

Fire

Comment # Comment

- 0023-003 My understanding is that live spruce are potentially a higher fire hazard than dead spruce because of the pitch content of live trees.
- 0038-006 6--No burning--it destroys good bacteria for depths up to 7 inches.
- 0069-006 Prescribed burns may be appropriate near populated areas to reduce the danger of larger uncontrolled wildfires. Other methods of vegetation manipulation are unnecessary. This land did fine before people came along to manage it.
- 0307-002 Also we would like to know how this plan addresses fire management and the spruce bark beetle infestation. Our concerns may be from a distance in location, but your plan would involve us due to how water flows, fire can roar over mountains, and beetles can cover large forest areas. If you can please assist us with this requested information, we would gladly provide you our comments on your plan.
- 0337-005 My sincere hope is that we can be proactive in restoring the forest health and reduce the risk of catastrophic fire. We need to get back to the basics and dedicate our efforts toward developing an asset as opposed to fostering a
- 0365-002 Burns logging
- 0366-005 1. A. Don't Burn without fallin the Timber first Because of Access for animal to new food source 2. A. Look at old burn in how it took 5 or 6 yrs for Moose to get access.
- 0397-005 1. A. Use prescribed Fire & Wildfire burning within prescription as the primary agent of forest regeneration on Seward Ranger District. This would work in the long term
- 0397-006 2. A. For reasons of forest health, and to discharge your responsibility to deal with a problematic fuel load. The fire ecology of the Kenai Peninsula demands more fire.
- 0397-007 3. A. Budget money to create a fire organization on SRD. Contract with State Division of Forestry for initial attack of wildfire in critical & full fire protection areas. Use SRD personnel for developing and implementing prescribed fire
- 0397-008 4. A. Leaders in the FS seem to regard logging as the best way to regenerate. The obstacle arises because the public doesn't like logging. Overcome the impasse by explaining fire to the public and getting pro- fire leaders.
- 0400-012 Fire protection: The plan should recognize that fire is an integral part of the region's ecology and promotes forest regeneration. Fire management and suppression should concentrate on defense of inhabited areas. Backcountry areas should be reclassified to allow less intensive responses to wildfires. The forest service should map areas of high fuel load and identify places where all-out suppression is not necessary to protect public safety.
- 0404-017 Fire plays a beneficial role in forest ecology. Prescribed fire should be used to reduce fuel near (within 100 feet of) structures to prevent the loss of life and property and to encourage forest regeneration and habitat. The USFS should aggressively suppress all unplanned fire ignitions that threaten life or private property. Ignitions occurring elsewhere should be addressed according to the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan.
- 0444-005 FIRE plays a beneficial role in forest ecology. Prescribed fire should be used to reduce fuel near (within 100 feet of) structures to prevent the loss of life and property and to encourage forest regeneration and habitat. The USFS should aggressively suppress all unplanned fire ignitions that threaten life or private property. Ignitions occurring elsewhere should be addressed according to the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan.
- 0458-007 Use logging of beetle killed trees only to establish "fire protection zones" around existing structures. Urge people/agencies to use metal roofs on structures to minimize fire dangers.
- 0479-049 In addition, we would like the Forest Service to advocate for more forested areas away from private land to be classified as "moderate" or "limited" in the Interagency Fire Management Agreement, and we would like to see this change in policy reflected in the Chugach Forest revision process. The Interagency Fire Management Agreement is geared toward fire suppression, which may be appropriate close to private lands, but is not necessarily appropriate in the backcountry. We understand the boundaries for the various fire protection zones within the agreement are being redefined at this time. Allowing fires to bum, where they do not threaten communities or private property, will
- 0701-001 Use fire to regenerate forests.

