




National Fire Plan

WILDLAND FIRE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

MAY 02 2008

MEMORANDUM

To: Chief, USDA Forest Service
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, Fish and Wildlife Service
Director, National Park Service

From: James E. Cason 
Chair, Wildland Fire Leadership Council

Subject: Modification of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy Guidance

On March 24, 2008, the Wildland Fire Leadership Council agreed on modifying the guidance to the "Interagency Strategy for the Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2004)," contingent upon favorable counsel review. The proposed modifications or "revised direction" will be tested in a limited number of field units this summer and then incorporated into revised "Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Policy" that will be issued in November 2008.

The existing Interagency Strategy for the Implementation of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy will continue to be applied this calendar year to units not selected to test the proposed modifications. Experience gained with the proposed Implementation Guide modifications will be used to draft effective guidance for national application in 2009.

Current Direction: "Only one management objective will be applied to a wildland fire. Wildland fires will either be managed for resource benefits or suppressed. A wildland fire cannot be managed for both objectives concurrently. If two wildland fires converge, they will be managed as a single wildland fire."

Revised Direction: "Wildland fires can be managed for one or more objective(s) based on the Land/Resource Management Plan direction."

Current Direction: “Once a wildland fire has been managed for suppression objectives, it may never be managed for resource benefit objectives.”

Revised Direction: “When two or more wildland fires burn together they will be handled as a single wildland fire and may be managed for one or more objectives based on the Land/Resource Management Plan direction as an event moves across the landscape and fuels and weather conditions change.”

Current Direction: “The Wildland Fire Situation Analysis process is used to determine and document the suppression strategy from the full range of responses available for suppression operations. Suppression strategies are designed to meet the policy objectives of suppression. Wildland fire use is the result of a natural event. The Land/Resource Management Plan, or the Fire Management Plan, will identify areas where the strategy of wildland fire use is suitable. The Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP) is the tool that examines the available response strategies to determine if a fire is being considered for wildland fire use.”

Revised Direction: “Every wildland fire will be assessed following a decision support process that examines the full range of responses. The system currently being developed and prototyped is known as Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS).”

Current Direction: “When a prescribed fire or a fire designated for wildland fire use is no longer achieving the intended resource management objectives and contingency or mitigation actions have failed, the fire will be declared a wildfire. Once a wildfire, it cannot be returned to a prescribed fire or wildland fire use status.”

Revised Direction: “Once a prescribed fire is no longer meeting those resources objectives stated specifically in the prescribed fire plan or project level NEPA and is declared a wildfire, it receives the same reassessment and selection of response objectives as any other wildfire event given the location, current conditions (fuels, weather, etc.), and identified management considerations.”

Under the guise of the “revised direction,” the USDA Forest Service and the DOI bureaus will work in concert with one another to select prototype field units, implement interim guidance, training, as well as a communication strategy for use by the summer of 2008.