



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO
2400

MAR 05 2014

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors
(Attention: Regional Fire Management Officers)

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

Subject: Fiscal Year 2014 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) with above normal risk and fire potential for a particular area. 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 FY2007 due to their steady and significant increase over the previous seven years. In FY2014, 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 Branch Chief, Wildland Fire, will approve individual or cumulative requests over \$100,000 for individual NPS units.
- Ongoing severity requests that cross fiscal years with an individual or cumulative total over \$100,000 require approval from the Branch Chief, Wildland Fire.
- Severity authorizations expire after 30 days. Extension requests may be submitted if severity conditions persist. The extension request should be received at the national office a minimum of five business days prior to the 30 day expiration. 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 Fire Code and is mapped to the severity functional area, fund 14XP112585, 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 FY 2014 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](#) is available including the required NPS Severity Cost Estimator. Questions may be directed to the Acting National Wildland Fire Operations Program Lead, Chad Fisher, at 208-387-5967; Wildland Fire Program Planning Lead, Jeff Scott, at 208-387-5210; or Management Analyst, Mike Van Hemelryck at 208-387-5206.

cc: Chief, Fire and Aviation Management