

MEMORANDUM
Department of Natural Resources

State of Alaska
Forestry/Fire & Aviation

To: DNR Division Directors
DOF Regional Foresters

Date: May 23, 2001

File No:

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From: Jeff Jahnke
Director



Subject: Department Order 113

Reply Due: n/a

This memo is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Division of Forestry (DOF) in the management of wildland fires occurring on state owned/managed lands.

Authority

Alaska Statutes Section 41.15.010 – 41.15.240 assigns the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) the responsibility to manage the wildland fire program for the State of Alaska. Department Order 113 (DO 113) delegates this responsibility to the DOF. DO 113 also designates the DOF as the primary fire representative for state lands managed by DNR regardless of protection area responsibility.

Alaska Statutes Section 41.15.210 establishes a Fire Suppression Fund in the state treasury for use of the Department. DO 113 delegates the responsibility for expenditure of the suppression fund to the DOF. The DOF is the only division/entity in the State of Alaska authorized to spend/obligate funds from the Fire Suppression Fund to suppress wildland fires on private, state, or municipal lands.

Wildland Fire Situation Analysis:

A Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) is a decision-making document that evaluates alternative management strategies against selected safety, environmental, social, economic, political, and resource management objectives to assist the land manager/owner in choosing an appropriate management response to an escaped wildland fire. When the land manager/owner selects an alternative on the completed WFSA, the land manager/owner is committing the State of Alaska to the expenditure of funds from the Fire Suppression Fund. Because DOF is delegated the authority to expend funds from the Fire Suppression Fund, it is appropriate that a DOF Regional Forester or designee sign the WFSA as land manager/owner on WFSAs prepared for wildland fires on state owned/managed lands.

It is critical that land managers be available to fulfill their responsibilities as resource advisor in preparation of the WFSA. This is their opportunity to champion their land management objectives and to ensure their desires are reflected in the completed WFSA. The resource advisor should be involved in all phases of the WFSA preparation and must make known to the DOF Regional Forester or designee their opinion of which alternative best meets their agency's land management objectives. However, it is the responsibility of the DOF Regional Forester or designee to select the appropriate alternative and sign the WFSA as land manager/owner.

Procedures For Wildland Fires:

DNR Managed State Land – State Protection:

The appropriate DNR Division [Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW), Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) or Division of Mental Health Trust (DMHT)] and DOF will jointly prepare the WFSA on state lands managed by DNR. The DOF Area Forester or designee will fulfill the role of the fire representative on WFSA preparation. A DMLW/DPOR/DMHT Division representative will function as the DNR resource advisor for the lands under their management. The DOF Regional Forester or designee will select the appropriate alternative and sign the completed WFSA for the land manager. The DOF Regional Forester or designee will prepare and sign the letter of delegation authorizing the Incident Management Team to implement the WFSA.

DNR Managed State Land – Federal Protection:

The DOF Regional Forester or designee and the DMLW/DPOR/DMHT resource advisor will jointly prepare the WFSA with the federal fire representative. After consultation with the appropriate DNR land manager, the DOF Regional Forester or designee will select the appropriate alternative and sign the completed WFSA for the land manager. The DOF Regional Forester or designee will be the formal contact point for the federal protection agency representative. The federal suppression representative will function as the fire representative for the WFSA. The federal suppression representative and the DOF Regional Forester or designee will prepare and sign the letter of delegation authorizing the Incident Management Team to implement the WFSA.

Non-DNR State Lands - State or Federal Protection:

The process for lands managed by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, the Alaska Railroad Corporation, the University of Alaska or other non-DNR land managers will be the same as for DNR managed state lands. Non-DNR land manager/owners must have a representative available to the DOF for the entire fire season including evenings and weekends. A contact list for each agency should be forwarded to the DOF Fire Operations Forester by April 15 annually.

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Protection Level Reviews:

DO 113 delegates the responsibility for fire management planning to the DOF. The DOF is to collate input from other Divisions in an effort to keep the Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan (AIWFMP) current. The AIWFMP has a provision for an annual review that gives the land manager/owner the opportunity to update the map atlas and change the protection designation on their lands. DNR land managers should become more involved in the review and updating of the fire management plan protection levels on state lands.

If you have questions or comments concerning wildland fire management or the WFSA process, please feel free in contacting Pete Buenau, Fire Operations Forester at 356-5850 or Joe Stam, Chief of Fire & Aviation at 269-8467.

Cc: Commissioner' Office
Pete Buenau, Fire Operations Forester
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Division of Forestry Personnel