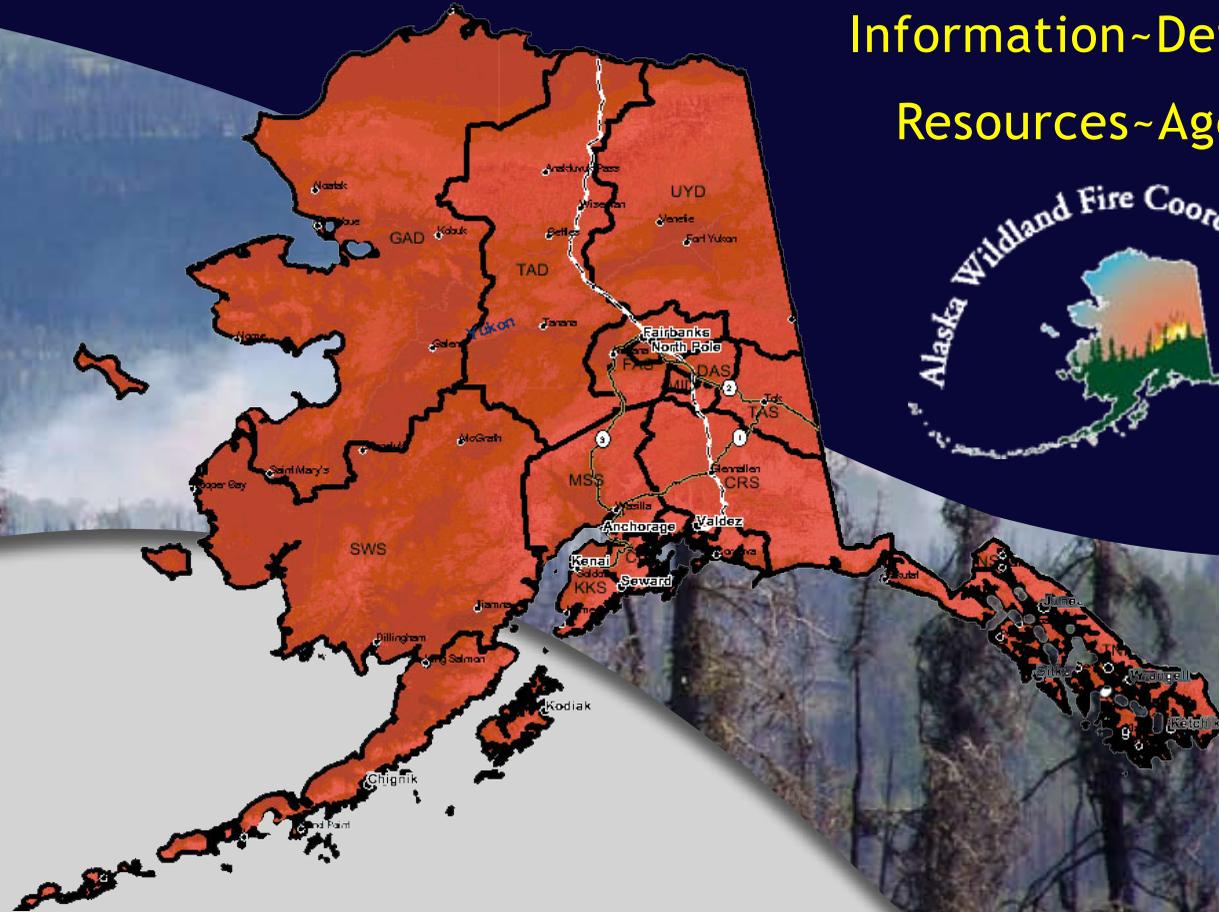


Alaska Wildland Fire Suppression Media Guide

INSIDE

Information~Definitions

Resources~Agencies



2008

QUICK REFERENCES

To Report a Wildland Fire Call: 911 or 1-800-237-3633 (AICC)

AK Interagency Coordination Center (AICC): <http://fire.ak.blm.gov>

General Email Contact: aicc_information@blm.gov

Alaska Division of Forestry (DOF) + BLM Alaska Fire Service (AFS) Fire Info: (907) 356-5511

INTRODUCTION

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The purpose of this guide is to:

- Provide the media with a basic understanding of wildland fire suppression in Alaska
- Provide direction for current fire information inquiries and incident news
- Familiarize the media with firefighting resources and planning
- Define terminology that is frequently used within the fire community

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 and 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.



