

# ROUTT COUNTY WILDLAND FIRE OPERATING PLAN

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**PREAMBLE**

This Routt County Wildland Fire Management Operating Plan (OP) is prepared pursuant to the Statewide Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement (Statewide Agreement) for the State of Colorado.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this OP is to set forth standard operating procedures, agreed upon procedures, and responsibilities to implement cooperative wildland fire protection on all lands within Routt County.

Participants in this OP consist of the following:

- Routt County Sheriff, in cooperation with local fire chiefs
- Routt County Board of County Commissioners
- Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest and Thunder Basin National Grassland (USFS)
- Northwest Colorado Fire Management Unit (BLM)
- Colorado Division of Fire Prevention & Control (DFPC)

All participants in this plan agree to coordinate wildland fire management activities as outlined herein.

## AUTHORITIES

- Colorado Statewide Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement Between:
  - United States Department of the Interior
    - Bureau of Land Management
    - National Park Service
    - Bureau of Indian Affairs
    - U.S. Fish and Wildlife -COLO\_COOP\_2021-FF06R03000 ◦
  - United States Department of Agriculture
    - Forest Service – Rocky Mountain Region  
Agreement Number 21-FI-11020000-001
    - Forest Service – MBRTB  
Agreement Number 21-FO-11020600-047
- Routt County Memorandum of Understanding For Participation in the Colorado Emergency Fire Fund
- Agreement for Cooperative Wildfire Protection in Routt County

This OP fulfills requirements in the Statewide Agreement among the United States Department of the Interior (USDI) – Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Colorado; National Park Service – Intermountain Region; Bureau of Indian Affairs – Southwest Region; Fish and Wildlife Service – Mountain Prairie Region; Bureau of Reclamation – Great Plains Region and Upper Colorado Region; and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region; and the Board of Governors of the Colorado State University System – acting by and through Colorado State University – on behalf of the Colorado State Forest Service and Colorado Department of Public Safety Colorado through the Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC).

This OP fulfills requirements in the current Memorandum of Understanding for Participation in the Colorado Emergency Fire Fund between the State of Colorado and Routt County. This OP fulfills requirements in the Agreement for Cooperative Wildfire Protection in Routt County.

## RECITALS

National Response Framework activities will be accomplished utilizing established dispatch coordination concepts. Situation and damage assessments information will be transmitted through established fire suppression intelligence channels.

Jurisdictional Agencies are responsible for all planning documents, i.e., land use, resource and fire management plans and decision support documents, for a unit's wildland fire and fuels management program.

Protecting Agencies implement fire management actions according to Jurisdictional Agencies' policies and applicable decision support tools.

## **INTERAGENCY COOPERATION**

### **Jurisdictional Roles**

#### **FIRE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each jurisdictional agency has ultimate responsibility for wildland fire management on its own lands.

Pursuant to C.R.S. 30-10-512 – 513.5, the Sheriff may designate a person or persons to represent his office as it relates to these statutes. The Sheriff or his designee will work with the Routt County Board of County Commissioners (or their designee) to assist other governmental authorities in emergencies for controlling or extinguishing such fires and for assisting in calling to their aid such persons as is deemed necessary.

Through the formation of special districts and acquiring wildland firefighting equipment, fire protection districts have assumed certain responsibilities for suppressing unwanted fires within their districts. It is clearly and mutually understood that fire protection districts will promptly attack wildfires and follow through on all necessary suppression actions on properties that fall within their respective protection areas.

Pursuant to Section 29-22.5-103 (1) (a) C.R.S. the chief of the fire department in each fire protection district is responsible for the management of wildland fires that occur within the boundaries of his or her district and that are within the capability of the fire district to control or extinguish in accordance with the provisions of Section 32-1-1002 (3) (a) C.R.S. The chief may utilize mutual aid agreements and unified command with neighboring fire protection districts to suppress and control fires that cross or threaten to cross boundaries of the district. The fire chief may transfer any duties or responsibility the fire chief may assume under this section to the county sheriff with the concurrence of the sheriff (C.R.S. 29-22.5-103 (1) (c)). For fires involving federal land, the fire department, the sheriff, and federal jurisdiction representative will determine responsibilities, command structure, cost share agreements and other administrative issues.

