

**MASTER COOPERATIVE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT  
NUMBER 13-FI-11083150-001  
SOUTHERN AREA OPERATING PLAN  
BETWEEN  
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR  
AND THE  
FOREST SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**PREAMBLE**

This operating plan is prepared pursuant to the Southern Area Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement #13-FI-11083150-001 signed and dated 2013.

This operating plan supersedes agreements and associated operating plans dated prior to the execution of the Master Agreement. Refer to the Master Agreement for information not specifically identified in this 2013 Southern Area Coordination Operating Plan.

This operating plan sets forth the guidelines for the cooperative relationship between the following agencies: Bureau of Indian Affairs; Southern Plains Region, Eastern Oklahoma Region, Eastern Region; National Park Service; Southeast Region, Northeast Region, National Capital Region, Intermountain Region, Midwest Region; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Regions 2, 4, and 5; Fire Director, Southern Group State Forester; and USDA Forest Service Region 8.

**INTERAGENCY COOPERATION**

The following are incorporated by reference and will remain in effect under the authority of the Southern Area Master Agreement until revised.

Southern Area Mobilization Guide  
Southern Area Mobilization Center Guide  
Southern Area USFS All Hazard Guide

Movement of federal and state resources will be coordinated through local dispatch centers and the Southern Area Coordination Center (SACC) in Atlanta, GA.

**OPERATIONS**

**Use of Aircraft**

- This plan covers, but is not limited to, use of agency owned or leased or contracted fixed and rotary winged aircraft, cooperative use, funding, administration and contracting of helicopters and air tankers; operation of Interagency Coordination Center; Interagency Incident Cache; Incident Management Teams; Training; Communications; and other non-fire activities.

- This action plan provides for each agency's responsibilities in meeting its share of the cooperative effort.
- This plan will not be construed as a binding document upon each agency should funds not be appropriated by the Congress of the United States.
- This plan will be revalidated at an annual meeting in July of each year.
- Since each Agency mutually benefits from this Agreement, administrative costs will not be exchanged, except as required by individual Agency regulation. In the event Agencies are required to Bill for administrative costs, each providing Agency shall charge administrative costs in kind.

#### Airtankers

- The Forest Service, regularly contracts for Airtankers to be located at Airtankers Base in Chattanooga, TN; Lake City, FL; Fayetteville, AR; and other locations with Portable Airtanker Base Trailers (PAB) on as needed bases.
- These Airtankers are available for interagency use throughout the Southern States, National Parks, Fish and Wildlife Refuges, Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Forests under the priorities listed in the Southern Interagency mobilization guide.
- Financing of Airtankers
  1. Forest Service will pay for availability of airtankers.
  2. National Park Service will staff the airtanker base located at Chattanooga, TN.
  3. Each Agency may provide detailers and funding per incident at Airtanker Base; and other Portable Retardant Bases, on as needed basis.
  4. Fund allocation will be specified in an Annual Addendum.

#### Helicopters

- The Forest Service has contracts for twenty helicopters to be used within the Southern Area which may be utilized on an interagency basis. The helicopters are based at Copperhill, TN; Glassy Mountain, GA; Witherbee, SC; Abington, VA; Mena, AR; Mt. Ida AR; Clarksville, AR; Ocala, FL; Weyers Cave, VA; Anniston, AL; Alexandria, LA (2); Forest, MS (2); Wiggins, MS; New Bern, NC; Lufkin, TX; Huntsville, TX;
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has an agency owned helicopter based at Merritt Is, Florida.
- The National Park Service has an agency owned helicopter base at Big Cypress National Preserve.
- Each agency's share in the Regional Program is specified in the Annual addendum.

#### Agency Aircraft and Pilots

- When an Agency owns or leases aircraft for personnel transport, cargo, photography, fire, and other uses, these aircraft and pilots are available for interagency use. The using agency will pay an hourly use rate, plus pilot's overtime and per diem. No administrative costs will be exchanged. Payment for aircraft use will include daily Fixed Overhead Rate (FOR), hourly use rate and pilot's per diem and overtime. Flight scheduling is through the Aircraft Dispatcher in Southern Area Coordination Center (SACC).

- Except as provided by attachments, agency pilots may be used by the other agencies for missions when pilots meet requirements of using agency. Pilot travel, per diem and overtime will be paid by benefiting agency. Request for pilot services will be made through the SACC.