Starter References

PHONE NUMBERS:

- **To Report A Wildland Fire Call: 911 or 1-800-237-3633 (AICC)**
- Alaska Division of Forestry + BLM Alaska Fire Service Fire Info: (907) 356-5511
- General Email: aicc_information@blm.gov

HELPFUL WEBSITES:

- Alaska Interagency Coordination Center (AICC): <http://fire.ak.blm.gov>
- AICC Morning Highlights: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/content/news/highlights/current.pdf>
- Map of Fire Locations: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/predsvcs/maps.php>
- Smoke Concerns: <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/air/am/smoke.htm>
- National Fire Situation: http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm
- Home and Property Preparation for Wildland Fire: <http://firewise.org/>
- Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (AWFCG) Materials:
<http://fire.ak.blm.gov/administration/awfcg.php>
- Interagency Standards for Fire & Aviation Operations:
http://www.nifc.gov/policies/red_book.htm

Visiting a Wildland Fire Incident

1. **FOR YOUR SAFETY**, contact the Incident Public Information Officer or Agency Public Affairs and let them know of your intention to visit.
2. You must be in good physical condition and are required to have the right personal protective equipment (PPE):

Recommendations for PPE at an Incident Base:

- Lace-up shoes with non-slip soles and heels
- Long pants and long-sleeve shirt

Minimum required PPE for fireline visits:

- 8-inch high, lace up leather work boots with non-slip, Vibram-type, melt-resistant soles.
- Yellow Nomex shirt and Nomex pants*
- Hard hat with chin strap*
- Leather gloves*
- Fire shelter*
- Hand tool (to be determined by escort)*
- Water canteen*

**There is a possibility you can get this PPE item at the incident, but please bring your own if you have it.*

Key Points

- Firefighter and public safety is the first priority.
- Alaskans are responsible, through individual efforts and community programs, to reduce the threat of wildland fire to their homes and property. FireWise Alaska provides a guide for home and property owners: <http://forestry.alaska.gov/pdfs/06Firewise.pdf>
- 67% of fires in Alaska are human-caused, or an average of 341 preventable fires each year.*
**Statistic from AICC Predictive Services that is averaged over a 10-year period*
- Fire management planning, preparedness, suppression operations, prescribed fire, and other related activities are coordinated on an interagency basis with involvement from State, Federal, local governments and Alaska Native entities.
- Lightning-caused, wildland fires are a natural process in Alaska.
- Managing wildland fire in Alaska balances risks and benefits in an ever changing environment.



Alaska Suppression Resources Include:

Smokejumpers The initial response force that travels to fire by aircraft and parachute.

Crews:

- Hotshot

Highly trained 20-person crews that are used mainly to build fireline by hand and are a national resource.

*All Hotshot Crews are Type 1 Crews, not all Type 1 Crews are Hotshots.

- Type 1

Highly trained 20-person crews that are used mainly to build fireline by hand.

- Type 2

- **Agency** 20-person crews that are used primarily for fireline construction and mop-up after a fire.

- **EFF** Alaska has designated approximately 70 Emergency Firefighter Crews that are hired, as needed, in groups of 16 people for in-state assignments. For out-of-state assignments they are 20-person crews.

Fire Specialists Individual firefighters that are highly trained and provide aviation support, incident leadership and fuel management services.

Engines Vehicles that are equipped with water, pumps, hose, and other fire suppression tools.

