NOTES FROM THE
NAFASR FIRE COMMITTEE MEETING
WITH
WASHINGTON OFFICE LEADERSHIP
McCELLAN FIRE TRAINING CENTER, SACRAMENTO, CA
ROOM C107B
TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2019
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

9:00-9:15 Welcome and Introductions Mike Rogers

Meeting Setting and Objectives:
Apologies for short notice for this meeting, but as usual we started trying to establish a
date immediately after the New Year. Government closures and travel restrictions
greatly complicated setting a firm date. This has impacted our usual attendance, but
the principle agency personnel are here to accomplish our purpose and objectives for
the year ahead of us.

This meeting is held to get the latest direction for the current Fire Year, a review of
findings from the last fire year and possible changes, plus an opportunity for the Fire
Committee and others to provide any feedback that was discussed by retirees. Finally
we need to review retirees’ assistance that may be valuable in getting certain changes
implemented.

Agenda Adjustments
We agreed to move Shawna Legarza’s Presentation up after Introductions as she had
additional meetings to attend. We also agreed to put Bob Baird’s presentation on after
Shawna’s presentation as he was only available in the AM. We identified three
additional bin items to add to the agenda:
1.) IMT Relationships with the Media and the non-presence of USFS Uniforms-Raley
2.) A requested quick update on Aviation Utilization and Effectiveness Study-Raley
3.) Managing Wildland Fire for Resource Benefits-Nelson
4.) How will the Forest Service handle trespass billing of human caused fires that have
been designated as “resource management fires”-Raley

9:15-11:00 Washington Office Discussion & Feedback Shawna Legarza
Shawna has now been on board as the National Director of F&AM since 2016. Shawna
provided a power point presentation that summarized the 2028 Fire Year and compared
it with past years. In 2018 fewer Fires, but more acres burned. In 2018 most of the
Fires were in the west. In 2017 the year started out with Fires in the SW and then
quickly moved to Montana with all Regions experiencing wildfires on the landscape at
nearly the same time. In 2018 58,000 Fires, 8.8 million acres burned. Over the past 20
years the number of acres burned by fire has increased with more frequent fires over
100,000 acres. One of the challenges currently being worked on is a common fire
reporting system among all agencies. 2019 has already seen a 10,000 acre wildfire in the New Jersey Pine Barrens. A renewed emphasis is being focused on Prevention, Education and Use of Technology.

There were fourteen notable Fires in 2018, which occurred in California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, and Utah. The Bald Mountain/Pole Creek Fire in Utah (initially Managed for Resource Benefits) generated a great deal of interest from both the public and government officials. California lost the most structures in 2018. California had four large wildfires, the Carr Fire, the Mendocino Complex, the Camp Fire and the Woolsey Fire.

- Lessons learned from 2018 Fire Year and review findings:
  In 2019 there will be a renewed focus on Prevention, Education and Technology.
- Outlook for 2019 Wildland Fire Year, including readiness:
  Early spring, Arizona and Alaska, by June 2019 the west will be under severe drought as projected by the Palmer Drought Index.

The excessive fuel loads have not gone away plus the abundant winter rains triggered a huge grass crop of flashy fuels.

A number of new Airtankers will be under contract with numbers ranging from a low of 18 available to a high of 53 plus the ability to add additional airtankers under “Call When Needed” contracts. Shawna stated the Airtanker Utilization and Effectiveness Study (AUES) begun in 2012 is ongoing, and is evaluating all types of delivery platforms and measuring results. This includes a longitudinal study monitoring retardant effectiveness. Former Smokejumpers and Hotshots are being utilized as monitors.

The question was asked as to why the FS kept zeroing in on large and very large airtankers which are primarily for large fires as opposed to smaller airtankers (like the F7F’s and CL-415’s) which are more oriented to initial attack. Shawna stated that by agreement the FS will provide the large and very large airtankers and the Department of Interior fire agencies will provide the smaller single engine airtankers (SEATs). Fortunately, the FS in California is supported by Cal Fire S-2T’s and helicopters along with some county and city helitankers equipped for night flying.