The county sheriff or Sheriff designee is responsible for coordination of fire suppression efforts on all private and state lands in the case of prairie, forest or wildland fires occurring in the unincorporated area of the county outside the boundaries of a fire protection district or that has exceeded the capabilities of the fire protection district to control or extinguish. The county's responsibilities are limited to those set forth in Sections 30-10-512 -513.5 C.R.S.

The County Sheriff is responsible to order evacuations of the citizens from their homes, business or other places within Routt County.

In the case of a wildland fire that exceeds the capabilities of the fire protection district to control or extinguish and that requires mutual aid and outside resources, the Sheriff shall direct a unified command be established to provide the command and management required to manage the fire upon the transfer (written) of the fire from the fire district to the Sheriff, the Sheriff shall upon said transfer assume financial responsibility for firefighting efforts on behalf of the county and the authority for the ordering and monitoring of resources. In the case of a wildland fire that exceeds the capability of the county to control or extinguish, the Sheriff shall be responsible for seeking the assistance of the state, by requesting assistance from the DFPC by calling the State Emergency Operations Line at (303) 279-8855. The Sheriff and the state shall enter into an

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agreement concerning transfer of authority and responsibility for the fire suppression and the retention of responsibilities under a unified command structure.

The DFPC shall be the lead agency for wildland fire suppression as identified in the Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan and in accordance with the provisions of Section 24-33.5-1201 et seq., C.R.S. DFPC personnel will respond as needed and be available to respond to wildfires on state and private lands when called by the Routt County Sheriff, Emergency Operations Director, Fire Chief or designee. DFPC will provide technical assistance to the county in suppression, logistics, planning and other necessary duties, upon the county's request.

The Routt County Emergency Operations Director is responsible for the development of and implementation of the county Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to meet the hazard analysis of the county including wildfire.

A list of authorized agency representatives for agencies with wildland fire responsibility in Routt County is located in **Appendix A**.

## **Interagency Dispatch Centers**

### **INITIAL ATTACK DISPATCH LEVELS AND THEIR DETERMINATION**

Initial attack dispatch levels are not predetermined in Routt County, but are based on the availability of personnel at the time of dispatch.

### **INITIAL ATTACK DISPATCH**

Routt County Communications (RCC) will act as dispatch for County and Fire Protection District (FPD) initial attack response. Craig Regional Dispatch (CRC) is responsible for dispatching and coordination of all federal wildfire resources within Routt County as well as all aviation. RCC will contact CRC relative to every wildfire dispatch in the County and vice versa.

## **Interagency Resources**

N/A for this version.

## **Standards**

### **INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM USE**

The agencies will operate under the concepts of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and its Incident Command System (ICS) as appropriate for providing qualified resources and for the management of incidents encompassed under the terms of this OP.

### **QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)**

Per the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), incident qualification cards (formerly referred to as "Red cards") are not required for initial attack on fires. Beyond the mutual aid period, NWCG incident qualification cards are required on federal jurisdiction fires and state-responsibility fires.

The NWCG allows agencies to require more stringent standards than the minimum for their agency specific personnel.

During the mutual aid period, if responders are not NWCG qualified for the position assigned, the agency's home unit assumes responsibility for these individuals. Each agency or department is responsible for providing worker's compensation insurance for its own personnel.

All cooperators dispatched outside of their jurisdiction will meet NWCG standards.

## **INSPECTION SCHEDULES**

Each agency is responsible for inspecting its own equipment annually for use and road worthiness prior to listing it as available for interagency use.

All DFPC and cooperator engines subject to interagency dispatch shall adhere to the General Conditions for Equipment outlined in the Colorado Resource Rate Form (CRRF).

## **PREPAREDNESS**

### **Protection Planning**

Established preparedness levels are based on current and forecasted burning conditions, fire activity, and resource availability. Resource availability is the area of most concern. Situations and activities described within the preparedness levels are considered during wildland and prescribed fire season.

#### **A. Preparedness Levels Are Established:**

To identify the level of wildland and prescribed fire activity, severity and resource commitment within the County.

To identify predetermined actions to be taken by Agencies and Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Groups to ensure an appropriate preparedness/readiness and resource availability for the existing and potential situation.

During periods when fire management activity is significant enough to require prioritization of fires in order to allocate critical, limited and/or scarce resources, MAC groups will be established to accomplish that priority setting. Agencies shall be represented by officials with delegation of authority for their respective agencies; To modify area-wide fire management activities when essential to ensure appropriate level of response to Routt County demands.