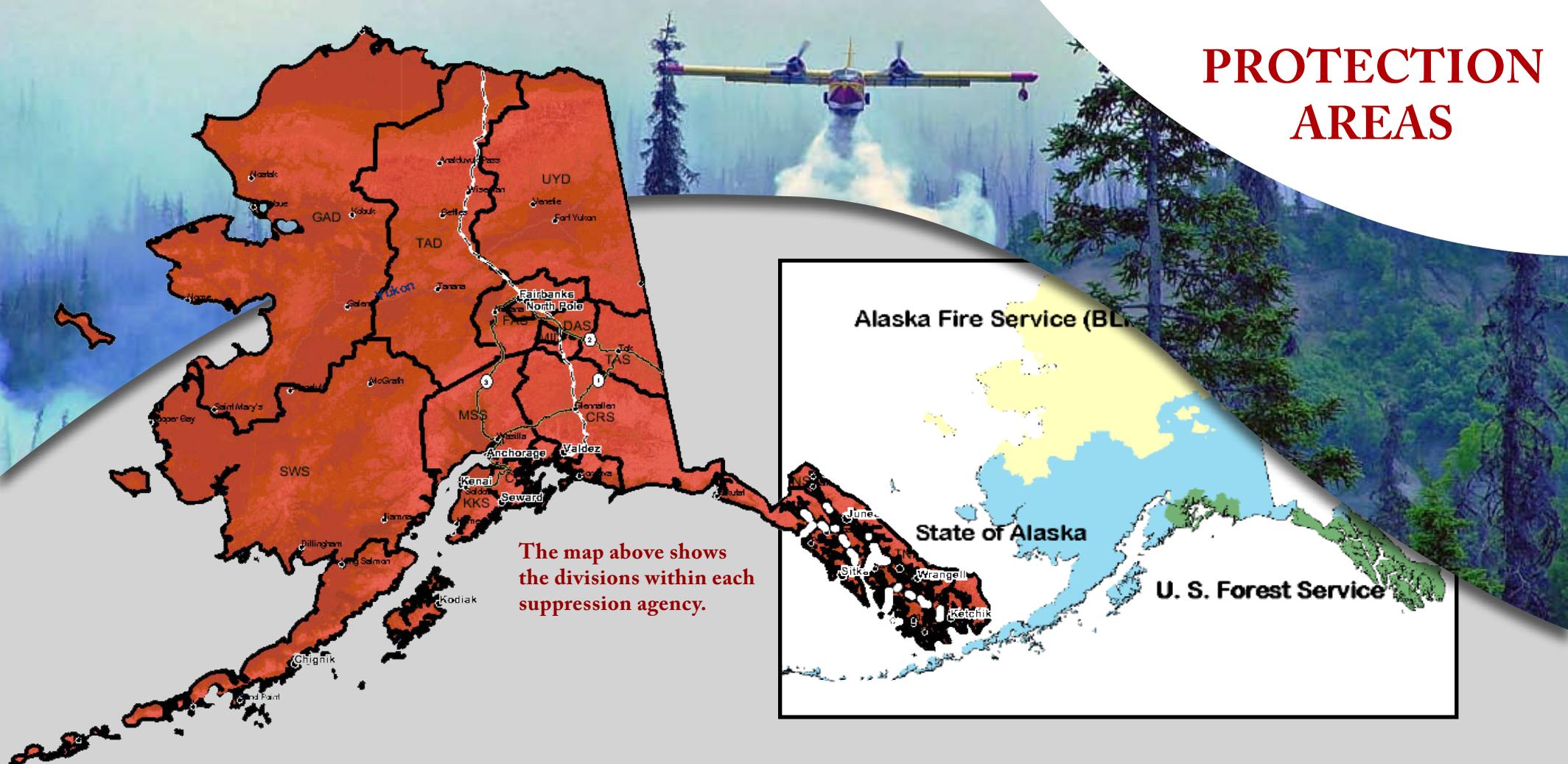
Aircraft Aircraft used to support detection and firefighting operations include air tankers, smaller fixed-wing aircraft, and helicopters.

Alaska Interagency Coordination Center

- The Alaska Interagency Coordination Center (AICC), based on Fort Wainwright, is one of 11 Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACC) located throughout the United States, see map.
- AICC operates on a Federal and State interagency basis.
- AICC serves as the focal point for initial attack resource coordination; logistical support and resource mobilization (including aircraft, personnel, equipment and crews); and predictive services.
- Cooperating agencies include: Bureau of Land Management, State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Fish and Wildlife Service.



PROTECTION AREAS



The map above shows the divisions within each suppression agency.



PROTECTION/SUPPRESSION AGENCIES

LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES

The Federal, State, and Alaska Native jurisdictional agencies (land management agencies) have the overall planning and management decision responsibility for their lands.

Three agencies provide suppression services: The Bureau of Land Management-Alaska Fire Service (AFS), the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources-Division of Forestry (DOF), and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The protection agencies provide wildland fire suppression services to the jurisdictional agencies (land management agencies) and implement actions documented and directed by the Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan.

Note: Under agreements with the Division of Forestry, cooperating fire departments also provide response to their communities and surrounding areas.



The Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan AIWFMP

Alaska wildland fire policies and procedures are standardized in the interagency fire management plan. Four wildland fire Management Options (Critical, Full, Modified, Limited) are utilized statewide by Federal, State and Alaska Native entities. The Management Option categorizations:

- *Prioritize areas for initial response and ensure human life, designated property and identified resources receive an appropriate level of protection with available firefighting resources*
- *Optimize the ability to achieve land use and resource management objectives and integrate fire management, mission objectives, land use, and natural resource goals*
- *Reinforce the premise that the cost of the suppression effort be commensurate with values identified for protection.*

FIRE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

The Management Options provide a guide for the agencies to prioritize the use of suppression resources. Management Options are established according to the Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan, 1998, and are reviewed yearly.