- How can NAFSR help and assist:
  Provide the feedback requested by Shawna on the document, Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Policy (February 2009).
  Continue support for Agency Identification on protective clothing worn by US Forest Service Firefighters.

- Chief’s letter of intent for 2019 season:
  The Letter of Intent is out and attached to these notes. In general, Committee Members thought the letter left too much open to interpretation, especially in the
Use of Wildland Fire to achieve desired Resource Management Benefits. In past years each Regional Forester has issued a supplemental letter indicating to employees how the Chief’s Direction will be implemented in that Region. With another serious Fire Year ahead it is important this year to provide Regional Guidance in the use of Wildland Fire to achieve desired Resource Management Benefits.

- Workforce Environment and Congressional Hearing:
  Emphasis will continue on creating and maintaining a Positive Work Environment for all employees. Active Management in 2019 includes Prescribed Fire, Mechanical Treatment, Fuel Reduction, Insect and Disease Management, Defensible Space, Timber Management and the implementation of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, which is the last attachment at the end of these notes.

- Current outlook on President’s 2020 Budget:
  FY 2020 will be the first year for the Fire Funding Fix, which should end the reallocation of critical Forest Management Funds to offset the ever growing costs of Fire Suppression. In 2017, the first year not included in the Fire Funding Fix the USFS had to offset $530 million out of allocated Forest Management Funds. In 2018 the USFS was required to offset $720 million out of allocated Forest Management Funds.

In 2019 emphasis will be on Partnerships with Communities. Community Fire Risk Reduction is facing new short term and long term challenges of Shared Responsibility and Cross Boundary Partnerships. Shawna handed out the Federal Fire Policy document entitled “Guidelines for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy” which was issued in February 2009. Several attendees noted the decision graphics for determining to go forward with “Managing Wildland Fire for Resource Management Benefits” is fuzzy and not clear. Shawna asked that we provide her with suggestions for changes.

Several questions were asked about the Risk Management Assessments on Wildfires while they are burning. Shawna indicated all data from these assessments are posted on the F&AM Risk Management Web Site for viewing.

Ron Raley inquired about how costs are tracked on Trespass Fires that later are designated as Resource Management Fires. He mentioned the 410 Fire in Colorado and asked, how are the costs of wildfires tracked where Wildfires that are aggressively fought initially at $1.0 million per day and then a decision is later made that the Fire will be classified as a “Managed Fire”? Shawna indicated that Section 104 Reporting accounts for all of the dollars spent. This is needed where some of the costs of the wildfire will be charged back to the accidental or purposeful instigator of the Wildfire. The management costs of the fire attributed to Resource Management must be separated out from the initial suppression costs.
Shawna stated the “Shared Stewardship” and “The Good Neighbor Authority” are helping to give the USFS the Capacity to use their available dollars in the 2020 Budget to accomplish more forest restoration work.

- General update on other significant issues impacting the WO:
  The USFS is experiencing a huge challenge in hiring non fire personnel to fill vacant but funded positions. Shawna currently has 6 GS-13 Funded Vacancies on her WO Staff, which includes Boise. Other barriers to Program Accomplishment include Travel Restrictions and Restrictions on Meetings.

