



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Division of Fire & Aviation

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Briefing Paper

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Issue: Wildland Fire Management Workforce

Discussion: In response to reductions in the federal fire budget, the NPS is going to have to reduce the size of the permanent fire management workforce. Additionally, the cost of suppressing wildfires has steadily increased, reducing the amount of the federal budget allocation left to fund base fire programs.

Congress and OMB have questioned whether fuels management funding has been used effectively to reduce fire suppression costs. The Department of Interior is requiring all the bureaus to devote more hazardous fuels funding to project implementation and less to staffing. The bureaus must limit base salaries and fixed costs to 50 percent of funding provided. The remaining half is to be used for projects, and will be identified and prioritized through a yearly department-wide call.

National Situation:

- Budget projections indicate that the NPS must reduce funding for preparedness staffing 16% by 2015. This could impact as many as 73 NPS positions nationwide.
- The NPS must also reduce hazardous fuels staffing 23% by 2015. This could impact another 45 NPS positions.

The Fire Management Leadership Board (FMLB) includes the regional fire management officers and members of the Branch of Wildland Fire. The FMLB chartered a technical team to develop a fire workload analysis to replace FIREPRO and help guide the downsizing of the fire program at the national, regional and park levels. The Planning Data System (PDS) analysis identifies park programs with fire occurrence and fuels management workload below thresholds justifying staffing. Final PDS results are expected by the end of September, 2012.

The FMLB will seek to implement an approval process that evaluates all requests to hire fire and fuels funded permanent or subject to furlough positions. The process will be informed by PDS results.

Regional Efforts:

The PWR fire staff met with the park FMOs in March to develop target organizations to meet projected FY13 cuts. The Regional fire management staff is drafting a list of surplus positions based on the PDS outputs designed to meet FY14 and FY15 cuts. This list should be ready for review in September.

* 23%
CUT IN
FY13.

Next Steps:

- Implement regional approval process for filling fire funded permanent positions.
- Reduce interagency positions, line items and fairshares (contributions to interagency dispatch).
- Reduce length of tours when filling fire positions.
- Combine staffing to meet networks' needs.
- Look for opportunities to obtain or combine wildfire protection and response capabilities with cooperators.
- Evaluate surplus fire positions for potential reassignment opportunities within parks, networks, and other regions.

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