

Task #1 Review agreements in other states, including Oregon, used to authorize local initial response to fires on federal lands

The DNRC contacted the states of Alaska, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. None of the states contacted were aware of separate agreements between federal agencies and local government fire organizations that were independent of the local mutual aid and local initial attack agreements falling under the umbrella of their Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreements (Master Agreements.) In Oregon, the Office of the State Fire Marshal mobilizes local fire service organizations outside their jurisdictional boundaries under the Conflagration Act; which is also designated in the Oregon Master Agreement.

In general, no states contacted were aware of separate agreements between local fire organizations and federal agencies. If local initial response is authorized, it would typically occur using common or standard practices under which local fire organizations operate as part of cooperative agreements and interagency arrangements.

By way of example, below you will find the language addressing wildland fire response as outlined in Montana's Master Agreement:

RESPONSE TO WILDLAND FIRE

All actions taken on the fire will be consistent with the Jurisdictional Agency's pre-planned objectives for the area in which the fire occurs and the terms of this Agreement. Jurisdictional Agencies will coordinate with Protecting Agencies on response expectations and land management requirements.

Under Montana Statute, the State's response to wildland fire is fire suppression. Federal wildfires that are not human-caused may be managed for multiple objectives in accordance with land and resource management plans. This may require the Jurisdictional Agency to fulfill certain fire management responsibilities.

Adjacent fire protection entities, including state and local government, should be consulted about fire management strategies utilized in these areas, and share in the decision-making process whenever possible. When a wildfire or that portion of a wildfire being managed to maintain and/or enhance resources, spreads to a protection area where it is not wanted, cost for that portion only will be assumed by the jurisdictional agency(s) who established the objective.

All fire agencies have primary responsibility for fire suppression within their respective protection areas. All Agencies, as appropriate, should be involved in developing the strategy, tactics, and mitigation actions to be used if the fire has the potential to impact another protection area. When the fire spread to another protection area is imminent or appears likely, the Agencies will identify financial responsibilities and as appropriate, cost share methodologies, and document the decisions and rationale. If agreement cannot be reached regarding financial responsibilities, discussion will be elevated to the next level agency administrators for the respective agencies.

Agency policy requires that a decision document be completed for all fires. Responsibility for development of the decision document shall be the joint responsibility of the Agency Administrators from the Jurisdictional Agency and the Protecting Agency of all affected Agencies. The decision documentation process will be described in the local OPs (Operating Plans.)

Protection responsibilities have been exchanged throughout Montana to promote efficiencies and reduce multi-agency response efforts. In areas where protection has been given to the State or another federal agency, the jurisdictional agency is not expected to provide suppression resources unless agreed to in writing between the local agencies involved. In these areas, jurisdictional agencies should not enter into suppression agreements with local departments or counties where they do not have protection responsibility.

CLOSEST FORCES

The guiding principle for initial attack suppression resources is to use the closest available resource regardless of which Agency the resources belong to and regardless of which Agency has protection responsibility.

INDEPENDENT ACTION

Except as otherwise limited in statewide operating plans, nothing herein shall prohibit any Party, on its own initiative and without reimbursement, from going upon lands under the jurisdiction or protection of another Party to this Agreement to engage in suppression of wildfires, when such fires are an imminent threat to lands under that Party's protection responsibility. In such instances, the Party taking action will promptly notify the Jurisdictional and Protecting Agency. Actions taken will be consistent with the pre-planned objectives and special management considerations for the area in which the fire occurs.

Task #2 Compare and analyze initial attack success rates between state and federal fire agencies;

Initial attack (IA) success has long been one of the primary performance measures used by agencies with wildland firefighting responsibility in the United States (US) and elsewhere. The US federal agencies currently state that (1) they credit an IA success when an 'unwanted' wildfire is suppressed before it expands beyond 100 acres of forest or 300 acres of grass or brush, and (2) the US Forest Service and Department of Interior strive to achieve 98 percent and 95 percent initial attack success rates, respectively.

Similarly, the DNRC strives for and maintains a goal of 95% of all *Direct Protection* fires controlled at less than 10 acres. For the past ten years, 96% of DNRC's fires were suppressed at 10 acres or less. It should be noted that the DNRC has not, historically, maintained a similar standard for fires outside of its Direct Protection including areas protected under State/County Cooperative Fire Protection (County Coop) as most of this protection area is non-forested range and grasslands or areas of scattered forest, where rapid fire spread is the norm and a 10-acre standard is impractical.

As with Task #1, the DNRC contacted the states of Alaska, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. All states contacted reported similar performance measures for initial attack success. Their standards all range from percentages in the mid to high nineties. Historical data indicates that the contacted states meet their standard in most years with occasional, severe fire years ending with a success rate in the mid to low nineties. As depicted in the chart below, federal and state agencies historically have used similar standards to measure initial attack success within their direct protection and, in most fire years, they achieve similar success rates that fall in the mid to high nineties.

| AGENCY | SUPPRESSION SUCCESS RATE | DEFINITION OF SUCCESS |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Alaska | 90% | Suppress 90% of fires in critical and full management options at 10 acres or less |
| Idaho | 94% | Provide initial attack capability to control ignitions to 10 acres or less, 94 percent of the time. |
| Montana | 95% | Suppress 95% of direct protection fires to 10 acres or less. |
| Oregon | 98% | 98 percent of all fires will be suppressed at 10 acres or less |
| Washington | 90% | Our goal is to see that nine out of every ten fires on DNR-protected lands are out before they ever exceed 10 acres. |
| Bureau of Land Management | 95% | Suppress 95% of unwanted fire to less than 100 acres in timber and 300 acres in range land. |
| Forest Service | 98% | Suppress 98% of unwanted fire to less than 100 acres in timber and 300 acres in range land. |

**Montana DNRC Success Rate for Fires Less than 10 Acres
 (DNRC Direct Protection Only)**

| Year | # Fires | # Fires < 10 ac | # Fires > 10 ac | % Success |
|------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 2017 | 370 | 346 | 24 | 93 |
| 2016 | 302 | 295 | 7 | 97 |
| 2015 | 414 | 390 | 24 | 94 |
| 2014 | 339 | 333 | 6 | 98 |
| 2013 | 401 | 394 | 7 | 98 |

Response to Joe Kolman, Director, Legislative Environmental Policy Office
July 25-26, 2108 Environmental Quality Council Meeting
Deadline to Kolman: July 6, 2018

Beginning with the 2016 fire year, the DNRC also began reporting to legislative committees, an overall initial attack success rate including both fires within DNRC Direct protection and fires within County Coop protection. In both years, the DNRC reported an overall initial attack success rate of 98%. To generate this statistic, the DNRC generates credits an initial attack success when a fire is fully contained within 24 hours and did not require an incident management team.