

Colorado

2010 Wildfire Preparedness Plan

Recommendation to the Governor

Authorization: Colorado Revised Statute 23-31-309

The wildfire preparedness plan recommendations developed pursuant to paragraph (a) of this subsection (3) shall be completed no later than December 1, 2006, and updated each December 1 thereafter.

The State Forester, a representative of the County Sheriffs of Colorado, a representative of the Colorado State Fire Chiefs' Association, the Director of the Division of Emergency Management, and the Adjutant General or his or her designee shall collaborate to develop a wildfire preparedness plan designed to address the following:

(I) The amount of aerial firefighting resources necessary for the state of Colorado at times of high and low wildfire risk;

(II) The availability of appropriate aerial firefighting equipment and personnel at times of high fire risk to respond to a wildfire;

(III) The availability of state wildfire engines and staffing of the engines at different levels of wildfire risk;

(IV) The availability of state inmate wildfire hand crews at different levels of wildfire risk; and

(V) A process for ordering and dispatching aerial firefighting equipment and personnel that is consistent with, and supportive of, the statewide mobilization plan prepared pursuant to section 24-33.5-1210, C.R.S.

There is hereby created in the state treasury the wildfire preparedness fund. The fund shall consist of all moneys that may be appropriated thereto by the general assembly, all private and public moneys received through gifts, grants, reimbursements, or donations that are transmitted to the state treasurer and credited to the fund, and all moneys transferred to the fund pursuant to section 34-63-102 (5) (a) (I), C.R.S. All interest earned from the investment of moneys in the fund shall be credited to the fund. The moneys in the fund are hereby continuously appropriated for the purposes indicated in this subsection (4). Any moneys not expended at the end of the fiscal year shall remain in the fund and shall not be transferred to or revert to the general fund.

By executive order or proclamation, the governor may access and designate moneys in the wildfire preparedness fund for wildfire preparedness activities. The Colorado State Forest Service shall implement the directives set forth in such executive order or proclamation.

SITUATION

Wildfires occur as unscheduled emergency events in wildland fuels (prairie or forest vegetation) and also in fuels that include a combination of wildland and man introduced fuels (houses and improvements). Wildfires involve or threaten human life, residential housing, other improvements, and natural resources. Due to natural fuels build-up and increased population in wildland urban interface areas, wildfires that exceed the control efforts of local and county resources are becoming more common and more complex. Wildland firefighting in Colorado is interagency in nature involving state, county, local, federal, and tribal partners. Colorado State Forest Service is lead state agency for wildland fire as identified in ESF 4a, Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan.

PREPAREDNESS PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

Wildfires which exceed the capabilities of local and county resources will occur.

Wildfires will threaten lives, property, and natural resources.

Successful suppression and extinguishment of catastrophic wildfires will require organized interagency cooperation at all levels of government.

Having state wildfire resources identified, staffed, and positioned to respond will prevent some wildfires from becoming large catastrophic events and will assist in the containment and suppression of those wildfires that do escape initial attack.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Ordering and tracking of resources is accomplished through six (6) Interagency Dispatch Centers and one (1) Interagency Regional Coordination Center.

Agreements are in place that provide access to resources throughout the nation.

Initial Attack Responsibility rests with local fire departments, counties, and federal land management agencies.

I. The amount of aerial firefighting resources necessary for the state of Colorado at times of high and low wildfire risk.

High Wildfire Risk: (Defined by a combination of indicators that include: Energy Release Component Charts; Fire Danger Rating System; Drought Indexes; Zone Dispatch Planning Levels of 3 or above; Regional Planning Levels of 3 or above; number of fire starts; predicted fire weather).

Single Engine Air Tankers (SEAT)

- 2 SEATs (Air Tractor (AT) 802's) under exclusive use contract for a minimum of 120 days each. Contract allows for flexible start and end dates and for extension of assignment periods beyond 120 days.
- 1 SEAT (Air Tractor (AT) 802) under exclusive use contract for 120 days. Contract allows for flexible start and end dates and for extension of assignment periods beyond 120 days.

