



USDA Forest Service Fire and Aviation Management Briefing Paper



Date March 2, 2005

Topic: Cost Containment

Issue: Cost containment is a large, complex issue but there are a few key areas that Regional Foresters should focus their attention on this year.

Key Points: There is increased scrutiny of the costs associated with large fires. This scrutiny is from both from internal and external sources including Forest Service Cost Review Teams, WFLC, GAO, OIG, and Congress. As a result, there are a number of high priority items that Regional Foresters should pay particular attention to this fire season. They include:

- ensuring that approving authorities are not exceeded
- tracking the percentage of fire events that use the “most cost effective” WFSA option
- the findings of the “Independent Cost Review Panel”¹
- maintaining a current list of and only using fully qualified IBA’s
- diligently working to ensure specific and equitable cost share agreements are in place where necessary
- ensuring that, after a period of 90 days, a detailed accounting showing all incident costs is requested and reviewed by the Agency Administrator
- determining whether we meet the 3 percent requirement of contracting to Service Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses (SDVOB)
- improving the Emergency Equipment Rental Agreement (EERA) process based on OIG’s recommendations²
- being aware of the WFLC report “Large Fire Suppression Costs, Strategies for Cost Management”, its recommendations and their implementation³

¹ The final report is expected to be issued in March 2005. If the Forest Service uses the supplemental appropriation again this year we will be required to have another independent review.

² The final OIG report is expected to be issued in April 2005.

³ A copy of the final report is available at www.fireplan.gov/leadership/news