

**MASTER COOPERATIVE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT AND STAFFORD ACT  
RESPONSE AGREEMENT 19-FI-11080700-085**

**EXHIBIT C**

**Operating Plan**

**Between**

**State of Mississippi/Mississippi Forestry Commission**

**DOI/Bureau of Indian Affairs**

**DOI/Bureau of Land Management**

**DOI/National Park Service**

**USDA Forest Service  
Agency Doc ID No. 19-FO-11080700-086**

**DOI/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

This Operating Plan is hereby made and entered into by and between the parties pursuant to the Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement (Agreement) signed and dated May 23, 2019. This Operating Plan, inclusive of any referenced attachments or exhibits, is tied to the Agreement. A formal modification to the Agreement is unnecessary, but shall not contradict the Agreement.

All portions of this Operating Plan should be addressed. State if any item is not applicable, but do not remove the item. To facilitate review of this Operating Plan, do not change the format or delete sections. Items may be added as necessary to each of the sections.

**I. PURPOSE**

This is a Statewide Operating Plan applicable to all signatory parties within the State of Mississippi. Its purpose is to address statewide issues affecting cooperation, interagency working relationships and protocols, financial arrangements, sharing of resources, and joint activities/projects. The Southern Area Mobilization Guide is considered part of this Operating Plan.

**II. RECITALS**

Stafford Act responses and related National Response Framework activities will be accomplished utilizing established dispatch coordination concepts. Situation and damage assessment information will be transmitted through established fire suppression intelligence channels.

Jurisdictional Agencies are responsible for all planning documents, i.e. land use, resource and fire management plans and decision support documents, for a unit's wildland fire and fuels management program.

Protecting Agencies implement the actions documented and directed by the appropriate planning documents and decision support documents for initial and extended attack on wildfire incidents. They provide the supervision and support including operational oversight, direction and logistical support to Incident Management Teams.

### III. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

1. **Interagency Dispatch Centers:** Mississippi Interagency Coordination Center (MICC), located in Pearl, Mississippi at the Southern Regional Fire Training Center, serves as the State Interagency Coordination Center for agencies in this agreement.

- A. Purpose and Overview: The National Forests in MS Dispatch Office is the Mississippi Interagency Coordination Center (MICC); which provides dispatch support for the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Mississippi Forestry Commission, and Bureau of Land Management. Pearl dispatch in the MICC provides support to the National Forests in MS; fire, prescribed burning and all-hazard incidents.

The Coordination Center is part of the Forest Fire/Lands/Minerals/Safety section located in the Supervisor's Office in Jackson. The center is staffed to lend support and coordination for state and federal agencies within the state of Mississippi. The primary support role of the center is wildland fire suppression and expanded dispatch. This does not exclude natural disasters or other human caused incidents.

#### B. Administrative Oversight/Structure

- i. Executive Board – N/A
- ii. Operations Group – N/A

#### C. Dispatch Organization

- i. **Staffing -** Hours of operations will be 0700 to 1730 hours, Monday thru Friday. As activity increases, MICC will staff as long as necessary, or upon request for activities such as prescribed burning or other emergency Incidents. There will be a dispatcher on call seven days a week. MICC will be staffed full time by a Center Manager, Assistant Center Manager, and two Initial Attack Dispatchers. During periods of high fire danger or increased activity, MS-MNF may temporarily increase staffing to meet the needs of the situation.

#### D. Roles and Responsibilities

- i. Center Manager - The Center Manager's primary purpose is to direct, plan, organize, supervise, coordinate, and manage personnel and operational activities of the Mississippi Interagency Coordination Center (MICC) by providing focused responsive coverage during daily operations and emergency situations involving Federal agencies. In addition:

- a. Determines priorities and supervises normal fire activities.
- b. Responsible for the development and execution of operating plans and action guides for efficient and cost effective mobilization of resources to emergency situations.
- c. Ensures all activities directed by the dispatch center are conducted safely and is responsible for the effectiveness of decisions made at the Center.
- d. Performs a variety of staff, personnel and administrative duties related to fire management activities.
- e. Provides daily briefings for assistant center manager and any detailers.
- f. Acts as liaison for support operations and incident commanders.
- g. Troubleshoots procedural problems in support operations and network. Identifies where bottlenecks or breakdowns are occurring and work to correct them.
- h. Evaluates cost effectiveness and information flow.
- i. Recognizes sensitive political or other special issues. Reacts to these issues to minimize their impact on operations.
- j. Reviews intelligence summaries and reports, and ensures reporting timeframes are met.
- k. Ensures accurate data and maintains current knowledge of area activity.
- l. Ensures coordination occurs. Monitors workload distribution and shift briefings.
- m. Resource availability: Monitors status of national resources. Identifies shortages or potential problems and resolves them.
- n. Coordination: Maintains communications concerning resource orders with field units, keeps abreast of general situations, and works to resolve conflicts. Shares information with appropriate entities.
- o. Gives and provides briefings as requested.
- p. Monitors weather patterns and forecasts; and maintains liaison with the National Weather Service and fire weather meteorologist. Identifies potentially significant weather situations.
- q. Maintains contact with other intelligence operations as appropriate.
- r. Reacts to special requests for information in a timely manner.
- s. Supervision: Builds and manages an appropriate staffing level. Acts as focal point for all sections, resolves problems, and provides direction. Maintains a broad perspective for overall operation.