## **USE OF INTERAGENCY FIRE RESOURCES**

### Training

Interagency training will be emphasized by all participating agencies. The Southern Interagency Fire Training Coordination Committee will coordinate training of other than local level courses.

The purpose and Scope of the committee is:

1. Address training issues as assigned by the Southern Area Coordinating Group including;

Facilitate Southern Area training needs analysis for 300-400 level courses.

- Facilitate trainee assignments to insure qualifications
  - Facilitate communication between Southern Area cooperators on training issues.
  - Share information on 100-200 level courses.
  - Nomination process for national training.
  - Voice Southern Area training needs at the national level regarding training issues such as; course development and needs and qualification/standards development and timing of courses being offered.
  - Provide recommendations for vacancies on the Southern Interagency Incident Command Teams.
  - The US Forest Service Fire Training Specialist will prepare the Southern Interagency Fire Training Calendar which will be posted on Southern Area Coordination Center web site: <http://gacc.nifc.gov/sacc/>
2. The committee will deal only with issues authorized by the Southern Area Coordination Group that address area-wide issues or national issues that affect the Southern Area. Committee recommendations will be presented to the Southern Area Coordinating Group for approval.
  3. Southern Interagency Fire Training Coordination Committee will consist of one representative from agencies within the Southern Area as follows:
    - States' South Central Compact
    - States' Southeastern Compact
    - National Park Service
    - U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service
    - Bureau of Indian Affairs
    - USDA Forest Service field unit in the South Central Compact
    - USDA Forest Service field unit in the Southeastern Compact
    - USDA Forest Service, Region 8, Fire & Aviation Training Specialist

## **USE OF INTERAGENCY FIRE RESOURCES FOR NON FIRE RELATED ACTIVITIES**

Participating agencies will provide equipment and personnel as needed in these activities, when qualified personnel and suitable equipment are available.

Availability will be determined by the providing agency. Method of payment for these services is covered in the Southern Area master agreement between the United States Department of the Interior and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The following are examples of non-fire activities where cooperation is beneficial and cost effective. This list is not all inclusive.

- Administrative – Aircraft or other support for the movement of dignitaries and agency personnel, aerial photography, etc. as the providing agency has resources to commit.
- Hazardous Materials – Response to hazardous material situation will be based on qualifications and availability of personnel and suitable equipment.
- Search and Rescue – Mobilization of overhead teams and support to the situation as qualifications and suitability of equipment permits and as agreed upon by agency line officers or their representatives.
- Integrated Pest Management – Detection and suppression of forest insect infestation will take place as qualified personnel and equipment are available.
- Law Enforcement – In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between USDA Forest Service and USDOJ (Law Enforcement) (See Chapter 40 Cooperation, National Interagency Mobilization Guide).
- EMT's – EMTs will be shared as policy and legal constraints permit.
- Other Natural Disasters – The Federal Response Plan (FRP), developed by 26 Federal Agencies and the American Red Cross, identifies overall responsibility and concept of operations for presidential declared disasters. (See Chapter 12, Scope of Operation, National Interagency Mobilization Guide).

### **SOUTHERN MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION (SMAC) GROUP**

The Southern Multi-Agency Coordination Group will be activated by the SACG and may meet on a daily basis to establish priorities and provide direction to SACC at a PL-3 or greater level.

The Southern Multi-Agency Coordination Group consists of the Forest Service Southern Region Operations Officer, the US Fish and Wildlife Service Fire Management Coordinator; the National Park Service Fire Management Officers, Southeast; Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fire Program Specialist; representatives from the Southeast and South Central (State) Forest Fire Protection Compacts; and the Fire Director, Southern Group State Forester (SGSF).

This group is established to improve top-level interagency coordination. Basic responsibilities of the SMAC group include:

1. Ensuring that the current situation status is provided, by agency.
2. Prioritizing incidents.
3. Ensuring that the current resource situation status is provided, by agency.
4. Determining specific resource requirements, by agency.
5. Determining resource availability, by agency.
6. Determining need and designating mobilization and demobilization centers.
7. Allocating scarce/limited resources to incidents.
8. Anticipating future resource needs.
9. Reviewing policies/agreements for resource allocations.
10. Assessing the need for other agency involvement.
11. Providing liaison with out-of-area facilities and agencies as appropriate.
12. Critiquing and recommending improvements.

## INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAMS

- The SMAC group will request nominations to fill vacant positions as they occur and will solicit the nominations from all of the agencies involved in the Interagency Incident Management Teams with recommendations being made by the Southern Interagency Fire Training Coordination Committee.
- Incident Management Team positions will be filled using these criteria.
  1. All individuals will be fully qualified
  2. All agencies should be represented on three teams
- Tenure – no specific tenure exists, but attempts will be made to rotate qualified personnel through the teams to achieve maximum experience potential.
- Personnel committed to these Incident Management Teams are expected to be available for assignment except in serious emergencies at home or on their home units.

## CREWS

Each agency will assume total salary costs for that agency's enrollees. The home unit will pay travel and per diem expenses while enroute to Asheville and return to the home unit. Travel, per diem and overtime while working on the crew will be the responsibility of the benefiting function or unit. In order to support the operation of the crew, each agency will contribute funds as specified in the Annual Addendum.

- Crew rotation will be shared equitably based on:
  1. Getting effective utilization of all red-carded personnel in the area regardless of agency affiliation or physical location.
  2. Giving the benefits and opportunities of utilization to all agencies involved.
- Crew Modules – During the period of greatest out of region assignments (generally May-October), Southern Area Type II crews are assigned to ten 5-crew "modules", which are on call on a rotational basis, to expedite national mobilization from Southern Area jetports.
- Hotshot Crews – The Southern Interagency Hotshot Crews are: Asheville Hotshot Crew (Training Crew), headquartered at Asheville, NC; Augusta Hotshot Crew, headquartered at Augusta Springs, VA, Cherokee Hotshot Crew, headquartered at Unicoi, TN, Jackson Hotshot Crew, headquartered at Jackson, MS. The objective of the Asheville Hot Shot Training Crew is to equip the enrollees through intensive fire training and fire related work experience to be better qualified to assume fire positions at their home units.

## CACHE

The Southern Interagency Fire Cache (SIFC) is listed in the NWCG National Fire Equipment System catalog as NFES National Interagency Support Cache.

The cache maintains eight mobile support vans – six are located throughout the area. Also, the Cache has one water handling van and two portable airtanker bases.

The cache is an extension of the Southern Area. The Fire Management Staff Officer, Daniel Boone NF, supervises the cache manager. The Southern Multi-Agency Coordination Group makes major policy decisions relative to the cache.

The Southern Area Coordinating Group makes major policy decisions relative to the cache. It also provides oversight of the Interagency cache Committee. This committee serves as a working to provide recommendations to the SACG.

The cache is funded by the partner agencies. Funding is specified in the Annual Addendum.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

There will be a semi-annual meeting with USFS, NPS, FWS, and State Foresters to discuss their plans for the upcoming fire season and emergency services and to update this action plan. These meetings will be held in July and November.

- Radio - Fast, effective communications is the goal of all agencies taking part in this action plan. Each unit or sub-unit is urged to purchase whenever possible, multi-channel radios to facilitate interagency communications. Interagency radio frequency use agreements are necessary for these situations. Units and sub-units should contact the communication specialist for their unit for details on agreement.

## **MOBILIZATION**

### Mobilization Guide

Mobilization of resources within and outside the Southern Area will be in accordance with the Southern Interagency Mobilization Guide as amended each fiscal year.

The Southern Area Coordination Center is located at 1200 Ashwood Parkway, Suite 230, Atlanta, GA 30338. The Center Manager from the USDA Forest Service supervises the center. Permanent staffing includes Assistant Coordinators from the National Park Service (NPS) and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

## **FUNDING**

The Southern Area Coordination Center is funded in the following manner:

- USDA Forest Service, National Forests, and State and Private Forests provide the salary and benefits for the Area Coordinator.
- USDA Forest Service provides salary, benefits, and travel of an aircraft coordinator.
- USDA Forest Service provides salary, benefits, and travel for Intelligence position.
- NPS provides the salary, benefits, and travel of an Assistant Coordinator.
- NPS provides the salary, benefits, and travel of a Fire Weather Program Manager.
- FWS provides the salary, benefits, and travel of an Assistant Coordinator.
- FWS provides the salary, benefits, and travel of a Meteorologist.
- BIA provides the salary, benefits, and travel of an Assistant Coordinator.
- Funding for utilities, communication systems, and miscellaneous supplies are provided by partner agencies as specified in the Annual Addendum. Billing for services provided under the Annual Addendum will be provided to the respective agencies for payment no later than May 15, each year.

