Alaska

Interagency

Wildland Fire Management Plan

2010

As the Administrator of an agency represented on the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group, I concur with their recommendation to update the *Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan, as amended 1998*. This updated plan affirms that firefighter and public safety is the single overwhelming priority in all fire management activities. It also reiterates the concepts presented in the 1998 plan and previous Alaskan interagency fire planning efforts for a consistent, cost-effective interagency approach to wildland fire management. It is the interagency reference for fire operations and provides the standards and terms to be used by all state, federal and Alaska native entities. This plan does not supersede individual agency policies and requirements. Where available, the unit fire management plans should be used in conjunction with this plan and referenced for supplemental information applicable to that unit.

My signature authorizes the use and implementation of the *Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan 2010* on lands under my agency's jurisdiction.

For the State of Alaska:

Denby S. Lloyd, Commissioner — Date: 29 April 10
Department of Fish and Game

Larry Hartig, Commissioner — Date: April 14th 2010
Department of Environmental Conservation

for Tom Irwin, Commissioner — Date: MARCH 17, 2010
Department of Natural Resources

For the U.S. Department of the Interior:

Eugene R. Virden, Acting Regional Director — Date: 3-29-2010
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Thomas P. Lonnie, State Director, Alaska — Date: 4-1-2010
Bureau of Land Management

Sue Masica, Regional Director, Alaska Region — Date: 3/23/2010
National Park Service

Geoffrey L. Haskett, Regional Director, Alaska Region — Date: 3/19/10
Fish and Wildlife Service

For the U.S. Department of Agriculture:

Beth Pendleton, Regional Forester, Alaska Region
U.S. Forest Service

April 12, 2010
Date

For Alaska Natives:

Myron Naneng, President
Association of Village Council Presidents

7/28/10
Date

Patrick M. Anderson, Executive Director
Chugachmiut

4/25/10
Date

Jerry Isaac, President
Tanana Chiefs Conference

6-28-10
Date

For Structural Fire Departments and other Organizations:

Mark Hall, Fire Chief
Anchorage Fire Department

5/10/10
Date

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan updates and supersedes the *Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan, as amended 1998* (AIWFMP98). It specifies direction for the response to a wildland fire that is based on the management option designation and provides guidelines to jurisdictional and protection agencies for decision support requirements as the complexity of a wildland fire increases. This plan should be used in conjunction with administrative unit fire management plans which contains definitive objectives and constraints for those units; some agencies and units rely solely on this plan for fire direction.

This plan affirms that firefighter and public safety is the first priority in all fire management activities for all agencies. It also reaffirms the concepts presented in 1998 plan and previous Alaskan interagency fire planning efforts for a consistent, cost-effective interagency approach to wildland fire management. The purpose of the update is to respond to public requests for more information regarding Alaskan fire management practices, clarify interagency guidelines, policies and operational direction for responses to wildland fires, and modernize terminology.

The descriptions of the four wildland fire management options (**Critical, Full, Modified, Limited)** that were established in previous planning efforts have been updated and expanded. Site designations (**Critical, Full, Avoid** and **Non-sensitive)** which provide precise direction for specific areas have been moved from the AIWFMP98 Appendices to the management option chapter in this plan.

The standard response associated with a management option designation is described and this plan continues to allow for non-standard responses with decision support documentation. The description for each management option contains the goals, objectives, priority ranking, operational guidelines, decision documentation needs, and historic fire occurrence statistics.

This document addresses:

- History of interagency fire planning efforts in Alaska and environmental documentation compliance
- Roles and responsibilities of the jurisdictional and protection agencies, the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group and the Multi-Agency Coordinating Group
- Federal, state and Alaska Native directives that provide the foundation for current fire management practices
- Common interagency goals, objectives and management considerations
- Management options and the range of wildland fire responses within Alaska
- References that guide operational procedures
- Fuels (vegetation) management in very general terms
- Protection areas and agencies responsible to provide wildland fire services
- Standards for reviews

This plan, titled the *Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan 2010*, is effective once the signature page is complete. It and the appendices will be available on the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group's webpage (http://fire.ak.blm.gov/). The plan will be reviewed annually and updated as needed. Appendices will provide for dynamic updates.

ACRONYMS

ADEC	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
ADF&G	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
AFS	Alaska Fire Service
AIBMH	State of Alaska Incident Business Management Handbook
AICC	Alaska Interagency Coordination Center
AIWFMP98	Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan, as amended 1998
ANILCA	Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act 1980
ANCSA	Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 1971
AWFCG	Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
DOF	State of Alaska, Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry
EA	Environmental Assessment
EFF	Emergency Firefighter
FMO	Fire Management Officer
FMP	Fire Management Plan
FWS	U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
GIS	Geographic Information System
IFMP	Interagency Fire Management Plan
IMT	Incident Management Team
MAC	Multi-Agency Coordinating Group
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFES	National Fire Equipment System
NFP	National Fire Plan
NPS	National Park Service
NWCG	National Wildfire Coordinating Group
USFS	United States Forest Service
WUI	Wildland Urban Interface

Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan 2010
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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

This 2010 update to the *Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan, as amended 1998* (AIWFMP98) responds to public requests for more information regarding Alaskan fire management practices, clarifies interagency guidelines, policies and operational direction for responses to wildland fires, and brings terminology up to date. The purpose of this plan is to promote a cooperative, consistent, cost-effective, interagency approach to wildland fire management and it is the interagency reference for wildland fire operational information.

For this update, standards have been carried forward from the AIWFMP98; terms are updated as appropriate. A history of interagency planning efforts and the associated environmental compliance documentation has been summarized and the background for federal, state, Alaska Native and interagency relationships, fire policies, and authorities are briefly addressed. Broad goals, objectives and mutual management considerations persist from the former plans and a few additions have been made. Firefighter and public safety is emphasized throughout this plan as the single, overriding priority in all fire management activities for all agencies.

Jurisdictional agencies have worked cooperatively to assign fire management options throughout Alaska on a landscape scale across agency boundaries. Those fire management options were originally defined in the interagency plans developed during the 1980s and were the essence of the AWIFMP98. The response to a wildland fire is determined by the management option designation and the likely consequences of the fire on firefighter and public safety. The options offer a choice of responses from aggressive suppression to surveillance and that range of responses provides an opportunity for agencies to achieve both protection and natural resource management goals and objectives. The response listed under each option addresses normal fire conditions and a high percentage of wildland fire situations that occur in Alaska. Situations arise where non-standard responses are prudent and justifiable. Procedures for those situations and for revising option designations are also included.

Operational guidelines for suppression activities, air quality and smoke management information, cause determination and trespass direction, and emergency stabilization and rehabilitation responsibilities are also discussed.

Fuels (vegetation) management programs afford further opportunities for agencies to achieve their goals and objectives; those activities are addressed in general terms. While the plan supports cooperation and coordination for project development and implementation, the selection and funding of these projects are driven by the missions and priorities of individual agencies.

This plan does not supersede individual agency policies and requirements. It is effective once the signature page is complete. Unit fire management plans use the standards and

definitions included in this plan and that facilitates effective communications, cooperation and collaboration among all agencies. Where available, the unit plans should be used in conjunction with this plan and referenced for supplemental information applicable to that unit.

B. History of Alaska Interagency Fire Planning

The basis for interagency wildland fire management in Alaska is found in the 13 Interagency Fire Management Plans (IFMP) completed between 1982 and 1988 at the direction of Alaska Land Use Council. (See Figure 1)

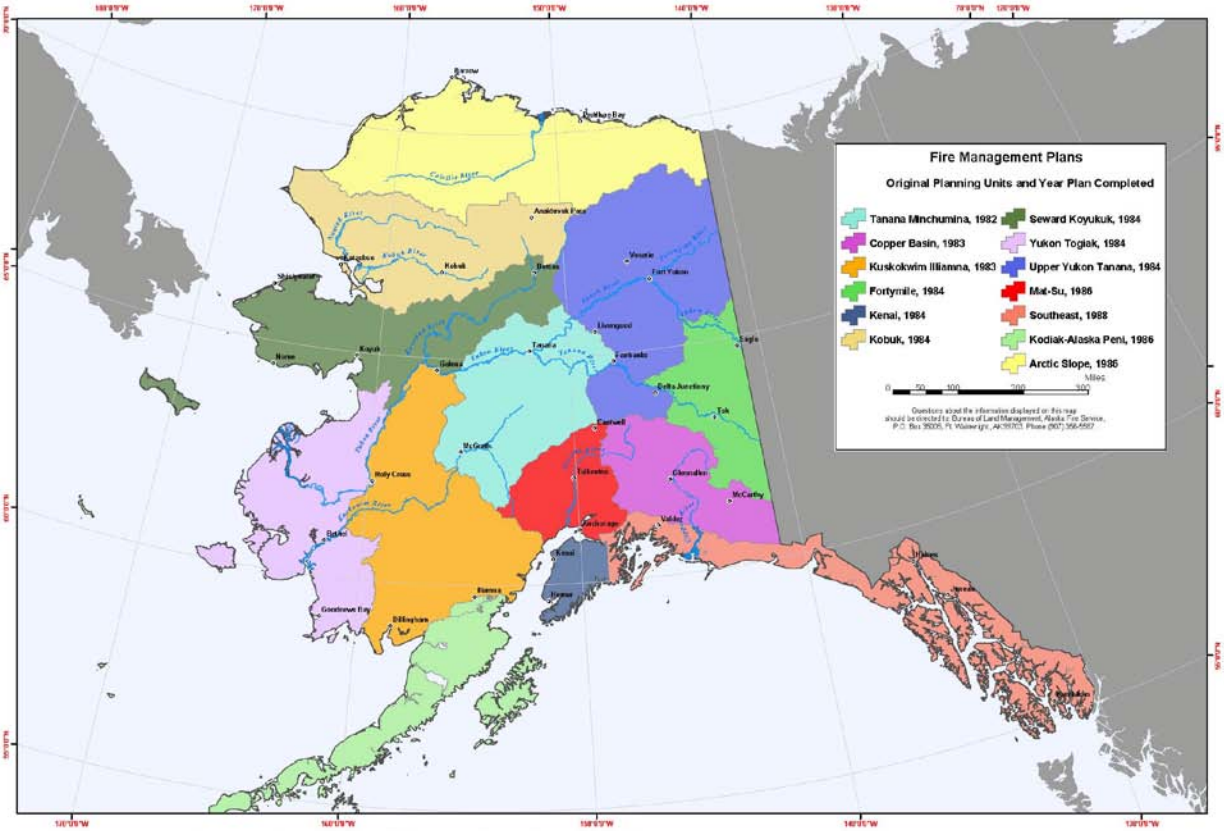
The Alaska Land Use Council was created under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act 1980 (ANILCA). This Council was directed "to serve as a forum for managers of public lands within Alaska and for governmental decision makers with differing perspectives and varying mandates with respect to land management of Alaska's land resources." (Alaska Land Use Council Annual Report 1982) The Council advocated multi-jurisdictional planning efforts and created the Fire Control Project Group to establish definitions and criteria for categories of fire protection and response as well as a schedule, organization, and process for completing interagency fire plans. (Alaska Interagency Fire Planning Guidelines revised 1984).

Four fire management options (**Critical, Full, Modified and Limited)** that set the resource assignment priorities and describe the standard response to a wildland fire within the option boundaries were defined. Values-at-risk, ecological considerations and suppression costs were factors used to develop the management option criteria. The first Alaska IFMP for the Tanana-Minchumina Planning Area was completed and approved in 1982. Using that plan as a model and reference, 12 more plans were completed through the collaborative efforts of interagency, interdisciplinary teams. Public input was solicited throughout the planning process.