National Guard: Helicopters: (contingent upon national commitment).

- Up to 2 CH-47's (Type 1 asset) with bucket capability.
- Up to 4 UH-60's (Type 2 asset) with bucket capability.
- Up to 4 UH-1's (Type 3 asset) with bucket capability.

Call When Needed Aircraft (CWN): under federal or state contract.

- Additional SEATs (402's to 802's or equivalent) as fire activity warrants.
- Helicopters (Type 1, 2, and 3) as fire activity warrants.

Low Wildfire Risk: (Defined by a combination of indicators that include: Energy Release Component Charts; Fire Danger Rating System; Drought Indexes; Zone Dispatch Planning Levels of 1 or 2; Regional Planning Levels of 1 or 2; number of fire starts; predicted fire weather).

1 SEAT (Air Tractor (AT) 802) under exclusive use contract. Contract allows for flexible start and end dates and for extension of assignment periods beyond 120 days.

Call When Needed Aircraft (CWN) as fire activity warrants.

II. The availability of appropriate aerial firefighting equipment and personnel at times of high fire risk to respond to a wildfire.

All SEATs first report to Fort Collins/Loveland for orientation. Management of SEATs is under direct supervision of CSFS. They are then pre-positioned as wildfire activity warrants, coordinated through interagency dispatch centers.

Contracts will allow for 7 day/week availability following interagency guidelines for work/rest, relief pilots, and flight restrictions.

Ground support personnel for exclusive use state SEATs are hired on as CSFS seasonal personnel to coincide with SEAT contract periods.

Ground support personnel for CWN aircraft, both SEAT and Helicopters, will be ordered when the aircraft are ordered.

Administrative support will be CSFS hourly hire to coincide with high fire risk/high fire activity times.

Aerial logistical support needs including contracts with airports, water sources, retardant mixing plants, loading equipment, operating facilities, will be coordinated and managed by CSFS.

III. The availability of state wildfire engines and staffing of the engines at different levels of wildfire risk.

Support for the Fuels Mitigation and Prescribe Fire Manager will continue. This position provides program direction and coordination for the state wildfire engines and fuels mitigation work.

High Wildfire Risk: (Defined by a combination of indicators that include: Energy Release Component Charts; Fire Danger Rating System; Drought Indexes; Zone Dispatch Planning Levels of 3 or above; Regional Planning Levels of 3 or above; number of fire starts; predicted fire weather).

13 Wildland Engines are available as single resources or strike teams for in state assignments. The engines are pre-positioned at CSFS Districts or Fire Departments. Engines are staffed by crews of 3. 4 Engines will be crewed by permanent state classified personnel meeting National Wildfire Coordinating Group qualifications for the position they are filling. Other engines will be crewed by CSFS foresters, seasonal hires, cooperators meeting National Wildfire Coordinating Group qualifications for the position they are filling, or federal partners. Ordering is through interagency dispatch zone protocol. Additional permanent engine staffing may be implemented as conditions warrant.

Low Wildfire Risk: (Defined by a combination of indicators that include: Energy Release Component Charts; Fire Danger Rating System; Drought Indexes; Zone Dispatch Planning Levels of 1 or 2; Regional Planning Levels of 1 or 2; number of fire starts; predicted fire weather).

10 Wildland Engines are available as single resources or strike teams for in state assignments. The engines are pre-positioned at CSFS Districts or Fire Departments. Engines are staffed by crews of 3. 4 Engines will be crewed by permanent state classified personnel meeting National Wildfire Coordinating Group qualifications for the position they are filling. Other engines will be crewed by seasonal hires or cooperators meeting National Wildfire Coordinating Group qualifications for the position they are filling. Ordering is through interagency dispatch zone protocol. Engines/crews are available for fuels mitigation, prevention work, and regional and national assignments.

