

BRITISH COLUMBIA & NW UNITED STATES WILDFIRE RESPONSE BORDER ARRANGEMENT
BETWEEN
British Columbia, Ministry of Forests
And
USDA-Forest Service, Pacific Northwest, Alaska, and Northern Regions
USDOI-National Park Service, Pacific West, Alaska and Intermountain Regions
USDOI-Bureau of Land Management for Oregon, Washington and Idaho State Offices

The following terms used throughout this Arrangement are hereinafter known as:

* Agencies	Agencies signatory to this Arrangement
* Jurisdictional Agency	Agencies with jurisdictional responsibility and receiving resources
* Supporting Agency	Agency providing suppression or management support
* Discovering Agency	Agency that discovers a wildfire regardless of jurisdiction
* Threat Zone	Area in which a wildfire poses a threat to values along the International Border
* Mutual Aid	Agencies assisting each other during the initial response and identification of wildfires along the International Border

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Arrangement is to provide the framework under which wildfire management activities, identification, initial response, mutual aid and planning allows for cooperative pre suppression and wildfire protection along the United States and Canada's British Columbia portion of the International Border.

The Agencies reflect that this mutually beneficial partnership will enhance each agencies wildfire management capabilities for the control and extinguishment of wildfires within the Threat Zone.

To facilitate this Arrangement the Parties will create a British Columbia & NW United States Wildfire Response Border Arrangement Operating Guideline. The Operating Guideline will identify strategic conditions for implementing procedures and establishing a command structure in order to support particular circumstances associated with wildfires.

II. SCOPE

This Arrangement pertains to all wildfires that pose a threat to values along the International Border involving British Columbia and the Northwest United States agencies. For fire(s) that are not threatening values along the International Border or require extended action, the Agencies will utilize the Canada/United State Reciprocal Forest Fire Fighting Arrangement or the Northwest Wildland Fire Protection Agreement (NW Compact).

This Arrangement supersedes the Northwest Border Arrangement for Fire Protection signed and dated May of 2019. Nothing in this Arrangement shall be construed to affect any other existing cooperative Agreements or Arrangements between the Parties. State border response is through the NW Compact and thus are not signatures to this arrangement, however they may support Agencies who are signature to this arrangement.

III. AUTHORITY

The authority exists to perform response activities to wildfires that threaten values along the International Border. This is found in an exchange of Diplomatic Notes dated May 7, 1982 and further defined in United States Public Law 100-428 (Temporary Wildfire Suppression Act), as amended by United States Public Law 101-11 (Wildfire Suppression Assistance Act).

Emergency border crossings procedures within the intent of this Arrangement will be provided by the Canada Border Service Agency and US Customs and Border Patrol in writing and attached annually as an addendum in the Operating Guideline.

IV. GENERAL PROCEDURES

Threat Zone

When a wildfire poses a threat to values along the International Border, the closest available resources may respond regardless of the jurisdiction.

Initial Assessment

Any Agency discovering a wildfire shall conduct an initial assessment determining values at risk and potential threats to each jurisdiction. The Discovering Agency will report the wildfire to the Jurisdictional Agency as soon as possible. The Agencies will agree which agency will take action on the wildfire based on access, location and available resources.

Independent Action

Except as otherwise limited in the Operating Guideline, nothing herein shall prohibit any Agency, on its own initiative, at its own cost, from going upon lands known to be protected by another Agency to engage in suppression of wildfires that threatens values along the international border. The Agency taking action will promptly notify the Jurisdictional Agency.

Mutual Aid

The Agencies may directly assist each other during the initial attack or the first 48 hours (or as negotiated) through US Fire Dispatch Centers or BC Regional Wildfire Coordination Centres (listed in the Operating Guideline Appendix B). This may include mutual planning or sharing of resources. Each Agency will be responsible for their own personnel, aircraft, and equipment and supply costs operating in the Threat Zone.

If further assistance is required all resources must be ordered through the Canada/United State Reciprocal Forest Fire Fighting Arrangement or the Northwest Wildland Fire Protection Agreement (NW Compact). This will occur if: fire(s) are not threatening values along the International Border, extended action is required, or Jurisdictional Agency requests specific resources and assistance from the Supporting Agency.

Resources

All personnel, aircraft, supplies and equipment are considered resources. These are referenced further in the Operating Guideline. Resources are coordinated through their respective Coordination/Dispatch Centres.

Mutual Planning

The Agencies agree to cooperate on developing strategic plans for fires that don't pose an immediate threat to values along the border. Such planning will involve affected local agencies on either side of the International Border to address and map special land management considerations.

To facilitate information sharing, all participating agencies will have access to each other's data related to locations of values at risk, surface fuels models, fire modeling results, and decisional documentation to the extent that each agency may share such information. The Coordinating Committee will address barriers to information sharing.

Special Considerations

To the extent possible the Supporting Agency taking action on a wildfire will consider special land management and fire management considerations of the Jurisdictional Agency, as described in the Operating Guideline.

V. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Border Crossings

Border crossings will be in accordance with the Procedures for Crossing International Borders as described in the Operating Guideline.

Standards

The Jurisdictional Agency agrees to accept the supporting agencies standards for training, fitness, personal protective equipment, qualifications and workers compensation. If the Jurisdictional Agency requires additional safety equipment standards than the Supporting Agency, it is the responsibility of the Jurisdictional Agency to supply the required equipment /supplies.

Certification of Positions

The Supporting Agency certifies that the personnel assigned will meet the requirements of the position.

Recall

Supporting Agencies will promptly notify the Jurisdictional Agency in the event of recall requirements to maintain their jurisdictional responsibilities.

Insurance

The Supporting Agency will ensure that their personnel and equipment is adequately covered for any accident, hospital, or medical costs incurred while in travel status.

Medical Response

Notwithstanding in the insurance statement, the Jurisdictional Agency will ensure immediate medical services are afforded to any member of the personnel on assignment regardless of the nature of the requirement or type of medical aid required.

Workers Compensation

Each jurisdiction's Workers Compensation laws cover their respective employees regardless of which country the employee is working.

Waiver

The Agencies waive all claims against each other for compensation from any loss, damage, personal injury, or death occurring in consequence of the performance of this Arrangement.

Duration

This Arrangement will take effect on the date of last signature and is effective through December 31, 2028 at which time it will expire, unless extended. Any Agency party to this Arrangement can terminate their participation in it by giving six months written notice to the other Agencies. A review of this Arrangement will be conducted every five years for appropriateness and modified or renewed for a period of not more than five years from the date the last party signs the modification or renewal.

Modification

Modifications within the scope of this Arrangement will be made by mutual consent of the Agencies, the issuance of a written modification, signed and dated prior to any changes being performed.

VI. INTERESTS AND BENEFITS

Benefits

Sharing of resources, expertise, training, and intelligence are needed by the Agencies in order to effectively prevent, detect and manage wildfires along the United States and British Columbia border. It is the intent of the Agencies, regardless of the point of origin, to cooperate on determining the most appropriate approach to be taken on any wildfire that threatens each other's lands along the International Border. If there is disagreement on action to be taken then it will be referred to each Agencies next organizations level.

The Arrangement constitutes a reaffirmation of the importance of engaging in cooperative fire management activities. This Arrangement is intended to encourage and strengthen other cooperative fire management activities, through the sharing among the participants of personnel, fire management techniques, skills and innovations. The objective of these activities is to improve the firefighting capabilities and knowledge resulting in the provision of more effective firefighting assistance to one another when necessary. Each participant should bear all of its costs and expenses of participating in these other cooperative activities.

The Agencies who participate under this Arrangement and Operating Guideline recognize the importance of collaboratively working together to ensure an effective and efficient wildfire response program along the international border and collectively identifying and addressing any border and customs/immigration needs and requirements.

Working Groups

The Agencies will establish working groups who will meet on a predetermined schedule to ensure the Arrangement and Operating Guideline remains current, and local operational procedures are in place.

The working groups include:

Coordinating Committee: Responsible for establishing and maintaining the Arrangement, developing Operating Guidelines, ensuring implementation follows the terms agreed to, and resolving issues that may arise.

Local Border Agencies: This includes all Agencies along the International Border that would be involved with a wildfire response that threatens values along the International Border. Responsible for understanding the Operating Guideline procedures, providing annual updates to local contact information, engage in mutual planning and cross-training as appropriate.

Steering Team: Provides support to the Coordinating Committee in terms of updating the Arrangement and Operating Guidelines and facilitates getting the information to the Local Border Agencies.

VIII. SIGNATURES

By signature below, all signatories to this Arrangement agree that the individuals listed in the Operating Guideline are authorized to act in their respective areas for matters related to this Arrangement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Agencies hereto have executed this Arrangement as of the date of the last signature.

**Rob
Schweitzer**

Digitally signed by Rob
Schweitzer
Date: 2024.04.15
07:27:26 -07'00'

Ian Meier, British Columbia Ministry of Forest
Assistant Deputy Minister



Digitally signed by
LEANNE MARTEN
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Leanne Marten, USDA Forest Service
Regional Forester, Northern Region

**MERV
GEORGE**

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Jacqueline A. Buchanan, USDA Forest Service
Regional Forester, Pacific Northwest Region

**BARRY
BUSHUE**

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Barry Bushue, Bureau of Land Management
State Director, Oregon and Washington

**KATHARINE
HAMMOND**

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KATHARINE HAMMOND
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Kate Hammond, National Park Service
Regional Director, Intermountain Region

**DAVID
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Sarah Creachbaum, National Park
Regional Director, Alaska Region

**JUNE
SHOEMAKER**

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June Shoemaker, Bureau of Land Management
State Director, Idaho

**DAVID
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David Szymanski, National Park Regional
Director, Pacific West Region

**CHAD VAN
ORMER**

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Chad VanOrmer, USDA Forest Service
Regional Forester, Alaska Region