11:00-12:00 Introduction by Robert A. Baird R5 FAM and Presentation by ANF Fire Chief, Bobby Garcia
Bob Baird took a few moments to share his background and his impressions since coming to the Forest Service after retiring from a career with the US Marine Corps [USMC] (Hurrah!). Tom Harbour crossed trails with Bob when they were both back in Washington working for their respective agencies. Tom adopted the Corps Quadrennial Review process, which Bob was involved with on the Corps side. When Tom learned Bob was going to retire he offered him a job with the US Forest Service as Deputy Director of Fire and Aviation Management. As part of Bob’s Training he undertook a detail in California with CAL FIRE. After two years in the WO Bob was selected as the Forest Supervisor on the Los Padres National Forest. He was there just two years when Shawna Legarza was selected to fill the Director of Fire and Aviation Management position behind Tom Harbour upon Tom’s retirement. Bob was selected to fill the R5 Director of Fire and Aviation Management vacancy created when Shawna left R5 for the WO. Bob Baird definitely has a Can Do attitude. He has come to view the Angeles as an “Indicator Species”, which experiences impacts 20 to 30 years ahead of the other National Forests. What happens on the Angeles will eventually impact the other Forests. The Angeles NF Fire Management program, in collaboration with the San Dimas and Missoula Equipment Development Centers, is a program of many important FIRSTS and continues in this role of creating new innovative FIRSTS for the National Fire and Aviation Management Program (A few examples follow: this ongoing collaboration has pioneered the integration of helicopters (1947) engine design, crew carrier design, and firefighting equipment design and development. Under the leadership of Jim Murphy, Riverside Fire Lab, and Ralph Johnston, Angeles NF, the Angeles organized the first ever National Helitack Program Module in 1957 at Chilao, began using large Sikorsky Helicopters for transporting the Forests six Hotshot Crews for rapid reinforcement deployment in 1959, developed initial rappelling protocols; with San Dimas EDC developed the Night Flying Helicopter Program in 1974 that became fully operational in 1977; in 1977 and 78 the Angeles served as the CORE AREA for implementing and testing the Incident Command System, one of the many products produced by the FIRESCOPE Program that was authorized by Congress following the disastrous 1970 Fire Season in southern California; in 1979 began utilizing the Missoula EDC’s heli-torch operationally on landscape scale Rx Fires and wildfires; provided training, night vision
goggles and a helitorch unit available on a property transfer to the Los Angeles County Fire Department so that the Angeles had year round access to both a Helitorch Unit and Night Flying Helicopter capability under a long term Cooperative Agreement, which enabled winter cross training on ongoing Rx Fire operations utilizing both Los Angeles County and ANF personnel.

BOB Baird has learned that FIRE is a very politically charged subject. He pointed out that the National Fire Plan did not provide for facilities. Overall Crew Facilities are grossly deficient throughout the National Forest System.

He is both a champion and advocate for the proper wearing of the Forest Service Uniform and wears it well.

At this point Bob introduced Robert J. Garcia, the current Fire Chief on the Angeles National Forest. Robert (Bobby) Garcia learned about the Forest Service as a 14 year old going to high school when he took part in an Outdoor Career Weekend at Camp Valccrest on the Angeles National Forest. This was a program developed by Forest Supervisor William (Bill) T. Dresser in a partnership with the American Legion and the Southern California Watershed Fire Council and carried on by District Ranger Terry Ellis after Bill’s retirement in 1980. In 1992 Greg Greenhoe, the Angeles Fire Chief, created an Explorer Post to provide opportunities for 16 to 18 year olds to learn about jobs in the Forest Service, provide them with fire training and first aid classes and provided volunteer opportunities to work alongside fulltime employees on heavy use weekends staffing information check points along major entry roads into the Forest. Bobby was one of the first enrollees and was in the first graduating class. This experience led to his first job on the Angeles and selection to the Apprenticeship Academy created by Tom Harbour and others. Bobby has ascended through every job, including the Superintendent of the Little T Hot Shot Crew and is currently in the top FIRE job on the Angeles. Bobby, to his credit, has absorbed everything presented to him and has developed a balanced Resource Management perspective, which has allowed him to grow well beyond the Forestry Technician level.

Noon

Lunch (a working lunch while Chief Garcia gave his power point presentation; lunch provided by Ron Raley, thank you Ron)

High Lights from the Power Point Presentation

1.) Constantly adapting, learning latest business practices to better work with partners in a new and better creative ways than in the past.

2.) Fire Settlement Funds now being used for Forest Restoration Projects. The Forest is leveraging appropriated, non appropriated and partnership funds to greatly expand restoration work and the creation of fire resistant environments on a landscape scale.

3.) With large fire events occurring every 5 to 10 years it is challenging to maintain the need for awareness, consistency and urgency among the 15 million residents of the greater Los Angeles Area.
4.) The Angeles and partner Agencies have embraced the National Cohesive Strategy (CS). As the lead agency there is a need to do a better job of engaging governing bodies, local officials and cooperating fire agencies to coordinate required planning across jurisdictional boundaries. Emphasis will continue on the creation and continued maintenance of Fire Adapted Communities.

