

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

### **Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (AWFCG)**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (AWFCG) was formed in 1994 through consolidation of the Alaska Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (AK MAC) and the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Council.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the member organizations and a companion annual Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document provide a method for identifying and seeking solutions to specific and common fire management and related programs.

#### **II. AUTHORITY**

1. Alaska Department of Natural Resources: Alaska Statute 41.15.010 – 030.
2. Alaska Department of Fish and Game: Alaska Statutes 16.05.020, 16.05.050, and 16.20.010 – 020.
3. Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Alaska Statute 46.03.010 – 020.
4. Protection Act of 1922 (42 Stat. 857; 16 U.S.C. 594)
5. Economy Act of 1932 (31 U.S.C. 686)
6. Cooperative Forest Assistance Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-313, dated July 1, 1978).
7. Native Organizations: PL-93-638 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, as amended.

#### **III. MISSION AND OBJECTIVES**

The mission of the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group, AWFCG, is to provide a forum that fosters cooperation, coordination, collaboration and communication for wildland fire management and related-activities in the State of Alaska. The AWFCG will be the leadership focus for planning and implementing interagency fire management state-wide.

## Objectives

Provide interagency leadership and coordinate implementation of current policies, directions and standards for incident management activities.

Instill professionalism in all aspects of fire management and develop a full partnership, trust and mutual assistance among the wildland fire protection entities.

Recommend a unified course of action to geographic agency administrators to promote safety and provide oversight in all aspects of fire management.

Serve as the geographic area clearinghouse and forum for the identification of interagency fire management issues and their solutions through the support and promotion of:

- Ecosystem management

- Wildland/urban/rural interface wildland fire risk mitigation

- Prevention and education

- Fuels and resource management

- Interagency research

- Management of geographic area interagency safety and training programs

- Oversight for national training nominations for S-520 and S-620

- Establish committees/task groups to address geographic area-wide issues

Serve as the geographic focal point for requests for interagency action to and from the national and local level.

Provide a communication link between local, state, tribal and federal entities.

Facilitate efficiencies in all wildland fire operations at all levels.

Provide oversight for selection and management of the Alaska National Type 1 Incident Management Team.

Provide oversight on the management of the EFF Type 2 Crews.

Provide oversight to the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center.

Foster representation of Alaska Natives entities in wildland fire management.

Activate a Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group on a situational basis.

#### IV. MEMBERSHIP

The AWFCG membership is composed of the following agencies and organizations:

State of Alaska

- Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) Ad hoc.
- Department of Fish and Game (ADFG)
- Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry (ADOF)

United States Department of the Interior

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

United States Department of Agriculture

- U. S. Forest Service (USFS)

Native Representatives

- Chugachmiut (consortium)
- Association of Village Council Presidents (consortium)
- Tanana Chiefs Conference

Additional organizations seeking membership may petition the AWFCG. If approved by AWFCG, membership is executed by the petitioning organization's written adoption of this MOU. The petition process is delineated in the annual SOP.

#### V. ORGANIZATION

The Member Representatives, Officers, Committees, and Task Groups make up the organization of the Coordinating Group.

Member Representatives. Member representatives are categorized as voting, ad hoc or advisory. Definitions for the categories are presented in the annual SOP. The voting members must have delegated authority from their agency signatory to this MOU or authorized through other agency documents. They serve until replaced by their member organization. Individual member representatives are their organization's authoritative source of information and operational commitment to this MOU's purpose and objectives. Individual member representatives are responsible to ensure that respective organization policy and procedures are maintained and administrators are informed. They coordinate AWFCG recommendations for their organization's acceptance and implementation. Individual member representatives or "Acting" may participate in meetings and work efforts of the AWFCG, serving as officers when appropriate.

Officers. The AWFCG will establish officers to facilitate the accomplishment of its work. The positions to be filled are: 1) Chair and 2) Vice Chair. The terms for each are one year beginning with the January quarterly meeting. Succession is from Vice Chair to Chair. The Recorder position is filled by consensus of the members, therefore the selection rotation does not apply. Annual rotation of officers is:

USDI, Bureau of Land Management

Chugachmiut Corporation

USDI National Park Service

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

USDA, Forest Service

Alaska Department of Natural Resources

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Association of Village Council Presidents

USDI, Fish and Wildlife Service

Tanana Chiefs Conference

The transfer of the AWFCG Officers occurs at the end of the January meeting. The agency of the outgoing Chair moves to the end of the list.

