordination**

The following elements apply to all wildland fires and/or prescribed fires, which have crossed, are planned to cross, or have potential to cross agency boundaries:

1. Assignment of fiscal responsibility to each agency for management costs.
2. Assignment of responsibilities to keep the public, cooperators, and internal personnel informed.
3. Development of decision criteria for periodic revalidation and evaluation by the appropriate Administrators of each agency.
4. Ordering of resources thru a single Geographical Coordination Center
5. Incident/Project management will be by a single unified incident management organization.
6. Agency resource advisors will be assigned to coordinate with the incident/project management team.
7. Completion of a joint risk assessment: which includes threat to life and property, resource availability, and environmental impacts.
8. Incident reviews will be conducted jointly by the affected agencies as deemed appropriate.

The following additional elements apply as indicated to the various fire management activities:

#### **A. Wildland Fire Use**

The following additional elements apply to wildland fire use fires, which have crossed, are planned to cross, or have potential to cross agency boundaries:

1. A Wildland Fire Implementation Plan will be developed in accordance with guidelines established in the "Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy, Implementation Procedures and Reference Guide." The Plan will incorporate the following concepts:
  1. Mutually agreed upon prescription criteria and objectives.
  2. Assignment of qualified personnel and adequate resources to implement the Wildland Fire Implementation Plan.
  3. Affected agency administrators will approve a mutual Wildland Fire Use Implementation Plan.

#### **B. Prescribed Fire**

The following additional elements apply to prescribed fires which are planned to cross, or have potential to cross, agency boundaries:

1. A single Prescribed Burn Plan will be reviewed and approved by affected Agency Administrators. The plan will include required components of affected agencies.
  - a. Assignment of qualified personnel and adequate resources to implement the Prescribed Fire Plan.

#### **C. Wildland Fire, Unwanted Fires**



The following additional elements apply to unwanted wildland fires which have crossed, or have potential to cross, agency boundaries:

1. Development of a joint Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA), approved by appropriate Agency Administrators of each agency involved.
2. Development of a joint Delegation of Authority with mutually agreed upon suppression objectives.

## **2. Exchanges of Resources**

Unit based resources for wildland fire and prescribed fire activities may be exchanged directly between neighboring Dispatch Centers and adjacent GYA units under the nationally endorsed concept of closest available forces as provided. Management of suppression and support resources will be generally limited to initial and extended attack to adjacent units.

Unit based agency and contract resources may be shared for non-fire situations when such sharing is mutually agreed upon and is in the best interest of the government. The receiving agency agrees to reimburse the providing agency. Resources will be coordinated by the respective Dispatch Centers.

## **3. Training**

The agencies agree that they will exchange training schedules and information on a regular basis, and cooperate whenever possible on joint fire management training efforts.

## **4. Prevention and Public Education**

The agencies agree that they will cooperate wherever possible on joint fire prevention and public education efforts, particularly at trailheads that access more than one agency. Fire prevention activities will be managed by each Unit for lands within their jurisdiction.

As part of the public education effort, pamphlets, or other items highlighting the ecological role of fire in the GYA, and how fire is managed may be produced. The development of these items will be agreed upon by the units. The items would be available to visitors and during fire management activities. Initial production may be coordinated by one or more GYA units and funds will be transferred to a cooperative account set up by the unit/s. Initial production costs will be borne equally by each unit.

## **5. Detection & Dispatching Procedures**

Lookouts, other ground detection methods and agency air patrols will cooperate in the exchange of information on fires detected by or reported to them.

The agency receiving notification of a fire will immediately notify the jurisdictional agency. Requests for movement of resources and equipment across agency & unit boundaries will be coordinated by the respective agency dispatch offices.

## **6. Science Initiatives**

Units will cooperatively pursue opportunities for advancing science related initiatives as they apply to Greater Yellowstone Fire Management.

## PART TWO

### AFFECTED AGENCIES:

Gallatin National Forest and Yellowstone National Park

### I. PURPOSE:

To give authority to Gallatin National Forest and Yellowstone National Park to cooperate in fire management activities in order to protect private and public lands, facilities, and human life on National Park or National Forest lands. This part outlines a proposed plan of operations for the prevention, detection and initial attack of wildland fires and the reinforcement assistance on wildland fires near mutual boundaries or joint Mutual Aid Zones of each agency.

The Mutual Aid Zones are defined as any land within the fire protection jurisdiction of each cooperating agency. The initial attack on wildland fire within the Mutual Aid Zone will operate on a closest-forces concept regardless of agency boundaries. The closest initial attack force to a wildland fire will respond when requested by the impacted agency.

