



Southwest Coordinating Group



May 21, 2004

2004 Wildland Fire Season Memorandum

Directed to: **Southwest Coordinating Group Members**

From: **Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group**

Topic/Issue **Commitment of suppression resources**

In the aftermath of the 2000 wildland fire season the then Southwest Fire Management Board was directed by the Southwest Agency Administrators to take actions that would prevent the Southwestern interagency dispatching system from not equally supporting wildland fire incidents, wildland fire use incidents, and prescribed fire incidents. A number of actions were taken as remedies: The Southwest Geographic Area Mobilization Guide (SWAMG) was rewritten to specifically include direction concerning allocation of resources for fire use and prescribed fire (SWAMG 12.6 c). The Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC) monitors and provides oversight for the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) that the intent of the policy is being followed in the Southwest dispatching system. The intent is that the dispatch centers would support the agencies in finding and ordering resources for supporting all fire incidents. It appears that there is some misunderstanding on implementation this season.

Many new players are in the Southwest since 2000 and many issues surrounding prescribed fire have changed but not the intent of the Southwest Agency Administrators. It is the position of the Southwest Coordinating Group that in Southwest Preparedness Levels 1-3 any local suppression resources may be exclusively committed through ROSS to a prescribed burn. National shared resources such as Type 1 crews, Type 1 Helicopters, Large fire support Type 2 Helicopters, and Smokejumpers may be exclusively committed but will be closely monitored by the SWCC Director to ensure that we maintain our national obligations and commitments. Once the suppression resource is shown as committed to an incident then it is not available for other assignments until released. Carefully consider initial attack aircraft in a prescribed burn plan as a contingency or holding resource due to the priority of initial attack for these aircraft. Any exclusive commitment of national suppression resources for longer than seven days to a prescribed burn at SW preparedness level 2 and above needs to be approved by the SWCC Director after consulting with the SWCG and the National Coordination Center Director.

It is the intent of the SWCG to be as responsive to the needs of the agencies to meet critical hazardous fuel treatment targets by providing adequate holding forces to prevent unintended resource loss or damage. This has to be carefully balanced with local, area, and national suppression force needs as fire danger increases. As always we will strive to err on the side of good judgement and common sense.

/s/ William C. Waterbury

William C. Waterbury, 2004-2005 Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group