5.) The four southern California National Forests are sharing planning and project execution resources across Forest Boundaries. The four southern Forests share a 25,000 acre Fuels Management target. Because planned use of Wildfire is not an option on three of the four southern national Forests (the Los Padres is the exception) due to the high valued infrastructure that surrounds each Forest each project must go through a collaborative, often time consuming, environmental evaluation with the local public that results in a Record of Decision. Each forest must have projects in the pipeline that will lead to the annual accomplishment of the 25,000 acre target on these four Forests.

6.) The four southern Forests (occasionally with exceptions on the Los Padres NF) will always be full suppression Forests with emphasis on early detection using the latest technologies to better leverage initial attack success, a safe and well coordinated, robust and aggressive initial attack on the ground and in the air followed by recovery measures to protect downstream values where near and long term risk is always taken into account.

7.) The focus of the energy on the Angeles is on the condition and resilience of the upstream values, maintaining a well trained and staffed firefighting organization, and enhancing Interagency Cooperation in a well defined, well coordinated Mutual Aid Zone amid a scene of constant turnover of Interagency personnel.

8.) Specific Challenges:
   A.) Drought, insects and disease and catastrophic fires that continuously shape and change the focus of the overall program from year to year.
   B.) There are 15 million people living in the greater Los Angeles area including large areas in both interface and intermix with 5-10 years between conflagrations that directly impact them.
   C.) Budget reductions in essential support elements (fleet, travel, training, supplies and equipment).
   D.) Environmental challenges: climate change, longer and more intense fire years.
   E.) Organizational Challenges
      a.) An ever shrinking militia availability due to workforce reductions and high priority project work.
      b.) A new way of entry into the FS & hiring practices.
      c.) Organizational alignment between Fire and Line Officers.
      d.) Shared leadership of the program and workforce.
      e.) Generational changes in the workforce; a difference in expectations (work-life balance).
      f.) Difficulty in recruitment and retention of a highly skilled and experienced workforce.
      g.) Over reliance on 1039 hiring authority (temporary employment).
h.) High vacancy rates.
   i.) Creating understanding and acceptance of the changes in the Chief’s Annual Letter of Intent to fire service partners, elected officials, other cooperators and our workforce.

The National Hazardous Fuels program has shifted out of the WO F&AM Program but still comes back to the Forests in Fire and has to be accounted for. The challenge is determining what part of the allocation can go to fixed costs and what goes to implementation, with the emphasis on implementation.

The Forest has become very aggressive in obtaining settlements from entities that are responsible for starting wildfires. In addition the Forest received a significant Mitigation Fund from Southern California Edison, who is installing a new major power line across the Forest. Some of these funds have been earmarked for the rebuilding of Vetter Lookout, which was destroyed in the 1997 Station Fire. Vetter Lookout has always served as a major information point and an opportunity to interact with Forest Visitors. A sizable chunk of the Fire Settlement Funds was taken from the Forest to help offset the $720 million in 2018 Fire Fighting costs (it would seem the sequestering of these specific funds was inappropriate and should have been confined to Congressionally appropriated Forest Management Funds).

Since the occurrence of the disastrous 1980 Mack Lake Fire in R9 all burners need to be qualified. It is becoming very difficult to keep qualified people and skills current. Long time Forest Cooperators are also experiencing a large turnover and reassignment of qualified personnel.

All Forest employees need to become more involved in the FIO tasks. Bobby described a day in the Field with then Forest Supervisor Jeff Vail. They were at the scene of a Fire and were notified of a new wildfire on the Gateway Ranger District. Bob and Jeff were some of the first non-initial attack personnel on scene and the road into the Fire Area was lined with TV Crew Mobile vans. Bob and Jeff made an immediate decision that each would take a side of the road and begin interacting with the media, although neither of them were trained as FIO’s. This is a graphic example of all employees needing to embrace this INFORMATION Function.

The Angeles is one of the few Forests that still stencils the FS Patch on both sleeves of all No-Mex Fire Shirts and prints US Forest Service Angeles National Forest on the back of each shirt for Agency identification. In the mid 1980’s the four southern California National Forests undertook an initiative in concert with the Missoula Equipment Development Center to find an indelible ink that would not compromise the integrity of the Protective No-Mex Fire Shirts. This soon grew into a Regional Emphasis that for awhile provided outstanding visibility that has somehow fallen through the cracks. For many years now Newscasts are live streaming video of Fire Fighters battling wildfires, however, the USFS is no longer appropriately identified. One would think that the only
Wildland Firefighters are CAL FIRE Firefighters, or County and City Fire Departments who do an outstanding job of marketing themselves and creating visibility.