The dispatch of Initial Attack resources will be on a requested basis by the agency with the suppression responsibilities for the Incident with the following exception. When an agency receives notification of an ignition in the vicinity of the towns of West Yellowstone, Gardiner, or Cooke City (see Recognized Areas), Initial Attack may be initiated on the fire if in the opinion of the agency receiving notification, the fire behavior or threat to resources, life, or property is such that a delay may result in unacceptable consequences. In this situation the agency maintaining jurisdiction will be notified concurrently when initial attack resources are dispatched.

#### Recognized Areas:

1. West Yellowstone: Legal area within one mile either side of the Park boundary east into the Yellowstone National Park and west into the Gallatin National Forest. This includes the eight miles North of West Yellowstone with the legal of T12S, R5E, sections 22, 27, 34 & T13S, R5E sections 3, 10, 15, 22, 26, 27; then 2 miles South of town with the legal of T13S, R5E, sections 33, 34 & T14S, R5E, section 3.
2. Gardiner: Legal area within T9S, R8E, sections 15, 16, 22, 23, 24, NE ¼ 21, and ¼ mile either side of Highway 89 going south from the North Entrance of Yellowstone National Park leading into the Gardiner Canyon towards Mammoth and ending at Slide Lake.
3. Cook City: Legal area within T9S, R14E, section 25, 26, 27, 33, 34. Primarily Highway 212 from the eastern park boundary of Yellowstone National Park at Silver Gate up to ½ mile East of Cooke City.

This portion of the agreement is meant to supplement existing interagency agreements regarding fire suppression between the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and U.S.D.I. National Park Service.

### 1. Initial Attack and Reinforcements

Where lands of one agency are included in the Mutual Aid Zone, the two agencies of this agreement will furnish suppression action to the extent possible, upon request except as specified in the PURPOSE section of this agreement, on any fire that occurs within that agency's jurisdictional boundaries.

When initial attack is undertaken by an agency not having jurisdictional authority on the land where the wildland fire occurs, the agency with jurisdictional authority will relieve the initial attack force as soon as practical. Activities will be coordinated between appropriate dispatch offices.

Where wildland fire(s) burn or threaten to burn on lands of both agencies, a boundary fire will exist. The agencies involved or threatened will cooperate to the fullest extent possible in suppressing and controlling the wildland fire(s). The Initial Attack Incident Commander who first initiates action will act as Incident Commander until an agreement on management of the wildfire is reached by the involved agencies.

## 2. **Special Provisions**

### **Preservation of Evidence:**

Where initial attack action is taken on wildland fires on lands of an adjoining agency, the Initial Attack Incident Commander will immediately gather and/or preserve information and evidence pertaining to the cause of the fire. Initial attack forces will notify the appropriate agency dispatch office of suspected person-caused fires as soon as possible.

### **Access to Land:**

Initial attack forces and reinforcement of the agencies involved in this Agreement are hereby authorized to enter upon land under the jurisdiction of the other included agency where necessary to carry out this agreement. The responding agency will respond in a manner that is commensurate with the jurisdiction agency's land management policies.

### **Yellowstone National Park:**

The use of bulldozers and other heavy equipment on Yellowstone National Park lands must have the authorization of the Park superintendent and the Rocky Mountain Regional Director. Use of motorized vehicles off of established and maintained roads and aircraft landings must have the approval of the Park Superintendent or his designee. Chainsaws may be used without prior authorization.

### **Gallatin National Forest:**

The use of mechanized equipment, including helicopter long lining, within the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness and the Lee Metcalf Wilderness must be approved by the appropriate Forest Service Official. Requests for such approval will be made through the Bozeman Interagency Dispatch Center.

## **PART THREE**

### **AFFECTED AGENCIES:**

Beartooth Ranger District of the Custer National Forest,  
Gallatin National Forest, and Yellowstone National Park

#### **I. PURPOSE:**

To give authority to Gallatin National Forest, Yellowstone National Park, and the Beartooth Ranger District of the Custer National Forest personnel to cooperate in zone dispatching activities in order to protect private and public lands, facilities, and human life on National Park or National Forest lands.

#### **II. IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED AND UNDERSTOOD BY AND BETWEEN THE PARTIES THAT:**

The Bozeman Interagency Dispatch Center, hereafter referred to as the Center, will provide initial attack and support dispatch services for Gallatin National Forest and the Beartooth Ranger District of the Custer National Forest.

The Center will provide support dispatch services and training coordination for Yellowstone National Park and the Beartooth Ranger District. This will include the processing of Resource Orders to and from the Northern Rockies Coordination Center.

The Center will be located in the Gallatin National Forest Supervisor's Office in Bozeman, Montana.

