

Appendix D. FIRE MANAGEMENT OPTION CHANGE PROCEDURES

Each of the land managing Federal and State agencies and ANCSA Corporations in Alaska have their own missions, goals, and objectives related to their lands. In order to effectively prioritize and manage Alaska wildfires there is a need to consider the full spectrum of initial responses to wildfire; from suppression actions designed to contain and control fire growth, to periodic surveillance of fires that are allowed to spread naturally across the landscape. To accomplish this, jurisdictional organizations and Protecting Agencies have collaboratively assigned one of four wildfire management options (**Critical, Full, Modified, and Limited**) to nearly all lands in Alaska. Pre-identified Wildfire Management Options allow fire managers to:

- Quickly prioritize areas for protection actions and the allocation of available initial attack 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.
- Reinforce the premise that the cost of suppression efforts should be commensurate with the economic, social, and resource values identified for protection.

Management options are assigned at a landscape scale and apply across jurisdictional boundaries. Considerations in their selection may include public and private values to be protected. Operationally, the management option at a wildfire's point of origin prescribes the default initial response to the incident and allows Protecting Agencies to rapidly prioritize initial attack resources and respond when Jurisdictional Agencies are unavailable for consultation.

There is no guarantee of protection from wildfire in any management option or on any site.

Management option designations are intended to be flexible. The default initial response will not be appropriate for every fire and may be overridden based on incident-specific considerations. See **3.2.3 Non-standard Responses**.

Jurisdictional Agencies and ANCSA Corporations have an annual opportunity to review wildfire management options and site designations on their lands and update them if warranted by changes in objectives, fire conditions, land use patterns, resource information, and/or technologies. Management option changes should be a collaborative effort between all affected jurisdictional and protecting units. Changes will not be made without the approval of all Jurisdictional Agencies whose lands are affected.

The following procedures are designed to ensure adequate and consistent documentation of management option changes. Collaboration between all affected Protecting and Jurisdictional Agencies (including ANCSA Corporations) is essential in the management option review/change process.

Completed change packages are due to Alaska Fire Service by March 1.

Review Process

1. Protecting FMOs will annually provide written reminders of fire management option review/change responsibilities to Jurisdictional Agencies within their Protecting Units.
2. Protecting and Jurisdictional Agencies will conduct internal and interagency reviews of fire management option boundaries and/or protection levels.
3. Non-standard responses will be reviewed annually by Protecting and Jurisdictional Agencies in order to validate fire management option boundaries and protection levels.

Change Process

1. Management Option boundary and/or protection level changes are typically initiated by Jurisdictional Agencies but may be initiated by Protecting Agencies or other cooperators.
2. Approved and verified management option change packages will be submitted by Protecting FMOs to the AFS Fire Planning Specialists, AICC Emergency Operations Coordinator, and AFS GIS by March 1.
3. The interagency Fire Management Option database within the Digital Atlas will be updated by April 1.
4. If any participant in the review/change process believes that the change process has been circumvented, unfairly implemented, or unduly delayed they will notify their AWFCG representative. The AWFCG is the final arbitrator for resolving procedural issues associated with the fire management option review/change process.

Change Initiator Responsibilities

1. Ensure all affected and adjacent Jurisdictional and Protecting Agencies are aware of and have the opportunity to participate in the change process.
2. Prepare a written description of proposed changes and the rationale behind them.
3. Prepare GIS and map products to support the proposed changes (including display map, and shapefile or geodatabase with enough basic metadata to clearly define the change).
4. Complete the *Management Option Change Initiator* portion of the Fire Management Option Change Approval Form (**Appendix E**).
5. Obtain dated approval signatures from all affected Jurisdictional Agencies in the *Jurisdictional Agency(ies) Responsibilities* portion of the Fire Management Option Change Approval Form (**Appendix E**).
6. Submit a complete change package to the appropriate Protecting FMO for final review and certification before March 1.
7. Be prepared to answer questions and provide additional data upon request.

Jurisdictional Agency Responsibilities

1. Provide values data as needed to support the proposed change and communicate jurisdictional concerns regarding proposed changes.
2. Assist with change package preparation.
3. Jurisdictional Agencies must approve all management option boundary and/or protection level changes within their jurisdiction by signing and dating within the *Jurisdictional Agency(ies) Responsibilities* portion of the Fire Management Option Change Approval Form (**Appendix E**).

Protecting Agency Responsibilities

1. All management option boundaries and/or protection level changes will be reviewed by the affected Protecting FMO(s) to determine whether they are operationally feasible. Protecting FMOs may propose modifications to the change proposal if feasibility concerns are identified. Ideally, Protecting FMOs are provided an opportunity to provide feedback early in the change process.
2. If the proposed change involves more than one Protection Area, one Protecting FMO will be identified to coordinate the process.
3. The Protecting FMO signs and dates the Fire Management Option Change Approval Form (**Appendix E**) after verifying that:
 - a. The submitted fire management option boundary and/or protection level changes are operationally feasible.
 - b. The required notifications have been completed.
 - c. The Fire Management Option Change Approval Form (**Appendix E**) has been completed and all required signatures have been obtained.
 - d. All required GIS data and map products are included with the change package.
4. The Protecting FMO submits the completed change package (see **Appendix E** for details). **The deadline for submitting the completed change package is March 1.**
5. The Protecting FMO will be responsible for notifying all affected Jurisdictional Agencies that the changes have taken effect and for ensuring that any local Protecting Unit map products are updated with the approved changes.

BLM-Alaska Fire Service and AICC Responsibilities

1. Changes to the Digital Atlas will be processed by the Alaska Fire Service GIS staff. Electronic archives of historical fire management option data will be maintained. Questions about spatial data will be referred to the data preparer identified on the Fire Management Option Change Approval Form (**Appendix E**).
2. The AICC Emergency Operations Coordinator will archive the Fire Management Option change package.

3. AFS GIS staff will ensure that the appropriate Protecting FMOs, AICC Emergency Operations Coordinator and the AFS Fire Planning Specialists are notified when approved changes have been incorporated into the Digital Atlas.
4. AFS Fire Planning Specialists will ensure that management option changes are made available to WFDSS and other systems (e.g., [AICC– Alaska Statewide Master Agreement webpage](#), Fire Management Option Change History).