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- 0779-001 Code me pro-fire. Fire can clear a path out of the dilemma that the beetle has imposed on land managers. You know that the epidemic has become too widespread to halt. You know that forests need regenerating and you know the potential for destructive wildfire. The FS failed to achieve enough public support for logging as the response to beetles. If properly explained, fire will garner public support and will enable you to reach your stated goal of forest health. Part of your explanation to the public should include distinguishing between the inhabited front country and
- 0779-002 The public did not allow you to use beetles as a can opener to road and log the backcountry. It will allow you to prescribe fire there to regenerate forest health. The public also demands that you protect the inhabited front country

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0779-004

BACKGROUND Wildfires have played a major role in establishing the vegetative communities of the Kenai Peninsula including portions of the Chugach National Forest. Land clearing and steam locomotives, in use on the Alaska Railroad from 1915 until the 1950's, caused numerous fires along the railroad right-of-way which spread to the surrounding forest. Near Moose Pass, the many early-successional-stage forests dominated by hardwoods resulted from these fires. Turn of the century mining, land clearing and resulting fires have had the same effect around Cooper Landing. Large fires in 1959 (10,000 ac. Kenai Lake) and 1969 (2,600 ac. Russian River) established vigorous stands of hardwoods with spruce trees in the understory. The maturing birch forests around Hope resulted from the 2,500-acre fire of 1907. Owing to the rarity of ground-stroke lighting on the Kenai Peninsula, human activity causes almost all fires. The Chugach National Forest typically has approximately 10 to 15 fire starts every year. On average these grow to about 2 acres. Effective fire suppression prevents them from growing larger. Some fires have escaped and grown large. If included in the calculations, the large, atypical wildfires would skew the average much higher. The ongoing epidemic of spruce bark beetles has killed large numbers of older spruce trees. Consequently, large amounts of potential fuel have fallen to the forest floor. With increased sunlight penetrating to the understory, grass and shrubs in some stands have increased in biomass. In stands not much affected by spruce bark beetles because of a preponderance of hemlock or hardwoods, ordinary vegetative succession continues. On national forest lands and former national forest lands, development of powerlines, homes, towns and campgrounds has occurred. Thus, the fuel complex continues to evolve.

II. OVERALL MANAGEMENT DIRECTION The Chugach National Forest recognizes the beneficial role of fire in the forest ecology of the Kenai Peninsula. It also recognizes the destructive potential of fires in inhabited areas affected by spruce bark beetles. The Chugach National Forest will manage fire as its primary agent of forest regeneration on the peninsula. The Chugach will suppress destructive fires in populated areas. On national forest land, on those parts of the Kenai Peninsula that do not drain into Prince William Sound, the Chugach National Forest will continue to aggressively suppress, all unplanned fire ignitions that threaten life or private property. Personnel will immediately attack all such fires and either have them extinguished by noon on the following day or develop a plan to extinguish them as soon as practicable. The USDA Forest Service, Chugach National Forest will strengthen its partnering arrangement with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry. The FS will contribute additional funding to the Division of Forestry. The FS, will delegate responsibility commensurate with that funding, to the Division for initial attack of fires occurring on national forest land. The FS will retain authority to determine fire policy on national forest lands and for determining which fires to attack. On those parts of the Forest that drain into Prince William Sound or the Gulf of Alaska, the Chugach National Forest will allow unplanned ignitions to burn while monitoring them to ensure that they do so safely within prescribed limits. The Chugach National Forest will concentrate its resources on developing and implementing an aggressive program of prescribed fire on the Seward Ranger District and portions of the Glacier Ranger District. In order of priority, the program will 1. Reduce fuel loads in and immediately around inhabited areas, 2. Regenerate forests in uninhabited areas adversely affected by bark beetles, and 3. Improve habitat for early successional wildlife while leaving appropriate amounts of late successional forest for other species.