During the primary fire season the Center requires a minimum of three dispatching personnel to provide adequate seven-day coverage. These positions being the Center Manager, the Assistant Center Manager, both provided by the Gallatin National Forest, and a Support Dispatcher, provided by the Yellowstone National Park.

The Agency contributing the employee to the Center is responsible for hiring, payroll, and other personnel action. The day-to-day supervision of Dispatch personnel will be handled through the Center's internal chain of command. Gallatin National Forest may assume hiring, payroll, and other personnel action responsibilities for the Support Dispatcher position upon mutual consent with Yellowstone National Park. In this event Yellowstone National Park will transfer funds to Gallatin National Forest through standard billing procedures to cover the cost for the Support Dispatcher.

An annual operating plan will be prepared by April 1<sup>st</sup> that at a minimum will specify: staffing, hours of operation, standard operating procedures/protocol, and procedures for expanded dispatch operations.

This agreement does not preclude either unit from establishing an independent expanded dispatch organization on an incident-by-incident basis as deemed appropriate by the responsible agency that could operate directly with the Northern Rockies Coordination Center. The ordering office will be responsible for tracking and recording keeping of all resources from mobilization through demobilization.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this agreement as of the last day written below:

Applicable parts  
of this agreement

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000      Janette      Kaiser  
One

Date      Janette Kaiser  
Supervisor, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000      Carole      'Kniffy'      Hamilton  
One

Date      Carole 'Kniffy' Hamilton  
Supervisor, Bridger-Teton National Forest

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000      Mike      Paterni,      for  
One, Three

Date      Nancy T. Curriden  
Supervisor, Custer National Forest

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000      David      P.      Garber  
One, Two, Three

Date      David P. Garber  
Supervisor, Gallatin National Forest

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000      Rebecca      Aus  
One

Date      Rebecca Aus  
Supervisor, Shoshone National Forest

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000      Jerry      B.      Reese  
One

Date      Jerry Reese  
Supervisor, Targhee National Forest

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000      Jack      Neckels  
One

Date      Jack Neckels  
Superintendent, Grand Teton National Park

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000      Marvin      O.      Jensen,      for  
One, Two, Three

Date

Mike Finley  
Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park

## APPENDIX B

# THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE AREA PREPAREDNESS PLAN

### **PURPOSE**

To identify the level of Wildland and Prescribed Fire, severity and resource commitment within the Greater Yellowstone Area.

To identify actions to be taken by the Greater Yellowstone Area Fire Management Advisory Group (FMAG) under the guidelines of the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (GYCC) to assure an appropriate level of preparedness/readiness for the existing and potential situation.

To modify or curtail Unit fire management activities when essential to assure preparedness or response capabilities for situations within the GYA.

### **GYA PREPAREDNESS LEVELS**

The Fire Management Advisory Group will monitor the GYA fire situation and preparedness levels and will determine the appropriate preparedness.

GYA preparedness levels are determined through a daily analysis of the GYA situation report by the FMAG. This is to assure that sufficient resources will be available for the GYA, various regions, or national situations.

Since the GYA is a subset of administrative units which lie within three separate geographic areas, the Rocky Mountain, Eastern Great Basin, and Northern Rockies. The determination of the preparedness level will be responsive to the three respective Geographic Area Preparedness Plans. At any one time, the three areas may be in different levels of preparedness as set forth in their respective regional plans. The GYA preparedness level will be determined based on the following criteria which have been derived from all three Geographical Area plans and the national preparedness plan, not superseding any of these plans. If and when at least two of the three Geographical plans reach a preparedness level higher than that of the GYA, the associated regional fire situation will be viewed as sufficient justification to raise the GYA level to the next higher preparedness level.

## PREPAREDNESS LEVEL I

### Description:

No large fire activity within the GYA. Units have low to moderate fire danger. Initial attack is successful and fires are manageable. Resources are adequate in the GYA.

### ACTION

### RESPONSIBILITY

Individual GYA Units will determine appropriate actions.

Agency Administrator

Certification that Wildland Fire Use fires meet resource objectives and adequate resources are available to ensure fires(s) continue to meet resource objectives through ensuing 24-hour period, given reasonably foreseeable weather conditions and fire behavior.