By 1988 IFMPs were implemented statewide on an interagency, multi-jurisdictional, landscape scale. Each plan contains a description of the local environmental and socioeconomic conditions, natural and cultural resources, fire history and behavior, and local subsistence activities. The plans provided a coordinated, cost effective, landscape scale approach to fire management, a consistent interagency approach to operational procedures and a systematic method for the identification and prioritization of values-to-be-protected. The response to a wildland fire was determined by the management option designation and the likely consequences of the fire on firefighter and public safety.

The Fire Control Project Group became the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Council which evolved into the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (AWFCG). At the direction of the AWFCG the common elements in the IFMPs were consolidated in the 1990s. The AIWFMP98 amended the 13 plans into a single reference document for operational information. The 1998 version incorporated operational changes, clarified language and updated terminology. It provided jurisdictional agencies with one document to "understand their management options, responsibilities and operations of wildland fire management in Alaska." (AIWFMP98 AWFCG cover letter)

Figure 1: Alaska Interagency Fire Management Planning Areas 1982-1988



Source USDOI, BLM/AFS 200 Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plans, Original Planning Units and Year Plan Completed

This 2010 update is the next step in delineating interagency wildland fire and fuels management. Terminology has been updated and management criteria further defined to incorporate changes that have occurred since the 1990s. It continues to provide a framework of common standards, terminology and expectations to facilitate effective cooperation and collaboration between the federal, state and Alaska Natives entities to achieve both protection and ecological goals in a cost-effective manner.

C. Environmental Compliance

Agency-developed land use, resource, and fire management plans meet state and/or federal regulatory requirements and identify agency-specific goals and objectives. These agency plans reference agency's policies, authorities and missions and, for federal agencies, comply with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) direction.
The IFMPs 1982-1988 and the AIWFMP98 were developed with a broad goals and objectives that support the various agencies' missions in Alaska. An environmental assessment (EA) which met federal NEPA requirements was prepared for the Alaska IFMP, Tanana/Minchumina Planning Area 1982. The 1984 Alaska Interagency Fire Planning Guidelines (page 7 Step No. 12) references the authorization of that EA to serve

as the programmatic EA for the IFMPs completed during the1980s fire planning efforts. No further NEPA documentation was completed for the AIWFMP98 or this 2010 update.

During the extensive planning efforts in the 1980s, a U.S. Solicitor's opinion informally determined that planning for natural fire and fire suppression does not meet the threshold requirements of an ANILCA section 810 evaluation.[1]

To comply with *2001 Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* and federal planning requirements, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have implemented agency-related fire management direction by completing administrative unit Fire Management Plans (FMP). The Bureau of Land Management completed a FMP for all Bureau of Land Management managed lands within Alaska. A Regional FMP for all Alaska Native allotments was completed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs; Tanana Chiefs Conference has prepared a plan for allotments within their service area. The U.S. Army-Alaska has included Forestry and Wildland Fire Management as an annex to their Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans that meets Army regulations and serves as their Fire Management Plan. These plans facilitate the achievement of the land use and resource goals and objectives identified in unit land use plans. Those agency FMPs are the foundation for the implementation of the interagency plan for their units. Some agencies and administrative units rely solely on the interagency plan for fire management direction.

D. Partnerships

An essential element of Alaska wildland fire management is interagency cooperation and collaboration. The Alaska interagency relationship offers the opportunity for federal, state and Alaska Native organizations to collaborate to provide for public safety, accomplish fire-related management objectives and maintain healthy ecosystems while each partner agency adheres to agency-specific rules and regulations that support their agency's mission. Each agency's role and responsibilities contribute to the success of interagency wildland fire and fuels management; interagency agreements identify and define agency roles.

1. Jurisdictional Agencies

The jurisdictional agency[2] has land and resource management responsibility for a specific geographical or functional area as provided by federal, state or local law. Development and adherence to agency planning documents for a unit's wildland fire and fuels management program are their responsibility. These include the U.S. Department of the Interior agencies, the U.S. Forest Service, departments and divisions

[1] Specific to Alaska are ANILCA Section 810(a) requirements that an evaluation of subsistence uses and needs be completed for any federal determination to "withdraw, reserve, lease, or otherwise permit the use, occupancy or disposition of public lands."

[2] The lists of jurisdictional and protection agencies responsibilities are from the 2005 BLM-NPS Intra-agency Agreement BLM No. LB1062000, NPS No. F9915060002; 2006 BLM-FWS Memorandum of Agreement BLM No. 2006-10, FWS No. 701816K414; and 2006 Intra-agency BLM-BIA Agreement BLM NO. LBI062011, BIA No. 6E00440038.

of the state of Alaska, branches of Department of Defense, Alaska Native regional and village corporations,

The Jurisdictional Agencies will:

1) Ensure management actions taken by the protecting agency are compliant with unit plans and jurisdictional agency policy.
2) Set the strategic fire direction pre-season as defined in the AIWFMP; ensure management option designations are appropriate and reviewed annually; and identify general restrictions and constraints on their administrative unit. Management option change procedures are addressed in the AIWFMP.
3) Identify resources and sites which require site-specific protection in accordance with the AIWFMP.
4) Approve non-standard responses as defined in AIWFMP.
5) Work collaboratively with protecting agency and other affected jurisdictional agencies to develop the complexity analysis and provide strategic incident objectives and constraints to ensure land and resource management objectives are met and documented during the decision support process. For incidents of federal lands or Alaska Native village and regional corporation lands, use of Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) is required.
6) Approve the incident's decision document, when required.
7) Develop and jointly sign a Delegation of Authority to implement the decision document when incident complexity is Type 3 and above.
8) Assign, as the incident complexity warrants, an Agency Representative and/or Resource Advisor.
9) Participate in Incident Management Team (IMT) briefings to discuss local issues, personnel and facilities and establish a formal recognition of agency roles.
10) Collaborate with protecting agencies and IMTs regarding media releases concerning resource conditions, policies and management objectives for their agency.
11) Participate in IMT closeouts and contribute to the written evaluation of their performance in the implementation of the direction contained in the Delegation of Authority.
12) Investigate and pursue all legal actions that are deemed necessary for human-caused fires.
13) Provide written standards that address wildfire suppression activity damage repair.
14) Determine the need for, develop and manage Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Restoration activities.
15) Manage fire prevention and education programs.

16) Coordinate and manage fire closure/restriction programs for agency lands.

2. Protection Agencies

The protection agency provides wildland fire suppression services to the jurisdictional agencies and is the lead agency for the implementation actions documented and directed by the appropriate planning documents. Examples of planning document are FMPs and decision records for incidents compiled through a decision support process. The protection agency may provide operational expertise and assist, as requested, in any planning document development.

To promote cost-effective suppression services and minimize unnecessary duplication of suppression systems, Alaska is divided into three protection areas with a primary protection agency delegated to provide services within each area. The protection agencies are the Alaska Department of Natural Resources – Division of Forestry, the Bureau of Land Management – Alaska Fire Service, and the U.S. Forest Service.

The Protection Agencies will:

1) Provide the operational control for suppression services in support of the jurisdictional agency's mission.
2) Provide fire detection coverage based on levels of lightning activity and human use or at jurisdictional agency's request.
3) Determine and document the incident location, management option and cause.
4) Implement the initial response based on management option designation and notify the appropriate jurisdictional agency of any fire detected on or threatening that agency's lands in accordance with the AIWFMP.
5) Assign Incident Commander for initial and extended attack; for incidents that are being monitored, incident command will be determined collaboratively.
6) Initiate and facilitate the Incident Complexity Analysis, when warranted.
7) Develop and jointly sign a Delegation of Authority to implement the decision document when incident complexity Type 3 and above.
8) Provide supervision and support including oversight, direction and logistical support for all wildfires.
9) Assign a protecting agency liaison to out-of-State Type 1 and 2 IMTs.
10) Conduct initial IMT briefings with the affected jurisdictional agencies.
11) Conduct IMT closeouts and consolidate IMT evaluations completed by the protection agency and affected jurisdictional agencies.
12) Complete wildfire suppression activities damage repair.
13) Fulfill interagency reporting requirement as directed in the AIMG and provide jurisdictional agencies with final fire reports.

14) Provide wildland fire management related training to jurisdictional and other protecting agency employees including emergency fire fighters based on needs and available training space.

15) Collaborate with jurisdictional agencies and IMTs on media releases that provide fire statistics and on-going suppression/management actions on fires. Questions regarding jurisdictional agency policy or actions will be referred to that agency.

3. Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (AWFCG)

The mission of the AWFCG is to provide a forum that fosters cooperation, coordination, collaboration and communication for wildland fire management and related activities within Alaska. It serves as the geographic area clearinghouse and forum for the identification of interagency fire management issues and their solutions. The AWFCG is the leadership focus for planning and implementing interagency fire management statewide and has established committees to promote specific programs and interagency partnerships.

The AWFCG is responsible for the oversight of this interagency wildland fire management plan and determines when updates, amendments or revisions are needed.

Agencies with voting membership in the AWFCG include the Anchorage Fire Department, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Forest Service, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Chugachmiut, Association of Village Council Presidents, and the Alaska Departments of Fish and Game and Natural Resources. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation is a non-voting member. Additional organizations seeking membership may petition the AWFCG.

The AWFCG Memorandum of Understanding, Standard Operating Plan and other AFWCG documents are posted at http://fire.ak.blm.gov/administration/awfcg.php

4. Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC)

In complex situations as described in the Alaska Preparedness Plan[3], the Alaska MAC facilitates collective agency administrator decision making. It provides a forum to discuss actions to be taken to acquire an adequate number of resources to meet anticipated needs and to allocate those resources most efficiently during periods of extreme fire activity and resource shortage.

The MAC is activated to coordinate:

- Incident prioritization

[3] Available in the *Alaska Interagency Mobilization Guide* at http://fire.ak.blm.gov/

- Resource allocation and acquisition
- State and federal disaster response or coordination
- Political interfacing
- Information provided to media and involved agencies
- Actions in anticipation of future needs
- Identification and resolution of issues common to all parties

The MAC Operations Handbook is posted at
http://fire.ak.blm.gov/administration/mac.php

E. Authorities

Agency-specific resource management and planning authorities are cited in agency land use plans. Agency manuals and handbooks are sources of information that direct that agency's programs.

Statutes pertaining to Alaska fire management are:

- Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act 1980 (ANILCA)
- Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 1971 (ANCSA)
- Alaska State Statutes 41.15.010 – 41.15.240
- Alaska Statehood Act 1958
- Native Allotment Act 1906

Additional policy and procedures for fire management is provided to Department of the Interior agencies in Department Manual 620 Chapter 1-3 with Chapter 2 specifically addressing Alaska. Additional guidance for the Lands Withdrawn for Military Use is found in the Memorandum of Agreements between Bureau of Land Management-Alaska Fire Service and the Department of Defense agencies.

II. FIRE POLICIES and DIRECTION

A full spectrum wildland fire management program in Alaska is a joint effort among federal, state, and native organizations. Each entity requires an ability to adhere to its mandated policies, regulations, laws and agency mission. The following is a brief description of those directives that promote the interagency working relationship in Alaska and provide the basis for current wildland fire management practices.

A. Federal

The *Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review Final Report (December 18, 1995)*[4] was the first joint comprehensive fire policy for the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture. The Final Report contained guiding principles that directed federal agencies to achieve a balance between suppression to protect life, property and resources, and fire use to regulate fuels and maintain healthy ecosystems. It promoted the use of wildland fire to accomplish resource management objectives and supported implementation of policies and recommendations in conjunction with states, tribes and local governments.

The *Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (January 2001)* contained specific actions to enhance wildland fire management and seeks to build on the strengths of the original policy. Firefighter and public safety is listed as the first priority and the 2001 policy directs all fire management plans and activities to reflect this commitment. The 2001 guiding principle and policy statements guide the philosophy, direction, and implementation of fire planning, activities and projects on federal lands. All the principles and policy statements are incorporated by reference into this plan and, where appropriate, the statements are included within this plan.

