

**2019-2024 Memorandum of Understanding  
for the operation of the Southwest Coordinating Group  
among the  
USDA – Forest Service, Region 3  
and the  
USDI – Bureau of Land Management, Arizona and New Mexico  
and the  
USDI – National Park Service, Intermountain Region (MOU No.\_\_\_\_\_)  
and the  
USDI – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southwest Region  
and the  
USDI – Bureau of Indian Affairs, Western, Southwest, and Navajo Regions  
and the  
State of New Mexico – Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department  
Forestry Division (SHARE No. 20-251-2300-0033)  
and the  
State of Arizona, Forestry Division**

**I. Authorities and Authorizing Documents**

- A. Memorandum of agreement/state master agreement between the States of New Mexico and Arizona and the agencies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Interior (USDI) with wildland fire responsibilities. An extensive listing of fire authorities for the Southwest Agencies is found at the beginning of each master agreement document.
- B. Interagency Agreement for Fire Management between the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Forest Service of May, 2010.
- C. Memorandum of Understanding for the Development of a Collaborative Fuels Treatment program, USDA, USDI, and National Association of State Foresters (NASF), January 2003.

**II. Purpose and Function**

The Southwest Coordinating Group's (SWCG) purpose is to provide a forum for understanding and implementing interagency policy, direction, and coordination to the Zone Management Groups and to the Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC) for fire and incident management activities.

The SWCG's goal is to provide a cooperative interagency forum seeking consistency in fire and incident management within the Southwest Geographic Area. The SWCG seeks to enhance safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of interagency fire management activities and support to authorized non-fire emergencies.

The SWCG implements procedures and standards to coordinate fire management programs of the participating agencies to avoid duplication and to provide a framework of constructive cooperation.

The SWCG is focused on fire, incident, fuels, and smoke management activities in the Southwest Geographic Area, which includes Arizona, New Mexico, and the lands administered by the signatory agencies west of the 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian in Texas and Oklahoma.

Agency members of the SWCG shall, by signature of individual agency administrators to this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), be delegated authority to act on behalf of their respective agencies for purposes of planning, priority setting, and implementation of all current agency policies, directions, and standards for fire and incident management activities within the Southwest Area.

The SWCG representatives will communicate to individual Agency Administrators any recommendations to establish significant new policies in fire or incident management prior to implementation.

This MOU supplements the memorandum of agreement/state master agreement between the States of New Mexico and Arizona and the federal agencies, and provides management direction to the SWCG.

### **III. Membership**

Membership is limited to agencies with statewide or regional wildland fire management responsibilities. Each signatory organization shall designate one representative to serve on the SWCG. Members have full authority to speak to the issues for their respective agencies. In addition, the Southwest Coordination Center Manager functions as a permanent, non-voting member of the SWCG. Each agency retains authority for designating its individual representative, as well as for determining the length of service on the SWCG.

### **IV. Organization**

#### **A. Southwest Coordinating Group**

The SWCG shall select a chairperson and vice-chair who shall serve two year terms. The chair, or acting chair, may represent the SWCG at national, regional, and local meetings and may serve as the initial point of contact for SWCG business. SWCG may select an executive assistant, other officers, committee members or liaisons, and task or work group members to perform assigned responsibilities as needed.

**B. Zone Coordinating Groups**

The SWCG reviews, advises, and assists the zone coordinating groups on training, zone Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) group work, coordination of fire closures and restrictions, and other fire, fuels, smoke, and incident management activities.

**C. Committees and Work Groups**

The SWCG may establish committees or task groups to carry out long term or recurring work, or specific work assignments for a limited time. Committees or task groups shall submit their reports or recommendations to the SWCG for review, approval, and further action. The SWCG shall establish a charter for each committee, and provide written or verbal direction as needed for work groups. SWCG shall assign a SWCG member as a liaison to each committee or task group.

**V. Activities and Responsibilities Delegated to the Group**

**A.** The SWCG is the Geographic Area Coordinating Group (GACG) for the Southwest Area.

**B.** The SWCG functions as, or provides personnel for, the Southwest Multi-Agency Coordination (SWMAC) Group. The function of this group is to meet, enhance coordination, and provide leadership to wildland fire management during periods of high fire activity. This may include acting on behalf of members' respective agencies for the purposes of planning, setting priorities, mobilizing and positioning resources, allocating and reallocating resources, and implementing all current agency policies, directions, and standards for fire and incident management activities within the Southwest Area. The Southwest MAC Group is the authority for directing and controlling fire management resources in the Southwest to insure priority agency and Geographic Area objectives are met. The SWCG coordinates with the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) and the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) as appropriate.

**C.** The SWCG oversees and directs the Southwest Coordination Center Manager, who oversees and directs the interagency personnel on the SWCC staff. The SWCG and SWCC monitor, evaluate, and direct the performance of the interagency dispatch centers in the Southwest Geographic Area.

**D.** The SWCG maintains a formal process for sharing fire intelligence and predictive services information among agencies.

**E.** The SWCG maintains procedures for selection and management of the Southwest Area Interagency Incident Management Teams.