- t. Serves as first line supervisor to the Assistant Center Manager and Initial Attack Dispatchers in terms of performance evaluations, development plans, time and attendance.
  - u. Initiates performance appraisals, development plans, awards, or adverse actions with concurrence of the Forest Fire Management Officer.
  - v. Oversees all daily operations of MICC including staffing levels and schedules, resource availability, fire activity, resource mobilization.
  - w. Implements the safe, cost effective ordering, scheduling, dispatching, and tracking of aviation resources. Coordinates Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) and Notices to Airmen (NOTAM) with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Coordinates and implements emergency response plans.
  - x. **Span of control** -First Line Supervisor of Assistant Center Manager and Initial Attack Dispatchers.
- ii. Assistant Center Manager(s) - The Assistant Center Manager is responsible for the technical accuracy in the execution of resource orders and operational efficiency of the section. This position performs routine dispatching duties and supervises support dispatchers and dispatch recorders, if assigned. This position organizes and disseminates incident intelligence through formalized reports, informal contacts and other sources.
- a. Receives resource status from field offices and all resources via telephone; situation reports, electronic mail, verbal updates, and briefings.
  - b. Utilizes resource-tracking systems. Documents resource status on appropriate log notes, resource order, and resource database. Verbally updates Center Coordinator on resources which are critically in short supply and those where shortages are anticipated.
  - c. Displays resource status. Maintains visual status of appropriate resources using maps and other established systems.
  - d. Places resource requests determining closest available resource and alternatives. Sources include NFES catalog, availability displays, reference books, mobilization guides, manager input, etc. Places order.
  - e. Processes assigned resources. Documents assigned resources to allow for good resource tracking using resource order forms/Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS), and resource database. Documents travel information and passes information to requesting unit.
  - f. Closes order per identified procedure.
  - g. Provides field units with information concerning use, capabilities, and availability of specific resources. Advises field of proper ordering procedures. Using General Message Forms.

- h. Refers questions concerning policy or interpretation of general operating procedures to the manager.
  - i. Beginning each shift review: dispatch logs, notes, and resource orders/ROSS.
  - j. Documents significant events in log to ensure continuity of information.
  - k. At close of shift review: orders and logs to ensure complete documentation. Conducts briefing with replacement.
  - l. Monitors resource tracking systems. Receives verbal updates from dispatchers on resources, noting any shortages or opportunities for reassignments. Relays this information to manager, document in shift log, makes sure information is discussed with other shifts, and relays to other entities as appropriate.
  - m. Observes chain of command. Receives assignments for section from Center Coordinator and delegate as appropriate. Sets timeframes and standards. Deals with personnel problems and concerns in a conscientious and diplomatic manner. Assigns work schedules for employees.
  - n. Acts as technical specialist for reviewing resource requests.
  - o. Helps dispatchers by giving insight as to best resource to fill a request.
  - p. Supervises processing of resource orders. Monitors information on subsequent unavailability of referred resource or major changes in agreed upon plan of action. Thinks ahead for alternatives and is aware of length of assignment issues. Considers resource availability, closest forces, cost effectiveness, safety, transportation availability, areas of fire activity or anticipated activity, and established priorities. Identifies preferred course of action to the manager.
- iii. Initial Attack Dispatchers
- a. Performs general dispatch duties for the MICC initial attack operations.
  - b. Keeps the center manager/assistant center manager informed of fire situations.
  - c. Receives fire report and initiates proper response as dictated by protocol, Dispatch Level, and local intelligence.
  - d. Tracks all initial attack resources on a daily basis.
  - e. Collects and distributes weather reports, fire behavior information, resource availability, etc.
  - f. Provides a communication link to all suppression and prescribed resources.
  - g. Coordinates with District Point of Contact regarding resource status, detection requests, and other suppression duties.

- h. Provides initial coordination for other emergency response (haz-mat, search & rescue, etc.).
- i. Completes all necessary records and distributes as appropriate.
- j. Keeps supervisor informed of all activity.
- k. Updates maps, resource lists, hazards, etc., as required.

E. Dispatch Services:

- i. Initial and Extended Attack - Each agency is responsible for its own initial attack dispatching. Agency Initial Attack Dispatch Centers are located in the following locations:
  - Mississippi Forestry Commission: 3139 MS Hwy 468, Pearl, MS.
  - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR, 7200 Crane Ln, Gautier, MS 39553
  - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee NWR, 13723 Bluff Lake Road, Brooksville, Ms. 39739
  - USDA Forest Service, Southern Regional Fire Training Center, Pearl, MS
  - National Park Service – Natchez Trace Parkway: 2680 Natchez Trace Parkway, Tupelo, MS 38804
- ii. Mobilization, Demobilization and Support - MICC is the central focal point for statewide incident support coordination and initial attack dispatching for the National Forests in Mississippi. MICC is additionally responsible for collection and dissemination of intelligence, weather forecasts, NFDRS indices, wildland fire and prescribed fire activity information. The primary mission of the Coordination Center is to provide the National Forests in Mississippi and cooperating agencies with prompt delivery of suppression and all-risk resources, logistical support/coordination, information to assist units in daily planning intelligence and logistical support/coordination during periods of high activity.