Fortunately Shawna totally concurs. However she has indicated this is an R-5 issue and the Region (Bob Baird) needs to resolve it. Retirees strongly recommend that a letter be written and issued to all employees requiring that ALL USFS Employees are required to wear the US Forest Service Uniform when in non-fire situations that do not demand the wearing of No-Mex. Where Fire protective clothing is required all No-Mex Fire Shirts will be properly identified with a stenciled USFS Shield on each sleeve and US Forest Service in large visible letters across the back.

1:00-2:00 At this point Shawna returned and entered into a lengthy dialogue with Committee Members regarding concerns with certain aspects of current Fire Management Policy Implementation. Dave Nelson provided the notes he took of this lengthy and open dialogue and added to his notes some fire management bench marks the USFS has effectively utilized over the years. His notes are attached. Shawna has requested that we all carefully read the Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy that was issued in February 2009 that she handed out and are attached to these notes. After reading she has asked the Committee to provide her with any needed suggestions/recommendations/changes for consideration.

2:00-2:15 **NAFSR Board Updates** Mike Rogers

The Board met in February 2019. The notes from this meeting are posted on the excellent NAFSR web site (www.nafsr.org).

Much effort was spent by the Board on developing support for the Fire Funding Fix, which was included and passed in the 2018 Omnibus Bill. We achieved part of what we were working towards. Unfortunately we did not get implementation until FY2020. We thank California Congressman Kevin McCarthy who was instrumental in making this happen and NAFSR member, Lee Belau.

NAFSR has developed a close advisory relationship with Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. The Secretary has tasked NAFSR with several challenges. One of the challenges NAFSR took on was a Capacity Study to look at the impacts of the Wildfire Suppression Cost Bailouts from Appropriated Funds over the years. A preliminary finding is that Forests and Ranger Districts have been consolidated with negative impacts, plus, the non-fire work force is now about ¼ the size it was prior to bailouts, which has directly impacted the ability to carry out needed Forest Management practices (fewer skilled resources to manage even larger areas of National Forest lands). Many critical skills are now consolidated and shared over several forests, which out of necessity results in multi forest coordination to determine the priority projects for this limited skill base to focus on. It will take time to rebuild the lost work force capacity. This will remain a huge organizational challenge for Forest Service Leadership. In the meantime the Forest Service is focusing on
Shared Stewardship Contracts and the Good Neighbor Authority to fill the Workforce Capacity void.

Lastly, the next USFS Retiree Reunion will be held in September of 2021 in South Lake Tahoe. The most recent September 2018 Reunion held in Asheville, NC was a great success.

2:15-2:30  Wildland Fire Cohesive Strategy Update        Mike Rogers

These highlights were provided courtesy of Joe Stutler who was unable to personally attend the Committee Meeting:

With few exceptions, most western states are implementing the Cohesive Strategy (CS) and are actually calling the work "CS implementation".

The State of CA has committed $1 billion to landscape resilience and Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) over the next 5 years, as a result of the recent number of very destructive wildland fires.

The State of Utah has codified CS language into State Codes; the State Forester will pay for all wildland fire costs in cities and municipalities if those entities demonstrate Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) progress.

The State of Utah has an 11 County effort underway that will use both Good Neighbor Authority and Stewardship Contracting to address small diameter woody products and will be offering other options for biomass utilization, using the value of the product for cost recovery vs. depending only on Grant program $'s, in a "all hands/all lands approach".

The Forest Service approved the Ventana Wilderness/Soberantes EIS, which allows fuel break maintenance within the Ventana Wilderness. These are the same fuelbreak lines used since the 1977 Marble Cone Fire. The EIS approves ongoing maintenance on the entire perimeter of the Soberantes Fire, support was received from all stakeholders, no appeals.