The first *Interagency Strategy for the Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* was issued in 2003; it was replaced by the *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (February 13, 2009)*. The 2009 *Guidance* affirmed the soundness of the *2001 Review and Update* and clarifies implementation direction to fully achieve the intent of the 2001 policy.

The National Fire Plan (NFP)[5] was developed in August 2000, following a landmark wildland fire season in the Lower 48, with the intent of actively responding to severe wildland fires and their impacts to communities while ensuring sufficient firefighting capacity for the future. The NFP addresses five key points: firefighting, rehabilitation, hazardous fuels reduction, community assistance, and accountability.

Fuels management was addressed further in the Healthy Forests Initiative (August 2002) which sought to reduce the risks severe wildfires pose to people, communities, and the

[4] The 1995 & 2001 policy and the 2003 & 209 implementation documents are available at http://www.nifc.gov/fire_policy/index.htm

[5] See http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/ for more information on the National Fire Plan, the Health Forest Initiative and other related fuels (vegetation) management documents.

environment. The Initiative was followed by the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 which contains a variety of provisions to speed up hazardous-fuel reduction and forest-restoration projects on specific types of federal land that are at risk of wildland fire and/or of insect and disease epidemics.

Federal policies and programs are implemented through Congressional appropriations and funding levels vary annually.

B. State

The mission of the State of Alaska, Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation (ADF&G) is to conserve and enhance Alaska's wildlife and habitats, and to provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits. One of ADF&G's goals is to encourage wildland and prescribed fire management policies, practices and decisions that benefit the fish and wildlife resources of Alaska.

The mission of the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry (DOF) is to develop, conserve, and enhance Alaska's forests to provide a sustainable supply of forest resources for Alaskans. One of DOF's goals is to "provide safe, cost-effective, and efficient fire protection services and related fire and aviation management activities to protect natural resources and human life on State, private, and municipal lands, commensurate with the values at risk."[6] DOF is bound by the Alaska statutes and administrative code sections that directly govern forest management activities on state forest land. Alaska statutes sections 41.15.010 - 41.15.240 mandate the Department of Natural Resources to manage the wildland fire program for the State of Alaska. Statute 41.15.010 addresses "protection from wildland fire and other destructive agents, commensurate with the values at risk, on land that is owned privately, by the state, or by a municipality." Information on the state fire management and forest health programs including burn permits, grants available, Community Wildfire Protection Plans and Firewise is available at http://forestry.alaska.gov/.

Alaska State House Bill 395 signed on May 4, 2005 defines the official Alaska Fire Season as April 1 to August 31; this was incorporated into state law under statute 41.15.050.

The State of Alaska is not bound by federal policies on lands under their jurisdiction i.e. state, private and municipal lands.

C. Alaska Natives

The Association of Village Council Presidents, Chugachmiut and the Tanana Chiefs Conference represent Alaska Native entities on the AWFCG. As members of this group, they participate in statewide wildland fire planning and facilitate the implementation of common interagency fire policies. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and Intertribal Timber

[6]The ADF&G goal statement is found in the ADF&G Fire Management Policy, October 2009. The DNR, DOF goal statement is found at http://forestry.alaska.gov/pdfs/08FireSeasonContactsInformationandIssues.pdf

Council represent Native groups on national groups and committees such as the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 1971 (ANCSA) Section 21(e) is the original citation that provides for "forest fire protection services from the United States at no cost" for lands conveyed under that act. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act 1980 Section 1401 amended that original language to read "wildland fire protection services." This provision is codified in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Title 43.[7] The U.S. Department of the Interior Manual 620 Chapter 2 [8] authorized the Bureau of Land management to provide those services.

D. Alaska Interagency

The AWFCG is the primary interagency forum for wildland fire management direction. The voting members represent the agencies that have responsibilities or direct influence on wildland fire management. One of the group's primary objectives is to provide interagency leadership and coordinate implementation of current policies, directions and standards for incident management activities. It serves as a communication link between local, state, tribal and federal entities. Committees and task group are formed to address interagency issues and concerns and to develop solutions. Subject matter experts are consulted as needed.

[7] Precise citation is 43CFR2650.1(c) and is available at http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html

[8] 620 DM2 section 2.4 is available at the Electronic Library of Interior Policies http://206.131.241.18/app_home/index.cfm?fuseaction=home

III. GUIDELINES for ALASKA

While each agency has agency-specific guidelines for their fire management program, the following are mutually developed goals, objectives and management considerations that cross all jurisdictional boundaries and are applicable throughout Alaska.

A. Goals

Since the beginning of the statewide interagency fire planning effort, the goal has been to offer the opportunity for protection and jurisdictional agencies to achieve both protection and agency-specific resource management goals. The need to provide protection levels to protect human life and health, qualifying property, and valued natural and cultural resources while also allowing for jurisdictional agencies to complete mission-related activities and accomplish fire-related land-use and resource management in a cost-effective manner has driven the range of responses available. These goals include:

- Emphasizing firefighter and public safety as the single, overriding priority.
- Defining criteria for prioritizing the allocation of resources in response to a wildland fire.
- Using ecologically, operationally and fiscally sound principles.
- Integrating fire management, mission objectives, land use, and natural resource goals.
- Maintaining a flexibility that allows agencies to adhere to their policies and respond to changes in objectives, fire conditions, land use patterns, resource information and technologies.
- Promoting cooperation, collaboration and partnerships for fire management between federal, state, and local governments, Alaska Native groups and other organizations.

The protection of human life is the first priority in every fire management activity. Setting priorities among protecting communities and community infrastructure, other property and improvements, and natural and cultural resources is done based on human health and safety, the values to be protected, and the costs of protection. Once people have been committed to an incident, these human resources become the highest value to be protected.

B. Objectives

The fire management objectives were developed to meet and support agencies' goals and to provide implementation guidance for fire operations. The objectives are:

- Protect human life.
- Prioritize areas for protection actions and allocation of available firefighting resources without compromising firefighter safety.
- Use a full range of fire management activities[9] to achieve ecosystem sustainability including its interrelated ecological, economic, and social components.

[9] Examples of fire management activities include fire suppression, monitoring, prescribed fire, thinning and other vegetation treatment projects, prevention and education programs, scientific studies, etc.

- Use wildland fire to protect, maintain, and enhance natural and cultural resources and, as nearly as possible, enable fire to function in its ecological role and maintain the natural fire regime.
- Manage vegetation through various fuels treatment techniques to reduce and mitigate risks of damage from wildland fire.
- Balance the cost of suppression actions against the value of the resource warranting protection and consider firefighter and public safety, benefits, and resource objectives.
- Consider short and long-term cost effectiveness and efficiencies while maintaining responsiveness to jurisdictional agency objectives and within the scope of existing legal mandates, policies and regulations.
- Minimize adverse environmental impact of fire suppression activities.
- Maintain each jurisdictional agency's responsibility and authority for the selection and annual review of fire management options for the lands that they administer.
- Adhere to state and federal laws and regulations.

Objectives are also listed within each management option description.

C. Management Considerations

This plan provides the framework for planning a response to a wildland fire by selecting fire management options based on land use patterns, values to be protected, and resource objectives. The general management considerations are:

- The population of Alaska is increasing; subdivisions and residential areas are expanding into previously undeveloped areas.
- The natural role of fire in the environment must be tempered by the need to protect human life and health, qualifying property, and valued natural and cultural resources.
- Well-trained, well-equipped, and adequately funded fire-related resources are essential to maintain public safety and public confidence in the fire management programs and to provide cost effective suppression.
- Fire management option areas are based upon the protection of human life and qualifying properties, the value of the resources to be protected, and ecosystem health and sustainability, and are not based on administrative boundaries.
- Strategies and tactics will be based on firefighter safety, the management option designation, the availability of firefighting resources, site condition and location, surrounding vegetation, accessibility and the overall statewide situation.
- During the fire season, the availability of suppression resources is limited and prioritization is necessary.
- The pre-fire season assignment of management options establishes priorities for allocation of fire-related resources and substantially improves the effectiveness of wildland fire management.
- Non-standard responses become necessary when human safety and health issues arise and situations such as unusual burning conditions or critical shortages of suppression resources occur.

- Documentation of wildland fire decisions will be in accordance with applicable federal or state wildland fire management policies and procedures.
- Lightning-caused wildland fires are an important component of the boreal forest and arctic tundra ecosystems, and the complete exclusion of these fires is neither ecologically sound nor economically feasible.
- In the southeastern Alaska coastal forest, lightning caused wildland fire is not ecologically significant. The majority of the fires are human-caused.
- Fuels (vegetation) management activities are necessary and important resource management tools to reduce and mitigate risks from wildland fire and accomplish land and resource management objectives. Treatments by the use of wildland fire, prescribed fire, manual or mechanical means are viable.
- Pre-suppression efforts, such as fuel break construction and hazard fuel reduction will reduce the potential threat to human life and private property and help meet the objective to reduce fire suppression expenditures.
- Agencies will work together and with their partners and other affected groups and individuals to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fires.
- Agencies will work both individually and jointly to enhance knowledge and understanding of wildland fire management policies and practices through internal and external communication and education programs.
- All fire management activities should be based on best available science and information. Alaska-specific fire-related research is encouraged.
- Under climate change scenarios, fire seasons are anticipated to change in length and the range of variability for Alaskan ecosystems may change (i.e. shrubs growing further north in areas that previously were tundra).
- Wildland fire management programs, activities, and processes should be compatible within and between jurisdictional and protection agencies.
- Land ownership and land management objectives as well as knowledge of natural and cultural resources will continue to change over time. Reviews, modifications, and updates of the fire management options may accordingly be made by the affected agencies.
- The annual review of fire management options by each jurisdictional agency is necessary to ensure the appropriate option has been selected within the scope of their policies and regulations and in support of their land use and resource management plans.

IV. FIRE MANAGEMENT

Fire occurrence is a vital component of many ecosystems, particularly those associated with the boreal forests, and important to the biodiversity of the resources and the long-term ecological health of the land. Jurisdictional agencies in Alaska have acknowledged and supported a natural fire regime in their planning efforts. However, the need to protect certain resources and the density and distribution of populated areas warrants fire management that also regulates the extent of fire on the landscape. In Alaska wildland fire management options have been defined to provide a range of responses from suppression actions that restrict size and extent of fire to monitoring and continuing the natural fire regime.

Alaska wildland fire policies and procedures were standardized in interagency fire management plans written during the 1980s. Four wildland fire management options (**Critical, Full, Modified, Limited)** are utilized statewide by federal, state and Alaska Native agencies. The four management option categories:

- prioritize areas for protection actions and allocation of available firefighting resources to achieve protection objectives;
- optimize the ability to achieve land use and resource management objectives and integrate fire management, mission objectives, land use, and natural resource goals; and
- reinforce the premise that the cost of the suppression effort be commensurate with values identified for protection.

Options are assigned on a landscape scale across agency boundaries. Jurisdictional agencies have selected management options based upon an evaluation of their legal mandates, policies, regulations, resource management objectives, and local conditions. Local conditions include but are not limited to population density, fire occurrence, environmental factors, and identified values. Ideally, option boundaries are readily identifiable from both the air and on the ground, are based on fuel types, access, topographic features, natural barriers and fire regimes, and reflect operational feasibility. Management option designations are intended to be flexible to respond to changes in objectives, fire conditions, land-use patterns, resource information, and technologies.

The designation of a management option pre-selects initial strategies for the response to a wildland fire; responses range from immediate suppression actions to periodic surveillance. Jurisdictional agencies are responsible for updating and reviewing management option and site designations annually. Only the jurisdictional agencies can select or change the wildland fire management options for the lands that they manage. The authority to determine fire management options for lands selected by the state of Alaska or Natives corporations for potential conveyance rests with the current federal jurisdictional agency; either entity may negotiate fire management option classifications with that current jurisdictional agency for those selected lands. Once lands have an interim conveyance or a tentative approval for conveyance, the state/corporation designates the fire management option for those lands.