Dispatchers will dispatch all resources on a closest resource available basis, without regard for district boundaries. Preference shall be given to the resources from the district on which a fire occurs when response times are about the same. Resource location, experience, and capability will be considered for each dispatch. Threat to life and property, incident location, fuels, fire behavior, as well as current and forecasted weather information will be considered to determine the amount and type of resources initially dispatched.

After regular business hours, district personnel receiving initial fire reports will initiate the dispatch of district resources. Once initial dispatch is made, this person will contact the MICC duty officer. For weekends, MICC will provide each district the name and contact numbers of the duty officer. Upon notification, the duty officer will staff the Coordination Center for additional support.

Cooperating agencies will report fires which occur after hours directly to the duty officer. The duty officer will contact the appropriate district duty officer for initial action and assist as needed in contacting additional personnel. The duty office will identify the I.C. and relay this information to all resources advising them to check in with the I.C. upon arrival at the incident.

The I.C. will report resource releases as they occur to the Coordination Center. Released resources will notify the coordination center when departing an incident and when arriving at their destination. At the time of release, resources will be reassigned or return to their standby location. If the Incident Commander is unsure of release time, the Coordination Center may request "tentative" release times for planning purposes. If replacement resources are needed, they will be ordered through the Coordination Center by the I.C.

Incidents detected by the Forest Service on state or other agency protected lands will be reported to MICC for other agency notification and possible dispatch or suppression assistance. MICC will immediately notify the appropriate unit or dispatch center having jurisdiction. MICC dispatchers will document the following information in the incident log: incident detection (who/how), date and time, address, phone number (if available), incident location, type of incident, character or behavior, committed resources (FS/other if known), who information was relayed to by MICC (time/date), and resources requested for assistance. Immediate designation of the I.C. is critical.

USFWS agency wildfire response personnel will contact closest agency representative for resource support and then follow up with MICC on the incident status and further needs.

#### **Off-Forest Assistance**

MICC will place resource requests and coordinate with other ranger districts and cooperating agencies with priority given to closest available resources. For resources not available in Mississippi, orders will be placed with adjacent state coordination centers or SACC, provided the requests do not exceed the amount listed in the Southern Area Mobilization Plan (Chapter 40 - Inter-Forest Cooperation).

SACC (Southern Area Coordination Center) will request resources through MICC for incident support outside of Mississippi. When resource orders are received, District FMOs, MFC employees, or cooperating agency duty officer will be contacted by the Coordination Center to fill requests. The Center Manager will keep the Forest FMO informed of ordering activity and resources assigned.

Movement of resources will require both parties be responsible for safety of personnel involved. Responsibilities will include, but are not limited to the following:

Sending unit will check personnel for such items as adequate and required personal protective equipment (PPE), forest map, physical fitness standards met, current IQCS qualification cards (and that they are qualified for the position they are being dispatched to perform), tools and equipment are in good conditions and safe for use.

Personnel being dispatched off-forest or out of the Southern Area should be briefed on what to expect. Briefing should cover: PPE item checks, transportation, weight limitations, crew boss expectations, any assignment details, fire situation, etc.

Receiving unit is to be responsible for the safe use of personnel and equipment after it is received, including personnel welfare and equipment maintenance. Receiving units ensure sufficient safety officers and other overhead are available to manage the fire safely. Personnel not familiar with the area will be briefed before going on the fire.

#### **Requests to SACC (Southern Area Coordination Center)**

All requests for resources will be processed through ROSS with the exception of Supplies. Requests for supplies will either be filled by local purchase or submitted directly to the Southern Area Cache.

#### **NICC (National Interagency Coordination Center)**

MICC will place requests for resources outside the Southern Area through SACC to the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) located in Boise, Idaho. MICC will not order resources directly from NICC except for communications equipment, i.e. radio kits.

#### **Initial Attack Dispatch**

Any wildland fires occurring on the forest will be reported to MICC. Personnel receiving reports from the public should get the fire information and the name and phone number of the person reporting the fire. This information should be immediately relayed to MICC for dispatch response.

MICC will dispatch the closest available resources, provide map coordinates and available size up information. During PL II and above, the districts will provide MICC a list of available initial attack resources by 0930 each day. Upon checking with the Coordination Center, resource will report their equipment



number, number of crew members, status and location when leaving their stations. When a dispatch is received, resource will acknowledge the dispatch and proceed to the incident. Upon arrival, the incident commander will size up the situation and inform the MICC current and anticipated activity and additional resource needs. Reinforcements will be dispatched as requested by the I.C. If no I.C. is identified, MICC will request the name of the I.C. so that all personnell will know who is in charge of the Incident.

