State of Alaska
FY2004 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Natural Resources
Fire Suppression
BRU/Component Budget Summary

BRU/Component: Fire Suppression

(There is only one component in this BRU. To reduce duplicate information, we did not print a separate BRU section.)

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Component Mission

The Division of Forestry's mission is to manage wildland fires in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible, meeting statutory requirements to provide wildland fire protection to all state, municipal and private lands.

Component Services Provided

This component enables the Division of Forestry to meet its statutory responsibility under AS41.15.010 for wildland fires on all state, municipal and private lands in Alaska.

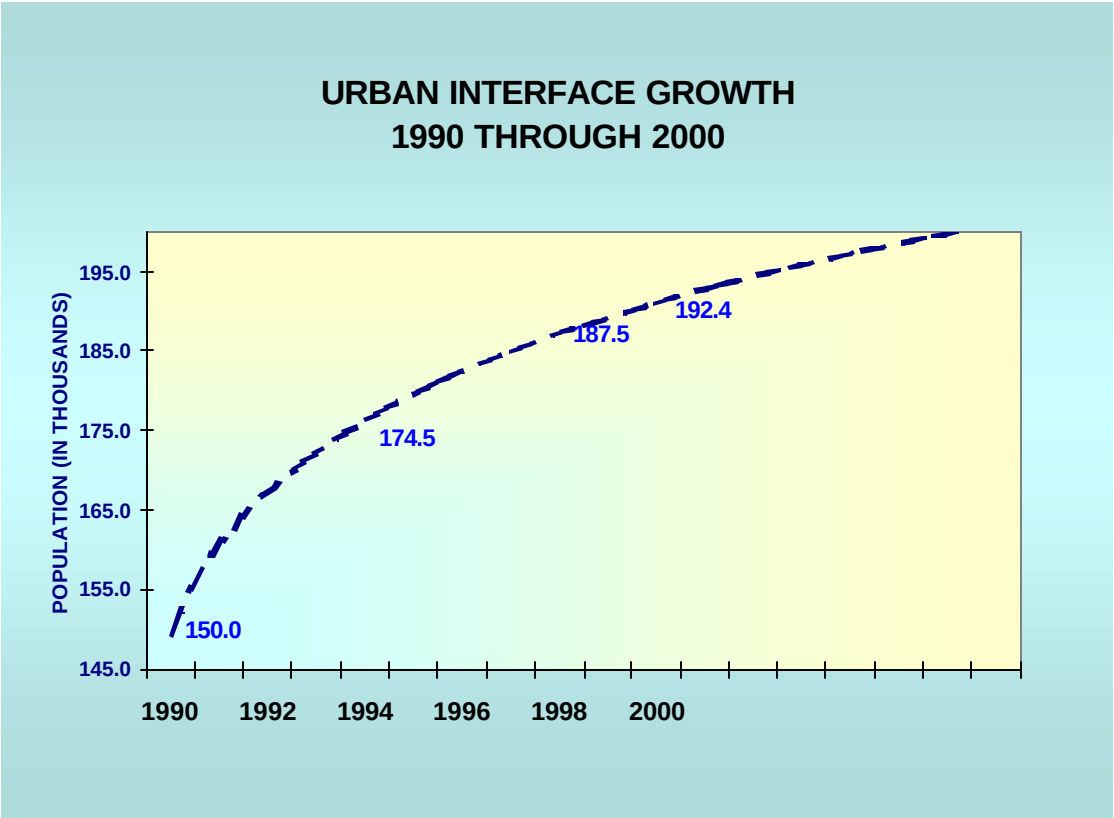
The Division provides rapid and aggressive initial attack on wildland fires consistent with the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan. This will be accomplished through cooperative agreements with federal and local government fire cooperators.

This component funds wildland fire suppression operations and fixed operating costs to provide for critical supplies, services, equipment, and personnel. Helicopters, air tankers and light fixed-wing aircraft are contracted from private vendors to provide detection, transportation of initial attack firefighters, and application of fire retardant to wildland fires. Village emergency firefighting crews, incidental emergency firefighters, local government and federal cooperator personnel will be hired in emergency situations to supplement the Division's firefighters.

Component Goals and Strategies

The goal of this component is to manage wildland fire in order to protect human life, inhabited improvements, Alaska's natural resources and other critical sites.

Strategies to be utilized are to provide for immediate and effective initial attack to suppress all fires in the populated areas of the state and to protect critical sites in other areas of the state as specified in the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan. Additional strategies are to coordinate emergency response efforts with local government, other state agencies and federal agency cooperators and to employ residents of Alaska in fighting wildland fires. Firefighters and resources available for rapid initial attack in the urban interface can be very effective in keeping new fires small.