Learning Labs/Hard Truths sessions on going throughout the WRSC, a Learning Lab model will be used at the 3rd CS workshop that will be held in Plymouth, MS in October 2019.

Developing a Learning Lab/Hard Truths workshop entitled, "What if (You choose the location) becomes the next Paradise, CA incident?" The first rollout will be on April 18th in Central OR. Over 200 citizens have registered for this workshop.

A new S-620 Area Command course will be offered the 2nd week of May at McClellan. A unified effort for integrated response between federal agencies and CAL FIRE, 36 confirmed attendees, 12 federal and state Agency Administrators attending.
2:30-3:00 Other Topics Identified at the beginning of the meeting
Four additional topics were identified:

1.) IMT Relationships with the Media and the non-presence of USFS Uniforms. This turned out to be a hot topic and was addressed on page 7.

2.) A requested quick update on Aviation Utilization and effectiveness. Shawna addressed this question as part of her presentation and her response can be found on page 2.

3.) Utilizing Wildland Fire for Resource Management Benefits. This topic was thoroughly discussed and captured in Dave Nelson’s notes, which are attached. We thank Shawna for hanging in there with us and for actively participating in the discussion that occurred.

4.) How will the Forest Service handle trespass billing on human caused fires that have been designated as “resource management fires”? (see Page 3).

Actions:

1.) Follow up with Bob Baird regarding a directive on the wearing of the Forest Service Uniform including Forest Service identification on Firefighters Protective Clothing.

2.) Follow up with Bob Baird on the regions clarification of the Chief’s Letter of Intent regarding the “use of wildland fire to achieve desired ecological conditions where possible”.

3.) After reviewing the February 2009 Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy Shawna asked us for suggestions/recommendations for making the decision matrix shown on page 18 less confusing.

4.) Lynn Sprague agreed to take a look at the Forest Planning Regulations and examine the guidelines for planned use of fire.

3:00 Adjourn

We again thank Shawna for spending the bulk of the day with us; for her listening to us and her interaction with us throughout the day. I want to thank Bill Derr for arriving a day early, making copies of our handout materials and setting up the room. I personally want to thank Dave Nelson for his excellent set of notes. It was difficult to chair the meeting and take notes at the same time. I apologize for the lateness in getting these notes out. Seems I have been on a constant go since the date of our meeting with little time to work on the notes without constant interruptions. We agreed to send the DRAFT notes (NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED) to the meeting attendees for a quick review. I only received comment back from both Ron and Sherry Raley, Dave Nelson and Shawna Legarza. I made all of the changes/edits received and have submitted the FINAL to Fire Committee Chairman, Al West for submission to NAFSR and distribution to attendees of this meeting and past meetings.

Respectfully Submitted
Mike Rogers  
NAFSR Fire Committee Member

Attachments:
1.) List of Attendees  
2.) Chief’s 2019 Letter of Intent  
3.) Dave Nelson’s Notes and Thoughts on use of Wildland Fire for Resource Management Benefits  
4.) Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy  
   (February 2009)

## ATTENDEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PHONE NO.</th>
<th>EMAIL ADDRESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mike Rogers</td>
<td>858-248-3204</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mprogers88@aol.com">mprogers88@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dennis Hulbert</td>
<td>530-268-1613</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dhulbert@hughes.net">dhulbert@hughes.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Bill Derr</td>
<td>510-525-8892</td>
<td><a href="mailto:billecem@me.com">billecem@me.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Sherry Raley</td>
<td>916-947-4328</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sherrylailey@comcast.net">sherrylailey@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Robert Garcia</td>
<td>626-716-2128</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rjgarcia@fs.fed.us">rjgarcia@fs.fed.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Shawna Legarza</td>
<td>202-205-0808</td>
<td><a href="mailto:slegarza@fs.fed.us">slegarza@fs.fed.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Tony Scardina</td>
<td>740-624-0702</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ascardina@fs.fed.us">ascardina@fs.fed.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Dave Nelson</td>
<td>530-265-6155</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dknelson@comcast.net">dknelson@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Lynn Sprague</td>
<td>208-761-3492</td>
<td><a href="mailto:glsprag@aol.com">glsprag@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Ron Raley</td>
<td>916-425-6570</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ron.rale@perimeter-solutions.com">ron.rale@perimeter-solutions.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Bob Baird</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:rbaird@fs.fed.us">rbaird@fs.fed.us</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Allan West | 805-646-5918 | naranjas@aol.com |
| Steve Brink |           | steveb@calforesters.org |
| Steve Eubanks |       | steubanks@mail.com |
As we move into the 2019 fire year, I am reflecting on the challenging year we faced in 2018. As a Nation, we experienced wildfires and devastating hurricanes that forever changed communities. We have also experienced tragedies in the 2019 fire year. Please pause for a moment of silence to reflect upon those lives we lost both on duty and off duty. They have paid the ultimate sacrifice and we will never forget them. I know the deep resilience and love for the land that runs throughout our organization. I anchor to that as we face another year-round fire season and recover and resume work following the 35-day lapse in appropriations. As I reflect on all of these events and the challenges we overcame during the recent shutdown, I am deeply grateful to all of you for the way you respond and take care of our neighbors, each other, and the lands we are privileged to steward.