#### **B. Craig Interagency Fire Danger Operating and Preparedness Plan**

The Craig Interagency Fire Danger Operating and Preparedness Plan is intended to document a decision-making process for agency administrators, fire managers, dispatchers, agency cooperators, and firefighters by establishing agency planning and response levels using the best available scientific methods and historical weather/fire data.

This Fire Danger Operating Plan (FDOP) documents the establishment and management of the Northwestern Colorado's Interagency Fire Weather System and incorporates NFDRS fire danger modeling into fire management decisions.

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The complete FDOP can be found on the Craig Interagency website: [https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch\\_centers/r2crc/predictive/fuels\\_fire\\_danger/Craig%20FDOP.pdf](https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2crc/predictive/fuels_fire_danger/Craig%20FDOP.pdf)

### **Protection Areas and Boundaries**

Jurisdictional boundary lines for USFS, BLM, and Routt County (private and state) lands are as shown on the Routt National Forest map (1/2 inch = 1 mile), 2009 revision.

Routt County Fire Management Plan Hazard Maps can be obtained from the Routt County Office of Emergency Management. The maps reflect the jurisdictional boundary lines for the five (5) Routt County FPDs, including the city of Steamboat Springs, and the towns of Hayden, Oak Creek, and Yampa, and lands in Routt County included in the Craig Fire Protection District.

### **Reciprocal (Mutual Aid) Fire Assistance**

All dispatches will be made based on the closest forces capable of responding to the incident. The mutual aid time period is defined as the time of initial dispatch and ends at either midnight of the first operational period or midnight of the second operational period. All mutual aid periods will preferably end at midnight for ease of financial accounting and the development of cost share agreements.

Mutual Aid protection has been established countywide between all signatories to this plan. It is agreed there should be no delay in initial attack pending determination of the precise location of the fire, land ownership, or responsibility. All state, federal and local resources are considered mutual aid. The Jurisdictional Agency will not be required to reimburse the Supporting Agency(s) for costs incurred following the initial dispatch of any ground and aviation resources to the fire for the duration of the mutual aid period. Assistance beyond the Mutual Aid period will be reimbursable assistance, and the Supporting Agency may bill the Jurisdictional Agency for resources assigned to the fire outside the Mutual Aid period. It is understood that no supporting Agency will be required to assist, or expected to commit resources to a Jurisdictional Agency.

### **Acquisition of Services**

N/A for this version.

### **Joint Projects and Project Plans**

#### **RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL MOBILIZATION GUIDES**

CRC maintains and updates a mobilization (MOB) guide. This guide is used by CRC to order resources for local incidents. Routt County Office of Emergency Management maintains and updates the MOB guide for Routt County.

### **Fire Prevention**

#### **GENERAL COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES**

When cooperating agencies determine that the fire danger warrants, fire prevention/suppression patrols may be initiated. If prevention patrol personnel are signed up as Administratively Determined (ADs), they could be required to respond anywhere on the administrative unit. Volunteer patrol personnel will not be required to respond.

## INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

### 1. Fire Danger Information

#### a. Fire Weather Station Locations

USFS maintains Remote Automatic Weather Stations (RAWS) at Dry Lake (Dry Lake RAWS #50207) and Lynx Pass (Porcupine RAWS #50406). Fire weather and fuels information from these stations should be similar to most of the lodgepole pine type in Routt County.

#### b. Data Sharing and Methods

The CRC monitors local fire danger levels. This information is available on the website after 10:00 a.m. at <https://www.weather.gov/gjt/fire>

#### c. Fire Danger Dissemination

Between 1600 and 1630 hours CRC will broadcast / fax fire danger rating with weather forecast and predicted fire danger rating for the next day. Forecasts are available on the website after 10:00 a.m. at:

[https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch\\_centers/r2crc/predictive/intelligence/dailybrief1.pdf](https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2crc/predictive/intelligence/dailybrief1.pdf)

#### d. Fire Prevention Signs

Each agency will determine when and where to place fire prevention signs.

### 2. Joint or Single Agency Press Releases

Each agency will prepare and release fire prevention material and media presentations according to its own prevention plans. Coordination with other agencies should be maintained in order to prevent a conflict in released material. Where pertinent, all news releases for fire prevention will carry a USFS, DFPC, BLM, FPD, Routt County Office of Emergency Management, or Routt County Sheriff by-line.