Key Component Issues for FY2003 – 2004

Wildland/urban interface fires are increasing. Responding to the rising numbers of urban interface wildland fires as Alaska's population continues to move into the forested areas of the state is one of the key issues facing the Division and its cooperators. In 1999 the Division suppressed six serious urban interface wildland fires that directly threatened inhabited structures. During 2000, Forestry responded to 16 fires that involved structures threatened by wildland fire. In 2001, 230 of the 299 fires in Forestry responsibility areas were urban interface wildland fires. In 2002, 311 of the 336 fires in the state's protection area were urban interface. The urban interface fire zone continues to increase as new homes and subdivisions are built.

Weather changes are extending wildland fire seasons. Complicating the urban interface issue, three distinct weather patterns set up in the summer of 2002 that created critical wildland fire danger statewide. During the week of May 12, a high-pressure system developed over the State before normal green up. Within a week temperatures were above 80 degrees and relative humidity registered in the teens. During the next two-week period more than 180 wildland fires started across the state. Three of these wildland fire starts became large fires within hours of each other on May 22nd and 23rd; two of these burned throughout the entire summer. The second critical period began in mid July resulting in 86 lightning caused wildland fires statewide during a five-day span, two of which later became expensive project fires. Another abnormal statewide high pressure system set up in early August which intensified fire activity on existing fires, some of which had been burning since early May.

Starting in the third week of May to the end of June the Division of Forestry mobilized approximately 250 individual overhead resources, six 20-person Type I crews, two air tankers and two rotor wing aircraft from the lower 48. Additionally, the Division had above average usage of in-state 16-person Type II Emergency Firefighting crews. Eight Type II Incident Management Teams were deployed in Alaska, which is well above the historic average.

Component costs are increasing due to longer seasons, more wildland fires. 2.2 million acres of forested lands

burned in Alaska during the 2002 fire season. This is the **fifth highest number of acres burned in recorded fire history**. Many of the fires were in limited protection and required no suppression action. However, a significant percentage of the wildland fires that required suppression action occurred on state responsibility lands resulting in the State of Alaska being required to pay the suppression costs. Several of these wildland fires became costly project fires requiring the assignment of incident management teams to suppress them.

HISTORIC SUPPRESSION COSTS

FISCAL YEAR	GF HIGH/ LOW	GENERAL FUND	FEDERAL FUND	SUPPRESSION TOTAL	INTER-AGENCY SUPPORT**	COMBINED TOTAL	ACRES PROTECTED	NUMBER OF FIRES
FY02		$23,587.8	$10,281.3	$33,869.1	$16.1	$33,885.2	134 MILL	336
FY01		$14,271.4	$10,072.1	$24,343.5	$6.7	$24,350.2	134 MILL	299
FY00		$13,993.4	$3,815.4	$17,808.8	$24.1	$17,832.9	134 MILL	324
FY99		$13,731.9	$5,561.1	$19,293.0	$15.9	$19,308.9	134 MILL	329
FY98	high	$23,686.1	$8,379.4	$32,065.5	$14.6	$32,080.1	134 MILL	591
FY97		$12,552.5	$8,897.1	$21,449.6	$39.7	$21,489.3	134 MILL	568
FY96		$16,592.4	$13,306.2	$29,898.6	$416.4	$30,315.0	134 MILL	615
FY95		$9,191.1	$8,334.1	$17,525.2	$4,674.5	$22,199.7	134 MILL	430
FY94		$10,252.0	$4,413.7	$14,665.7	$0.0	$14,665.7	134 MILL	508
FY93	low	$7,743.3	$3,069.0	$10,812.3	$5.1	$10,817.4	134 MILL	516
				$0.0				
TOTAL		$145,601.9	$76,129.4	$221,731.3	$5,213.1	$226,944.4		4,516

AVERAGES	GENERAL FUND/YR	FEDERAL/YR	TOTAL/YR	IA SUPPORT/YR	TOTAL
	$14,271.6	$8,085.1	$22,356.7	$649.2	$23,005.9

AVERAGE EXPENDITURES (removing years with high & low GF) = $14.3 Million GF Annually for Fire Suppression on State Jurisdiction Lands.

** Interagency Non-Fire Support:
FY 95 $4,674.5 of funds were expended in support of Koyukuk Flood in Fall 1994.
FY 96 $416.4 of funds expended on Fall Storm Support, Search and Rescue (SAR), and Fuel Support.