**CHAIR.** The Chair is responsible for setting the agenda and for calling and conducting AWFCG meetings. The Chair approves the minutes for the meetings. At the Fall Fire Review the Chair will report on previous year accomplishments. Issues identified at the Fall Fire Review will assist with determining emphasis areas for the AWFCG during the following year.

**VICE-CHAIR.** The Vice-Chair will succeed the Chair and perform the Chair's duties in its absence.

The Chair or Vice-Chair will represent the AWFCG and the Alaska Geographic Area at national meetings such as the annual meeting of the NWCG–Geographic Area Coordinating Group Chairs. If the Chair or Vice-Chair is unable to represent the AWFCG, the AWFCG will select a member to serve as their representative.

**RECORDER.** The Recorder will ensure that minutes of meetings are taken, edited, filed and distributed. The position will also prepare and distribute AWFCG meeting agendas. The Recorder will also produce and distribute approved AWFCG and Committee meeting notes including decisions and recommendations to Member Representatives. The Recorder is also responsible for providing the contact information of the new Chair to the National Interagency Coordination Center Manager and the National Wildfire Coordination Group Executive Secretary.

Committees. Standing committees may be established by the AWFCG in accordance with this MOU. Established committees will operate under the direction of individual charters specific to their mission. Committees will report to the AWFCG. The AWFCG will appoint one of its Member Representatives as liaison to each committee. Committees will establish a Chair position. Committee Chairs will ensure that meeting minutes are taken, approved and distributed. Committee Chairs or their 'Acting' may be requested to attend AWFCG meetings. Committees and committee liaisons are listed in the annual SOP.

Task Groups. Temporary task groups may be established by either the AWFCG or Committees. They will be established whenever work of limited scope and duration is desired. Establishing a task group requires appointment of a lead person responsible for facilitating completion of the assignment. Task groups are temporary and will sunset when the work assigned is complete unless redirected by the AWFCG. Each task group will have a clearly defined purpose and specific objectives. Task groups will report to and take direction from the AWFCG or committee establishing it. Task groups and task group lead individuals are listed in the annual SOP.

## VI. DECISION PROCESS

The preferred decision making process is by consensus. Procedurally a unanimous vote of present voting members documents concurrence and consensus. If consensus cannot be reached within the meeting time frame, the issue will be tabled until the next meeting or AWFCG monthly conference call to provide additional time to reach consensus. The additional time will enable dissenting member(s) to provide revised proposed alternative(s)/recommendation(s) or for the AWFCG to establish a work group to develop alternative(s)/recommendation(s) for the full group's consideration. The Chair will issue a letter tasking the work group with developing alternative(s)/recommendation(s) for AWFCG's consideration. If consensus cannot be reached, then a vote will be taken and a simple majority will determine the approved alternative(s)/recommendation(s). The decision needs to comply with individual agency's rules and regulations. Given the independent nature of each member's organization and the mission of group, the AWFCG should not deal with urgent or hurried decision making. However, once a decision has been reached, all members agree to abide with the group's decision. A record of decision

and any supporting documentation including any dissenting member(s) statement will be placed in the official AWFCG notes.

## VII. MEETINGS

The AWFCG will meet quarterly. The Officers of the AWFCG are responsible for organizing, conducting and documenting the results of meetings. Minutes of each meeting will be distributed to the Member Representatives. The official record of the AWFCG proceedings will be maintained at the Recorder's location. The specific date and location of future meetings are to be determined as a function of current business.

## VIII. RESPONSIBILITY

It is important that AWFCG adopted recommendations receive formal review, acceptance and distribution by member organizations. Individual members will distribute documents through their organizational channels. Recommendations which require policy change or financing commitment are subject to review and approval by appropriate agency or private organization administrators.

