

State of Alaska FY2005 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Natural Resources Fire Suppression Activity Component Budget Summary

Contents

<i>Component: Fire Suppression Activity</i>	3
Component Financial Summary.....	6
Summary of Component Budget Changes.....	7

Component: Fire Suppression Activity

Contribution to Department's Mission

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

Core Services

The Division's Wildland Fire Management Program consists of two components under its statutory responsibility in AS41.15.010 for wildland fires on all state, municipal and private lands in Alaska. This component funds wildland fire suppression operations and closely related activities.

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.

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.

Note: Performance measures for the Statewide Fire Suppression RDU components are included in the Fire Suppression Preparedness Component.

FY2005 Resources Allocated to Achieve Results		
FY2005 Component Budget: \$11,673,900	Personnel:	
	Full time	0
	Part time	0
	Total	0

Key Component Challenges

Alaska's population continues to move into the forested areas of the state and responding to the rising numbers of urban interface wildland fires is one of the key issues facing the Division and its local government 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. For the 2003 fire season, 353 of 369 fires were in the urban interface. The urban interface fire zone continues to increase as new homes and subdivisions are built.

Weather changes are extending Alaska's wildland fire season and complicating the urban interface issue. The legislated wildland fire season is May 1st through September 30th annually. However, due to changes in the weather pattern, the Division's initial attack firefighters are normally fighting wildland fires much earlier than the May 1st date. In 2003 the Division responded to 49 fires in March, which was by far the most fire responses in March on record. All of these fires occurred in the urban interface and several of these early fires threatened homes and other structures directly. On March 12, the Helen fire near Palmer burned 65 acres, destroyed an historical barn and other out buildings, and threatened numerous other homes and businesses in the area.

Forestry's ICS trained and experienced personnel are increasingly being used for all-risk incident response ranging from other natural disasters such as the windstorm disaster declaration in March 2003, the Denali earthquake response, flooding, search and rescue within the state to national incidents such as the New York City response on 9/11 and the NASA shuttle recovery response this last year. The state is increasingly relying on their availability in planning disaster or terrorism response. However, the majority of these personnel are 3-5 month seasonal staff, whose seasons are already too short to provide required training and ensure their availability for fires. Increased all-risk workload is devolving toward the few fire managers who have full time fire management responsibilities. While Forestry is probably the best choice for many emergency response situations, man-months expended annually toward all-risk assignments negatively impact our ability to get the basic wildland fire management missions accomplished in the most effective and cost-efficient manner.

Component costs are increasing due to longer seasons, more urban interface wildland fires. 602,146 acres of forested lands burned in Alaska during the 2003 fire season, which is near the 10 year average for yearly acres burned. Approximately 12% of the total number of fires statewide were in limited protection and required no suppression action. However, 91% 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. Five of these wildland fires became costly project fires requiring the assignment of incident management teams to suppress.

Starting in the second week of May to the end of June the Division of Forestry mobilized approximately 136 individual overhead resources, five 20-person Type I crews, and 31 additional smokejumpers from the lower 48. Additionally, the Division had above average usage of in-state 16-person Type II Emergency Firefighting crews. Changes in national security requirements for personal identification have caused village EFF crews significant problems in mobilizing for fires. Considerable assistance is needed to provide to villages for resolution of this issue. Four Alaskan and one State of Washington Type II Incident Management Teams were deployed in Alaska.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2005

This component will operate at current funding service levels. No significant changes are anticipated at the current funding level.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2003

Fire Program budgeting was previously split in Forest Management and Development and Fire Suppression, and is now in Fire Suppression Activity and Fire Suppression Preparedness.

- 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 and 2002 fire seasons where the division successfully suppressed 98% of the wildland 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 93% of 258 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 Junction, Copper River, McGrath, Anchorage, the Mat-Su Valley, Soldotna and the Haines Areas. This trend supports an outcome of increased wildland/urban interface fires that require extended and more expensive attack.
- 47 EFF village crews were used on 61 in-state fires and 20 EFF village crews and 1 Type I crew were mobilized out-of-state. In addition, 378 individual EFF were sent to the Lower 48, 4 EFF village crews were sent to British Columbia through participation in the Northwest Compact and 10 crews were mobilized to assist with the recovery of the Space Shuttle Columbia. The state expended \$5,373.7 in EFF wages in CY03. Hiring EFF crews supports an outcome of increased employment for Alaskans in rural areas that have few sources of income as well as cost-effective support of Alaskan fire suppression efforts.
- Provided Air Tanker and Aerial Supervision Module support for 45 days to the State of Oregon through the Northwest Compact. Sharing of resources through participation in the NW Compact provides an outcome of reciprocal assistance when Alaska experiences resource shortages during high levels of fire activity.
- Provided the Incident Commander, Deputy IC and other key personnel to the Alaska Interagency Incident Management Team which was assigned to 4 fires over 43 days during an extremely busy fire season in Montana.