  
Regional Forester  
Southern Region, USDA Forest Service

11/15/13  
Date

Regional Director  
Region 4, U. S. Fish and Wildlife

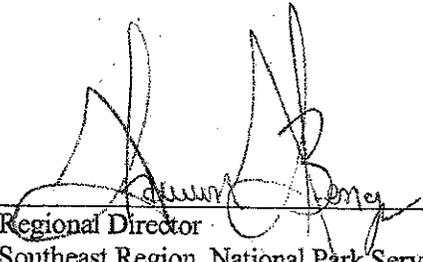
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Regional Director  
Region 5, U. S. Fish and Wildlife

Date

Regional Director  
Region 2, U. S. Fish and Wildlife

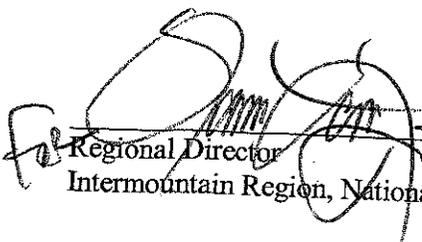
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Regional Director  
Southeast Region, National Park Service

3-25-13  
Date

Regional Director  
Northeast Region, National Park Service

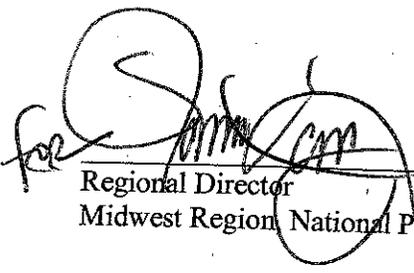
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Regional Director  
Intermountain Region, National Park Service

10/30/13  
Date

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Regional Director  
National Capital Region, National Park Service

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Date

  
Regional Director  
Midwest Region National Park Service

10/30/13  
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Regional Director  
Southern Plains Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

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Regional Director  
Eastern Oklahoma Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

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Regional Director  
Eastern Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

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Date

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Regional Forester  
Southern Region, USDA Forest Service

Date

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Regional Director  
Region 4, U. S. Fish and Wildlife

Date

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Regional Director  
Southeast Region, National Park Service

Date

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Regional Director  
Northeast Region, National Park Service

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Regional Director  
Intermountain Region, National Park Service

Date

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*Lisa A Mendelson - Telamini*  
Regional Director  
National Capital Region, National Park Service

11/27/13  
Date

Deputy

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Regional Director  
Midwest Region, National Park Service

Date

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Regional Director  
Southern Plains Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Date

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Regional Director  
Eastern Oklahoma Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

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Regional Director  
Eastern Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Date

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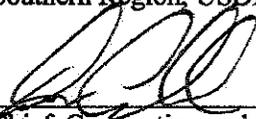
Chair  
Southern Group of State Foresters

Date

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Regional Forester  
Southern Region, USDA Forest Service

Date



12/5/13

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Chief, Contracting and Grant Services  
Region 4, U. S. Fish and Wildlife

Date

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Regional Director  
Southeast Region, National Park Service

Date

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Regional Director  
Northeast Region, National Park Service

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Regional Director  
Intermountain Region, National Park Service

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Regional Director  
National Capital Region, National Park Service

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Regional Director  
Midwest Region, National Park Service

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Regional Director  
Southern Plains Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

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Regional Director  
Eastern Oklahoma Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

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Regional Director  
Eastern Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

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Regional Director  
Intermountain Region, National Park Service

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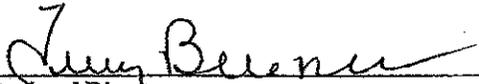
Regional Director  
National Capital Region, National Park Service

Date

Regional Director  
Midwest Region, National Park Service

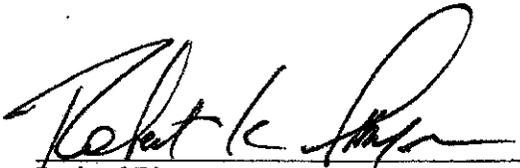
Date

ACTING

  
Regional Director  
Southern Plains Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

9-25-13

Date

  
Regional Director  
Eastern Oklahoma Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

9.25.13

Date

Acting

  
Regional Director  
Eastern Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

9/27/2013

Date