Incident Commanders should keep the Coordination Center informed of anticipated resource releases and make resources available for dispatch as they become excess.

USFWS initial attack wildfires will be dispatched through each individual dispatch office or Refuge Complex responsible for their agency landscapes. Occurrence reports to USFWS will be multiple and diverse. Most will be received from municipalities and county emergency services dispatch centers. USFWS Station dispatchers will record all pertinent information from reporting parties and maintain a log of events throughout the incident period. Notification of an incident and requests for additional resources will be requested through MICC and or MFC via Incident Commanders or Local Dispatchers.

### **Extended Attack**

Extended attack incidents are those which will not be contained in the first burning period and may require resources beyond that available for initial attack. "Burning period" is defined as the part of each 24-hour period when fires spread most rapidly, typically from 10:00 AM until sundown. As soon as it is apparent that a fire will extend into the next burning period with reasonable likelihood that it will burn for multiple periods, MICC will inquire about the ordering of additional resources. MICC will contact the District/ Forest FMO about the ordering of any additional resources for the incident.

The districts may be requested by the Coordination Center to begin acquiring needed supplies and equipment through established agreements with local businesses. MICC will fax copies of the current resource orders to the district with the project order number and "P" code assigned. The resource orders will be used to document any future requests as orders are generated at the incident. Use of the orders will provide a systematic method of documenting requests, eliminate duplication and allow for smoother information transfer between the incident and MICC.

Incident Status Summary's (ICS 209) are nationally required for fires that burn in 100+ acres of timber or 300+ acres of grass or brush or has a type 1 or 2 incident management team assigned to it. Most extended attack fires will require Incident Status Summary's (ICS 209). Incident Commanders are responsible to complete,

update and send the ICS 209 to MICC by 1900 daily until the fire is declared controlled. Incident Status Summaries are used to prioritize allocation of resources, suppression planning, and tracking incident costs. Instructions for completing the ICS 209 are found in Exhibit 3.A.

## **REPORTS**

### **Daily Situation Report**

Throughout the year MICC will submit the daily situation report via the internet. Specific instructions for accessing the report and completing data entry are found in the Situation Report Users' Guide. The report will be prepared by MICC and submitted electronically by the close of business each day. All wildland fires and planned or accomplished prescribed burning since the last report, will be reported. The minimum standards for situation reporting are as follows:

- a) All significant fire information will be reported by the Center Manager to the Forest FMO, Southern Area Coordinator, District Rangers, and cooperators to ensure the timely recognition of approaching critical fire situations.
- b) MICC will report all wildfire activity and accomplished prescribed fire activity for the National Forests in Mississippi to SACC throughout the year on the daily situation report.

### **Individual Fire Reports**

An Individual Fire Report (FS 5100-29) will be completed for all statistical wildland fires. The 5100-29 is to be completed by the appropriate district personnel. Individual fire reports are to be completed within ten days of the fire being declared out.

USFWS will create fire codes for their agency wildfires. If USFWS resources are officially requested to support non-federal cooperating agencies then a support firecode will be created.

### **Reporting Wildland Fire & Prescribed Fire Activity**

As part of the Daily Situation Report, districts and cooperators will report the following information on prescribed burning:

- a) Number of units/acres by objective planned for the day.
- b) Units/acres accomplished by objective during past 24 hours.
- c) Number of people committed to burning projects.
- d) Number of equipment units committed (engines, dozers, aircraft).

Wildland fire information shall include:

- Number of fires
- Size of each
- Cause
- Status (est./actual time contained/controlled)
- Assigned resources

Prescribed fire notification to the public or local cooperators (within the same county) is the responsibility of the unit executing the project. The notifications will be made as described in the Prescribed Fire Burn Plan (FS 5100-6) and documented.

Districts and cooperators are to report the above information daily to MICC by 1030 - anytime prescribed burning is planned or when wildland fires have occurred since previous days P.M. Situation Report.

- iii. Aviation - MICC will hire only aircraft and pilots approved by the FS Regional Aviation Group or the Office of Aircraft Services (OAS).

Only agency approved and carded aircraft will be used for government flights. All Forest Service or Department of Interior users of aircraft are personally responsible for checking aircraft approval certificates: Forest Service form 5700-21 (all aircraft) or Office of Aircraft Services (OAS) forms OAS-36A (fixed wing) or OAS-36B (helicopters).

When single-engine aircraft or helicopters are used for reconnaissance work, only those passengers essential to the mission will be carried. Those missions will be carried out so that the aircraft will remain at 500 feet or more AGL (above ground level). The pilot in command must select a flight pattern that will ensure a proper route in case of engine failure. The pilot has the final say concerning the safety of the aircraft and its' occupants.