As I look ahead to the remainder of the 2019 fire year, it is more important than ever we remain grounded in our core values of safety, diversity, conservation, interdependence and service, while we foster a safe, respectful workplace where everyone is valued for their contributions. Everything we do—every part of our mission—depends on creating a workplace where each one of us is able to thrive in our work, free from harassment and safe from harm.

For wildfire response, let me be clear: that we will continue to implement incident response strategies and tactics that commit responders to operations where and when we understand the risks responders may face and where they can be most successful. We will deploy our people under conditions where we protect important values at risk. These decisions will be based on risk-informed trade-off considerations, looking at all available tactics and opportunities, while maintaining relationships with the communities we serve. Each of us must remain committed to “stop, think and talk” before “acting”.

Wildland fire management is vitally important to the land management mission of our agency, to our partners’ missions, and to the American people. We must take the necessary steps to ensure we deliver our mission, including those key land management activities that help reduce fire risk, across all land ownerships, as outlined in the President’s December 21 Executive Order 13855. This year we will lean into doing business differently, we will work in a spirit of Shared Stewardship, at a larger scale and with shared decision making with the States. Congress has entrusted us with tools to get this job done; we will make maximum use of new authorities in the 2018 Omnibus bill and the 2018 Farm Bill.
With this in mind, I issue this direction to ALL employees. Each of you has a role to play in
 carrying out our key agency priorities of reducing wildfire risk and improving forest conditions.
 As you continue to focus on work that delivers successes in these priority areas in 2019, these
 principals apply:

• We will maintain our commitment to improve the wildland fire system to one that more
  reliably protects responders and the public, sustains communities and conserves the land.
• We will be responsible for ensuring sound, risk informed decision making that takes into
  account the best science available and most appropriate use of the right tools at the right
  time.
• We will engage early with our partners and communities to strengthen relationships even
  where priorities may differ, to ensure we are sharing risk before fires start, to work
  towards achieving our shared goals and missions.
• We will use active management that focuses on wildfire risk reduction, forest products
  and restoration, engaging in cross-boundary collaboration to set landscape-scale
  treatment priorities with our partners.
• We will also use wildland fire to achieve desired ecological conditions where possible
  and where it makes sense, setting that intention together with our partners.

We recognize we work in complex environments and the importance of continuing to be
 committed to the goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy: safe and
effective wildfire response, creating resilient landscapes, and working toward fire adapted
 communities. The Strategy’s Vision is to safely and effectively extinguish fire when needed; use
 fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and as a nation, live with wildland fire.

I am proud of USDA Forest Service employees and the work we do to meet the wildland fire
 challenges we face. In 2019, my expectation is for all of us to focus our efforts intently on the
decisions we make as agency administrators, fire leaders, fire responders and land managers. At
the same time, we must continue our work together to build and sustain the work environment
that all employees and partners want and deserve. Together, these commitments from each of us
will inspire our innate desire to improve the condition of our Nation’s forests and grasslands and
honor our commitment to be good neighbors.

I want to thank each of you for the great work you do.

[Victoria Christiansen]
VICTORIA CHRISTIANSEN
Chief