## IX. FINANCIAL

This instrument is neither a fiscal nor a funds obligation document. Any endeavor involving reimbursement or contribution of funds between the parties to this instrument will be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures including those for Government procurement and printing. Such endeavors will be outlined in separate agreements that shall be made in writing by representatives of the parties and shall be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority subject to agency-specific legal requirements and fiscal controls. This instrument does not provide such authority. Specifically, this instrument does not establish authority for noncompetitive award to the cooperator of any contract or other agreement. Any contract or agreement for training or other services must fully comply with all applicable requirements for competition. Participation in any activities sanctioned or sponsored by the AWFCG is at individual member organization expense.

## X. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The parties hereto, in writing, may terminate this instrument in whole, or in part, at any time before the date of expiration. Any party may withdraw from the AWFCG by giving 30 days written notice.

This instrument in no way restricts the Cooperators from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations, and individuals.

Pursuant to Section 22, Title 41, United States Code, no member of, or Delegate to, Congress shall be admitted to any share or part of this instrument, or any benefits that may arise from Modifications within the scope of this instrument shall be made by the issuance of a mutually executed modification prior to any changes being implemented.

XI. PRINCIPAL CONTACTS

Principal contacts for each agency are identified in the annual SOP.

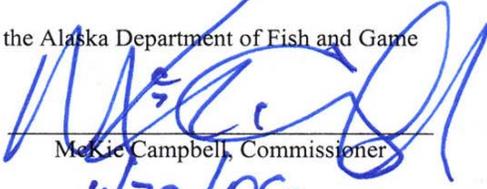
XII. TERM

This instrument is executed as of the last date of signing shown below and, unless sooner terminated, expires on September 30, 2010, at which time it will be subject to review, renewal, or expiration.

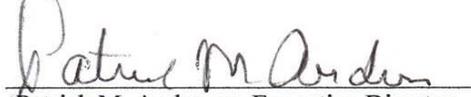
**XII. APPROVAL**

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this memorandum of understanding..

For the Alaska Department of Fish and Game

  
Mekie Campbell, Commissioner  
11/20/06  
Date

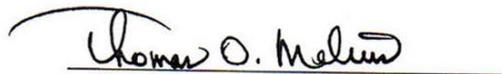
For Chugachmiut

  
Patrick M. Anderson, Executive Director  
7/7/06  
Date

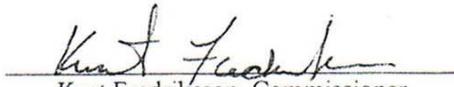
For the Alaska Department of Natural Resources

 for  
Michael Menge, Commissioner  
11/13/06  
Date

For the Fish and Wildlife Service,  
U.S. Department of the Interior

  
Thomas O. Melius, Regional Director  
July 31, 2006  
Date

For the Alaska Department of Environmental  
Conservation

  
Kurt Fredriksson, Commissioner  
7/14/2006  
Date

For the Forest Service,  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

  
Dennis Bschor, Regional Forester  
8/31/2006  
Date

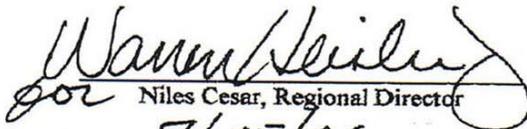
For the Association of Village Council Presidents,

  
Myron Naneng, President  
7/12/07  
Date

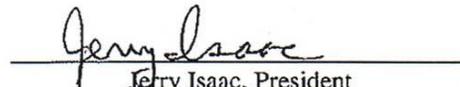
For the National Park Service,  
U.S. Department of the Interior

  
Marcia Blaszak, Regional Director  
8/15/06  
Date

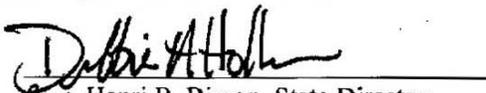
For the Bureau of Indian Affairs,  
U.S. Department of the Interior

 for  
Niles Cesar, Regional Director  
7/05/06  
Date

For Tanana Chiefs Conference

  
Jerry Isaac, President  
11-4-06  
Date

For the Bureau of Land Management,  
U.S. Department of the Interior

 for  
Henri R. Bisson, State Director  
9/20/06  
Date