III. FIRE PROTECTION LEVELS The Chugach National Forest, and other federal and state agencies, have a written agreement regarding fire protection levels on the Kenai Peninsula as well the rest of Alaska. In the "Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan", agencies have categorized the entire land area for receiving critical, full, modified or limited priority for fire protection. Areas of private property and inhabited areas receive the highest, or critical priority. Areas of high commodity value such as timber receive the next priority, full. Areas receiving modified protection have some commodity value and get immediate fire suppression. However, the land manager may trade off the cost of further suppression with the consequences of greater acres burned. In areas categorized as limited, suppression costs would exceed fire damage and the land manager does not take suppressive action because the fire may benefit the land. The Chugach National Forest will re-categorize some national forest land. Any area currently categorized as critical will remain critical and will continue to receive the highest priority for immediate, aggressive suppression without fail. On a going fire, firefighters will continue to receive resources until they emerge victorious. Most areas currently categorized as modified, will shift to the limited category. Although at one time some of these areas supported timber of some commodity value, the bark beetle epidemic has greatly reduced that value. Now, fire may benefit these areas. The Chugach National Forest will scrutinize areas currently receiving full protection. Within two years, the Forest will determine which areas within the full protection category retain high resource value (timber or other) or would likely spread fire to adjoining critical protection areas. These areas will remain in the full protection category. The remainder of the acreage in the current full category will downshift to the modified category.

IV. FIRE PREVENTION AND PRE-SUPPRESSION The Chugach National Forest will continue to assist local communities and individuals in preventing wildfires. The Chugach will strengthen public education in fire ecology and fire prevention. The Chugach will assist in conducting workshops explaining the creation of fire defensible space around buildings. The Chugach will assist Cooper Landing, Moose Pass and Hope in the design, location and construction of fuel breaks close to these communities. The Chugach will continue to cooperate with local volunteer fire departments. In alternate years, the Chugach will conduct introductory fire-fighting courses leading to the qualification of individuals as wildland firefighters. During the Alaska fire season, the Chugach will make available at least one, Type II, fire-fighting hand crew with boss for dispatch to any requesting land manager. The Chugach will continue to operate three, remote area weather stations on the Kenai Peninsula and to make their data available to fire managers. The Chugach National Forest will continue to maintain its 100-person cache of fire-fighting equipment at the Kenai Lake Work Center and will make its contents available to any requesting fire manager.

V. WILDFIRE BURNING WITHIN PRESCRIPTION Although prescribed fire will meet most of the fire-related goals of this plan, unplanned ignitions that become wildfires may also meet those goals if the wildfire burns within prescribed conditions of location, wind speed, wind direction, humidity and time of year. Within five years, the Chugach National Forest will specify these conditions on a watershed basis, in those areas where the Forest has already established a goal of reducing fuel load, regenerating forests or enhancing wildlife habitat. Based on the existing fire management plan, literature review, professional judgment and past local experience, the Chugach will develop a policy of allowing

