

Alaska NPS Structure Protection Procedures

The following procedures provide guidance to NPS Park Management, Alaska Fire Service (AFS), the Alaska Division of Forestry (DOF), the USDA Forest Service (FS) and Incident Management Teams concerning structure protection priorities for wildland fire suppression activities on lands managed by the National Park Service (NPS) in Alaska. These procedures does not pertain to non-federal lands within NPS unit boundaries. This document was prepared in cooperation with regional and park wildland fire, resource management and cultural resource management staffs.

1. The safety of the public and fire suppression personnel is the first priority in fire suppression/structure protection decisions and implementation. Regardless of the protection status of a structure, if humans are present at a structure threatened by wildland fire, human safety is the priority. Firefighter safety will not be compromised for structure protection.
2. The priority of structure protection is determined by the selected fire management options (Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan, 1998) and dependent upon the availability of resources. Firefighting resources may not be available or able to safely access the structure(s) identified for protection.
3. The appropriate laws, regulations and policies in conjunction with General Management and Resource Management plan(s) will be referenced for decisions regarding protection of structures.
4. The determination of the wildland fire management options for lands and resources managed by the NPS is the responsibility of NPS park management in conjunction with NPS wildland fire and park personnel. The NPS will determine the fire management option for structures on NPS managed lands using the following criteria:
 - a. The structure(s) is a primary domicile (Critical Management Option).
 - b. National Historic Landmarks that may be threatened by wildland fire (Critical Management Option).
 - c. The structure has been determined eligible for or is on the National Register of Historic Places, has structural integrity (e.g. intact roof and walls, a reasonable probability for defense), is at potential risk from wildland fire and has been identified for or undergoing routine maintenance/restoration (Full Management Option).
 - d. NPS administrative (e.g. patrol cabin) or public use structures – public funds expended to construct or maintain (Full Management Option).
 - e. The use of the structure is provided for under NPS permit or an approved Mining Plan of Operations (Full Management Option).
 - f. The structure is undergoing an eligibility or management assessment and has structural integrity (e.g. intact roof and walls, a reasonable probability for defense) or is involved in a legal process (Full Management Option).
5. Unauthorized structures will not be protected.

6. In a wildfire situation, if information on the fire map atlas is not sufficient, the suppression organization fire management officer will contact the appropriate NPS Area or Regional Fire Management Officer for a decision.
7. If in a wildfire situation, an undesignated structure is discovered on NPS lands, appropriate NPS Area or Regional Fire Management Officer will be notified. NPS will determine fire management option for the structure using criteria listed in #4. If the structure has intact roofs and walls, it will be afforded protection commensurate with Full Management Option until a final determination is reached.
8. NPS wildland fire and park personnel will initiate the actions to reduce hazardous fuels adjacent to structures on NPS managed lands that have been identified for protection. The NPS will clarify hazardous fuel reduction responsibilities of NPS permit holders within their permit stipulations. The NPS may assist permit holders with fuel reduction activities. The NPS also may assist non-federal entities with fuel reduction activities that are mutually beneficial to both parties.
9. The NPS wildland fire management officers are responsible for providing current NPS fire management option selections to the suppression organizations, ensuring changes are incorporated into the map atlas, and maintaining the NPS wildland fire management databases. The fire management options for structures will be recorded on the fire map atlas. Structures that do not warrant protection will be identified as "non-sensitive" on the map atlas. Changes in wildland fire management options and updating of map atlas should be part of the annual fire management plan review.
10. Any fire operations that included structure protection actions in the preceding year will be evaluated to determine if the fire management category is appropriate and if the operations were safely and efficiently conducted.