Native allotment designations are the responsibility of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and may be managed by a service contract provider. Under state statute, the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry represents private landowners other than Native allotment owners and village or regional corporations; the private landowners may negotiate with the state for management option designations. Federal and state permits, leases, sales contracts and other documents that allow for private use of federal and state lands contain information regarding wildland fire protection levels and management option designation in the document or document's stipulations. Those designations are applicable to the lands and personal property located on those lands; the issuing jurisdictional agency designates the management option category for those lands.

Figure 2 Land Status and Jurisdictional Agencies

Land Status	***Jurisdictional Agency***
City, Borough and Municipalities	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Military Training Areas (BLM-managed lands withdrawn for military purposes)	U.S. Army Alaska in conjunction with Bureau of Land Management
National Conservation Area	Bureau of Land Management
National Forests	U.S. Forest Service
National Monuments Mainland AK Southeast AK	 National Park Service U.S. Forest Service
National Parks and Preserves	National Park Service
National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPRA)	Bureau of Land Management
National Recreation Area	Bureau of Land Management
National system of public lands (defined in Federal Land and Management Policy Act)	Bureau of Land Management
National Wildlife Refuges	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Native Allotments (patented or certificated) Native Allotment Applications	Bureau of Indian Affairs Bureau of Land Management
Permits or Leases (Federal or State)	Issuing agency
Private fee simple lands	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Regional or Village corporate lands (established by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act)	Corporation
Selected lands (Native or State)	Bureau of Land Management or if within a National Park or Wildlife refuge, National Park Service or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
State Critical Habitat Areas, Range Areas, Refuges and Sanctuaries	Jointly managed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources
State Parks, Forests, Mental Health, and other state lands	Alaska Department of Natural Resources

The designation of Critical, Full or Modified (pre-conversion) does not ensure protection from wildland fire. A protection response will be based on various factors including:

- firefighter safety considerations that evaluate the site condition, location, surrounding vegetation, and presence of hazardous materials;
- the availability and prioritization of firefighting resources; and
- an analysis of the overall statewide situation.

Ultimately it is the personal responsibility of permittees, leasees, allotees, private landowners and jurisdictional agencies to mitigate and minimize risk to their property and structures and to be "Firewise"[10].

The protection agencies use the management options to determine initial action priorities subject to firefighter and public safety. The highest priority for a suppression response is on fires occurring in or threatening a Critical management option area followed in order of priority by Full, Modified and Limited management option areas.

If the management option objectives are not met by initial action forces or if a prescribed fire is declared a wildfire, a decision analysis process and supporting decision documentation that identifies incident objectives and requirements is required for the incident. That process will provide situational assessment, analyze hazards and risk, define implementation actions and document decisions and rationale for those decisions.

In the following sections, the response listed under each classification addresses normal fire conditions and a high percentage of wildland fire situations that occur in Alaska. Situations arise where non-standard responses to the selected management options are prudent and justifiable. The AWFCG and the MAC have the authority to increase or decrease levels of suppression regardless of management option designation if conditions warrant. Jurisdictional agencies may also request and protection agencies may suggest non-standard responses as conditions warrant. Procedures for those situations and for revising option designations are included at the end of this chapter.

[10] Information for Homeowners, Community Firewise programs and Community Wildland Fire Protection Plans is available at http://forestry.alaska.gov/fire/firewise.htm

A. Critical Management Option

Intent

These are the highest priority areas/sites for suppression actions and assignment of available firefighting resources. Lands in wildland urban interface[11] and other populated areas where there is an immediate threat to human life, primary residences, inhabited property, community-dependent infrastructure, and structural resources designated as National Historic Landmarks qualify to be considered for this designation. This classification is applicable an entire village or town as well as a single inhabited structure. (See Site Designations section IV.E.)

Objectives

1. Protect human life.
2. Prioritize areas for protection actions and allocation of available firefighting resources without compromising firefighter safety.
3. Protect area from wildland fire.
4. Provide for protection actions on fires that threaten human life, qualifying properties, or high-value resources with available firefighting resources and without compromising firefighter safety.

Priority

Firefighter and public safety is the first priority.

These areas are the **highest** priority for assignment of fire-related resources and detection coverage.

Operational Guidelines

1. **Preparedness:** Annual updates of the map atlas by jurisdictional agencies provide a systemic method to inform protection agencies of area/site locations and site improvements.

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[11]Wildland urban interface (WUI) is the line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuel. (National Wildland Fire Coordinating Group Glossary). FPA-Preparedness Module white paper "Defining a Common Attribute" (Jan 2005) further refines the WUI definition by adopting the University of Wisconsin parameters (http://silvis.forest.wisc.edu/Library/WUIDefinitions2.asp)

"WUI is composed of both interface and intermix communities. In both interface and intermix communities, housing must meet or exceed a minimum density of one structure per 40 acres (16 ha). Intermix communities are places where housing and vegetation intermingle. In intermix, wildland vegetation is continuous, more than 50 percent vegetation, in areas with more than 1 house per 16 ha. Interface communities are areas with housing in the vicinity of contiguous vegetation. Interface areas have more than 1 house per 40 acres, have less than 50 percent vegetation, and are within 1.5 mi of an area (made up of one or more contiguous Census blocks) over 1,325 acres (500 ha) that is more than 75 percent vegetated. The minimum size limit ensures that areas surrounding small urban parks are not classified as interface WUI.

The California Fire Alliance (2001) defined "vicinity" as all areas within 1.5 mi (2.4 km) of wildland vegetation, roughly the distance that firebrands can be carried from a wildland fire to the roof of a house. It captures the idea that even those homes not sited within the forest are at risk of being burned in a wildland fire."

2. **Detection:** When the levels of lightning activity or human use indicate a high potential for ignition or at the request of a jurisdictional agency, these areas and sites are the priority for detection coverage.
3. **Response to Wildland Fire**
    - **i. Initial Action:** Provide protection to the area/sites from a wildland fire without compromising public or firefighter safety.
        1. The objectives in order of priority are human life and safety, site protection and fire control. Response is also dependent on the availability of fire-related resources.
        2. **Notification Requirements:** Contact jurisdictional agency immediately.
    - **ii. Extended Action:**
        1. If a wildland fire is not contained with initial action forces, initiate a documented decision analysis and support process to determine a course of actions and associated costs.
        2. **Notification Requirements:** Contact jurisdictional agency immediately.
    - **iii. Use of Wildland Fire** would only be appropriate in extraordinary circumstances at the explicit documented direction of the affected jurisdictional agency.

Fire Occurrence

Based on twenty years[12] of data, the majorities of fires in these areas are human-caused and occur in a wildland urban interface setting. The median fire size is 0.1 acres. Ninety percent of the fires igniting in Critical are 1 acre or less.

Discussion

Excluding fire from these areas may necessitate vegetation (fuels) management projects to reduce and mitigate the risks of damage from a wildland fire.

Wildland firefighters are neither equipped nor trained to fight structure fires. Furthermore, agency policies do not allow it. Structural fire suppression within defined service areas is the responsibility of volunteer, city or borough fire department; there are areas outside defined service areas where there are currently no structural fire-fighting forces.

Wildland firefighters will not take direct suppression action on vehicle or dump fires. Should firefighters encounter structure, vehicle or dump fires during the performance of their normal wildland fire suppression duties, firefighting efforts will be limited to areas where the fire has spread onto agency protected lands.[13]

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[12] All figures are statewide and derived from 1988-2007 data compiled by Alaska Interagency Coordination Center.
[13] *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*, also known as the Red Book, Depts. of the Interior and Agriculture, Chapter 10, annual publication available at http://www.fire.blm.gov/Standards/redbook.htm

B. Full Management Option

Intent

This option provides for protection of cultural and paleontological sites, developed recreational facilities, physical developments, administrative sites and cabins, uninhabited structures, high-value natural resources, and other high-value areas that do not involve the protection of human life and inhabited property. Structures on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places and non-structural sites on the National Register are placed within this category. Either broad areas or specific sites qualify to be designated as Full. (See Site Designations section IV.E.)

Objectives

1. Prioritize areas for protection actions and allocation of available firefighting resources without compromising firefighter safety.
2. Minimize damage to the identified sites and areas from wildland fire.
3. Control all wildland fires at the smallest acreage reasonably possible with initial action forces.

Priority

Firefighter and public safety is the first priority.

These areas are a **high** priority but are below wildland fires within or threatening a Critical Management Option area or site.

Operational Guidelines

1. **Preparedness:** Annual updates to the map atlas by jurisdictional agencies provide a systemic method to confirm and update area/site locations.
2. **Detection:** When the levels of lightning activity or human use indicate a high potential for ignition or at the request of a jurisdictional agency, these areas and sites are the next priority after Critical for detection coverage.
3. **Response to Wildland Fire**
    i. **Initial Action:** Control all wildland fires at the smallest acreage reasonably possible with initial action forces without compromising public or firefighter safety.
        1. The priority is site protection followed by minimizing fire spread in high value areas to the smallest acreage reasonably possible. Response is also dependent upon the prioritization and availability of fire-related resources.
        2. **Notification Requirements:** Jurisdictional agencies will be notified promptly.
    ii. **Extended Action**:
        1. If a wildland fire is not contained with initial action forces, initiate a documented decision analysis and support process to determine a course of actions and associated costs.
        2. **Notification Requirements:** Contact jurisdictional agency promptly.
    iii. **Use of Wildland Fire** would only be appropriate on rare occasions, based on site-specific circumstances, and at the documented direction of the

affected jurisdictional agency. Examples of such circumstances would be if the initial size-up and response is delayed beyond 24 hours or if a fire is primarily burning into Limited.

Fire Occurrence

Between 1988 and 2007, two-thirds of fires in Full were human-caused. Median fire size is 0.3 acres. Eighty percent of the fires are contained at 5 acres or less; ninety percent are contained at 40 acres or less.

Discussion

The long range effects on fire-dependent ecosystems are a land management consideration when designating Full at the landscape scale. The attempt to exclude fire may necessitate implementing vegetation (fuels) management programs.

C. Limited Management Option

Intent

Limited is designed for broad, landscape-scale areas where the low density and wide distribution of values to be protected best allows for fire to function in its ecological role. Sites that warrant higher levels of protection may occur within the boundaries of Limited areas and actions to protect these sites will be taken when warranted without compromising the intent of this management option.

Wildland fire is used as a management tool to maintain, enhance and improve ecological conditions. In these areas, fire is routinely able to function in its natural roles as an essential ecological process.

Limited is also assigned to areas where the cost of suppression may exceed the value of the resources to be protected or the environmental impacts of fire suppression activities may have more negative impacts on the resources than the effects of the fire.

Objectives

1. Use wildland fire to protect, maintain, and enhance natural and cultural resources and, as nearly as possible, enable fire to function in its ecological role and maintain the natural fire regime.
2. Weigh the costs and associated environmental impacts of the suppression actions against the values to be protected and consider firefighter and public safety, benefits and resource objectives.
3. Realize short and long term cost effectiveness and efficiencies.
4. Minimize the adverse effects of fire suppression efforts

Priority

Lowest for allocations of fire-related resources.

Exception: When on-the-ground actions are warranted, the priority for allocation of resources is equivalent to the management option designation of the affected site. For example, if an action on a fire within Limited is an attempt to keep the fire from burning on to a Full site, the priority for suppression resources allocation should be equal to that given to Full.

Operational Guidelines

1. **Preparedness:** Annual updates to the map atlas by jurisdictional agencies provide a systemic method to confirm and update area/site locations.
2. **Detection:** Detection efforts will be compatible to fire conditions and availability of detection resources. Detection will be provided by the protection agency when requested by a jurisdictional agency based on availability of detection resources.
3. **Response to Wildland Fire**
    i. **Initial Action:**
        1. Surveillance, assessment, site protection as warranted.