The AIWFMP defines the following Management Options. The designation of a Management Option pre-selects initial strategies for a wildland fire; responses range from immediate suppression actions to periodic surveillance.

Critical (red):

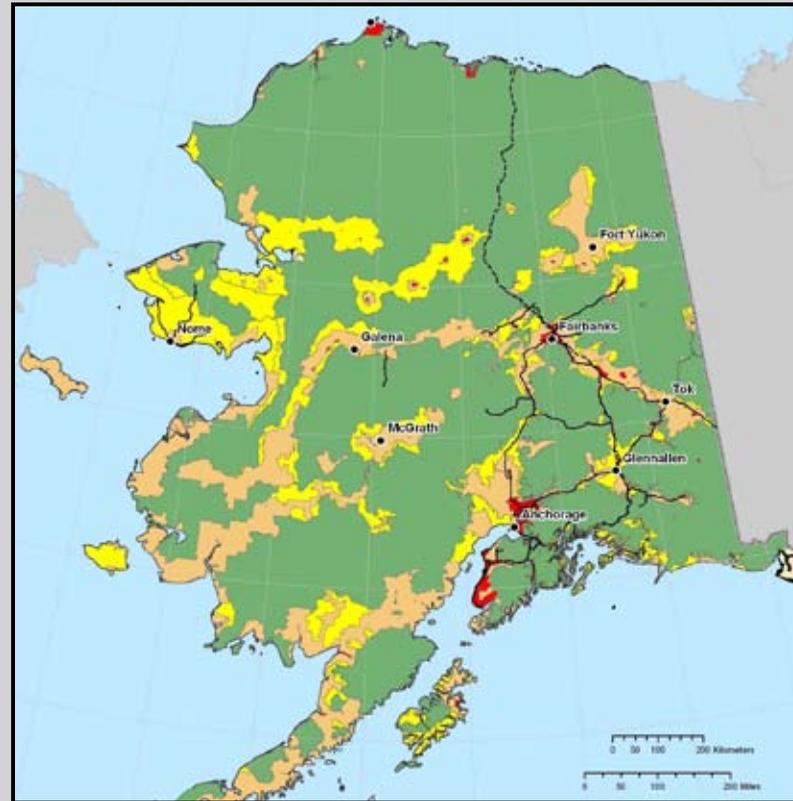
Highest suppression priority to protect human life, inhabited property, and improvements specified by land manager. Fires receive immediate, aggressive action depending on resource availability.

Full (orange):

Protection of cultural and historical sites, uninhabited private property, natural resource high-value areas, and other values that do not involve the protection of human life and inhabited property. Fires receive suppression efforts, depending on resource availability.

Modified (yellow):

This option provides a management level between Full and Limited. The intent is to balance acres burned with suppression costs and to accomplish land and resource management objectives when conditions are favorable. Site-specific actions are taken as warranted.



Limited (green):

Recognizes areas where the cost of suppression may exceed the value of the resources to be protected, the environmental impacts of fire suppression activities may have more negative impacts on the resources than the effects of the fire, or the exclusion of fire may be detrimental to the fire dependent ecosystem. Actions may be taken to keep a fire within the boundary of the Management Option or to protect identified higher value areas/sites.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT



INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (IMT)

IMTs are pre-established teams that are configured with Command Staff, General Staff, and other leadership and support positions. Alaska has the capacity for both Type 1 and Type 2 IMTs. The Alaska Type 1 IMT is on the national Type 1 IMT rotation list and fills orders not only for wildland fires, but also other emergency situations.

