"I am therefore committing us to move toward a point where we anchor our actions and decisions to a well-understood doctrine."

Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth, January 26, 2006

Finally, after a tasking that has taken almost six years, the revised FSM 5100 (Fire Management Chapter – Zero Code) is now codified. The Amendment, 5100-2012-1, substantially revises the entire Fire Management 5100 Zero Code chapter to better align with the U.S. Forest Service mission, with distinct focus on Doctrine as the agency’s policy, practice and procedure. The amendment also reflects the tremendous amount of work and effort that wildland firefighters and Fire & Aviation Management Program managers have already put forward during this period to bring Doctrine to fruition. Efforts include accomplishments in risk management, research and facilitated learning. Doctrine was first introduced philosophically at the 2005 Pulaski Conference and was formally adopted by the Forest Service Chief in 2006.

Right from the beginning with 5102 – Objective it starts with a new and future vision for Fire and Aviation Management: “Safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and as a Nation, live with wildland fire.” To support this vision five objectives set the foundation for an all-inclusive and comprehensive High Reliability Fire Management program. These objectives are intrinsic for supporting the vision and will help move the agency forward and progressively into the future.

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Risk Management and Risk Reduction – transforming our workforce into a more refined safety culture

Implementing fire management programs to protect the ecology of forest service lands for multiple uses

Enhanced and Improved Collaboration and Partnerships

Learning – utilizing science, research and innovative practices

Empowerment of employees in leadership, judgment and decision-making.

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The amendment then moves into a description of Doctrine application in the Forest Service and proceeds into guidance principles for the objectives listed above which we consider to be the evolutional change for Fire and Aviation Management. This moves principle concepts from the Fire Suppression Doctrine into actual field application in the manual system. Our thinking is that the purpose of Doctrine is to create an organization guided by well stated doctrinal principles that represent
the reality of the work, the fire environment, and the mission. They are understood and meaningful to every employee, the public at large, and are the heart of mission accomplishment.

The rest of the amendment is pretty much standard with the normal responsibilities section from the Chief to the District Rangers, explanation of the current interagency and collaborative governance and the listing of references. The only things of note are that there are definitions added for doctrine, policy, principles, and risk management and that the “Red Book” is listed to be guidance for implementation of policy

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Contact: William Waterbury or Mike Apicello at: wwaterbury@fs.fed.us or mapicello@fs.fed.us at the FS- FAM Branch of Risk Management, for more Information or feedback on this “dialogue”

For more information On Doctrine - visit the -FS doctrine website: http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/index.html

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For more information on Service-wide Directives, please visit these electronic sites:

For Forest Service Employees Intranet: http://fsweb.fs.usda.gov Select the link for Directives.


The public can access and retrieve Service-wide directives electronically from:


(For further information and assistance concerning Service wide directives, send an electronic message to wo_directives@fs.fed.us or telephone (202) 401-4077. The voicemail at this telephone number is monitored daily. Leave a detailed message that includes your name, telephone number including area code, name of your organization (if applicable), and the nature of your request.)