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**File Code:** 5100**Date:** July 7, 2023**Route To:****Subject:** Letter of Intent for Wildfire – 2023**To:** All Forest Supervisors

Here it is, the beginning of July, fire activity is picking up around the Region, and I know you all are getting prepared for another busy year. I want to begin by thanking you for your hard work, commitment, and resiliency over the last several years. This Region has experienced devastating wildfires that burned hundreds of thousands of acres, impacting communities and infrastructure, and severely impacting the lands we manage. Though the 2022 fire season was milder than expected, last winter the Region experienced record snowfall and rain events, exacerbating damage to infrastructure. I recognize the toll this takes on all of us and that we will be dealing with the aftermath of these events for years to come while also responding to immediate emergencies. To echo Chief Moore, as we enter fire season, I expect you to focus on our people first and I expect that focus to include taking care of yourself and ensuring you have the appropriate downtime to recharge. Speaking of recharging, it is critical for carded Agency Administrators to make themselves available, when possible, to provide that much needed relief and support to our colleagues experiencing fire activity.

In previous years, drought conditions required the Region to take an aggressive approach to wildfire suppression with no latitude to manage an incident with less than a full suppression strategy. With the record snowfall and rain events this past winter alleviating the drought situation across California, we now have an opportunity to provide flexibility with respect to wildfire suppression. While I expect that we will continue to maintain strong initial attack, the Regional Forester has the authority to use natural ignitions to further our fuels reduction work across the landscape. Every wildfire will continue to receive a strategic, risk-based response, using the full spectrum of management actions that consider fire and fuels condition, weather, values at risk, resource availability, and land management plans. The use of natural ignitions can be considered with “the right plan, in the right place, at the right time and with the right assets and right duration,” approach, in partnership with tribes, communities, and partners. In addition, we have an opportunity to implement more prescribed fire in California than in the past ten years. As such, it is my expectation that when you have resources available and not engaged in suppression, they are working to prep burn units for fall burning and to support orders following the newly released prescribed fire mobilization guide. This is an opportunity to demonstrate to the public and Congress that we can reduce risk to communities, critical infrastructure, habitat, and watersheds.

In the event an opportunity arises to manage an incident with less than a full suppression strategy, my expectation is that you will contact the Regional Office, specifically the Deputy Regional Forester (DRF) for State and Private and the Regional Fire Director (RFD), or “Acting,” to set up a call to discuss the overall strategy of managing the incident. During the call, please be prepared to engage in dialogue covering the following items:



- Does your Forest Plan allow for a fire to be managed other than full suppression?
- Do you have a prescribed fire plan for the planning area that can inform actions you will take? If not, do you have a plan for control features, including cut-off points?
- Where is the fire located in relation to values at risk and distance?
- Is there a threat to life, property, or public and firefighter safety that cannot be mitigated?
- What is the political/social climate (locally and regionally) for managing the incident for a less than full suppression strategy?
- Are potential effects on cultural and natural resources within the range of acceptable effects?
- What are the regional/national resource commitments to on-going incidents?
- What is the potential size of the incident being requested to manage for less than full suppression?
- What opportunities are present to fully suppress the incident at a smaller footprint, and provide for a positive outcome?
- What is the external communication strategy?
- What is the expected duration of the incident and how long will you require resource (equipment and personnel) assistance from outside the local unit?

As in past years, I also expect communication with the DRF and RFD if something of significance or potential significance occurs. Some examples include: during an emerging incident, if attempts to contain and suppress a fire becomes less effective in containment/suppression and a complexity analysis and organizational needs assessment are needed; the Forest lacks the necessary resources required to implement the current strategy; there are potential political concerns; potential strategy conflicts with partners; there is national media interest.

We look forward to the opportunity to engage with you during the most active part of fire season in continuing dialogue around fire suppression strategies, resource needs, and concerns.

If you have any questions please contact Jaime Gamboa, Director of Fire and Aviation Management at (909) 677-6017 or [jaime.gamboa@usda.gov](mailto:jaime.gamboa@usda.gov).

X Jennifer Eberlien

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Signed by: JENNIFER EBERLIEN  
JENNIFER EBERLIEN  
Regional Forester