

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

R-6

OR/WA

Bureau of Land
Management

United States
Department of
the Interior

Reply Refer To: 5100 (FS) / 1292/9210 (BLM) (OR-934) P

Date: October 27, 2006

FS-Memorandum

EMS TRANSMISSION 10/31/2006

BLM-Instruction Memorandum No. OR-2007-005

Expires: 09/30/2008

To: Bureau of Land Management District Managers and Forest Service Forest Supervisors

Subject: Interagency Radio Backbone System

DD: 12/08/2006

Program Area: Radio Communications.

Purpose: Under Service First direction, an Interagency Radio Backbone Strategy has been developed. The fundamental goal of this strategy is to improve radio coverage in the Pacific Northwest. This strategy was transmitted to the Districts and Forests under Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Instruction Memorandum No. OR-2006-043. This directive covers field verification for the Pacific Northwest radio coverage analysis portion of the strategy.

Policy/Action: Field verification is outlined as an action item under the Radio Backbone Strategy (2006). Special software was used to develop maps showing predicted handheld radio coverage for Oregon and Washington. Once verified, these products will allow the team to correct the analysis software (if needed) and implement a complete interagency radio strategy.

The due date for the validation is December 8, 2006. Each District/Forest will need to validate the initial coverage maps based on initial attack dispatch boundaries. This validation includes:

- Validation of any areas identified on the map showing no coverage.
- Drawing on the map any areas you know do not have coverage, but are not shown on the map.
- For those areas that do NOT have coverage, describing how critical it is to provide full-time coverage to the area.

Process for responding to this directive:

1. Download the Adobe Acrobat pdf map for your area. A predicted radio coverage map has been developed for each dispatch office. You will find these maps at this site: ftp://199.134.225.65/Incident_Specific_Data/PACIFIC_NW/2006_NWCC_INFO/Radio_Survey/
2. Click on this link and find the dispatch office(s) in which you are interested; then 'drag' that file to a folder on your computer.
3. Plot this map using a large scale plotter.

4. The colored areas (brown) on the map indicate where no coverage is available, based on the analysis software.
5. Ground truth as many of these 'no coverage' sites as possible. If the area **does** have coverage, draw a bold 'X' through the area. If the area **does not** have coverage, do nothing on the map.
6. Based on local knowledge or additional ground validation, draw in areas where radio coverage is not available if they are not indicated on the map.
7. For those areas not having coverage in steps 5 and 6 above, indicate the relative importance of setting up permanent radio coverage. Use the following scale:
 - a. **N** – Not important. Satellite phones or a temporary repeater will be used instead.
 - b. **S** – Somewhat important.
 - c. **C** – Critical that full-time radio coverage be established.
 - d. **O** – Other dispatch unit radio tower, with different frequency, is providing coverage.
8. Send the completed maps back to:

Dale Guenther
Forest Service Region 6
Fire and Aviation Management
PO Box 3623
Portland, OR 97208

Timeframe: The due date for requested information is December 8, 2006.

Budget Impact: Budget impact is minimal. There may be some costs to field units in relocation and installation of mountaintop repeaters.

Background: Last December, a meeting was held in the State Office/Regional Office to address several issues dealing with radio communications in south-central Oregon. An outcome of this meeting was the creation of two groups to address the issues needing resolution. The first group was a tactical team tasked with addressing specific issues for south-central Oregon. The second group was tasked with developing a strategic plan which would enable implementation of a single radio system to serve both the BLM and the Forest Service in Oregon and Washington. This group completed the Interagency Radio Backbone System Strategic Plan.

This plan identifies the need to complete an Oregon/Washington radio coverage map to enable us to determine the adequacy of current coverage, and then to determine any needed improvements in coverage. Each District and Forest should plan on making personnel available to accomplish this task.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: None.

Coordination: The team involved in development of the strategy included representatives from Fire and Aviation Management, BLM Information Resources Management, the Forest Service Information Solutions Organization, BLM National Radio Telecommunications, Forest Service National Radio Telecommunications, and Fremont/Winema/Lakeview Interagency Unit management.

Contact: For policy or management guidance related to the Radio Backbone Strategy, contact Carl Gossard, Chief, Branch of Fire and Aviation Management, (503) 808-6461. For technical questions regarding this directive, contact Dale Guenther, Information Technical Specialist, State Office/Regional Office, (503) 808-2188. For radio support and strategy information, contact Thuy Ta, BLM Radio Program Manager, (503) 808-6269.

/s/ Kathy J. Eaton (for)
ELAINE M. BRONG
State Director, OR/WA
USDI Bureau of Land Management

/s/ Liz Agpaoa (for)
LINDA GOODMAN
Regional Forester, Region 6
USDA Forest Service

Authenticated by
Mary O'Leary
Management Assistant

1 Attachment(s)

1 - [Interagency Radio Backbone System Strategic Plan](#) (6 pp)

BLM Distribution
WO-(FA-100)
OR-934 (Carl Gossard)
OR-955 (Thuy Ta)

cc:
WO-Fire and Aviation
Dale Guenther, FS R6