

Appendix K

Wilderness Management Direction

Policy, Goals and Objectives

The fire suppression policy for wilderness areas in the PSICC will be to conduct all fire management activities in a manner compatible with overall wilderness management objectives. The goal of fire management in Wilderness is best achieved when the affects of fire as a natural agent are observed, and the affects of fire management activities are not. Fire managers shall give preference to using methods and equipment that affect the least:

1. Alteration of the wilderness landscape
2. Disturbance of the land surface
3. Disturbance to visitor solitude
4. Visibility of mechanized or motorized activities during periods of visitor use

Fire management objectives in wilderness, as stated in the Forest Service Manual (FSM 2324.21) are:

- Permit lightning caused fires to play, as nearly as possible, their ecological role within wilderness.
- Reduce to an acceptable level the risks and consequences of wildfire within wilderness or of wildfire escaping from wilderness.

fire use for resource benefit as a fire objective is approved via amendment to the Land & Resource Management Plan of 1985 and amended in July 1987, and June of 2008. Fire managers should assign a Wilderness Resource Advisor to any Wilderness fires that occur in sensitive areas, or involve extended fire management activities.

Minimum Impact Management Techniques (MIMT) requirements

Minimum Impact Management Techniques are used to minimize the evidence of fire suppression and other management activities. These tactics are generally used in wilderness areas or other areas with high resource values.

Minimize impacts to paleontological and heritage resources, streams, stream banks, shorelines, lakes and associated vegetation, and habitat for threatened, endangered, proposed, and sensitive species from wildfire suppression efforts in the following ways:

- Prohibit the use of earth-moving equipment on known paleontological or heritage sites.
- Discourage the application of fire-retardant chemicals over riparian areas, wetlands and open water.
- Prior to using earth-moving equipment, consult appropriate specialists for guidance.

These minimum impact tactical standards should be used as the guiding principle in Wilderness fire suppression. Suppression personnel from the IC to the firefighter need to modify their suppression philosophies and actions so that the unique and special characteristics of wilderness are maintained.

Guidance for Using Motorized or Mechanized Equipment in Wilderness

District Rangers will approve the use of helicopters, airtankers, and power tools such as chainsaws, portable pumps, etc., for fire suppression purposes in all wilderness areas of the Pike/San Isabel National Forests. Per FSM 2326.04c (PSICC supplement 12/10/2004), “District Rangers are delegated authority to approve use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport under conditions prescribed in FSM 2326.1, item #1

The following chart shows the delegation of authorities for approving motorized and mechanical equipment within Wilderness on the Pike and San Isabel National Forest.

Motorized/Mechanical Request	Authorization for Non-Emergencies	Authorization for Fire and Other Emergencies
Chainsaws, Pumps	Regional Forester	Forest Supervisor
Helicopters-Fixed Wing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retardant Delivery • Bucket Work • Personnel Shuttle 	Regional Forester	Forest Supervisor
Transport & supply by aircraft, air drop & mechanical transport	Regional Forester (2326.1)	Forest Supervisor
Helispot Construction	Regional Forester	Forest Supervisor
Motor Vehicle	Regional Forester	Forest Supervisor
Tractors (Heavy Equipment)	Regional Forester	Regional Forester
Management Ignited Fire in Wilderness	Regional Forester	N/A
Managed for resource benefit objectives in Wilderness	N/A	District Ranger (where objective is established)
Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) projects in Wilderness	Regional Forester (2323.04c.11)	Forest Supervisor

Each District will make provisions for fighting fires in wilderness when motorized or mechanized equipment cannot be used. This will include having alternate suppression equipment available, special training for fire suppression crews, and using confine or contain tactics.

Use the following “guidelines” when considering mechanized transport or motorized equipment for fire suppression purposes in Wilderness.

Approve the use of Motorized Equipment (chainsaws, portable pumps, etc.) when:

- There is a threat to life, property, public or firefighter safety that can only be mitigated with the use of motorized equipment.
- Potential effects to cultural or natural resources will be outside the range of acceptable effects, unless motorized equipment is used. Take into account the

historic size and severity of fires in the affected area and any pertinent fire protection objectives.

- The Burning Index (BI) exceeds, or is predicted to exceed, the 90th percentile level for the affected area.
- The down dead fuel loading or number of snags is such that containment or control objectives cannot be met without the use of motorized equipment.
- Technically difficult trees (usually “C” level difficulty) must be felled for firefighter safety, and where using a crosscut saw substantially increases risk to the sawyer.
- Use of motorized equipment will result in substantially less impact to the Wilderness resource (i.e. using a pump to establish a “wet line”, versus using handtools to dig line).
- Electing to use Fire Use objectives may necessitate the planned use of motorized equipment as part of a potential contingency action.

Approve the use of Mechanized Transport (off-highway vehicles, wagons, carts, helicopters, smokejumpers, heli-rappellers, air cargo drops, etc.) when:

- There is a threat to life, property, public or firefighter safety that can only be mitigated with the use of mechanized transport.
- Potential effects to cultural or natural resources will be outside the range of acceptable effects, unless mechanized transport is used. Take into account the historic size and severity of fires in the affected area and any pertinent fire protection objectives.
- Use of mechanized transport will result in substantially less impact to the Wilderness resource (i.e. using a helicopter to ferry crews to / from an off-site base camp, versus establishing a camp in a sensitive environment).
- On-going fire situations dictate prompt retrieval of specialized personnel or equipment, and there is no other practical means of retrieval. Retrieval of firefighters or their equipment from Wilderness is normally viewed as a non-emergency situation.

Approve the use of Fire Retardant chemicals in Wilderness when:

- There is a threat to life, property, public or firefighter safety that can only be mitigated with the use of fire retardant chemicals.
- Potential effects to cultural or natural resources will be outside the range of acceptable effects, unless fire retardant chemicals are used. Take into account the historic size and severity of fires in the affected area and any pertinent fire protection objectives.
- Use of fire retardant chemicals will result in substantially less impact to the Wilderness resource (i.e. using fire retardant to substantially extinguish a fire, versus using handcrews and motorized equipment). Remember retardant dyes can last for years on rocks and logs, dependent on weather and exposure.
- Consider the use of water (preferred) or foam instead of retardant.

Approval for construction of Helispots within Wilderness:

Per FSM 2326.04c (PSICC supplement 12/10/2004) – only those District Rangers, who have attended “Wilderness Management for Line Officers”, are delegated

responsibility and authority for the construction of helispots within Wilderness. If permission is granted, use the following guidelines:

- Locate helispots and ‘dip-sites’ outside of Wilderness whenever feasible
- Provide for risk assessments and safety
- Use natural openings where possible, or areas that minimize needed tree felling.
- Consider the visual impacts of potential locations; when possible, locate helispots away from main trails and popular attractions.
- Where possible, select locations that can be easily restored to their natural appearance.

Do not approve Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) projects within Wilderness unless:

- To prevent an unnatural loss of the Wilderness resource, or
- To protect life, property, and other resource values outside of Wilderness.