IV. The availability of state inmate wildfire hand crews at different levels of wildfire risk.

High Wildfire Risk: (Defined by a combination of indicators that include: Energy Release Component Charts; Fire Danger Rating System; Drought Indexes; Zone Dispatch Planning Levels of 3 or above; Regional Planning Levels of 3 or above; number of fire starts; predicted fire weather).

Inmate Crews: Inmate Crews are positioned at Canon City, Rifle, and Buena Vista facilities. Crews are self contained, fully trained and qualified to meet NWCG standards, supervised with fully qualified supervisory personnel, fully equipped with wildland personal protective gear, with dedicated transportation.

Low Wildfire Risk: (Defined by a combination of indicators that include: Energy Release Component Charts; Fire Danger Rating System; Drought Indexes; Zone Dispatch Planning Levels of 1 or 2; Regional Planning Levels of 1 or 2; number of fire starts; predicted fire weather).

Inmate crews are available for suppression and fuels mitigation work within the state.

Inmate crews are available (when necessary legal authorities exist) to respond to wildfire suppression request in adjoining states.

Consideration in investment in training and equipping one additional Colorado Department of Corrections Crew in 2010 with likely placement at the Delta Facility that will increase capacity of state crews.

V. A process for ordering and dispatching aerial firefighting equipment and personnel that is consistent with, and supportive of, the statewide mobilization plan prepared pursuant to section 24-33.5-1210, C.R.S.

Primary ordering, dispatching, and tracking of assigned wildfire resources is by existing protocol through the six interagency dispatch centers located in Fort Collins, Pueblo, Durango, Montrose, Grand Junction, and Craig; and through the Rocky Mountain Area Coordination Center in Lakewood. Wildfire resources are listed using the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS). The statewide mobilization plan recognizes and supports the current wildland dispatching system.

Secondary ordering of state resources may occur state to state through the Emergency Management Assistance Compacts or regional Fire Compacts with communication back through the interagency fire dispatch system.

Support of the Interagency Air Center at Rifle will increase efficiencies in response by state resources.

Support for current 4 Fire Management Officers will continue with potential to increase support as conditions warrant.

2 Fire Management Officers are positioned on the Front Range and 2 on the Western Slope to coordinate fire management activities including assistance to fire departments and counties, especially in the area of availability in the ROSS system, qualifications, red-carding, and training.

The 6 Interagency Dispatch Centers and the regional coordination center will be supported with operational funding and or seasonal support staff to assist in dispatching of state and local resources.

Colorado National Guard assistance begins with a request by the incident commander and determination by the Regional Interagency Coordination Center that requested resources are either; 1. not available through normal dispatch channels; or 2. there is imminent threat to life. When these conditions are met, RMACC will make the request by calling DEM on the state emergency line at 303-279-8855. The request should identify the capability required, estimated mission duration and incident command coordinating point of contact information. DEM will validate requests for assistance and, if appropriate, obtain the Governor's approval for activation of CONG assets. DEM will then mission assign CONG assets to support the incident commander. The mission assignment will identify the specific CONG tasks, mission duration, authorized force allowances and funding limits. CONG forces will then contact the incident command point of contact and begin support coordination actions.

2010 Preparedness

Planned Budget (see table below)

Air Resources (includes exclusive use contracts, encumbered contingency accounts, state personnel and equipment to manage the resources)
3 Single Engine Air Tankers Primary Season
1 Single Engine Air Tanker Secondary Season
Call When Needed Contingency for additional SEATs or Helicopters
National Guard Air Resource
Maintenance and support of SEAT bases in Colorado
Interagency coordination of air resources
Admin Support

State Engines (includes personnel, upgrades, and operating expense)

4 state permanent staffed engines
3 state seasonal staffed engines
6 state engines with cooperator staffing
2 lowboy transport trailers maintenance
Fire Equipment Shop support for equipment maintenance and repair.
Replacement and/or upgrade of state engines