### 3. Red Flag Announcements

The NWS periodically issues a Fire Weather Watch or Red Flag Warning. RCC broadcasts these to the FPDs. RCC announces to all responding fire units the current Red Flag status.

## ENGINEERING

### 1. Land Use Planning (Wildland-Urban Interface)

Routt County recommends that a wildfire hazard review be conducted by the FPD on all proposed subdivisions. In the City of Steamboat Springs, Steamboat Springs FPD, Oak Creek FPD, and West Routt FPD, wildfire mitigation will be done in accordance with the International Fire Code (IFC) adopted by the FPDs.

### 2. Railroads and Utilities

No formal inspections or requirements.

## ENFORCEMENT

### 1. Restrictions and Closures

The purpose of fire restrictions and closures is to reduce the risk of human-caused fires during unusually high fire danger and/or burning conditions, and for the protection of human life and property. Fire restrictions impose many limitations on the general public, and therefore should be implemented only after all other prevention measures have been taken. These measures may include, but are not limited to increasing the number of prevention signs; public contacts; media campaigns; and other proactive outreach and public education efforts. Fire restrictions should be considered when high to extreme fire danger is predicted to persist. Other considerations are the level of human-caused fire occurrences being experienced, firefighting resources available, potential high-risk occasions (4th of July, etc.), and fire activity occurring on a large landscape. Restrictions should not be considered the equivalent of a prevention program.

Fire restrictions and closures can be invoked on federal, state, and private lands under federal and state laws. Agency administrators are responsible for coordinating with other agencies including, but not limited to, all federal land management agencies, DFPC, Colorado State Parks, county sheriffs, county offices of emergency management, and local fire departments. Agency administrators issue appropriate documents and are responsible for enforcing restrictions and closures for those lands on which they have jurisdiction. Restrictions and closure procedures should attempt to be uniform across administrative and geographic boundaries. Public information about restrictions shall be broad-based, clear, and coordinated. Routt County utilizes the Craig Interagency Fire Restriction Plan to ensure scientific data is gathered for the recommended restriction.

Exemptions to fire restrictions in Routt County may be granted as allowed by the Routt County Fire Restriction Plan (Ordinance Number 2013-2), which is located in the Routt County Office of Emergency Management and recorded with the Clerk and Recorder at Reception No. 736673.

Annually, the parties to the OP shall review and validate the restriction and closure procedures and monitor the previous year's use of the procedures to ensure restrictions and closures are implemented consistently. At this time the parties will also evaluate and coordinate fire prevention, education, and outreach efforts. Any changes in agency contacts or administrators will be documented, with the

development or amendment of a contact/communications plan. All press releases, description of stages, and other necessary agency documents will be available in template format before the start of the fire season. Development and issuance of news releases will be coordinated with all agencies for any implementation or rescission of fire restrictions or area closures.

When the conditions within an area approach threshold levels, appropriate agency personnel make recommendations to agency administrators, who in turn should consult with each other and initiate coordinated restrictions/closure procedures. These threshold levels should be determined by all wildland management agencies in the county before the onset of fire season and will become part of the OP. The planning process for restrictions will include a public awareness campaign, keeping the media and public informed of the possibility of restrictions and/or closures.

### **Public Use Restrictions**

N/A for this version.

### **Burning Permits**

#### **ISSUING OPEN BURNING PERMITS (HEALTH AND AIR QUALITY)**

For prescribed burns the jurisdictional agency will follow agency-prescribed fire policy and procedures and notify RCC and CRC. Such notification should include the location, timing, and nature of prescribed burns.

### **Prescribed Fire (Planned Ignitions) and Fuels Management**

The agencies agree to cooperate in the development and implementation of prescribed burning programs.

Wildfires resulting from escaped prescribed fires ignited by a party to this OP on lands it manages shall be the responsibility of that party. The party responsible for the prescribed fire will reimburse other parties to this OP consistent with the terms and conditions contained herein for costs incurred in suppression of such fires.

If parties to this OP conduct a cooperative prescribed fire, details covering cost sharing, reimbursement, and responsibility for suppression costs, should it escape, shall be agreed upon and documented in the burn plan.

### **Smoke Management**

N/A for this version.