MICC will order an coordinate the use of aircraft on the forest. Prior to ordering a flight, the requesting unit will be provided the following flight request containing the following information:

1. Name of person requesting flight
2. Date of flight (s) and time
3. Purpose of flight/ objectives
4. Passengers names and weights
5. Passenger pick-up points
6. Job Code

There are various "Call When Needed" (CWN) and exclusive use helicopters available through the ordering system. Orders for these types of resources need to be placed through the MICC using the appropriate flight request form. Ensure that Job code you are using is valid. Also ensure districts ordering aviation resources are up to date on policy requirements such as but not limited to:

- Current Interagency Aviation Mishap response guide and checklist.
- Signed and approved Helibase plan.
- Signed and approved Project Aviation Safety plan if mission is not a wildfire.
- Aviation Hazard Map to include military routes.
- Appropriate emergency response equipment.

MICC and Districts will maintain current copies of the above documents. All dispatch personnel should be trained and aware of the particulars in regards to these. They should know the military routes across the forest and how to contact their coordinators, where the helibases are, etc.

- iv. Prescribed Fire (if applicable)
- v. All Hazard (law Enforcement, Natural Disaster, etc, as appropriate)

USFWS will follow all DOI National and Regional Aviation Policy requirements.

#### **EMERGENCY INCIDENTS (NON-FIRE)**

The appropriate county sheriff's office is the coordinating office for all non-fire incidents and search-and-rescue missions within the dispatch area. Ranger Districts will coordinate all activity with the sheriff's office and will operate in accordance with the communication portion of Search and Rescue Plan when incidents occur on National Forest (ANNEX A). For circumstances involving in-house searches for Government aircraft/personnel on National Forest lands, the only requirement is for notification of the sheriff's office in order to let them know we are coordinating a search and rescue. The Forest Service has the latitude to enter Collection Agreements with the counties. These agreements would make available supplies, equipment, facilities and personnel to the counties during emergency incidents however none are currently in place.

The Forest Emergency Plan is for natural disasters, search and rescue, and national emergencies occurring on National Forest, regardless of fire protection jurisdiction.

Upon request, MICC will initiate appropriate action regarding incidents involving agency personnel and/or occurring on agency lands, in accordance with county sheriff.

USFWS Hurricane Responses and other Non-Fire emergencies will be internally managed through the Zone Fire Management Office unless the facility is compromised from storm damages. In the event other refuges may host expanded operations. Funding sources for these types of emergencies will be internal within the agency.

#### ANNEX A: NATIONAL FORESTS IN MISSISSIPPI SEARCH AND RESCUE PLAN.

Communication will be made through the MICC (Mississippi Interagency Coordination Center). No operation will be allowed to proceed or continue unless prompt communication with MICC or the Unit Dispatch can be maintained. Uses of cellphones, human repeaters, or other means are acceptable as long as they permit immediate communication by Forest Service personnel to the unit dispatch. Radios should be used as a primary means of communications so that other resources responding can stay current on the developing information. A check in / check out process should be established for all responders.

#### F. Funding – N/A

- i. All agencies have cost sharing mechanisms at their disposal and will be utilized where appropriate
- ii. Financial plan (attach as Appendix) - N/A

### IV. PREPAREDNESS

**1. Protection Planning:** Agencies will maintain responsibility for protection of lands under their jurisdiction. Closest forces concept will be used when appropriate and conducive to public safety.

**2. Protection Areas and Boundaries:**

- The Mississippi Forestry Commission has primary wildfire protection responsibilities on all private and state owned land as directed by Mississippi Law.
- The National Park Service has primary wildfire protection responsibilities on lands within the legislative boundaries of the following National Park Service Units in Mississippi.
  - Gulf Islands National Seashore, Ocean Springs
  - Vicksburg National Military Park, Vicksburg
  - Natchez Trace Parkway

- The Forest Service has primary wildfire protection responsibilities for all lands administered by the National Forests in Mississippi.
- The US Fish & Wildlife Service has primary wildfire protection responsibilities for all lands administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Mississippi.