F. The SWCG reviews, revises, and approves various operational documents outlining Southwest procedures including the Southwest Mobilization Guide, the SWCG Handbook, the SWCC Operations Guide, the Southwest MAC Handbook, the Southwest Incident Management Team Guidelines, the Southwest Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) Operations Guide, and the Southwest Type 2 Crew Guidelines.

G. The SWCG performs other functions as assigned or directed by Agency Administrators.

## **VI. Agency Responsibilities**

Individual employees of federal and state land/fire management agencies support fire and incident management activities, as Agency Administrators direct.

Agency administrators support the development and maintenance of fire and incident management skills in their personnel. Agency administrators are responsible, through their agency directives, to develop, maintain, and make available these employees for incident management and teams.

Some agencies' participation in all-risk activities is limited by laws and authorities.

If the SWCG's activities under this MOU generate a significant legal question or issue, then each member, in his or her sole discretion, may consult with his or her agency's legal advisor on the appropriate course of action. The members then will meet and use their best efforts to develop and present a unified response to the legal question or issue.

## **VII. Finance**

The respective agencies and offices will handle their own activities and use their own resources, including the expenditure of their own funds, in pursuing the above purposes and objectives.

Nothing in this MOU shall require the parties to obligate or transfer any funds. Specific work projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, or property among the various agencies and offices will require execution of separate agreements and be contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds. Such activities must be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority.

## **VIII. Term of Agreement**

This MOU is effective for each agency upon the date of its signature. It shall remain in effect for five years from the date of that signature, or may be terminated earlier by mutual written consent of all parties. Any signatory agency may withdraw from this MOU by giving 30 days written notice to the others. Withdrawal by an agency shall not terminate this MOU or affect the participation of other agencies.

## **IX. Exclusions**

This MOU is intended to guide the internal operation of the SWCG.

This MOU shall not be construed to incur benefits to any parties not signatory hereto, except where such benefits may occur from other agreements or associations with a signatory agency.

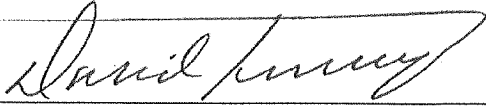
This MOU is not intended to , and does not create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person in the State of New Mexico or the State of Arizona.

## **X. Approvals**

Each signatory agency shall be provided a signatory page, which, when signed and returned to the Southwest Coordination Center Manager shall be attached to this document and become a part of this document. The Agency Administrator may designate an agency representative with approval and delegation authority on the agency signatory page, but may change that representative at his or her discretion.

I approve this Memorandum of Understanding for the operations of the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) and hereby designate and delegate the State Fire Management Officer, to act on behalf of the **State of Arizona**, Department of Forestry and Fire Management, as my representative to this group.

Date 11/12/19

Arizona State Forester   
State of Arizona, Department of Forestry and Fire Management


I approve this Memorandum of Understanding for the operations of the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) and hereby designate and delegate the Regional Fire Management Officer, to act on behalf of the **Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Region**, as my representative to this group.

Date 6-7-19

Regional Director   
Navajo Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

I approve this Memorandum of Understanding for the operations of the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) and hereby designate and delegate the Regional Fire Management Officer, to act on behalf of the **Bureau of Indian Affairs, Southwest Region**, as my representative to this group.

Date Aug. 28, 2019

Acting Regional Director   
Southwestern Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs




I approve this Memorandum of Understanding for the operations of the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) and hereby designate and delegate the Regional Fire Management Officer to act on behalf of the **Bureau of Indian Affairs, Western Region**, as my representative to this group.

Date 8/27/19

Regional Director   
Western Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs

I approve this Memorandum of Understanding for operations of the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) and hereby designate and delegate the State Fire Management Officer to act on behalf of the **Arizona State, Bureau of Land Management**, as my representative to this group.

Date 9-13-2019

State Director   
Arizona, Bureau of Land Management

I approve this Memorandum of Understanding for operations of the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) and hereby designate and delegate the State Fire Management Officer to act on behalf of the **New Mexico State, Bureau of Land Management**, as my representative to this group.

Date 8/22/2019

State Director   
New Mexico, Bureau of Land Management

I approve this Memorandum of Understanding for the operations of the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) and hereby designate and delegate the Regional Fire Management Coordinator, to act on behalf of the **U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service**, Region 2, as my representative to this group.

Date 8/28/19

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

# APPROVAL AND DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

I approve this Memorandum of Understanding for operations of the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) and hereby designate and delegate the Aviation and Fire Management Assistant Director for Fire Operations to act on behalf of the Southwestern Region, **U. S. Forest Service**, as my representative to this group.

Date 8/1/2019

for Regional Forester Elaine Kolvman  
Southwestern Region  
U. S. Forest Service

I approve this Memorandum of Understanding for the operations of the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) and hereby designate and delegate the State Fire Management Officer to act on behalf of the **State of New Mexico, Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department - Forestry Division**, as my representative to this group.

Date 8/22/19



Cabinet Secretary or Designee  
New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department

I approve this Memorandum of Understanding for operations of the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) and hereby designate and delegate the Deputy Regional Fire Management Officer, Santa Fe, to act on behalf of the **National Park Service**, Intermountain Regional Office as my representative to this group.

(MOU No. G12491900002)

Date 8/21/2019

Regional  
Director Kate H. H. P. Acting  
National Park Service, Intermountain Region