



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20240

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2400

March 19, 2013

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors
Attn. Superintendents

From: Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection /s/ **Cameron H. Sholly**

Subject: Federal Fire Policy Council Expectations

Attached is the “*2013 Direction to Wildland Fire Leadership*” document signed by the heads of the major land management agencies. This document outlines a range of expectations for agency administrators and fire managers as we enter the 2013 fire season.

Despite the increasing wildland fire challenges we face in this agency and around the country, I commend the collective efforts of our National Park Service fire fighters, support staff, and leadership for continuing to ensure we are adequately prepared and able to meet our wildland fire objectives.

Cc: Deputy Regional Directors
Associate Regional Directors – Operations
Regional Chief Rangers
Regional Fire Management Officer
FMPC Senior Leadership



2013 Direction to Wildland Fire Leadership

In 2012, we experienced many large, costly fires that burned more than 9 million acres—the third largest number since 1960 when accurate recordkeeping began. These fires challenged our capacity and financial resources. Information released by the U. S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the *State of the Climate* report and from the National Drought Mitigation Center indicates “continued warm temperatures, exceptional drought conditions, and existing low snow levels throughout the country may contribute to an increase in the risk of wildfires during 2013.” As the season approaches, it is important to remember the basics of the federal firefighting community—acknowledge risks and adjust to them; manage with our highest level of skill; and carefully monitor what is working well and what is not. Throughout the season, it is vital that we work with our partners across the landscape and give thoughtful consideration to the needs of communities and the resources they depend on.

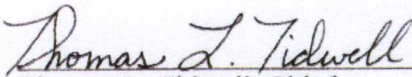
In preparation for the 2013 fire season, our expectations for agency administrators and fire managers are, as follows:

- **Ensure firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every decision and activity.**
- **Understand and embrace our guiding principles** set forth in the [Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy](#) and [National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy](#);
- **Understand your roles and responsibilities and ensure your staffs understand and complete their responsibilities** as defined by [Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy](#), the 2013 Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (the [Red Book](#)), or the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Wildland Fire and Aviation Program Management and Operations Guide (the [Blue Book](#)).
- **Be engaged, and reach out to your interagency partners and stakeholders to ensure they are appropriately involved.** Federal, Tribal, state, and local interagency coordination and cooperation are essential during all three phases of the fire season—pre-season planning, during a wildfire incident, and post-fire and fire season reviews. When an incident occurs on your unit, engage with those managing your incident, as well as your affected partners, use risk management principles to inform decisions, and be actively involved.
- **Collaborate to set realistic expectations and develop practical, risk-informed decisions and approaches.** It is vital the decisions we make and the approaches we develop are reached in collaboration. We must share the associated risks—not transfer the risk to others.
- **Learn from others and share what you learn.** You are expected to engage key stakeholders before, during, and after an incident to review what did and did not work, and seek suggestions for improvement. Learn from others who have had similar incidents and apply those lessons learned for improvement. Identify who is responsible to follow through and ensure implementation.
- **Inform and involve your chain of command at the earliest opportunity.** Timely, complete reporting of fire activity and emerging issues are essential to maintaining effective communication. Follow the established reporting process, and report potential issues of national concern through your Agency/Bureau Director or Chief.

- **Keep our publics informed.** Managing risk is enhanced through sharing of information on our decisions and actions from the very beginning of an incident. Regular, reoccurring dialogue using communication tools fit to the audience builds an understanding of our decisions and trust in our performance.

Agency leadership will schedule briefings as issues arise and the Preparedness levels rise to 4 and 5. A key purpose of these briefings will be to maintain situational awareness and identify issues that may need national support. We want to assure line managers and the fire organization that we will provide you support throughout the fire season.

Finally, together, our success this season will be defined by when we are all informed; share and manage risk resulting in safely and effectively suppressing unwanted fire; use fire where allowable; and protect and manage our natural resources. Thank you for your leadership, engagement, continued commitment, and service to preparing for and protecting our nation against wildfire.

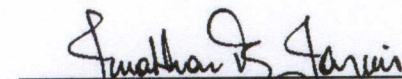

Thomas L. Tidwell, Chief
USDA Forest Service

FEB 21 2013
Date



Mike Pool, Acting Director
Bureau of Land Management

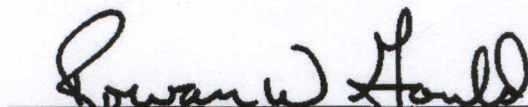
2/8/2013
Date


Jonathan B. Jarvis, Director
National Park Service

2-20-2013
Date


Michael S. Black, Director
Bureau of Indian Affairs

2/11/2013
Date


Daniel M. Ashe, Director
Fish and Wildlife Service

2/13/2013
Date