**3. Methods of Fire Protection and Suppression:**

- **Reciprocal (Mutual Aid) Fire Assistance:** The closest available resource may initiate suppression action on any wildfire on reciprocally protected lands regardless of land ownership. The reciprocal area is identified by a one mile buffer adjacent to National Park Service, US Fish & Wildlife, and USDA Forest Service ownership boundaries. The Protecting Agency will not be required to reimburse the Supporting Agencies for its costs of fire suppression within the first 24 hours. For wildfires located outside of the reciprocal areas, agencies may provide assistance upon request of the Protecting Agency. Supporting Federal Agencies will not bill the State, or vice-versa, for the first 24 hours. Resources will charge to their established pay code until the non-billable mutual aid period is met, at which time they may convert to the established job code for the incident.
    - All requests for assistance will be processed through the State and Forest Service Dispatch Centers.
    - Resource orders will be processed at MICC as appropriate for all cooperators. USDA Forest Service Dispatch Center will process all orders for incidents within their jurisdictional boundaries and will be supported as needed by MICC.
    - The requesting agency agrees to assume responsibility for making necessary arrangement and paying all expenses for lodging and meals for personnel from the sending agency.
  - **Acquisition of Services:** All areas that are not under reciprocal protection will be managed according to cooperative protection standards. Assistance from the agency that does not have protection responsibility will be reimbursable. However, if the fire is controlled with initial attack forces within the first 24 hours, there will be no charges or reimbursement by either agency.
- 4. Joint Projects and Project Plans:** If any of the State or Federal Agencies wish to engage in joint cooperative projects, such as prescribe fire/fuels management, preparedness, fire analysis/planning, rehabilitation, training, prevention, public affair, and other mutually beneficial efforts in support of interagency fire management, a Supplemental Project Agreement (as outlined in Exhibit I) or other written document will be prepared.
- 5. Fire Prevention:** When appropriate agencies will work together to provide Fire Prevention and Education.
- 6. Public Use Restrictions:** When feasible, agencies should coordinate the implementation of restrictions for consistency in a given area. Each agency will retain the rights to limit public use on lands under their jurisdiction. Agencies shall notify appropriate partners of any area closures, burn bans, or other restrictions. Whenever such closures, restrictions, or burn bans are established, the other agencies will comply with them to the extent possible within their own agency's rules and regulations.
- 7. Burning Permits:** All Agencies will coordinate with the appropriate State Dispatch Office for

smoke permits.

8. **Prescribed Fire (Planned Ignitions) and Fuels Management:** Prescribe burns will comply with State smoke management guidelines.
9. **Smoke Management:** Prescribe burns will comply with State smoke management guidelines.

## V. OPERATIONS

### 1. Fire Notifications:

- To assist with reporting requirements and situational awareness all fires on federal lands will be reported to MICC with a location, protection unit, and acreage.
- All agencies will report their own fires through the appropriate reporting systems.
- Reporting should be through and email or phone call to MICC as soon as possible.
- When a federal agency takes sole action on wildfires that threaten or involve private lands the State Dispatch Center will be notified.
- When the State takes sole action on lands that threaten or involve federal lands the appropriate agency will be notified as soon as possible.

1. **Boundary Line Fires:** A fire threatening the reciprocal area boundary may be considered a fire within the reciprocal boundary at the discretion of the agency or State officer in charge. Standard fire notification procedures will be followed.
2. **Independent Action on Lands Protected by Another Agency:** Each agency may take independent action in reciprocal areas on any lands under protection responsibility of the other agency.

### 3. Response to Wildland Fire:

#### 1. Special Management Considerations:

- National Park Service – The use of Minimal Impact Suppression tactics (MIST) shall be used on all National Park Service (NPS) lands. The use of heavy mechanized equipment is forbidden unless approved by the Park Superintendent. No chemical (retardant, foam) application on NPS lands unless approved by the Park Superintendent.
- US Fish & Wildlife (USFWS) – The use of Minimal Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) shall be used on all USFWS nationally designated Wilderness areas. No application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of water ways. No use of heavy equipment within 300 feet of water ways. The use of heavy mechanized equipment is within the range of appropriate management responses for suppression activities.
- US Forest Service (USFS) – The use of Minimal Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) shall be used in Wilderness areas and no mechanized heavy equipment, chainsaws, leaf blowers, etc. except by approval of the Regional Forester or Forest Supervisor.
- Unless otherwise agreed, the Jurisdictional Agency will provide an Agency Representative or appropriate environmental technical specialist to advise a Protecting Agency of any special management considerations that may influence suppression action. The cost of these individuals shall be paid by the Jurisdictional Agency. The Incident Commander will incorporate special management considerations into the incident planning process, subject to the delegation of authority.

4. **Decision Process:** For wildfires which are expected to exceed initial attack capabilities all parties involved with jurisdiction will meet to develop and document their decisions regarding suppression strategies and tactical actions that are cost efficient and consider loss and benefit to land resources, values-at-risk, social and political values, and existing legal statutes.
5. **Cooperation:** Pre-season meetings should be held to discuss areas which require a higher priority protection. Values-at-risk would be identified and ranked in order of priority. This would help set priority in the event that multiple fire starts occurred at the same time and require prioritization. The group should also identify those areas requiring fuels treatment/mitigation for future analysis.
6. **Communication:** Should occur prior to fire seasons and during the early stages of wildland fires. Agencies managing fires, especially those with multiple objectives, should consider: firefighter and public safety, predicted weather conditions, resource drawdown, proximity to values-at-risk, smoke, current and anticipated fire activity, and time of season. Neighboring jurisdictions should provide prompt notification to agencies when concerns exist about wildfires that are managed strategically and have the potential to impact adjacent jurisdictions. The appropriate management response (Confine, Contain, and Control) will be selected for each incident. In the event that the wildfire will impact adjacent jurisdiction, all parties will be asked to participate in the development of the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) decision.
7. **Cost efficiency:** Jurisdictions will identify conditions under which cost efficiency may dictate where suppression strategies and tactical actions are taken. Points to consider include loss and benefit to land, values at risk, resource, social and political values, and existing legal statutes.
8. **Delegation of Authority:** In the event that overhead teams are called in to stage, or to assume control of an incident, the agency with protection responsibility will prepare the delegation of authority.
9. **Preservation of Evidence:** Evidence will be preserved in accordance with applicable Agency regulations and policies.