State Inmate Crews (includes training, equipping, mitigation projects)

- 3 Juniper Valley Crews - existing
- 1 Juniper Valley Crew – pending DOC review
- Supervision - backup supervision
- Fuel Hazard Reduction Projects

Preparedness Management

- Fuels Mitigation and Prescribed Fire Manager
- Northern Front Range FMO (Fort Collins Dispatch Area)
- Southern Front Range FMO (Pueblo Dispatch Area)
- Southwest FMO (Durango and Montrose Dispatch Areas)
- Northwest FMO (Grand Junction and Craig Dispatch Areas)
- Seasonal Dispatch support for Pueblo and Fort Collins Zones and Rocky Mountain Regional Coordination Center. Operational Support for Pueblo, Fort Collins, Craig, Montrose, Grand Junction, and Durango Zone Dispatch Centers.
- EFF Agreements Updated and Assessments Received
- County Agreements Reviewed
- Annual Operating Plans Completed
- Federal/State Interagency Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement Reviewed and Updated
- FEMA/State Agreement and Administrative Plan Updated and Executed

Preparedness Services

- Satellite Phone Service and Maintenance
- High Band and 800 Mhz Radios Service and Maintenance
- Personal Protective Gear/Fire Shelter Program for Fire Departments
- Equipment Support for Regional Incident Management Teams
- RMCG Operations Committee Team Management Software
- Prescribed Fire Equipment and Training for fuels mitigation purposes
- Fuels Mitigation Equipment

Carry-Over Funds

The Preparedness Fund will be managed to conserve state resources while providing resources to respond to wildfires. Part of the management strategy is to carry over funds where possible for use during future high activity fire years and to provide consistency between state fiscal years and wildfire calendar years. Carry over funds provide the capacity to contract and/or wildfire resources during the time between legislative sessions, the beginning of the state fiscal year, and the actual transferring of funds from the state treasury. Essentially, the capacity and flexibility afforded by carry over allows for the continuity and consistency of the program.

	Resource	Cost (Expense)	Anticipated Funding	Running Totals
2008/2009			2,500,000 Carry forward	2,500,000
2009/2010 Appropriation			3,250,000	3,250,000
Air Resources	3 SEATs, Primary	1,956,000		3,794,000
	1 SEAT, Secondary	200,000		3,594,000
	CWN contingency	100,000		3,494,000
	NG contingency	200,000		3,294,000
	Admin Support	60,000		3,234,000
State Engines	15 Engines	1,005,000		2,229,000
Inmate Crews	Crew Support	200,000		2,029,000
Management	Managers	679,000		1,350,000
Services	Equipment	150,000		1,200,000
	Carry Forward to 2010/2011	1,200,000		0

Budget Considerations

- Budget Estimates are based on last years budgets, actual expense, and maximum implementation.
- Air Resources include exclusive use contracts, call when needed contracts, Colorado National Guard.
- Hand Crew costs include training, equipping, hazard fuel mitigation projects, supplemental supervision, logistical support.
- National Guard costs include activation costs, mission training, and equipment.
- Preparedness Management and Services are in support of state preparedness resources and support services to counties and fire departments.
- Fire activity will influence actual expense and may necessitate adjustments during the year.
- The Preparedness Fund Appropriation will be a topic of review and consideration of continuation during the 2011 Legislative Session.

VI. Recommendation

1. Accept this plan as guidance to the Colorado State Forest Service for implementation in preparation for 2010 wildfire activity.
2. By executive order or proclamation, access and designate moneys in the amount of \$3.25 million appropriated for state fiscal year 2010/2011 and carry forward moneys from the 20099/2010 state fiscal year that currently are held in the wildfire preparedness fund for wildfire preparedness activities as outlined in the 2010 Wildfire Preparedness Plan.