## **OPERATIONS**

### **Fire Notifications**

RCC will receive reports of wildland fires from the public and will notify the applicable agencies. CRC is the contact for all federal lands. The public will be encouraged to use 911 for reporting.

Assisting agencies making initial attack on fires within the mutual aid fire protection zone will ensure that the jurisdictional agency is promptly notified of the fire through RCC or CRC. CRC and RCC will keep each other informed of fires reported to their respective centers. The County Sheriff, Emergency Operations Director, or designee will be notified of all wildland fires. If the fire is on or threatening state or private land, and is expected to exceed the control capabilities of the County, the DFPC shall be notified through the State Emergency Operations Line at (303) 2798855 or by contacting the DFPC Regional Battalion Chief (BC) directly. If the fire is on or threatening land managed by the BLM, or Routt National Forest, RCC will notify CRC. The appropriate state land manager will be notified on all fires burning in their respective areas.

Failure to notify DFPC may jeopardize the opportunity for reimbursement of suppression expenses.

### **Boundary Line Fires**

A fire burning on or adjacent to a known or questionable protection boundary will be the initial attack responsibility of the protecting agencies on either side of the boundary. The agencies agree that public and firefighter safety are the first priority. The agencies agree to coordinate suppression management through the use of a Unified Command or with Delegation of Authority from all jurisdictions to an agreed IC. The initial attack ICs of the involved agencies shall mutually agree upon fire suppression objectives, strategy, and funding of agency suppression resources. When a fire burns on both sides of a protection boundary or threatens another jurisdiction, and is beyond the mutual aid period, a cost share agreement shall be jointly prepared and approved by the Federal Unit Administrator and Routt County Emergency Operations Director (or their designees) for all actions.

For the purpose of this operating plan, jurisdictional boundaries DO NOT pertain to the boundaries of individual fire protection districts. The mutual aid area will include all lands in Routt County, including all ski areas. Mutual aid will be implemented as follows:

Countywide response: Participants will respond to wildfires in the county regardless of jurisdiction. The level of activity or involvement by assisting agencies making a response may vary. At a minimum, assisting agencies will send such personnel and equipment necessary to size-up the fire and report the situation to the jurisdictional agency. Upon arrival, the Initial Attack IC will determine legal description and the need for appropriate jurisdictional fire investigator.

County-wide initial attack: The closest forces should be dispatched without regard to jurisdiction. Participants will initiate suppression activities on wildfires regardless of jurisdiction when it is within their capability to do so. Assisting agencies will not initiate attack fires on another jurisdiction if initial attack puts personnel at unreasonable risk (such as a remote fire discovered at night) or if asked to stand down by the jurisdictional agency. Agencies taking independent action within another agency's jurisdiction should notify that agency as soon as possible. The jurisdictional agency should assume responsibility for suppression at the earliest possible time, or as otherwise agreed. No party to this agreement shall be required to make resources or assistance available to the requesting party if by so doing would impair the party's ability to provide effective emergency services within its own service area.

Each agency will assume responsibility for its own expenses during the mutual aid period. The assisting agency may request reimbursement for costs incurred after that time. The jurisdictional agency will reimburse assisting agencies for costs incurred after the mutual aid period if requested to do so. Every effort should be made by the assisting agency to advise the IC of any claims related to the incident prior to departure from the incident. If that is not possible, then the assisting agency shall advise the IC of such claims no later than 24 hours after departure from the incident.

It is understood that no agency will be required or expected to commit its forces to assisting another agency to the extent of jeopardizing its own responsibilities, or the security of lands it is charged with protecting. During the mutual aid period each agency agrees to accept each other's standards (fire qualifications and fitness).

## **Response to Wildland Fire**

This OP is the only interagency fire response plan in use for Routt County between the County and State and Federal agencies. For specific use of wildland fire on public lands, refer to the Northwest Colorado Fire Management Plan, Current Fire Danger Operation Plan (FDOP), and Routt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

## **Special Management Considerations**

### **UNPLANNED FIRES ON FEDERAL LANDS**

All unplanned fires on federal land require a response and a decision. This is best communicated with clear objectives and an "incident strategy". The incident strategy is based on the following criteria:

