



Arizona State Forestry Division
Bureau of Indian Affairs: Southwest, Navajo, Western Regions
Bureau of Land Management: Arizona, New Mexico
National Park Service, Intermountain Region
New Mexico State Forestry Division
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
U. S. Forest Service



Date: May 21, 2012
To: Chair, Southwest Zone Coordinating Groups
Center Manager, Southwest Area 3rd Tier Dispatch Centers
From: Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group
Subject: Establishment of Southwest Area Border Fire Response Guidance

For the last several years Fire Operations along the US/Mexico Border has become increasingly complex and dangerous. A recent GAO report recommended that all agencies should develop border-specific fire response guidance.

The Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) tasked the Southwest Operations Group to collect and evaluate border operations safety information and procedures in an effort to enhance firefighter safety and situational awareness in and around the fire environment near the international border. A Border Fire Operations Task Group was established to gather information from all agencies that conduct fire management operations along the border. The task group found that there was no uniform interagency guidance among the various agencies. The exception to this is the Coronado National Forest and Tucson Dispatch Center have, over several years, developed a good set of border operations protocols that have been used when managing Forest Service fires along the US/Mexico Border.

The SWCG requests that each Zone Coordinating Group which manages fires along the U.S./Mexico Border develop interagency protocols by May 30, 2012, using the attached Border Fire Response Protocol template. The interagency protocols will help share intelligence, increase firefighter safety awareness and provide risk mitigation during fires operations on border fires.

The SWCG is dedicated to promoting safety and safety awareness of fire personnel on the ground in the constantly changing demands of the fire management along the US/Mexico Border. Having a set of protocols and sharing of intelligence to reduce risk, is critical to the safety of the firefighters engaged in fire operations along the US/Mexico Border.

Sincerely,

Leon W. Ben, Jr.

Leon W. Ben, Jr.
Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group

Attached: Border Fire Response Protocol Template