Exception: If there is an immediate threat from a wildland fire in Limited to Critical, Full or Modified (before conversion date) areas, a suppression response may be initiated.

2. **Notification Requirements:** Jurisdictional agencies will be notified promptly.
   Exception: The jurisdictional agency will be notified immediately when there is an imminent threat requiring immediate action. Notification prior to taking action is preferred but actions should not be delayed due to the notification process. The reasons for the action will be documented in writing and maintained in the fire record

ii. **Extended Action:**

1. Periodic surveillance will continue for the duration of the fire to evaluate fire behavior and threats. Surveillance frequency will be determined by the protection agency in coordination with the jurisdictional agency.
2. When the fire threatens a higher management option area (excluding site protection), a documented decision analysis and support process may be initiated to determine a course of actions and associated costs.

iii. **Use of Wildland Fire** is routinely available; documented decision analysis and support process may be appropriate based on complexity or initiated at the discretion of the jurisdictional agency.

Fire Occurrence

Based on twenty years of data (1988-2007), the majority of fires in Limited are lightning-caused; less than 20% of fires have been human-caused. The number of acres burned annually is dependent on weather and vegetation conditions. Median fire size is 60 acres; 80% of the fires are 3,500 acres or less and 95% are less than 50,000 acres.

Discussion

Wildland fires occurring within this designation will be allowed to burn within predetermined areas while continuing protection of human life and site-specific values. By allowing for a natural mosaic of fire size and intensity, this option reduces both long-term risks and costs while sustaining a natural range of variation in plant composition and structure. Each jurisdictional agency has structure protection guidelines to which the protection agency will adhere.

D. Modified Management Option

Intent

Modified is the most adaptable option available to jurisdictional agencies since the response to wildland fire is based upon fire and environmental conditions. The essential element of this option is the conversion dates described below. Sites that warrant higher levels of protection may occur within Modified areas.

The Modified option provides a management level between Full and Limited. Unlike Full management areas, the intent is not to minimize burned acres, but to balance acres burned with suppression costs and, similar to Limited, to accomplish land and resource management objectives when conditions are favorable.

1. Under suitable fire and environmental conditions, accomplish fire-related land-use and resource objectives in a cost-effective manner while providing appropriate levels of protection to identified sites.
2. Maintain the flexibility to respond to fire conditions and tailor the initial action to those conditions.

Conversion Dates

Annually, the AWFCG reviews assigned conversion dates and determines if that date is appropriate based on local and statewide fire and weather conditions. (When establishing Modified areas, jurisdictional agencies assign one of the several dates: July 10, August 10, August 30, or September 30). Conversion may occur statewide, by a geographically defined area, or administrative unit.

A jurisdictional agency may request, through their AWFCG representative, that the AWFCG consider an earlier date during unusually wet fire seasons or postpone the conversion date during unusually dry fire seasons. The protection agencies may facilitate this process. The agency must provide the AWFCG representative the rationale with supporting data for the change as well as the opinions of other affected agencies. The rationale and supporting data will be included with the AWFCG decision record. If the conversion date is postponed, the AWFCG will reconsider a new date at intervals no longer than 10-days until conversion takes place. On the conversion date, the strategy and tactics on Modified management option lands automatically converts to those analogous to the Limited management option.

Objectives

1. Use a range of fire management responses:
   Before the conversion date: Contain fires with initial action forces.
   After the conversion date: Use wildland fire to protect, maintain, and enhance natural and cultural resources and, as nearly as possible, allow fire to function in its ecological role and maintain the natural fire regime.
2. Weigh costs and associated environmental impacts of the suppression actions against the values to be protected.
3. Realize short and long-term cost effectiveness and efficiencies.

4. Moderate the adverse effects of fire suppression efforts.

Priority

Before the conversion date, fires occurring within Modified will receive priority for allocation of initial action forces after the protection of Critical and Full areas.
After the conversion date, the priority is low for the allocation of initial action forces and equal to Limited.

Exception: When on-the-ground actions are warranted, the priority for allocation of initial action forces is equivalent to the management option designation of the affected area or site.

Operational Guidelines

1. **Preparedness:** Annual updates of the map atlas by jurisdictional agencies provide a systemic method to confirm and update designated areas. Conversion dates will be identified on the map atlas and in the attribute table for the GIS file.
2. **Detection:** Detection efforts will be compatible to fire conditions and availability of detection resources. Critical and Full management areas are higher priorities. Additional detection will be provided by protection agencies when requested by a jurisdictional agency based on availability of detection resources.
3. **Response to Wildland Fire:**
   i. **Initial Action:**
      1. *Before the conversion date*, contain the fire, but not minimize acres
         After the conversion date, surveillance, assessment, site protection as warranted.
      2. **Notification Requirements:** Jurisdictional agencies will be notified promptly.

      Exception*:* An ***immediate threat*** from a fire in Modified to an area or site designated Critical or Full may result an immediate suppression action if fire-related resources are available. The reasons for the action will be documented in writing and maintained in the fire record. If possible, the jurisdictional agency will be notified before actions are taken; actions, however, will not be delayed due to notification procedures.

   ii. **Extended Action:**
      1. *Before conversion:* If a wildland fire is not contained with initial action forces, a documented decision analysis and support process will be initiated to determine a course of actions and associated costs.
      2. *On the conversion date:* The course of action for any ongoing fires should be reviewed to determine if objectives are still valid and suppression actions should continue.
      3. *After conversion:* Periodic surveillance will continue for the duration of the fire. Surveillance frequency will be determined by the protection agency in coordination with jurisdictional agency.
      4. A documented decision analysis and support process may be initiated by the jurisdictional or protection agency at any time during the

duration of the fire to determine or validate the course of actions and associated costs.

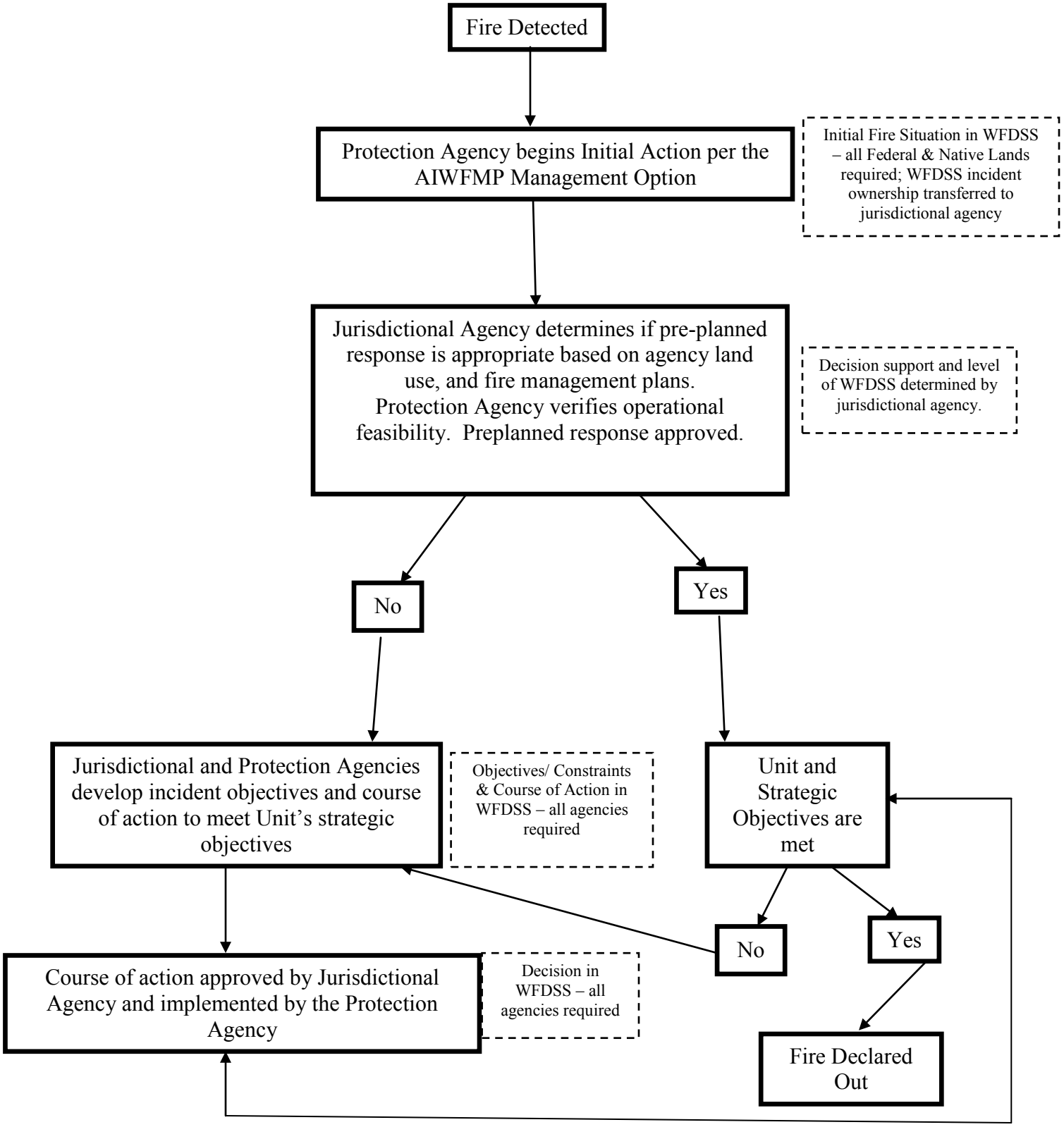
5. **Notification Requirements:** The jurisdictional agency will be notified immediately when there is an imminent threat requiring immediate action. Notification prior to taking action is preferred but actions should not be delayed due to the notification process. The reasons for the action will be documented in writing and maintained in the fire record.

iii. **Wildland Fire Use** is a decision routinely available after the conversion date. Prior to the conversion date, a documented decision from the jurisdictional agency is required to follow this strategy.

Fire Occurrence

Historically, the majority of fires in Modified are lightning-caused; approximately 25% of fires in Modified have been human-caused. The number of acres burned annually is dependent on weather and vegetation conditions after conversion. Median fire size is 4 acres; 90 % of fires in Modified are less than 2,500 acres.

Figure 3
Operational Decision Chart for All Management Options



E. Site Designations

Critical, Full, Avoid and **Non-sensitive** site designations have been established to identify the appropriate actions to be taken within the landscape-scale management option areas. These site designations give protection agencies specific guidance for structures, cultural and paleontological sites, small areas of high resource value and threatened and endangered species nesting areas.

- ***Critical*** sites are to be protected from fire and receive the same priority as Critical Management Option areas.
- ***Full*** sites are to be protected from fire and receive the same priority as Full Management Option areas.
- ***Avoid*** sites are areas where fire suppression activities should be avoided and effects from suppression efforts minimized. Aircraft should be restricted from these areas.
- ***Non-sensitive*** sites have been located and identified by the jurisdictional agency and do not require any type of protection, suppression actions, or considerations.

Information about specific sites may not be available due to the legal mandate for protection of cultural resources, endangered species or personal information. Designations may be recorded on the map atlas in the protection agency offices and it is the joint responsibility of jurisdictional and protection agencies to keep the atlas current as possible. A site database is maintained by Alaska Fire Service. When a structure is located during fire management activities and no designation has been recorded, jurisdictional agency will be notified immediately and they will determine actions to be taken.

The safety of the public and fire suppression personnel is the first priority when planning actions to be taken to protect Critical and Full sites from wildland fires. Regardless of the site designation, if humans are present at a structure threatened by wildland fire, human safety is the priority. Site designations are subject to annual review and updating.

F. Non-Standard Responses

The four fire management options address a high percentage of wildland fire situations that occur in Alaska. However, situations arise where non-standard responses to the selected management options are prudent and justifiable. All non-standard responses that occur will be reviewed at the annual Fall Fire Review.