- Should lead to meeting the objectives
- Risk to firefighters (Life First Concepts/Risk Management – probability and the consequences of fire impacting values at risk vs. the risk to firefighters put in place to mitigate the risk of fire impacting values.)
- Fuels, Weather and Topography influencing the fire and the anticipated spread of the fire
- Values truly at Risk: Communities, Infrastructure, Watersheds, Social, Ecological, Cultural, etc.
- Partner agencies and their objectives (if the fire is or is expected to be multijurisdictional)
- Cost of meeting objectives
- Smoke Management: Coordination with the States and monitoring
- Desired conditions (outlined in land management plans or other documents)
- Resource Availability
- Fire modelling Tools
- Seasonality – duration of fire/change in conditions

Agency Administrators and Fire Managers should assess the criteria above and then develop a strategy to successfully manage the fire, and meet objectives. The strategy may use natural barriers, changes in weather, fuel changes or rely heavily on the efforts of firefighters and aircraft. It could be a combination of all these elements (and usually is).

Suppression within designated wilderness, wilderness study areas, and/or roadless areas, as designated on the map, will not be conducted without direct orders from the jurisdictional federal official.

Use of mechanized equipment (e.g., bulldozers, graders, etc.) will not be permitted on federal lands without the express approval of the appropriate federal official.

Use of roads on federal lands presently closed to vehicular travel (outside of wilderness areas) is hereby authorized to all participants of this operating plan as follows:

- Access for detection and suppression is allowed on established roads behind locked gates.
- Once approved by the Agency Administrator (or their designee), access for suppression only is allowed on roads that have been designated as "closed."

Agencies responding to fires on federal land will attempt to adhere to the various federal agency plans for managing fires for multiple objectives and resource benefit when provided guidance by the appropriate federal officials.

### **FIRE OPERATIONS IN BEETLE KILL STANDS**

Due to altered fuel conditions, personnel operating within the bark beetle environment should be aware of the imminent danger presented by dead and dying trees, falling at an increasing rate across a broad forested landscape. Personnel operating in a beetle kill environment should utilize the USFS-R2 Fire Operations Guidance in Bark Beetle Stands located in Appendix B.

### **REPAIR OF WILDFIRE DAMAGE**

The State Emergency Fire Fund (EFF) is strictly a fire suppression fund and cannot pay for rehabilitation. It may be authorized by the DFPC Agency Administrator only when part of the Incident Action Plan (IAP) during the EFF period.

Various cost-share programs for wildfire land rehabilitation are available for private land, including the Emergency Watershed Stabilization Program from the USDA, National Resources Conservation Service.

### **REINFORCEMENTS, SUPPORT AND CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT**

Traffic control will be provided by the appropriate law enforcement agency, upon request, to expedite the routing of vehicles and personnel to and from major fires and to exclude unauthorized personnel from the area.

It will be the responsibility of the agency upon whose land the fire originates to take law enforcement action with regard to investigation of cause of the fire and prosecution of those responsible, if applicable. When initial attack is made by other than the jurisdictional agency, the assisting agency will immediately gather and preserve information and evidence pertaining to the cause of the fire for the jurisdictional agency.

For warning notification, sheltering procedures, and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) procedures refer to the Routt County EOP.

All requests for additional resources will be made by the IC in consultation with the jurisdictional agency representative. In the event that applicable ordering procedures are not substantially complied with, the cost of the additionally ordered resources shall be the responsibility of the party that ordered such resources.

## STRUCTURE PROTECTION

The operational roles of the federal agencies as partners in the urban interface are wildland firefighting, hazard reduction, cooperative prevention, education and technical assistance. Structural fire suppression is the responsibility of tribal, state, local governments or fire protection districts.

## PATIENT TRANSPORT

No person or agency, private or public, shall transport a patient from any point within Routt County in an ambulance to any point within or outside Routt County unless that person or agency holds a valid license and permits issued by Routt County.

Exceptions in the Routt County Ambulance Licensing Regulations are:

- Ambulances operated by a department or agency of the federal government, originating from a federal reservation or under contract with a federal agency or department for the purpose of federal responsibility.
- Vehicles, including ambulances from another county or state, used during a major catastrophe or mass casualty incident when permitted ambulances are insufficient.
- Refer to Routt County Resolution #2009-049 – A resolution concerning regulation of ambulance, ambulance services, and emergency medical personnel for more details. This document can be found in the Routt County Office of Emergency Management or recorded with the Routt County Clerk and Recorder at Reception No. 691535.