Costs are increasing due to longer seasons, more wildland fires. The state's wildland fire seasons are longer than in past years and costs for suppression of wildland fires continue to increase. The annual cost of wildland fire suppression consistently exceeds base budgeted funding. This has been recognized by both the administration and legislature and additional funding has been made available through the use of the emergency declaration process and supplemental appropriations, as well as through ratification of funding for the period from May - June when Supplemental funding estimates proved to be insufficient.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2002

- Successfully suppressed 98% of the 241 wildland fires in critical protection at 10 acres or less, exceeding the measure of 90% and equaling the 2000 fire season where the division successfully suppressed 98% of the wildland 218 fires in critical protection. This measure is highly dependent upon conditions including weather, winds, number of simultaneous fires, etc. This trend supports an outcome of decreased wildland/urban interface fires that reach project fire level, thus saving the state suppression costs and protecting public lives and property.
- Successfully suppressed 96.1% of 311 wildland fires in critical and full protection at 10 acres or less, exceeding the measure of 90%. These urban/ interface fires were suppressed by firefighters in Tok, Fairbanks, Delta, Copper River, McGrath, Palmer/Big Lake, Soldotna and the Haines Areas. This trend supports an outcome of increased wildland/urban interface fires that require extended and more expensive attack.
- Employed 21 EFF village crews in-state and 20 EFF village crews and 1 Type I crews out-of-state, as well as 378 individual EFF for a total of wages paid to Alaskans of $5.2 million. Hiring EFF crews supports an outcome of increased employment for Alaskans in rural areas that have few sources of income.
- Provided Alaskan aviation vendors with income from thirteen 90-day and one 45-day aircraft contracts for helicopters, air tankers and fixed wing aircraft used to support wildland and wildland/ urban interface fire suppression. Economic support of Alaskan aviation vendors results in an outcome of a healthier aviation sector and increased employment.
- Managed and responded to a total of 336 wildland fires in both wildland and wildland/urban interface areas on 134 million acres. A diversified outcome effect results in increased employment, increased economic benefit to vendors, protection of life and property.
- Provided fire weather forecasting a minimum of 5 days per week during fire season, providing critical information to managers making decisions to institute fire burn bans, position firefighters and aircraft in certain areas, and call in more resources. The outcome is more efficient fire management, which saves the state money.
- Analyzed daily lightning occurrence data to determine areas where wildland fires are most likely to occur. Provide aircraft detection to areas of multiple strikes and provide rapid response to fire starts in areas with high value natural resources and human improvements. The outcome is more efficient fire management which saves the state money.
- Generated $17.8 million into the Alaskan economy, including payments to 995 vendors who supplied additional aircraft detection, commodities and supplies during fire suppression activities this season. This major economic influx supports an outcome of increased employment and an increased economic stimulus to the state's economy.
- Purchased firefighting capabilities from the federal government saving the state duplication of services and funding. This supports an outcome of more efficient government.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

Alaska Statutes - Title 41

Section 41.15.010 - 41.15.170

Section 41.15.200 - 41.15.240

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Key Performance Measures for FY2004

Measure:
The number of fires that result from human actions, whether as a function of population growth or other causes.
Sec 110(b)(5) Ch 124 SLA 2002(HB 515)

Alaska's Target & Progress:
Target
Reduce human caused fires in the state's protection area.

Progress
In fire season 2002, 320 of the 399 fires were human-caused. This is an increase of the number of human caused fires from fire season 2001 where there were 279 human caused fires. The increased numbers in 2002 resulted from an extended fire season due to extreme dry conditions in May and August.

In March of 2003, 31 human caused fires have already been reported due to high winds and lack of snow in the Mat Su Valley and the Kenai Peninsula.

Benchmark Comparisons:
There is no benchmark for this measure.

Background and Strategies:
Humans cause approximately 80-85 percent of the wildland fires occurring each season in the Division's protection area. Strategies include maintaining an aggressive wildland fire prevention program and continued support of the defensible space and FIREWISE concepts in an effort to reduce the overall percentage of human-caused fires.

Measure:
The percentage of fires in full and critical protection categories that are held to less than 10 acres.
Sec 110(b)(6) Ch 124 SLA 2002(HB 515)

Alaska's Target & Progress:
Target:
Contain 90% of fires in full and critical protection categories at 10 acres or less.

Progress:
First quarter FY03 on track. In fire season 2001, 271 of 277 fires (99%) of fires in full and critical protection were kept to 10 acres or less. In fire season 2000, 236 of 241 fires (98%) reached the target.

Benchmark Comparisons:
There is no benchmark for this measure.

Background and Strategies:
The Division of Forestry responds to an average of 423 wildland fires annually in its protection area. The most cost-effective response requires adequate preparedness and coordination with the Division's numerous cooperators. The occurrence of wildland/urban interface fires will continue to increase as the population moves to the wooded areas of the state, climatic changes result in longer fire seasons, and serious insect/disease infestations add to the hazardous fuels problem.