## VI. USE AND REIMBURSEMENT OF INTERAGENCY FIRE RESOURCES

1. **Cost Share Agreement (Cost Share Methodologies)** - The type of cost share methodology utilized will vary according to a great variety of environmental, resource, tactical, political, and other considerations. The following factors will influence the ultimate selection for a cost share methodology for any given wildland fire.
  - The cost-sharing methodologies that will be utilized should wildfire spread to a neighboring jurisdiction in a location where fire is not wanted.
  - The cost-share methodologies that will be used should a jurisdiction accept or receive a wildland fire and manage it for multiple objectives.
  - Any distinctions in what cost-share methodology will be used if the reason the fire spreads to another jurisdiction is attributed to a strategic decision, versus environmental condition (weather, fuels, and fire behavior) or tactical considerations jurisdictional boundaries. Examples of cost-sharing methodologies may include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - When a wildland fire that is being managed for multiple objectives spreads to a neighboring jurisdiction because of strategic decisions, and in a location where



6. **Aviation Operations:** Directions provided in the appropriate agency Safety Plans.

- Aircraft involved in joint operations will be equipped with multi-channel compatible radios.
- Aircraft will use and monitor 122.925 unless otherwise directed.
- MS-MNF will provide flight following for all USFS contracted aircraft and will use National Flight Following.

**VII. BILLING PROCEDURES** (Refer to Exhibit D of the Master Coop Agreement - Reimbursable Billings and Payments)

1. **Suppression Billing:**

A. Billing information, provide:

- Agency name and billing address
- Financial Contact (name, phone, email)
- Invoice Bill
- Agreement Number
- Incident name and number
- Dates of incident covered by billing
- Location and jurisdictional unit
- Appropriate Incident Fire Code
- Summary Cost data for the amount being billed. Use incident cost information or standard generated cost reports by Agency to support billing whenever possible. Charges between Federal Agencies will utilize equipment rates identified in Chapter 100 or the Southern Area Mobilization Guide.
- Agency DUNS
- Billing timeframes – Provide contact information for written request for extensions beyond timeframes established in Reimbursable Billings and Payments, Exhibit D,
- Indirect Cost Rates, if applicable
- Identify a process for handling any supplemental billing information, summary data or additional billing documentation. Such supplemental billing information, summary data or additional billing documentation may be requested and provided if agreed upon by the Parties. The process should include:
  - Points of Contact
  - Process for handling requests,
  - Any standardized reports information

2. **Fee Based Services** – billings will be in accordance with separate written agreement or contract(s).

3. **Non-Suppression Billings:** As described in this Operating Plan, the parties may jointly conduct cooperative projects and/or share resources to carry out non-suppression activities in support of interagency fire management. These joint projects or activities may involve sharing of costs and/or a transfer of funds between parties involved, at which time a separate, local agreement, procurement, or other appropriate written document will be required. Billing will be defined under the terms of that document.

fire is not wanted, the managing jurisdiction may be responsible for wildfire suppression costs.

- In those situations where weather, fuels, or fire behavior of the wildland fire precludes stopping at jurisdiction boundaries, cost-share methodologies may include, but are not limited to :
  - a) Each jurisdiction pays for its own resources – fire suppression efforts are primarily on jurisdictional responsibility lands.
  - b) Each jurisdiction pays for its own resources – services rendered approximate the percentage of jurisdictional responsibility, but not necessarily performed on those lands.
  - c) Cost-share by percentage of ownership.
  - d) Cost is apportioned by geographic division or percent of effort.  
Examples of geographic divisions are: Division A and B (using a map as an attachment); privately owned property with structures; or specific locations such as campgrounds.
  - e) Reconciliation of daily costs (for larger, multi-day incidents). This method relies upon daily agreed to costs, using Incident Action Plans or other means to determine multi-Agency contributions. Reimbursement must be followed up by a final bill.

2. **Training:** Interagency training opportunities can be made available. This can include, but is not limited to the annual fire refresher, wildfire academies, and in-house training. Each agency agrees to operate under the National Incident Management System (NIMS) standards as developed by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). State employees and employees of the DOI Agencies will adhere to the Wildland Fire Qualifications System Guide (PMS 310-1) and the US Forest Service employees will adhere to the Forest Service Fire and Aviation Management Qualification Guide. Each agency will accept the qualification system used by the other agency.
3. **Communication Systems:** To enhance communications, radio stations may be added, deleted, or relocated by mutual agreement between representatives of both agencies. Each agency may install the others radio frequency in its radios for use in cooperative activities. All federal licensing requirements will be followed. All headquarters and/or dispatch centers of all agencies will have commercial telephone service. When it becomes necessary for an agency to operate radio equipment belonging to another agency, all operating procedures of the agency owning the equipment will be followed. Each agency will maintain its own radios and will cooperate to the fullest extent in maintaining efficient communications between agencies. Radio communication will be maintained between aircraft and State and Forest Service Dispatchers.
4. **Fire Weather Systems:** The State and Federal Agencies will share information from RAWS stations owned and/or operated by each respective agency, and agrees to maintain those stations to the standards outlined in PMS 426-3 Interagency Wildland Fire Weather Station Standards and Guidelines.
5. **Incident Meteorological (IMET) Services:** The procedure shall be made in accordance with the provision of the Interagency Agreement for Meteorological and Other Technical Services (IMET Agreement), and shall not conflict with the procedures of the Mobilization Guides. Reimbursement and expenditures for IMET services shall follow the procedures detailed with the IMET Agreement.