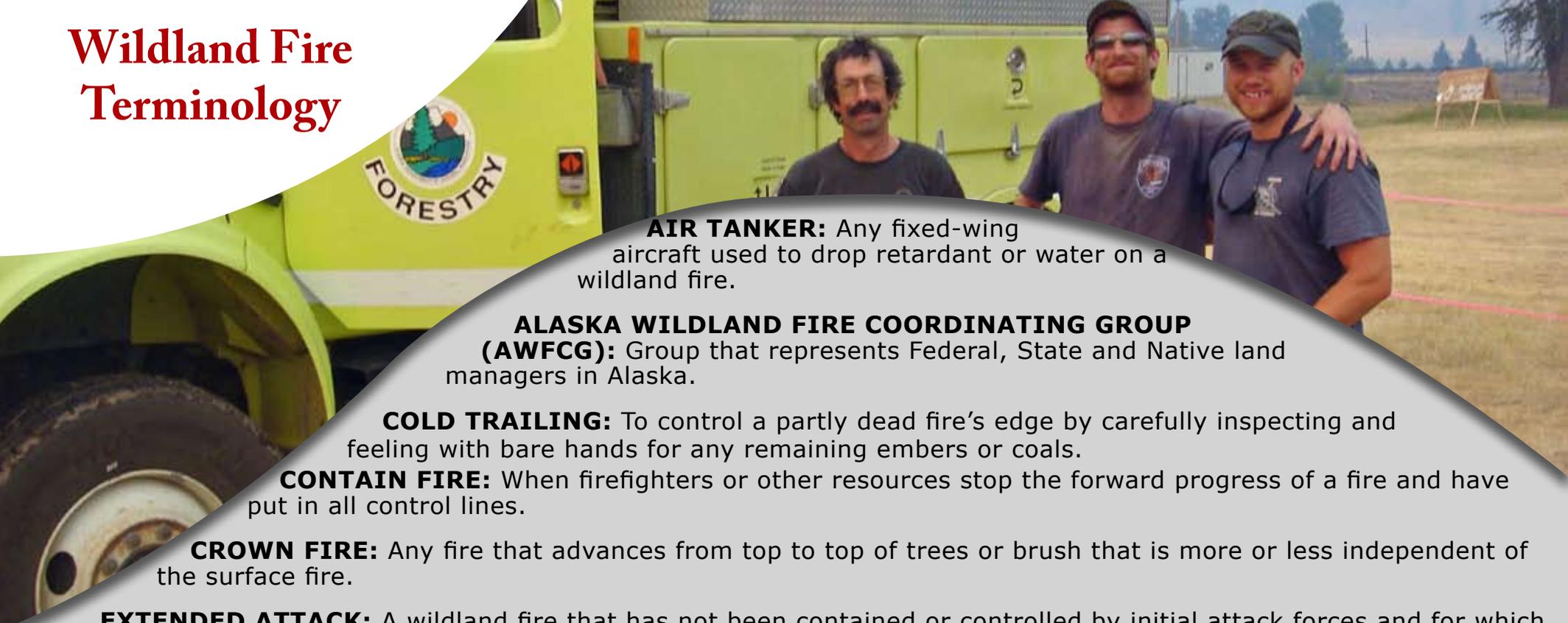
Alaska Type 1 IMT Website:

<http://www.imtcenter.net/AlaskaInteragencyType1IMT/default.html?TeamID=25>

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS)

A standardized on-scene emergency management concept specifically designed to allow its user(s) to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents, without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries. Wildland Fires are typed by complexity, from Type 5 (least complex) to Type 1 (most complex).

Wildland Fire Terminology



AIR TANKER: Any fixed-wing aircraft used to drop retardant or water on a wildland fire.

ALASKA WILDLAND FIRE COORDINATING GROUP (AWFCG): Group that represents Federal, State and Native land managers in Alaska.

COLD TRAILING: To control a partly dead fire's edge by carefully inspecting and feeling with bare hands for any remaining embers or coals.

CONTAIN FIRE: When firefighters or other resources stop the forward progress of a fire and have put in all control lines.

CROWN FIRE: Any fire that advances from top to top of trees or brush that is more or less independent of the surface fire.

EXTENDED ATTACK: A wildland fire that has not been contained or controlled by initial attack forces and for which more firefighting resources are arriving, en route, or being ordered by the initial attack incident commander.

FIRE BEHAVIOR: The manner in which a wildland fire develops; how fuels ignite, flame development, and fire spread.

FIRELINE: The part of a control line that is scraped or dug down to mineral soil.

FIRE PERIMETER: The entire length of the outer edge of the fire.

HELIBASE: A location within the general incident area for parking, fueling, maintenance, and loading of helicopters.

HOSE LAY: Connecting sections of fire hose together from the fire pump to the fire location with designated sections of line controlled by use of water.

INITIAL ATTACK: The resources and personnel first dispatched to a wildland fire incident.

MOP-UP: After the fire has been controlled, all actions required to make the fire "safe", prior to being called out. This includes trenching, falling snags, and checking all control lines.

OVERHEAD: Personnel who are assigned to supervisory positions. This includes incident commander, command staff, directors, supervisors, and unit leaders.

Additional Wildland Fire Terminology:

<http://forestry.alaska.gov/fire/glossary.htm> or <http://www.nwccg.gov/pms/pubs/glossary/index.htm>