## Decision Process

Federal agencies are required to complete a Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS), or the most current wildland fire situation analysis tool, on all fires on federal lands that escape initial attack. The Routt County Emergency Operations Director should ensure preparation or review and approve the WFDSS for fires that have the potential to affect multiple jurisdictions and have the potential to go through an extended attack period into a project fire situation.

When a fire is burning on or threatens to burn on multiple jurisdictions, one (1) WFDSS should be prepared that considers all jurisdictions (the whole fire). All jurisdictions impacted by the fire should participate in the WFDSS process.

DFPC recommends that a Decision Support System be completed for all fires that receive a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) declaration.

DFPC requires a DFPC Analysis Form be prepared on non-federal fires that have the potential to exceed County control capabilities. Cooperation

## RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES PROCEDURE

The primary purpose of this OP is to ensure prompt suppression of wildland fires. Any interagency dispute arising from these procedures will be resolved on site by the Unified Command. When

necessary, following the conclusion of the fire incident, a panel of agency representatives other than the participants in the incident will review and resolve the dispute.

## **POST-INCIDENT ACTION ANALYSIS**

Analysis of incidents will be conducted at a level commensurate with the complexity of the incident.

### **Communication**

Federal, state, and county radio systems are largely incompatible at this time. The Fire Emergency Radio Network (VFIRE 21 and FERN 1) offers a partial solution to this problem. VFIRE 21 will be used for interagency communication on wildland fires. The state of Colorado has designated "VLAW 31," also referred to as "NLEEC") for communication to dispatch centers. Digital Trunk Radio (DTR) MAC Channel 17 shall be used as a hailing and mutual aid channel.

CRC has two (2) 800 MHz radio consolettes that are to be used to facilitate user interoperability for mutual aid purposes between all dispatch centers in Northwest Colorado and user agencies.

Agencies with programmable radios should assign VFIRE 21 frequency to one (1) channel.

For the purposes of conducting business authorized by this cooperative agreement, all parties to this OP agree that assisting agencies may use the jurisdictional agency's radio frequencies as needed to conduct emergency communications on fires of the jurisdictional agency. No party to this OP will use, or authorize others to use, another agency's radio frequencies for routine day-to-day operations. FPDs on incident management missions, under the auspices of the County, are granted permission to use federal radio frequencies, if needed, to assure safety of the operation. Refer to the Craig Interagency Field Operations Guide for radio frequencies specifically authorized for use.

### **Cost Efficiency**

N/A for this version.

### **Delegation of Authority**

N/A for this version.

### **Preservation of Evidence**

#### **FIRE INVESTIGATIONS**

The jurisdictional agency will have primary responsibility for fire investigation, and any civil or criminal follow-up actions taken. Additionally, however, the jurisdictional agency will keep other responding agencies informed of the status of its investigations and legal actions. Fire cause determination is required for EFF incidents and for FEMA incidents.

## **STATE EMERGENCY FIRE FUND (EFF)**

Route County is party to the Memorandum of Understanding for Participation in the Colorado Emergency Fire Fund (EFF Agreement).

### **Emergency Fire Fund (EFF) Procedures and Roles**

DFPC Regional Battalion Chief

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Acts on behalf of the Director of Fire Prevention & Control in completing DFPC Analysis Form (DFPC 1) with assistance from the Sheriff or designee for each shift, and preparing DFPC EFF Funding Request (DFPC 3) to ensure the DFPC Director or designee is aware of local situations and procedures.

### Routt County Sheriff or Designee

Assist DFPC BC in preparing DFPC Analysis Form (DFPC 1) for potential EFF fires; sign Assumption Control Form (DFPC 4) for fires that the Director of DFPC approves for EFF; and serve as County representative on MAC Policy group.

### Routt County Commissioners

Approve Assumption Control Form (DFPC 4) for fires that the DFPC Director or designee approves for EFF. Delay in signing DFPC 4 may result in increased costs for the County.

### Other Agencies

Provide Sheriff with personnel and equipment necessary to meet minimum County resource commitment.

### MAC Group

All EFF fires will utilize a MAC Group consisting of, at a minimum, a Routt County Commissioner (or designee), the Routt County Sheriff (or designee), appropriate fire district representative (or designee), and the DFPC designee. If land administered by another agency is threatened or involved, that agency will provide a member of the MAC Group outlined under the Cooperation Section.