Participation on National Type I teams provides outcomes of invaluable experience and reciprocating service to Alaskan firefighters, particularly in wildland-urban interface.

- 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 Alaskan aviation sector and increased employment.
- Managed and responded to a total of 476 wildland fires in both wildland and wildland/urban interface areas on 134 million protection acres. A diversified outcome effect results in increased employment, increased economic benefit to vendors, and protection of life and property.
- Provided fire weather forecasting 7 days per week during the fire season, providing critical information to managers making decisions to restrict open burning, position firefighters and aircraft in certain areas, and call in more resources. The outcome allows Forestry to preposition initial attack for quick response during high fire danger and take other actions that result in more efficient fire management. The outcome, which provides more efficient fire management, saves the State money.
- Analyzed daily lightning occurrence data to determine areas where wildland fires are most likely to occur. Provided aircraft detection to areas of multiple strikes and provided rapid response to fire starts in areas with high value natural resources and human improvements. The outcome allows Forestry to preposition crews and send aerial detection to areas of high lightning occurrence for quicker initial attack.
- 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

11 AAC 95

Contact Information

Contact: Jeff J. Jahnke, State Forester

Phone: (907) 269-8474

Fax: (907) 269-8931

E-mail: jjahnke@dnr.state.ak.us

Fire Suppression Activity Component Financial Summary

All dollars shown in thousands

	FY2003 Actuals	FY2004 Authorized	FY2005 Governor
Non-Formula Program:			
Component Expenditures:			
71000 Personal Services	0.0	3,252.3	3,152.3
72000 Travel	0.0	186.8	151.8
73000 Contractual	0.0	8,884.8	6,464.8
74000 Supplies	0.0	2,000.0	1,905.0
75000 Equipment	0.0	0.0	0.0
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	0.0	14,323.9	11,673.9
Funding Sources:			
1002 Federal Receipts	0.0	6,960.4	3,460.4
1004 General Fund Receipts	0.0	7,363.5	724.4
1108 Statutory Designated Program Receipts	0.0	0.0	1,500.0
1140 AIDEA Dividend	0.0	0.0	4,315.6
1150 ASLC Dividend	0.0	0.0	1,673.5
Funding Totals	0.0	14,323.9	11,673.9

Estimated Revenue Collections

Description	Master Revenue Account	FY2003 Actuals	FY2004 Authorized	FY2005 Governor
Unrestricted Revenues				
None.		0.0	0.0	0.0
Unrestricted Total		0.0	0.0	0.0
Restricted Revenues				
Federal Receipts	51010	0.0	6,960.4	3,460.4
Statutory Designated Program Receipts	51063	0.0	0.0	1,500.0
AK Industrial Dev. Export Auth. Receipts	51406	0.0	0.0	4,315.6
AK Post-Sec. Education Comm. Receipts	55520	0.0	0.0	1,673.5
Restricted Total		0.0	6,960.4	10,949.5
Total Estimated Revenues		0.0	6,960.4	10,949.5

**Summary of Component Budget Changes
From FY2004 Authorized to FY2005 Governor**

All dollars shown in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2004 Authorized	7,363.5	6,960.4	0.0	14,323.9
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-Eliminate language section for federal receipts appropriation Sec16/CH83/SLA03/P63/L6 HB75	0.0	-2,000.0	0.0	-2,000.0
-Authorization to Collect for Fire Suppression Support from Lower 48 States and Canada	0.0	-1,500.0	1,500.0	0.0
-Transfer Out Fire Fixed Costs to Fire Suppression Preparedness component	-650.0	0.0	0.0	-650.0
-One-time fund source change from GF to AIDEA and Student Loan Corp Dividends	-5,989.1	0.0	5,989.1	0.0
FY2005 Governor	724.4	3,460.4	7,489.1	11,673.9