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unplanned ignitions to burn when they do so 1. On lands categorized as modified or limited for fire protection, 2. When they do so within an established prescription and 3. When they do so safely as judged by the land manager in charge. VI. PRESCRIBED FIRE 1. For Fuel Reduction As the highest priority, fuel reduction will command the greatest amount of fire resources during the life of this plan. - In addition to reducing fine fuels resulting from logging, which the Forest will deal with as a separate matter, the prescribed fire program will reduce fuel loads in unlogged stands affected by spruce bark beetles. Because of the rationale of preventing loss of life and property, these burns will occur on national forest lands adjacent to private property and uninhabited areas such as Hope, Moose Pass and Cooper Landing. The prescriptions may result in relatively cooler fires that mostly consume fine fuels and surface litter. 2. For Forest Regeneration In addition to planting trees in logged areas, which the Forest will continue, as a separate matter, the prescribed fire program will regenerate forests with high bark beetle mortality and insufficient hemlock, birch or young spruce to regenerate themselves naturally. These may occur anywhere within forested areas of the Chugach National Forest. To create conditions favorable for tree regeneration, the prescriptions may result in relatively hotter fires that consume fine and large fuels as well as most or all of the duff layer. 3. For Habitat Improvement In addition to the Forests ongoing wildlife program for all species, the prescribed fire program will improve habitat for early successional wildlife. The Chugach recognizes the need of some species for late-successional forests. The Chugach National Forest recognizes that a prescribed fire may have more than one goal or benefit. Prescribed fires designed for fuel reduction or for forest regeneration may secondarily benefit some wildlife. Therefore, burns designed primarily for wildlife will receive the lowest priority within the prescribed fire program. They may occur independently under the wildlife program, they may occur anywhere within the forested or non forested portions of the Chugach National Forest. VII. SCHEDULE OF AREAS FOR TREATMENT Because the success of a prescribed burn depends greatly on weather, the Chugach does not expect to meet the following schedule in full every year. The Chugach does expect to meet the following schedule cumulatively by the end of a 10 to 15-year period. The planning and preparation will occur regardless of weather. The Chugach will reallocate current staffing, and will increase expertise to meet the demands of this increased prescribed fire program. The Chugach will prepare and will have approved burn plans for the following areas as specified by year, with a two-year preparation time for each. Of necessity, a reviewer must regard all acreage figures as approximate to within 20 percent. Year 2000. Upper Kenai River North Side fuel reduction 750 acres forest regeneration 750 acres Year 2001. Upper Kenai River North Side fuel reduction 750 acres forest regeneration 750 acres Year 2002. Tern Lake / Moose Creek fuel reduction 300 acres habitat improvement 300 acres Resurrection Creek/Palmer Creek fuel reduction 500 acres Southwest Trail Lake South of Highway fuel reduction 400 acres Year 2003. 8 Upper Kenai River South Side / Russian River fuel reduction 1,000 acres forest regeneration 500 acres Year 2004. Cooper and Stetson Creeks forest regeneration 1,500 acres Year 2005. Kenai Lake North Shore forest regeneration 1,000 acres Upper Canyon Creek / Upper Quartz Creek forest regeneration & habitat improvement 500 acres Year 2006. Trait Creek forest regeneration habitat improvement 750 acres Granite Creek / East Fork Bench Creek forest regeneration 750 acres Year 2007. Summit Lake fuel reduction & forest regeneration 500 acres 9 Trail Creek forest regeneration & habitat improvement 750 acres Grant Lake forest regeneration & habitat improvement 750 acres Year 2008. South Shore Kenai Lake forest regeneration 1,500 acres Upper Russian Lake / Cooper Lake forest regeneration & habitat improvement 500 acres Year 2009. Middle / Upper Quartz Creek forest regeneration & habitat improvement 1,000 acres Upper Canyon Creek / Upper Quartz Creek forest regeneration & habitat improvement 500 acres Cooper Creek habitat improvement 500 acres Upper Russian Lake / Upper Resurrection River forest regeneration & habitat improvement 500 acres end

0781-020 Although ACE believes the forest will regenerate fine on its own, we recognize there may be some areas where prescribed fire may be of benefit. ACE would like to see the Forest Service analyze fire potential as its primary agent of forest regeneration on the Kenai Peninsula, where the vast majority of human inhabitants live within the forest. The Copper River area has seen a significant increase in beetle activity over the last few years and we expect they may be faced with the same salvage logging agenda as did the western forest. Therefore, ACE would like the Forest Service to evaluate fire over the rest of the forest as the primary means of regeneration as well. ACE would like the Forest Service to map, out areas of concern where fuel load is particularly high and/or where there are inhabited structures. Where fire danger is high, closest to communities, ACE would support selective logging to create shaded fuel breaks. However, using salvage logging as a way to address fuel loads is an inappropriate response, we believe and could actually contribute to uncontrolled fire, as was witnessed the past few summers with both the Granite Creek and Crooked Creek fires. In addition, ACE would like to see land classifications mapped out. We believe economics must be weighed when addressing fire. To the backcountry an equal level of fire protection, as afforded to inhabited areas is not economically appropriate and may not be biologically appropriate either.

0784-003 More importantly, there is a growing concern on the Kenai about the potential fire hazard associated with the beetle-infested timber. Many residents in my district stand to lose substantial property and maybe even their lives should fire strike. Logging of beetle-infested timber must take place to lessen the potential loss of life and property

0860-139 Massive areas of dead trees and fire

0880-021 Adopt the State Fire Management Plan

