

“Doctrine Dialogue”
U.S. Forest Service
Fire & Aviation Management

Update: April 2007

THE LATEST DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENTS

From the very beginning of the doctrine effort, the Forest Service stated that there would be 3 critical phases prior to seeking authorization for a principles-driven fire suppression and fire management program based on Foundational Doctrine. At present, we are well into the second phase, *validation*, which will culminate in a complete rewrite of the Forest Service Manual 5100 (Fire Management). The process has already begun and is covered in greater detail on page two of this update. For the sake of those needing a reminder of what the other phases are, they include *education* and *implementation*.

Although *education* was identified as a singular phase, *education communications* will be an ongoing process. In this issue of “Doctrine Dialogue” we target the field, local practitioners, and those who will be ultimately “taking doctrine to the fire line” as our key audience. As information unfolds and doctrine momentum grows, expect much more frequent communication throughout the summer, especially as we approach *implementation* goals.

Since the last issue of “Doctrine Dialogue” (Volume 3) Forest Service Fire and Aviation Management conducted two additional Doctrine conferences. Each was dedicated to specific mission areas. In the subsequent conferences - Aviation Operations doctrine and All-hazard Response doctrine were addressed. In their entirety, the completed series of conferences included:

- **“The Original Pulaski Conference”**
(“Foundational Doctrine for Fire Suppression” – June 2005)
- **“The Fire & Aviation Foundational Doctrine Conference”**
(“Rotor and Wing Conference” - January 2006)
- **“The Foundational Doctrine for All-Hazard Response”**
(“Developing All-Hazard Response Principles and Guidance” - July 2006)

While each conference provided insight into different tactical approaches, they all noted variable expectations from constantly changing social, economic, and demographic pressures. Shared sentiment from conference participants echoed the belief that having clearly understood and well articulated doctrine would not only provide for more effective decision-making and mindful action, but would also clear the way for sound risk management and enhanced firefighter, public and community safety. The need for foundational doctrine that illuminates key principles promoting “core values, improved decision-making, and the implementation of leaders’ intent” was also a recurrent theme in each gathering.

As stated above, the agency recognizes that *education* and *validation* are but two steps in this complex journey. Yet there also remains keen acknowledgement that along the way, certain other key pieces must come together at the most common and acceptable level. And that full Doctrine implementation will also require the understanding and support of OSHA, the USDA Office of General Council (OGC) and the USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG) - as well as acceptance from our interagency partners.

Regarding our partners, the USFS Fire and Aviation Management organization keenly recognizes that implementing Doctrine within a principles-based management approach must also work in the interagency and cooperator environment. The most current reflection of collaboration on Doctrine can be seen in the 2007 Red Book under “*Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*”. Chapter One of the Red Book highlights interagency efforts and includes this statement on the “Purpose for Fire Operations Doctrine”:

“Fire operations doctrine states the fundamental principles on the subject of fire operations. Doctrine establishes a particular way of thinking about fire operations. It provides a philosophy for leading firefighters in fire operations, a mandate for professionalism, and a common language. Fire operations doctrine does not consist of procedures to be applied to specific situations so much as it sets forth general guidance that requires judgment in application.”

http://www.nifc.gov/red_book/2007/Chapter01.pdf

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The Forest Service Manual Re-Write

As mentioned earlier, there are still many steps in the journey and we noted we are in the *validation* phase. Because the Forest Service Manual stands as the legal authoritative foundation from which we proceed with our work, the FSM 5100 Fire Management manual will be completely rewritten. Upon completion of this *validation* task and subsequent approvals we may begin to see a Doctrine based, principles-centered fire management program become firmly anchored and ready for implementation as early as January 2008.

The Re-Write Workshops

Presently three Manual rewrite workshops are scheduled throughout April and May 2007. The goals are to have designated manual chapters rewritten at each workshop, and the task complete by June. With the ultimate goal of having interim direction ready by October 2007 – these are definitely large strides in an arduous journey. Participants in the re-writing workshops include highly skilled, experienced, and knowledgeable subject matter and subject area experts, including participants from the original series of “Pulaski Conferences.”

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“Points to Ponder”

“Doctrine is the body of principles - not rules - that guide an organization’s activities and actions.

“Doctrine does not consist of procedures to be applied to specific situations, so much as it sets forth general guidance that requires judgment in application.”

“Doctrine provides information on how decisions should be made, not what the decisions should be.”

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Additional information on “Doctrine Dialogue” as well as links to highlighted documents can be found at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/>

Although our website is undergoing a “makeover” these documents are accessible on the web.

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