1. Individual Fire Incident

During the initial fire notification, the protection agency may recommend that the jurisdictional agencies authorize or the jurisdictional agency may request either an increased or decreased level of suppression on a fire regardless of the fire management option. The decision and the rationale for request and the action taken will be documented. The written record of this authorization must satisfy the managing jurisdictional agency wildland fire policy documentation and timeframe requirements.

All non-standard responses that occur should be reviewed by the jurisdictional agencies during the annual internal reviews to determine if the management option designations should be re-evaluated.

2. Unusual Conditions in a Geographic Area

The MAC may be convened to implement a temporary change from the selected management options for a specific geographic area(s) during periods of unusual fire conditions (e.g., numerous fires, predicted drying trends, smoke problems, unusually wet conditions or suppression resource shortages). This does not include adjustment of the conversion date for Modified lands. Past actions have included discretionary suppression of all new starts regardless of fire management options. These departures usually do not apply statewide but to specific regions of the state.

A jurisdictional agency may request a temporary management option change for a specific geographic area through a representative on the MAC group. The office desiring the change must inform jurisdictional agencies potentially affected of the proposed change and solicit their opinion. The protection agency may facilitate this process. The jurisdictional agency requesting the change must provide to the MAC group a supporting rationale as well as the opinions of affected jurisdictional agencies. That document will be included with the MAC group decision record.

G. Revisions to Management Option Designations

An essential attribute of the fire planning effort in Alaska is providing jurisdictional agencies the flexibility to change the fire management option as warranted due to changes in land use, protection needs, laws, mandates or policies. Changes are submitted through the AWFCG procedures found at http://fire.ak.blm.gov/administration/awfcg.php Submissions are accepted between September 30 and March 1 and the target date to record all changes in the map atlas including the GIS file is April 1.

H. Map Atlas

The map atlas at local protection agency offices and the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center is the official record that delineates fire management option boundaries and site designations. When conflicts in information arise, the local dispatch office is assumed to have the most correct data. Alaska Fire Service (AFS) maintains electronic versions (current and historical) of the statewide management option data. An updated GIS file is available annually and is posted at http://fire.ak.blm.gov/predsvcs/maps.php

A site database is also maintained by AFS; it is not available publicly due to the sensitive information contained within it.

V. Operational Guidelines

A. References

Operating guidelines for suppression activities are documented in the following sections.

1. National

The following documents serve as national guidelines and may reference or supplement agency policies. The NFES number listed is the National Fire Equipment System catalog number.

- *Interagency Standard for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (*Red Book*),(NFES 2724) an annual publication by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture states, references or supplements agency policy and guidance to perform safe and effective fire and aviation management operations. Available at http://www.nifc.gov/policies/red_book.htm. Currently, the BIA is not a signatory and has a similar publication: the *Blue Book*.
- *National Interagency Mobilization Guide (Mobe Guide)* (NFES 2092) published annually and available at http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/mobguide/index.html
- *Interagency Incident Business Management Guide* (*Yellow Book*) (NFES 2160) contains information related to uniform application of regulations on the use of human resources, including classification, payroll, commissary, injury compensation, and travel; acquisition of necessary equipment and supplies from appropriate sources in accordance with applicable procurement regulations; managing and tracking government property; financial coordination with the protection agency and maintenance of finance, property, procurement, and personnel records and forms; use and coordination of incident business management functions as they relate to sharing of resources among federal, state, and local agencies, including the military; investigation and reporting of accidents; investigating, documenting, and reporting claims; documenting costs and implementing cost-effective criteria for managing incident resources; and non-fire incidents administrative processes. Available at http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/IIBMH2/iibmh.pdf
- Other National Wildland Fire Coordinating Group publications are found at http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/pubs.htm. These include the *Fireline Handbook (NFES0065), Incident Response Pocket Guide* (NFES 1077), *GIS Operating Procedures and Standards (NFES 2809)*, the *310-1Wildland Fire Qualifications System Guide (NFES 1414)*, and others.

2. Alaska

The following documents have been developed to address Alaska concerns and issues.

- *Alaska Handy Dandy Fire Suppression Field Guide* is the Alaska interagency operational reference guide for field personnel. Examples of content include: sample forms; general information on safety, fire behavior, fuels and weather; retardant base locations; radio frequencies; equipment hiring procedures and rental rates; etc.
- *Interagency Incident Business Management Guide* (*Yellow Book*) supplements:
  - The *State of Alaska Incident Business Management Handbook* (*AIBMH*) is the state supplement. Available at: http://forestry.alaska.gov/fire/incidentmanagement.htm
  - The BLM Alaska supplemental business practices are available at http://fire.ak.blm.gov/afs/organization/bustech/incbusmgmt/incbusmgmt.php
- *Alaska Emergency Firefighter (EFF) Type 2 Crew Management Guide* establishes standard operating procedures and guidelines for the protection agencies for utilization of Type 2 EFF crews.
- Jurisdictional Agency's Administrative Unit Fire Management Plans.
- State of Alaska Policy and Procedures Manual.
- *Alaska Interagency Mobilization Guide* published annually and available at http://fire.ak.blm.gov/
- *Fuel Model Guide to Alaska Vegetation* (April 2008) includes basic vegetation and fuel model descriptions, fire behavior and vegetation crosswalk to the 40 fuels models, 13 fuels models and the Canadian models available at http://fire.ak.blm.gov/administration/awfcg.php

In addition, the National Weather Service provides fire weather forecast daily and posts red flag warning and watches when condition warrant. (Available at http://fire.ak.blm.gov/predsvcs/weather.php)

Fire weather indices are calculated using the Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System and available at http://fire.ak.blm.gov/predsvcs/fuelfire.php.

B. Guidelines and Constraints

Jurisdictional agencies have identified the following general constraints and guidelines; additional constraints applicable to specific incidents are at the discretion of the jurisdictional agency and are documented in the jurisdictional agency's fire management plans, the incident's decision record and/or the Delegation of Authority.

- To the extent possible, minimum impact suppression tactics should be used. Firelines will be constructed in a manner that minimizes erosion and will follow natural contours wherever possible. Indirect attack will be used to the extent practical. A fireline rehabilitation plan for wildfire suppression activity damage, as approved by the jurisdictional agency(s), must be completed before the final demobilization occurs.

- The use of tracked or off-road vehicles (for example, bulldozers or all-terrain vehicles) requires written authorization by the jurisdictional agency(s) on a case-by-case basis prior to use.
- Application of aerial fire retardant near lakes, wetlands, streams, rivers, and sources of human water consumption or areas adjacent to water sources should be avoided. A minimum of 300 feet is identified in the *Red Book*. Individual jurisdictional agencies may have more restricted retardant guidelines.
- Base camps, spike camps, helispots and other support areas should be located in natural clearings if possible. The construction of helispots should be minimized. Any opening created for support areas will be cut with an irregular perimeter. Such areas will be kept clean so as not to attract animals and will be cleaned up before departure of the last suppression personnel.
- Support areas such as camps, staging areas, and helibases will not be located on Native allotments. No resources will be removed from a Native allotment (e.g. firewood) without an approved agreement. The BIA or the local BIA service provider may prepare the agreement.
- Flight patterns and suppression activities will be restricted around areas designated Avoid. Examples include peregrine falcon nesting areas, threatened or endangered species, or sensitive sites identified by the jurisdictional agency.
- Suppression activities on or near non-structural cultural sites must be coordinated with the jurisdictional agency.
- Jurisdictional agencies should be consulted concerning any operational restrictions in designated wilderness areas.

C. Air Quality and Smoke Management

Concerns about public health related to air quality and visibility are considered in actions taken within all fire management option areas. Smoke from wildland fire is inevitable. Outreach efforts to keep the public informed are aimed at providing ample opportunity for individuals to take action based on individual health factors and smoke concentrations.

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) is the regulatory agency responsible for air quality and smoke management. During the fire season, ADEC routinely issues air quality advisories addressing air quality levels and may recommend actions that individuals can take to protect their health. ADEC is represented on the AWFCG.

Prescribed burns may require written approval from ADEC. The ADEC Enhanced Smoke Management Plan[14] stipulates regulations to be followed for prescribed fires.

[14] The Enhanced Smoke Management Plan (ESMP) is an agreement and program plan developed and agreed upon by the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group. The purposes of the ESMP is to mitigate the nuisance, health and safety hazards to transportation (such as, roadway and airport visibility impairment) and smoke sensitive features (such as hospitals, schools, and clinics) posed by smoke intrusions into populated areas; to prevent deterioration of air quality and Alaskan Ambient Air Quality Standard violations; and to reduce visibility impacts in mandatory Class I Federal Areas in accordance with Regional Haze Rules. (ADEC website http://www.dec.state.ak.us/air/ap/docs/pbappl.doc)

For wildland fires, the AWFCG Smoke Effect Mitigation and Public Health Procedures[15] provide minimum uniform requirements for interagency use to monitor air quality. The measures were developed to promote a proactive assessment and documentation of potential smoke impacts. Assessments are the responsibility of both the jurisdictional and protection agencies. As requested, ADEC provides the technical expertise for addressing air quality and health related issues. Additional information on air quality is available on the ADEC website at http://www.dec.state.ak.us/air/am/smoke.htm.

When convened, the MAC addresses air quality and smoke management issues. During periods of extensive fire activity, the MAC group in conjunction with ADEC may determine that new fire starts will be suppressed due to smoke and air quality concerns regardless of fire management options

D. Cause Determination and Trespass Actions

The initial action Incident Commander is responsible for the initial assessment for determining the cause and protecting the point of origin of a wildland fire. When the initial determination is human-caused, it is the responsibility of the protection agency to immediately notify the jurisdictional agency. The jurisdictional agency is responsible for all investigations procedures and pursuit of any administrative, civil or criminal actions. Protection agencies may, at the request of the jurisdictional agency, facilitate investigations and will be included in any cost recovery determination.

E. Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation

Stabilization and rehabilitation efforts are undertaken to provide for public safety, protect communities' infrastructure and sustain ecosystems.

For wildland fire incidents, the Incident Commander is responsible to consult with the jurisdictional agency and to complete mitigation measures that meet jurisdictional agency's standards for any impacts due to suppression efforts before fire-related resources are demobilized from the fire.

For Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation timeframes and procedures to mitigate fire effects on federal lands, reference 620 DM 3, the *Interagency Burned Area Emergency Response Guidebook (Feb 2006)* and the *Interagency Burned Area Rehabilitation Guidebook (Oct 2006.)*[16]

[15] Available at http://fire.ak.blm.gov/administration/awfcg.php
[16] Both guides are available at http://web.blm.gov/internal/wo-200/wo-220/ESR/.

VI. Fuels Management

Fuels (i.e. vegetation) management assists private landowners, communities and agencies in mitigating the risks of wildland fire and achieving desired land use and resource management conditions.

A. Agency Programs

Fuels management activities assists in accomplishing land use and resource management goals and objectives. Fuels treatments may be necessary in areas where the objective is to exclude or restrict wildland fires to improve the effectiveness of fire management programs, the efficiency of wildfire suppression efforts, or to achieve desired resource and land management conditions. Projects may also be developed and implemented in support of scientific research. Each project is approved and funded on a case-by-case basis and available funding varies annually.

Agencies follow their individual policies and guidelines when developing fuel management projects. Fuels projects, funding, and planning requirements are agency-specific; however, some aspects of fuels management are addressed at an interagency level. Ideally, large prescribed fire projects are implemented and coordinated between agencies to minimized public impacts and maximize the efficient use of available resources. Fuels treatment projects including prescribed fires require agency-specific reviews and approvals.

The following sections address general fuels management information.

