WASHINGTON

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

To: Regional Foresters, USDA Forest Service
Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Director, National Park Service
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

From: Kim Thorsen
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Subject: Fiscal Year 2013 Fire Program Analysis Status, Direction, and Timeline

Last month we met with the Fire Program Analysis (FPA) Oversight Group to discuss the status, capabilities, and next steps of FPA. At that meeting we agreed on four basic points:

- In the near future we will migrate the management and oversight of FPA into the new interagency wildland fire management framework, which will clarify the relationships between the technical project team, agency users (national level budget and planning staffs), and oversight of all wildland fire information technology investment activities.
- FPA is a set of analytical tools that are used to help develop and defend the wildland fire preparedness budgets of the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior at the national level. Within the capabilities and limitations of FPA we will use it to assist both agencies in jointly developing budgets. In its current state FPA is not suitable for field-level use.
- Continued research will occur into new tools and capabilities to improve the functionality of FPA and make the system easier to use. Investment decisions for any new tools or capabilities, once the research phase is completed in the summer of 2013, will take place through the interagency wildland fire investment process.
- The current set of FPA tools and capabilities will be refined and stabilized, including developing and refining data standards that will allow cross-jurisdictional comparisons and analyses.

During Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) we will undertake a number of activities to refine and improve the FPA tools in support of wildland fire budget analysis and decision making:

- The Support Working Team (SWT) will update and process all required information with assistance from the Fire Planning Units (FPUs). The SWT representative responsible for

each FPU will calibrate the application, verify and update fuels treatments with concurrence from the local FPU team, and assure that accurate information is submitted. While the SWT will be working to assure minimal impact to the field, some updates will require local team involvement.

- Improve data standards and requirements to allow cross-agency and functional comparisons and analyses. A high priority is to standardize resource cost definitions, such as the standard cost of a operating an engine. This will be completed by the Interagency Analysis Team (IAT) and other selected individuals from across the wildland fire community.

Earlier this year the FPA Oversight Group (OG) decided to transition from an annual to a 2-5 year analysis cycle to evaluate tradeoffs. "Off years" will be used to assess system functionality and complete a more thorough analysis on previous submissions as part of ongoing efforts to stabilize and refine the current capabilities of FPA. The FY11 analysis cycle will stand as the most recent complete analysis.

Once associated updates and analyses are completed, FPU outputs will be assessed for reasonableness and accuracy at the national level by the IAT, national level budget and planning staffs, and the technical project team, as appropriate. Any findings and recommendations will be communicated to the field via the appropriate Bureau/Agency and U.S. Forest Service representative.

Currently the SWT and IAT noted five areas of improvement for 2013.

Calibration *- the SWT will calibrate any FPUs that are no longer calibrated to historic fire distribution because of changes made to the FPA application or the Fire Planning Unit (including: FPU/FWA boundaries, WUI data, fire behavior fuel model, and ignitions).*

Anomalies- *the SWT will review those FPUs not responding as expected in performance measure trends and determine whether changes are required.*

Fuels Options *- FPU fuels treatments will be developed for the current fuels option based on 2009 funding. The Plus 20 and Minus 20 fuels options will be developed by starting with the current fuels treatments, then adding to or subtracting acres from the current fuels option.*

Non-budgeted resources *– non-budgeted resources will be included in the current preparedness option based on 2009 funding. Non-budgeted resources in the Plus 20 and Minus 20 preparedness options will be held constant at the level in the current preparedness option. There should be no changes to non-budgeted resources in either the Plus or Minus preparedness options.*

Prevention Program *– the prevention program will be developed for the current preparedness option based on 2009 funding. The prevention program in the Plus 20 and Minus 20 preparedness options will be held constant at the level of the current preparedness option. There should be no changes to the prevention program in either the Plus or Minus preparedness options.*

The timeline for this work is:

- **February 1, 2013**: SWT submits results of FPA runs for all 133 FPUs;
- **March 15, 2013**: IAT and national level budget and planning staffs complete a thorough analysis on submissions, and document the analysis conclusions and recommendations;
- **March 30, 2013**: 2013 FPU analyses' submissions and data in the FPA system are archived.
- **Summer 2013**: The IAT, and national level budget and planning staffs, will present their conclusions and recommendations.

We are committed to the continued improvement of the tools and capabilities that FPA provides to support wildland fire budget analysis. We will continue to work with you and your staffs to provide the best possible tools to help us make wise and informed budget decisions.