

Department of the Interior and USDA Forest Service

National Fire/Air Issues Coordination Group

I. BACKGROUND

The Fire/Air Issues Coordination Group (Group) is established under the guidance and direction of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council. The Group is to provide leadership and coordination in uniting both Departments' air resource and fire management programs under the common purpose of meeting the goals of the National Fire Plan, while both aiding in the development of and compliance with appropriate federal, state and Tribal air quality policy, standards and regulations.

The Department of the Interior's Departmental Manual, 620 Chapter 1, Wildland Fire Management, Section 1.5C requires the Department to: "Develop fire management plans, programs, and activities which are based on a foundation of sound science; that incorporate public health and environmental quality considerations; and support bureau land, natural, and cultural resource management goals and objectives."

The Department of Agriculture, Manual DM-5600-001, Chapter II.14 states, "It is USDA policy that agencies shall comply with all Federal, State, interstate and local requirements, administrative authorities and processes and sanctions regarding the control and abatement of air pollution from any activities or activities under their jurisdiction."

This Group is established to assist in coordinating, supporting, and promoting efforts of the fire and air quality programs of both Departments.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Group is to assist in the coordination and development of effective and efficient agency programs, and to address fire/air issues that may arise when implementing the National Fire Plan and meeting natural resource objectives.

The Group will:

- Provide coordination and collaboration between the fire and air resource programs on fire-related air quality issues.
- Facilitate a framework for collaborative approaches in addressing fire and air issues at the local, state, Tribal, and national level.
- Establish consistent and cost-effective air quality planning, documentation, and emission reporting processes in implementing the National Fire Plan.

III. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Fire/Air Issues Coordination Group are as follows:

- Establish and maintain national priorities in supporting the fire and air resource management programs relative to fire related air quality issues.
- Coordinate with the National Association of State Foresters on air quality issues related to fuels treatments or other fire management activities, consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.
- Coordinate with State and Tribal Air Quality Regulators and State Foresters on air quality issues for fuels treatment projects on State specific issues.
- Coordinate with the Environmental Protection Agency in their development of standards, regulations, policy and guidance that relate to air quality impacts of wildland fire including fuel treatments.
- Coordinate with State and Tribal Air Quality Regulators and State Foresters on air quality issues for fuels treatment projects on State specific issues
- Coordinate with and provide leadership to the five Regional Planning Organizations that have been established to implement national Regional Haze Regulations.
- Coordinate with the USDA Forest Service and Department of the Interior- sponsored Joint Fire Sciences Research Program, Fire Research Coordination Council, USDA Forest Service and U.S. Geological Survey fire science research and any other research efforts in developing and implementing research proposals and demonstration projects that address fire-related air quality issues.
- Identify air quality research and information needs related to wildland fire and provide recommendations to appropriate scientific organizations.
- Review and make recommendations for developing consistent bureau and agency policies that address fire-related air quality issues.
- Provide consistent guidance on addressing air quality issues in programmatic plans, fire management plans, and other management plans.
- Determine and make recommendations of appropriate skills and training levels required to appropriately address fire-related air quality issues.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

For the Department of the Interior, primary members will include a representative of the Department's Office of Wildland Fire Coordination and one Fire or Resource Management Specialist or scientist from each of the following: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey. For the USDA Forest Service, primary members will include one Fire or Resource Management Specialist from each of the following staffs: National Forest Systems, State and Private Forestry, and Research. The members shall represent a mix of fire/fuels experts and air experts. The members will elect a chairperson and elect an executive secretary to coordinate and carry out the activities of the Group.

Additional specialists and scientists will be included on an *ad hoc* basis as specific needs or issues arise. Advisory members can include the Interior Department's Director, Office of Wildland Fire Coordination, the USDA Forest Service National Fire Plan Coordinator, the Fire Research Coordination Council chairperson and others as identified by the Group.

V. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chairperson. The responsibilities of the Chairperson are to:

- Maintain communication and coordination with the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, National Wildfire Coordinating Group Working teams, and Fire Research Coordination Council.
- Set the dates and establish the agenda for meetings and conference calls.
- Establish workgroups for specific tasks. Establish purpose of the task, work to be accomplished, participants and date for completion.
- Approve minutes within five days following a meeting.
- Provide briefings for the Secretaries' Immediate Staffs and other senior leadership as requested.

Executive Secretary. The responsibilities of the Executive Secretary are to:

- Solicit input and prepare meeting agenda items.
- Provide agenda and advanced study materials to members.
- Record and track action items and accomplishments.
- Prepare minutes for Chairperson approval and distribute upon approval.

Bureau and Agency Representatives. The responsibilities of the Department of the Interior Bureau agencies, and the USDA Agency representatives are to:

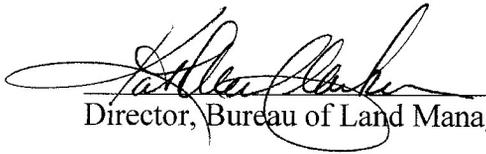
- Represent their respective Bureau or Agencies in the identification, discussion, development, and implementation of fire-related air issues and their resolution.
- Submit agenda items and review advanced study materials prior to meetings and conference calls.
- Participate in all conference calls and meetings, or ensure that adequate backup representatives are available and sufficiently informed to represent the Bureau or Agency.
- Participate on task groups as necessary.
- Communicate issues and their resolution to appropriate Bureau or Agency managers and specialists for information and concurrence.
- Coordinate on development of standards, regulations, policy, and guidance that relate to air quality impacts of wildland fire, including fuels treatments.

VI. APPROVAL

This Group is effective on the date of approval by the undersigned representative. The Group may be revised upon the recommendation of the majority of the members with concurrence of the approving officials. The Group will continue to function until such time it is no longer needed and will be terminated through a decision of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council.


Chair, Wildland Fire Leadership Council
Chief, U.S. Forest Service, USDA

6/20/03
Date


Director, Bureau of Land Management, DOI

6/20/03
Date


Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, DOI

6/20/03
Date


Director, National Park Service, DOI

6/20/03
Date


Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs, DOI

6/20/03
Date