1. Prescribed Fire

Prescribed fires are planned ignitions to achieve land use and resource objectives. Prescribed fires are implemented only with the Agency Administrator's approval of a formal prescribed fire plan. For federal agencies or on projects on which federal dollar are expended, NEPA analysis may be required; an ANICLA 810 statement regarding project effects on subsistence and/or concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Office that there are no adverse effect on historic properties may be appropriate. Air quality criteria are included in the prescribed fire plan.

When conducting prescribed burning, agencies follow the ADEC *Enhanced Smoke Management Plan* (ESMP). The ESMP is an agreement and program plan developed and agreed upon by the AWFCG. The purposes of the ESMP is to mitigate health and safety hazards to smoke sensitive features; to prevent deterioration of air quality and Alaskan Ambient Air Quality Standard violations; and to reduce visibility impacts in mandatory Class I Federal Areas in accordance with Regional Haze Rules. Prescribed burning requires written ADEC approval before starting the burn if the intent is to burn 40 acres or more or clear and burn the debris from 40 acres or more during a year. The ADEC regulations are available at

http://www.state.ak.us/dec/home.htm. Depending on the location of the project area, additional permits may be required from local government entities such as municipal fire departments or borough air quality offices.

The *Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide (2008)* is available at http://www.nifc.gov/fire_policy/rx/rxfireguide.pdf[17] and may be supplemented by agency or administrative unit guidance. Interagency sharing of expertise, resources, and personnel for prescribed fire is encouraged.

2. Mechanical and Manual Treatments

Mechanical and manual treatments are implemented based on funding availability and under approved project plans. Projects on federal land or expending federal dollars may required site-specific analyses, including the appropriate NEPA documentation, an ANILCA 810 statement regarding project effects on subsistence and/or concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Office that there are no adverse effects on historic properties may be appropriate.

B. Public and Community Projects

Proactive measures by individuals and communities can assist in reducing the risks of wildland fire to homes, other structures and private property.

1. Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP)

CWPPs are developed by local community members to address issues such as wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, or structure protection. The process of developing a CWPP can help a community clarify and refine its priorities for the protection of life, property, and critical infrastructure in the wildland–urban interface. It also can lead community members through valuable discussions regarding management options and implications for the surrounding watershed. Federal and state agencies may assist, but are not responsible for development of CWPPs. For additional information and templates see: http://www.safnet.org/lp/cwppfaq.cfm. A modified CWPP template for Alaska is posted at http://fire.ak.blm.gov/administration/awfcg.php; completed Alaska plans are posted at http://forestry.alaska.gov/fire/cwpp/.

[17] ***Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide*** (2008 Guide) provides standardized procedures, specifically associated with the planning and implementation of prescribed fire. The 2008 Guide provides unified direction and guidance for prescribed fire planning and implementation for the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service as well as National Wildfire Coordinating Group partners the National Association of State Foresters and the United States Fire Administration.

2. Firewise and Firewise Communities

This is an educational program aimed at homeowners, land developers, zoning officials, and other groups with the goal of developing homes, subdivisions, and communities with the threat of wildland fire taken into consideration. The goal is to have homes, subdivisions, and communities built that will survive wildland fires in the future. A Firewise-Alaska brochure and other prevention materials are available at http://fire.ak.blm.gov/administration/awfcg.php

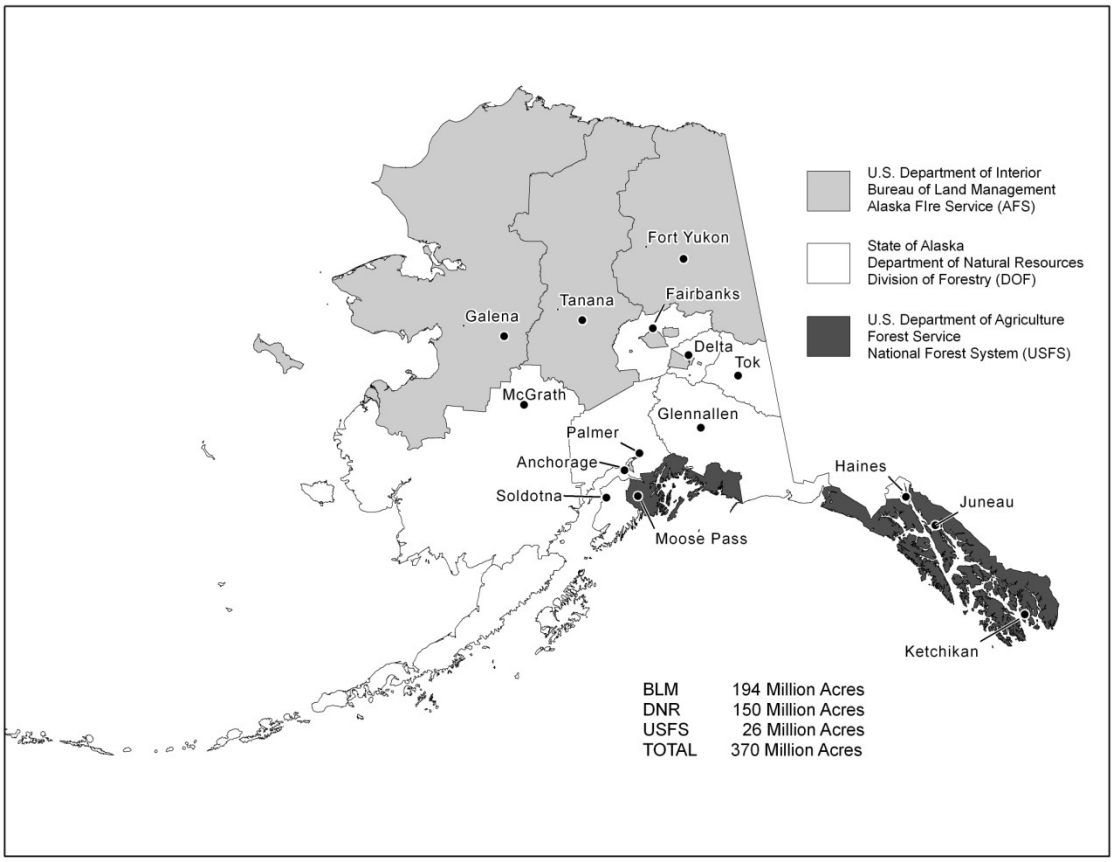
Firewise Communities is a unique opportunity available to fire prone communities. Its goal is to encourage and acknowledge action that minimizes home loss due to wildfire. Reference http://forestry.alaska.gov/fire/firewise.htm for information on becoming a recognized Firewise Community in Alaska.

VII. Protection Areas and Organizations

All agencies are responsible to provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land and resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, equipment and management oversight. Agency employees are trained, certified and available to participate in the wildland fire program locally, regionally, and nationally as the situation demands.

To promote cost-effective suppression services and minimizing unnecessary duplication of suppression systems, Alaska is divided into three protection areas. The protection providers respond to all wildland fires within their respective protection areas regardless of jurisdictional agency. These services are provided by three agencies: Alaska Department of Natural Resources – Division of Forestry; the Bureau of Land Management – Alaska Fire Service, and the U.S. Forest Service.
Agreements and annual operating plans delineate services and billing procedures; services are also provided as directed by state and federal laws.

Figure 4: Alaska Protection Areas



VIII. Evaluation

Evaluations assure accountability, facilitate conflict resolution, and identify resource shortages and agency priorities.

A. Interagency Reviews

1. Fire Management Plan

The current approved version of the Alaska interagency plan is posted on the AICC website at http://fire.ak.blm.gov/administration/awfcg.php The AWFCG reviews the interagency fire plan annually and determines if an amendment or revision is appropriate. It is the responsibility of jurisdictional agencies to ensure management option designations are appropriate for the lands that they manage; protection agencies may recommend revisions.

2. Fall Fire Review

The AWFCG sponsors an annual interagency post-season review to discuss issues and concerns and evaluate agencies' performance and achievements.

B. Internal Agency Management Option Reviews

An essential attribute of the fire planning effort in Alaska is providing the jurisdictional agencies with the flexibility to change the fire management option designations as warranted. Systematic management option evaluation and fire reviews procedures are encouraged to support land management missions and policies and to determine effectiveness of their fire management program and related projects in achieving their goals and objectives. An annual, pre-season review of the fire protection needs, landscape scale management option designations, management option boundaries and site designations is recommended.

GLOSSARY

National Wildfire Coordinating Group Glossary is extensive and a recommended reference. The glossary can be found at: www.nwcg.gov/.

Alaska Fire Service (AFS): An organization within the Bureau of Land Management with fire suppression responsibilities for Interior Department-managed lands, ANCSA corporate lands, and military lands (through agreements).

Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan 1998 (AIWFMP): The interagency document that contains interagency standards and definitions for fire management operations.

Alaska Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC): The group activated to prioritize incidents within Alaska and/or the allocation of critical resources within Alaska when statewide or national fire activity warrants.

Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act 1980 (ANILCA): The act that transferred approximately 100 million acres from BLM-management to National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (AWFCG): The group's purpose is to facilitate coordination and effectiveness of wildland fire activities and provide a forum to discuss and recommend action, or resolve issues and problems of substantive nature. Membership is comprised of representatives of the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, the State of Alaska Departments of Natural Resources, Environmental Conservation and Fish and Game, and Native organizations.

Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System (CFFDRS): The model used to systematically evaluate burning conditions in Alaska.

Conversion Date: That day after which most fires in the Modified Management Option receive the same response as a fire in a Limited Management Option area. Conversions dates are not uniform and may change from one geographic area to another.

Designated Site: A site which has been assigned a protection level: Critical, Full, Avoid or Non-Sensitive.

Division of Forestry (DOF): The organizational section of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources responsible for wildland fire suppression on state, municipal and private lands.

Emergency Firefighter (EFF) Crew: Type 2 crew hired as needed. Alaska has 72 designated EFF crews in 55 towns and villages. The *Alaska Emergency Firefighter Type 2 Crew Management Guide* documents crew requirements and stipulations.

Extended Action: The actions taken on a wildfire after completion of a documented decision analysis and support process to determine a course of action and associated costs.

Firewise: A cooperative effort among local, state, federal and private agencies and organizations to promote fire safety in the wildland/urban interface

Incident Objectives: The objectives specific to the particular incident; precise statements that reflect tactical accomplishment milestones to be accomplished on the incident. Incident Objectives may be limited to short time periods, such as a single operational period, but can be extended for multiple operational periods. Incident Objectives can serve as a means for tracking incident accomplishments and workload demand thresholds.

Incident Requirements: Incident Requirements are developed by the local unit to provide management organizations direction in incident management. They are recommended technical and scientific specifications for management activities and/or potential actions to help achieve objectives and provide the foundation, framework, and limitations/challenges for potential management activities.

Initial Action: The actions taken by the first resources to arrive at a wildfire.

Interim Conveyance: The title used for lands which are approved for conveyance to a Native corporation. Once the Interim Conveyance is issued, the lands are administered and managed by the Native entity.

Jurisdictional Agency: The agency having land and resource management responsibility for a specific geographical or functional area as provided by federal, state or local law.

Management Option: A fire management suppression classification assigned by the land manager that indicates the standard response to a wildland fire. Responses range from full fire suppression to managing fires for resource benefits.

Monitoring: The systematic process of collecting, recording and mapping of fuels, topography, weather, fire behavior, and fire effects data.

Native Allotments: Lands for which the BIA is responsible has a trust responsibility. (See Trust Lands.)

Native Corporation: a. **Regional**: An Alaska Native Regional Corporation, established under the laws of the State of Alaska in accordance with the provisions of ANCSA. The State of Alaska has been divided into 12 Native Regional Corporations with a thirteenth formed for Alaska Natives who live outside of Alaska. Regional Corporations receive all subsurface

rights of lands acquired by Village Corporations within their region. They also receive the surface and subsurface rights of lands conveyed to the region. b. **Village**: An Alaskan Native Village Corporation, organized under the laws of the State of Alaska as a business for profit or nonprofit corporation to hold, invest, manage and/or distribute lands, property, funds and other rights and assets for and on behalf of a native village in accordance with the terms of ANCSA. Village Corporations receive ownership of the surface estate on the land conveyed to them. The Village Corporation entitlement varies from three to seven townships, depending on their population as of 1970.