Agency Administrator



## PREPAREDNESS LEVEL II

### Description:

One or more units experiencing moderate to high fire danger. Multiple wildland fires occurring, initial attack successful on most fires and a potential exists for escapes to size class B or C. Escaped fires are manageable, potential for further growth is moderate. Resources are adequate in the GYA.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
Level I action carry through.	Unit FMO/Fire Staff
Individual Agency Administrator's briefed as appropriate	Unit FMO/Fire Staff
Individual Units monitor and evaluate wildland and prescribed fire activity and resource commitments in the GYA	Unit FMO/Fire Staff

## PREPAREDNESS LEVEL III

### Description:

Two or more Units experiencing high to very high fire danger with no weather break expected within the next 48 hours. Two or more Units are experiencing size class C or D fires. One Unit requiring commitment of a Type I or Type II Incident Management Team. Units are experiencing resource shortages and are requiring assistance from their respective GACC. National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) and/or Rocky mountain Area Coordination Center (RMACC), Eastern Great Basin Coordination Center (EGBCC), Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NRCC) are supporting wildland and/or prescribed fire activity in their or other Region(s).

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Level I and II actions carry through.	Unit FMO/Fire Staff
GYA Fire Management Advisory Group (FMAG) is activated	FMAG Chairperson
Brief the GYCC Fire Management Representative and coordinate wildland and prescribed fire activity in the GYA	FMAG Chairperson
Periodic briefing for Regional Fire Staff and GYCC Managers providing wildland and prescribed fire situation update and evaluation	FMAG Unit FMO/Fire Staff
Evaluate need for a MAC Group Representative	FMAG, Regional Fire Management Staff and GYCC Fire Management
Coordinate repositioning of resources and ensure availability of qualified personnel for wildland and prescribed fire assignments	FMAG
Individual Units provide timely update on emerging or existing fire situation to FMAG, respective Regional Office, and NICC through normal GYA situation reporting system	Unit FMO/Fire Staff
Evaluate and document that Unit prescribed fire program objectives can be accomplished given current commitment of resources and severity potential predictions. Evaluate all new wildland fire use fires against current and predicted fire behavior forecasts.	Unit FMO/Fire Staff

## PREPAREDNESS LEVEL IV

### Description:

Two or more Units experiencing very high to extreme fire danger with no weather break expected within the next 48 hours. Multiple ignitions cause a number of fires to escape initial attack, resulting in size class D+ fires. Two or more Units experiencing project fires requiring commitment of Type I or Type II Incident Management Teams. Resource shortages are being experienced in the GYA and by GACC's, with two or more Regions being supported by NICC and/or GYA GACC's. Other national fire activity increasing the competition for resources, placing a drain on the normal GYA GACC's.

### ACTION

### RESPONSIBILITY

Level I, II and III actions carry through.

Unit FMO/Fire Staff

Wildland Fire Use and prescribed fire application can be continued or be initiated if the proposed action is approved by an agency at the regional or state office level. This approval must be based on an assessment of risk, impacts of the proposed actions on area resources and activities and include feedback from the Geographical Area MAC Group. The Geographic Area Mac Group provides information or perspectives to agencies wishing to proceed with or implement a wildland fire use or prescribed fire application. **The final decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.**

Unit FMO/Fire Staff  
Agency Administrator  
FMAG  
Regional Fire Staff  
GYCC Fire Mgt Rep

Increase coordination between GYA and potentially affected agencies involving Regions concerning prioritizing resources and fire restrictions with other GYA Units and potentially affected neighbors.

FMAG  
Regional Fire Staff

Evaluate potential of going to Level V and inform all GYA Units and Regional Staff of all affected agencies.

FMAG  
Regional Fire Staff

## PREPAREDNESS LEVEL V

### Description:

Three or more GYA Units experiencing extreme fire danger with no weather break expected within the next 48 hours. Three or more Units experiencing major fires requiring the commitment of Type I Incident Management Teams. NICC and/or GYA GACC's actively supporting two or more Regions with fire activity. Significant competition for resources exists with the potential to exhaust all Agency resources.

### ACTION

### RESPONSIBILITY

Levels I, II, III and IV actions carry through.

Unit FMO/Fire Staff

Wildland Fire Use and prescribed fire application can be continued or be initiated if the proposed action is recommended by the regional or state level. The National Agency representative will assess risk and impacts of the proposed actions and discuss with the National MAC Group. This group will have an opportunity to provide information or perspectives to agencies wishing to proceed with or implement a wildland fire use or prescribed fire application. **The final decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.**

Unit FMO/Fire Staff  
FMAG  
Agency Administrator  
Regional Fire Staff  
GYCC Fire Mgt Rep  
Agency National Rep

Evaluate need for a GYA representative on Geographical Area MAC Groups to assess resource availability, establish priorities, and coordinate with other Geographical MAC Group(s).

GYCC, FMAG  
Unit FMO/Fire Staff

Intensify coordination efforts with all fire protection agencies and news media.

FMAG  
Unit FMO/Fire Staff  
Regional Fire Staff