**4. Stafford Act Billings**

- Refer to Exhibit H of the Master Coop Agreement – Use of and Reimbursement for Shared Resources in Stafford Act Response Actions
- Billing timeframes – Provide contact information and process required for any written request for extensions beyond timeframes established in Exhibit H.

**VIII. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. **Principal Contacts:** Refer to Exhibit B of Master Coop Agreement – Principal Contacts. Complete and add to this Operating Plan.
2. **Personnel Policy:** See Exhibit G – Supplemental Fire Department Resources. List personnel to be mobilized under the terms of that Exhibit by name, position(s), and identified as Single Resource. While on assignment, these individuals are (XX) FD employees and the (XX) FD will be reimbursed for their actual costs. N/A
3. **Modification:** Modifications within the scope of this Operating Plan shall be made by mutual consent of the Parties, through the issuance of a written modification signed and dated by all Parties prior to any changes being performed. Any Party shall have the right to terminate their participation under this Operating Plan by providing one year advance written notice to the other Parties.
4. **Annual Review:** This Operating Plan is reviewed annually by February 1st and revised, as needed.
5. **Duration of Operating Plan:** This Operating Plan is executed as of the date of last signature and remains in effect throughout the life of the master agreement unless modified or superseded. If the current Master Coop Agreement is superseded by a new Agreement, this Operating Plan may remain in effect to the extent that it does not conflict with provisions of the new Agreement, but only until such time that all activities and conditions can be incorporated into a new Operating Plan.
6. **Previous Instruments Superseded:** List, as applicable.
7. **Authorized Representatives:** By signature below, all signatories to this Operating Plan certify that the individuals listed in this document are authorized to act in their respective areas for matters related to this Operating Plan.

**IX. REVIEW AND SIGNATURES**

*The Geographic Area Operating Plan will be approved by the signatory State and Federal NWCG member agencies.*

*The Statewide Operating Plans will be approved by the signatory State and Federal NWCG members. Unit Administrators will have the responsibility for developing and approving sub-geographic area operating plans.*

*Each signatory agency may have policies/procedures for entering into agreements (including this Operating Plan) that require additional review by attorneys, agreement specialists, or contracting officers.*

USDOI FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Southeast Region, Zone 7

**Sami J. Gray**

Digitally signed by Sami J. Gray  
Date: 2019.02.21 10:45:30 -06'00'

Fire Management Officer  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

USDOI NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Southeast Region

*MS RIVER FIRE MANAGEMENT ZONE*



~~Zone~~ Regional Fire Management Officer  
Date: 3/1/19

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Eastern States Office



Fire Management Officer  
Date: 03/04/19

USDOI BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
Eastern Region

Regional Director  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

USDA FOREST SERVICE  
National Forests in Mississippi



CARL PETRICK Forest Supervisor  
Date: 5/23/19

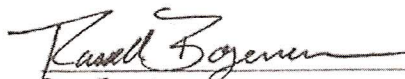
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TAYLOR  
Date: 2019.02.12 16:20:02  
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**VICKI TAYLOR**

VICKI R. TAYLOR Agreements Specialist  
Date: 02/12/2019

USDA Forest Service Agreement  
No. 19-FO-11080700-086

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
Mississippi Forestry Commission



State Forester  
Date: 4-2-19

Agreements Coordinator  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Operating Plan) that require additional review by attorneys, agreement specialists, or contracting officers.*

USDOI FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Southeast Region, Zone 7

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fire Management Officer  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

USDOI NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Southeast Region

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Fire Management Officer  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Eastern States Office

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fire Management Officer  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

USDOI BUREAU OF INDIAN  
AFFAIRS  
Eastern Region

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Director  
Date: 5/16/2019

USDA FOREST SERVICE  
National Forests in Mississippi

\_\_\_\_\_  
Forest Supervisor  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agreements Specialist  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
Mississippi Forestry Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
State Forester  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agreements Coordinator  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*contracting officers.*

JOCELYN  
LITTLECHIEF

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LITTLECHIEF  
Date: 2019.05.15 10:22:33  
-05'00'

Jocelyn LittleChief, Contracting Officer

Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Agency

Date: 5/15/2019

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Agency Administrator/Fire Director)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency

Date: \_\_\_\_\_