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Instruction Memorandum No. FA IM-2013-005
Expires: 09/30/2014

To: State and Center Directors

From: Assistant Director, Fire and Aviation

Subject: Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Procedures for Approval of Wildfire Decisions in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS)

Program Area: Fire Operations, Fire Management, Fire Planning, Fuels Management

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum (IM) provides updated guidance for the use of the WFDSS related to wildfire decision approval and awareness of fire costs. This IM also transmits an amendment to the BLM's Manual Section (MS)-1203 Delegation of Authority to address approval of wildfire decisions.

Policy/Action: This IM supersedes FA IM-2012-018, which established requirements for the use of the WFDSS in 2012. Detailed guidance for BLM use of the WFDSS is contained in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book).

Wildfire Decision Approval Process for Fires Involving BLM Lands

- The BLM approvers of wildfire decisions documented in WFDSS are displayed in the Department of the Interior (DOI) WFDSS Approval Requirements Table in Chapter 11 of the Red Book.
- The BLM Agency Administrators must meet fire training requirements for agency administrators, as specified in Chapter 2 of the Red Book.
- The BLM Agency Administrators will maintain WFDSS user profiles, allowing them to approve wildfire decisions documented in WFDSS.

Delegation of Wildfire Decision Approvals

- The BLM policy for delegating wildfire decision approval is revised through amendment to the Delegation of Authority 1203 Manual, Appendix 1. This amendment is illustrated in Attachment 1.

Wildfire Cost Awareness

- Wildfire decisions, documented in WFDSS and approved by BLM Agency Administrators, constitute awareness of estimated fire costs to date. This cost, shown in the WFDSS Course of Action, will be developed from sources such as I-Suite, ICS209 summaries, finance units within incident management teams, estimation spreadsheets, or other sources.
- To ensure awareness of suppression expenditures at all levels, local agency administrators will provide written notification to state directors or the bureau director as cost thresholds (Red Book, Chapter 11) are approached or reached.
- Fire cost certification, separate from a wildfire decision published in WFDSS, is no longer a process used by BLM.
- All forms pertaining to fire cost certification are obsolete and will not be used.

Wildfire Decision Approval Process in Alaska for Non-BLM Lands

- In Department Manual 620 Chapter 2, BLM is delegated the responsibility to provide cost-effective wildland fire suppression services on DOI-managed and Alaska Native lands. In this direction, BLM-Alaska Fire Service (AFS) participates in the wildfire decision approval process for fires on those lands.
- The AFS Manager and AFS Fire Management Officers serve as agency administrators for approving wildfire decisions documented in WFDSS.
- In addition to the Jurisdictional Agency Administrator, AFS Fire Management Officers serve as agency administrators for fires less than \$5 million.
- In addition to the Jurisdictional Agency Administrator, the AFS Manager serves as an agency administrator for fires \$5 million and greater.
- To ensure awareness of suppression expenditures at all levels, the AFS Manager will provide written notification to the state director or the bureau director as cost thresholds (Red Book, Chapter 11) are approached or reached.

Supporting resources such as examples, user guides, and BLM State WFDSS leads are located in the “Policy” section of the BLM Fire Operations website:

http://web.blm.gov/internal/fire/fire_ops/policy_wfdss_blm.htm.

Timeframe: This IM is effectively immediately.

Budget Impact: Moderate on-going costs will be incurred as offices document wildfire decisions in WFDSS.

Background: In May 2012 the BLM updated, through amendment of MS-1203 Delegation of Authority, the approval authorities for wildfire decisions and cost thresholds. To facilitate effective wildfire management, MS-1203 has been further amended to delegate authority to local managers to approve all wildfire decisions regardless of cost thresholds. Amendments made in MS-1203 Delegation of Authority are illustrated in Attachment 1.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: This IM documents changes to delegations of authority related to approvals for wildfire decisions, which have been incorporated by amendment into BLM's MS-1203 Delegation of Authority. This guidance is also being incorporated into the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*, as applicable.

Coordination: This IM has been coordinated between the Fire Operations (FA300) and Fire Planning and Fuels Management (FA600) staffs. It has also been coordinated with the Division of Evaluations and Management Services (WO830), which maintains the MS-1203-Delegation of Authority Manual.

Contact: Questions may be directed to Doug Havlina, Fire Ecologist, 208-387-5061, or Ted Milesnick, Acting Division Chief, Fire Planning and Fuels Management, 208-387-5198.

Signed by:
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Authenticated by:
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1 Attachment:

1 – Amendment to Delegation of Authority Manual Section-1203 for Wildfire Decision Approval (2 pp)

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