Strategies include providing immediate, aggressive initial attack in coordination with cooperating local government, structure fire departments and federal agencies. This strategy includes creating and maintaining cooperative agreements to enhance initial attack response effectiveness. Additional strategies include media coverage of fires to expand public awareness of the impact of human caused fires, support of fire prevention activities, and increased public education on how to create survivable space around private property.

Fire Suppression

Component Financial Summary

All dollars in thousands

	FY2002 Actuals	FY2003 Authorized	FY2004 Governor
Non-Formula Program:			
Component Expenditures:			
71000 Personal Services	10,286.1	2,960.3	4,444.0
72000 Travel	808.1	34.7	140.5
73000 Contractual	18,235.6	6,746.9	8,196.2
74000 Supplies	4,316.7	704.5	768.6
75000 Equipment	628.5	20.0	689.2
76000 Land/Buildings	0.0	0.0	0.0
77000 Grants, Claims	0.0	0.0	0.0
78000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expenditure Totals	**34,275.0**	**10,466.4**	**14,238.5**
Funding Sources:			
1002 Federal Receipts	10,281.3	7,321.8	7,330.4
1004 General Fund Receipts	23,587.8	3,144.6	6,908.1
1007 Inter-Agency Receipts	405.9	0.0	0.0
Funding Totals	**34,275.0**	**10,466.4**	**14,238.5**

Fire Suppression

Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2004

This program will operate at current service levels. The funding for this program comes from a base appropriation complimented with Disaster Declaration funding, Supplemental funding, and Ratification funding.

This budget proposes an increment for $3,957.7, from its current level that presently funds only a portion of the component's fixed costs, to a level that will fund the component's budgeted fixed costs.

This budget proposes to transfer $194.2 in GF to DNR Data Processing Chargeback Component for bundled service charges from ACS for fire suppression radios, network services, and circuits. The expectation is for this service to improve at an overall lower cost to this program.

Summary of Component Budget Changes

From FY2003 Authorized to FY2004 Governor

All dollars in thousands

	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds
FY2003 Authorized	**3,144.6**	**7,321.8**	**0.0**	**10,466.4**
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-Base Transfer to Inter. Info Tech component for Radios, Space/Power and Dedicated Circuits	-194.2	0.0	0.0	-194.2
-Annualize FY2003 COLA Increase for General Government, Confidential and Supervisory Bargaining Units	0.0	8.6	0.0	8.6
Proposed budget increases:				
-Fund Fire Suppression FY04 Fixed Costs	3,957.7	0.0	0.0	3,957.7
FY2004 Governor	**6,908.1**	**7,330.4**	**0.0**	**14,238.5**

Fire Suppression

Personal Services Information

Authorized Positions			Personal Services Costs	
	FY2003 Authorized	FY2004 Governor		
Full-time	8	10	Annual Salaries	1,595,523
Part-time	34	74	Premium Pay	1,741
Nonpermanent	0	0	Annual Benefits	615,135
			Less 3.00% Vacancy Factor	(66,372)
			Lump Sum Premium Pay	2,297,973
Totals	**42**	**84**	**Total Personal Services**	**4,444,000**

Position Classification Summary

Job Class Title	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Juneau	Others	Total
Accountant II	1	0	0	0	1
Accounting Tech I	0	0	0	1	1
Administrative Clerk II	0	1	0	2	3
Aircraft Maint Inspector	0	0	0	1	1
Aircraft Pilot II	0	0	0	4	4
Aircraft Supervisor	0	0	0	1	1
Food Service Journey	0	0	0	1	1
Food Service Lead	0	0	0	1	1
Food Service Sub Journey	0	0	0	2	2
Forest Tech II	0	4	0	10	14
Forest Tech III	0	3	0	11	14
Forest Tech IV	0	0	0	1	1
Forester I	0	2	0	2	4
Forester II	0	1	0	1	2
Forester III	1	0	0	0	1
Forester IV	1	0	0	0	1
Human Resource Technician II	0	0	1	0	1
Maint Gen Sub - Journey I	0	0	0	5	5
Maint Gen Sub - Journey II	0	0	0	1	1
Mech Aircraft Adv Jrny	0	0	0	1	1
Mech Auto Sub Journey	1	0	0	0	1
Procurement Spec I	0	0	0	1	1
Stock & Parts Svcs Journey I	0	1	0	3	4
Stock & Parts Svcs Journey II	0	1	0	2	3
Stock & Parts Svcs Lead	0	1	0	0	1
Stock & Parts Svcs Sub Journey	0	6	0	8	14
Totals	**4**	**20**	**1**	**59**	**84**