Native-Selected: Lands withdrawn for Native selection under ANCSA and selected by Native village or regional corporations.

Planned Ignition: The intentional initiation of a wildland fire by hand-held, mechanical or aerial device where the distance and timing between ignition lines or points and the sequence of igniting them is determined by environmental conditions (weather, fuel, topography), firing technique, and other factors which influence fire behavior and fire effects (see prescribed fire).

Prescribed Fire: A wildland fire originating from a planned ignition to meet specific objectives identified in a written, approved, prescribed fire plan for which NEPA requirements (where applicable) have been met prior to ignition (see planned ignition).

Protection Agency: The protection agency provides wildland fire suppression services to the jurisdictional agencies and is lead agency for the implementation actions documented and directed by the appropriate planning documents.

Protection: The actions taken to limit the adverse environmental, social, political, and economical effects of fire.

Regional Corporation: see Native Corporation

Resources (fire-related): Personnel, equipment, services and supplies available, or potentially available, for assignment to incidents. Personnel and equipment are described by kind and type, e.g., ground, water, air, etc., and may be used in tactical, support or overhead capacities at an incident.

Resources (cultural): A general term that refers to archeological, historical, paleontological, religious etc. sites.

Resources (natural): The natural resources of an area, such as timber, grass, watershed values, recreation values, and wildlife habitat.

Response to wildland fire: The mobilization of the necessary services and responders to a fire based on ecological, social, and legal consequences, the circumstances under which a fire occurs, and the likely consequences on firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and values to be protected.

State-Selected: Land selected by the State under the Statehood Act for possible future conveyance.

Suppression: All the work of extinguishing a fire or confining fire spread.

Surveillance: The systematic process of collecting, recording or mapping the fuels, topography, weather, fire behavior and location of values to be protected to provide the information necessary to make management decisions on wildland fires.

Trust Lands: Land (or an interest in land) is held between the United States as legal owner and the Native individual(s) as equitable owner. The legal owner holds the legal title to the property but only for the benefit of the equitable owner. The equitable owner (Native allottee) has the full right to use and occupy the property and do anything with it except to sell or lease it, grant rights-of way, or sell the natural resources off it.

Unplanned Ignition: The initiation of a wildland fire by lightning, volcanoes, and unauthorized or accidental human-caused fires (see wildfire).

Use of Wildland Fire: Terminology developed to describe the management of either wildfire or prescribed fire to meet resource objectives or benefits.

Village Corporation: See Native Corporation

Wildfire: An unplanned ignition of a wildland fire (such as a fire caused by lightning, volcanoes, unauthorized and accidental human-caused fires) and escaped prescribed fires. (See unplanned ignition and escaped prescribed fire).

Wildland Fire: A general term describing any non-structure fire that occurs in the wildland.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) – The line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetation fuels.

Appendices

Appendix A
Document History and Review Chronology

1980s Interagency Fire Management Plans

These plans were developed through the collaborative efforts of interagency, interdisciplinary teams and applied on a statewide, interagency, multi-jurisdictional, landscape scale. They provided land mangers with wildland fire strategy choices and provided operational direction to the suppression agencies. *Alaska Interagency Fire Planning Guidelines* were published in 1984 to assist planning group in expediting the completion of the plans. The following thirteen plans provided "an opportunity for land managers within the planning area to accomplish their land use objectives through cooperative fire management" (*Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Tanana/Minchumina Planning Area)* and standardized management options statewide.

1982 *Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Tanana/Minchumina Planning Area and Amendment 1984*
1983 *Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Copper Basin Planning Area*
1983 *Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Kuskokwim/IIliamna Planning Area*
1983 *Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Upper Yukon/Tanana Planning Area*
1984 *Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Fortymile Planning Area*
1984 *Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Kenai Planning Area*
1984 *Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Kobuk Planning Area*
1984 *Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Seward/Koyukuk Planning Area*
1984 *Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Yukon/Togiak Planning Area*
1986 *Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Arctic Slope Planning Area*
1986 *Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Kodiak/Alaska Peninsula Planning Area*
1986 *Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Matanuska/Susitna Planning Area*
1988 *Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan, Southeast Planning Area*

1998 *Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan, as amended 1998*

This plan consolidates the common elements in original 13 plans listed above. It provided the land managers and fire suppression organizations a single reference for interagency fire management operational information. The plan clarified and streamlined existing fire management planning documents and also incorporates operational changes that had occurred since the 1980s statewide fire management planning effort.

2010 *Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan*

This plan updated and superseded the *Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan, as amended 1998*. The update was completed in response to public requests for more information regarding Alaskan fire management practices, to clarify interagency guidelines, policies and operational direction for responses to wildland fires, and to bring terminology up to date. This plan affirms that firefighter and public safety is the first priority in all fire management activities for all agencies. It also reaffirms the concepts presented in 1998 plan and previous Alaskan interagency fire planning efforts. The stated purpose of the 2010 plan is to promote a cooperative, consistent,

cost-effective, interagency approach to wildland fire management and to be the interagency reference for wildland fire operational direction.

Annual Review Chronology

This document will be reviewed annually by the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group. Updates and revisions will be incorporated into the document through this Appendix. Every five years the plan will be submitted for regional review and signatures.

As an example:
The Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan 2010 was review by the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group on **(DATE)**. The following updates and revisions were approved:

1. XXXXX
2. YYYYY
3. ZZZZZZ

Dale Haggstrom **Date** **Alaska Department of Fish and Game**	**Alice Edwards** **Date** **Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation**
Dean Brown **Date** **Alaska Department of Natural Resources**	**Steve Heppner** **Date** **U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)** **Bureau of Indian Affairs**
John Gould **Date** **DOI, Bureau of Land Management**	**Dan Warthin** **Date** **DOI, National Park Service**
Doug Alexander **Date** **DOI, Fish and Wildlife Service**	**Ron Knowles** **Date** **U.S. Department of Agriculture** **Forest Service**
Mike Burley **Date** **Association of Village Council Presidents**	**Charlie Sink** **Date** **Chugachmiut**
Clinton Northway **Date** **Tanana Chiefs Conference**	**Date** **Anchorage Fire Department**

Appendix B
Map Atlas Legend

The following are the symbols have been used in the paper map atlas since it was developed. The GIS files may contain a legend with different symbols.

1. **Fire Management Option Boundary Lines:** Single letter symbols are used to designate each of the four management options:

Critical	C
Full	F
Modified	M
Limited	L

2. **Modified Area Conversion Dates:** The initial evaluation dates for Modified management areas will be noted on the map and contained within the attribute table for the GIS file.

3. **Sites with Structures:** ✡ with the first letter of site designation indicates a structure. For example, a Critical site would be indicated by ✡ C

4. **Non-structural Cultural, Paleontological and High Value Resource Sites:** ☾ with the first letter of site designation indicates these resources. For example, a cultural site that has been designated Avoid would be indicated with ☾ A

5. **Threatened and Endangered Species:** with a letter denoting the site designation. An example for a site designated Full is F

Appendix C
Fire Occurrence Statistics

The following was derived from datasets compiled by the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center.

Prior to the 1980s planning efforts, wildland fires were suppressed based on resource availability. In 1988, the interagency planning efforts were completed and four fire management options (**Critical, Full, Modified and Limited)** that set the resource assignment priorities and describe the standard response to a wildland fire within the option boundaries had been defined and used by federal, state and Alaska Natives entities statewide. Standard responses range from aggressive suppression to surveillance. Those management options definitions were carried forward to the *Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan as amended 1998* and into this 2010 update.

1967 -1981 Before the Interagency Fire Management Plans
1988 – 2002 Interagency Fire Management Plans in effect for 15 years.
1988-2007 Interagency Fire Management Plans in effect for 20 years.
Statewide Occurrence

Years	Human		Lightning		Total	
	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres
1967 – 1981	4,353	2,102,657	3,219	9,666,982	7,572	11,769,639
1988 – 2002	5,863	1,075,412	2,527	14,064,870	8,390	15,140,282
1988 - 2007	7,487	1,353,308	3,523	26,559,330	11,010	27,912,638

Management Option	Statewide 1988-2002 Fire Size (Acres)							
	Fires	Acres	Average	<50%	<80%	<90%	<95%	<98%
Critical	4,188	60,829	15	0.1	0.3	1.0	2.0	6.0
Full	1,813	1,393,257	768	0.3	5.0	35.0	370.0	5,255
Limited	1,325	10,392,779	7,843	40.0	2,970	13,214	36,400	93,317
Modified	921	3,177,693	3,450	4.0	180	1,880	8,541	43,952
Unplanned	143	115,724						
Total	8,390	15,140,282						

Management Option	Statewide 1988- 2007 Fire Size (Acres)							
	Fires	Acres	Average	<50%	<80%	<90%	<95%	<98%
Critical	5,324	198,896.3	37	0.1	0.3	1.0	2.5	8.0
Full	2,443	2,459,962	1007	0.3	5.0	40.0	325.0	5,400
Limited	1,968	20,234,722	10,282	60.0	3,500	17,958	47,060	131,913
Modified	1,122	4,439,190	3,956	4.0	212	2,400	11,582	49,906
Unplanned	153	579,868						
Total	11,010	27,912,638.3						

1988-2007 Ten Largest Fires Statewide

Year	Fire Number & Name		Latitude	Longitude	Size(Acres)	Cause
1997	B393	Inowak	6159	15705	606,945	Lightning
1988	A043	832015	6554	14807	541,231	Lightning
2004	A4SZ	Boundary	6516	14653	537,627	Lightning
2004	A7AA	Dall City	6618	14952	483,280	Lightning
1990	A143	FYU NE 85	6731	14235	464,320	Lightning
2004	A5RC	Billy Creek	6349	14349	463,994	Lightning
2004	A4RZ	North Dag	6544	15213	419,884	Lightning
2004	A4XX	Pingo	6712	14622	403,993	Lightning
1990	A185	BTTS S 40	6615	15127	400,182	Lightning
1997	B280	Simels	6334	15712	365,871	Lightning
2004	A4XV	Winter Trail	6657	14520	344,833	Lightning

1988-2002 Ten Largest Fires Statewide

Year	Fire Number & Name		Latitude	Longitude	Size(Acres)	Cause
1997	B393	Inowak	6159	15705	606,945	Lightning
1988	A043	832015	6554	14807	541,231	Lightning
1990	A143	FYU NE 85	6731	14235	464,320	Lightning
1990	A185	BTTS S 40	6615	15127	400,182	Lightning
1997	B280	Simels	6334	15712	365,871	Lightning
1997	B309	Magitchlie Ck	6338	15825	308,120	Lightning
1988	A165	832064	6558	14549	289,360	Lightning
1990	A121	032018	6637	14751	267,930	Lightning
2002	A283	Geskakmina	6438	15026	257,549	Lightning
1991	B569		6644	15207	249,784	Lightning

1967-1981 Ten Largest Fires Statewide

Year	Fire Number & Name		Latitude	Longitude	Size(Acres)	Cause
1969	9482	Holanada Ck	6603	15211	803,420	Lightning
1969	9430	Butte Creek	6520	14212	525,000	Human
1974	8686	Buza	6604	15742	512,000	Lightning
1969	9486	Bear	6450	15650	422,000	Lightning
1969	9406	Fishhook	6638	14341	363,000	Human
1977	7721	Bear Creek	6240	15410	361,600	Lightning
1969	9447	Big Denver	6502	15100	314,683	Human
1977	8623	Kugruk	6545	16223	270,000	Lightning
1977	8689	Augus	6612	15916	270,000	Lightning
1969	9513	Ridge Top	6518	15225	251,520	Lightning