United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

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2400

March 4, 2013

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors
Attention: Superintendents

From: Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection **/s/ Cameron H. Sholly**

Subject: Fiscal Year 2013 Wildland Fire Severity Program Oversight

Parks should consider requesting severity funding to augment initial attack, detection and prevention capacity when any combination of environmental factors leads to a long-term event (greater than seven days) of above normal risk and fire potential for a particular area at a given time of year. When a park encounters extreme conditions for extended periods outside of the "normal fire season," a severity funding request should be prepared, including a description of the emergency preparedness actions to be taken. The regional and/or national office will evaluate the requested resources with regard to all contributing factors, including drought and burning indices, live and dead fuel moistures, ignition potential, and staffing levels at the park unit and cooperators.

The Department of the Interior (DOI) imposed a cap on severity authorizations in FY07 due to their steady and significant increase over the previous six years. In FY13, the National Park Service (NPS) severity authorization is capped at $4,038,000. The following oversight guidelines apply:

- Fire severity funding is not intended to raise preparedness funding levels to cover differences that may exist between funds actually appropriated (including rescissions) and those identified in the fire planning process.
- Regional Directors may approve severity requests for individual NPS units up to $100,000 per individual or cumulative event.
- The National Branch Chief, Wildland Fire, will approve individual or cumulative requests over $100,000 for NPS units, including severity requests that cross fiscal years.
- Severity authorizations expire after 30 days. Additional requests may be submitted if severity conditions persist. These severity extensions will be considered to be part of the original event.

- Requests must comply with the general requirements in RM-18 and the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book), unless superseded by this directive.
- NPS resources used to fill a Forest Service severity order will be outside the NPS authorization cap.
- When conditions that triggered the severity event subside, and severity resources are no longer needed, the resources should be released and demobilized as soon as reasonably possible.

Severity expenditures are subject to audit to ensure that severity resources remain available to augment local resources and that the type and duration of resources generally match the authorized severity plan and severity conditions. Resources and supplies ordered under severity authorization must be documented using the established incident resource ordering process. Even when authorized for a particular unit and time period, severity funding should only be used and charged to the severity account while resources are completing severity-related work. Severity events are to be tracked using a Work Breakdown Structure that includes the FireCode and is mapped to the severity functional area, fund 13XP112585, and unit's cost center.

Within two days of a region approving a severity request, the regional office will provide copies of the approval, request, and any supporting documentation, to the Wildland Fire Operations Program Lead and Wildland Fire Program Planning Lead. Within two weeks after the severity period ends, the region will provide the Fire Budget Analyst with an estimate of the authorization amount necessary to cover obligations so that any projected excess authorization may be rescinded and redirected as needed. All requests and documentation should be uploaded to the shared FY13 NPS Wildland Fire Severity Google Drive, with notification to the Operations and Program Planning Leads.

DOI Fire Directors will re-negotiate bureau specific authorization caps within the DOI cap as needed. In circumstances of extraordinary fire potential, the bureaus will work with the Office of Wildland Fire and request an increase in the DOI severity cap.

Additional guidance may be found at: http://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol_severity_funding.html, including the required NPS Severity Cost Estimator. Questions may be directed to the National Wildland Fire Operations Program Lead, Mark Koontz, at 208-387-5090; Wildland Fire Program Planning Lead, Jeff Scott, at 208-387-5210; or Fire Budget Analyst, Jessica Bowron, at 208-387-5296.

cc: Deputy Regional Directors
Associate Regional Directors, Operations
Fire Management Program Center Leadership
Regional Chief Rangers