### EFF Activation

Implementation of the EFF can be done only by the DFPC Director or designee upon the recommendation of the local DFPC BC or designee, following a request from the County. For this reason, it is important that the DFPC Duty Officer be notified immediately via the State Emergency Operations Line at (303-279-8855) of major fires on private/state lands within the County. Should the fire surpass, or threaten to surpass, the ability of County resources to contain it, EFF implementation can occur only with a DFPC representative on scene.

### DFPC Forms:

DFPC 1 prepared by DFPC BC or designee with input from Routt County Sheriff or designee.  
DFPC 4 prepared by DFPC BC or designee with input from Routt County Sheriff or designee.

### County Responsibility

The intended minimum Routt County resource commitment for an ongoing EFF fire is two (2) wildland engines, three (3) water tenders, one (1) road grader and one (1) dozer, all with operators (either County provided or under the County's inter-governmental agreement with the Fire Protection Districts). The inability of Routt County to provide a complete intended support package should not preclude the County from providing the support that they are capable of providing. Additionally, Routt County will provide an Incident Command Post (ICP) and traffic control. It is understood that if the tactics of a given incident do not require some of this equipment, it will not be required on scene as determined by the IC.

### EFF/DFPC Responsibility

DFPC will provide an Agency Administrator for each EFF fire. DFPC will act as the fund administrator for all EFF fires.

#### **EFF Deactivation**

DFPC will transfer control of an EFF fire back to Routt County when fire spread is contained, the Agency Administrator's objectives have been met, and a written plan has been prepared for the next operational period.

#### **Mop-Up and Patrol**

The County will be responsible for mop-up and patrol, after control of an EFF fire has been transferred back to the County from DFPC, according to an extended IAP.

#### **Reclamation**

The landowner shall be responsible for funding all reclamation work.

## **USE AND REIMBURSEMENT OF INTERAGENCY FIRE RESOURCES**

### **Cost Share Agreement (Cost Share Methodologies)**

Suppression costs will be determined on an operational period basis utilizing the IAP when a fire is accepted by the State as an EFF incident.

#### **REIMBURSABLE COSTS**

Reimbursable assistance refers to those resources that are to be paid for by the protecting agency. Reimbursable assistance resources shall be requested by the protecting agency or supplied through automatic or mutual aid systems and shall be recorded by the resource order process within the dispatching systems of both the protecting agency and supporting agencies or documented by the IC in the fire report. Resources not documented in this manner are not reimbursable. Except as otherwise provided, all costs incurred as the result of an incident and documented as stated above are generally reimbursable.

When a fire occurs on lands of more than one (1) agency, and cost are incurred in addition to the initial attack, reimbursement will be based on a mutually agreed upon cost share agreement.

#### **COST SHARING**

Written cost share agreements should be prepared when a wildfire burns across or threatens jurisdictional boundaries, and/or exceeds the mutual aid period. The intent is to appropriately distribute the financial burden based on a method agreed upon by a representative from each affected jurisdiction. A cost share agreement should be negotiated as soon as practical.

In those operational situations where weather, fuel, or fire behavior of the wildland fire precludes stopping it at jurisdictional boundaries, cost-share methodologies may include, but are not limited to:

- Each jurisdiction pays for its own resources – fire suppression efforts are primarily on jurisdictional responsibility lands.
- Each jurisdiction pays for its own resources – services rendered approximate the percentage of jurisdictional responsibility, but not necessarily performed on those lands. Cost share by percentage of ownership of jurisdictional responsibility.

- Cost is apportioned by geographic division. Examples of geographic divisions are: Division A and B (using a map as an attachment); privately owned property with structures; or specific locations such as campgrounds.
- Reconciliation of daily estimates (for larger, multi-day incidents). This method relies upon daily agreed to cost estimates, using IAPs or other means to determine multi-Agency contributions. Reimbursement can be made upon estimates instead of actual bill receipts.

## **Training**

Standard approved fire training courses are provided periodically by DFPC, USFS, BLM, and other agencies. As these courses are scheduled, all cooperators will be informed and invited to participate. The basic wildland fire training typically consists of I-100, IS-700, L-180, and S130/190 of the NWCG Standards.

## **Communication Systems**

N/A for this version.

## **Fire Weather Systems**

N/A for this version.

## **Aviation Operations**

### **AVIATION MAP AND NARRATIVE**

CRC has aviation hazard maps for Routt County.

### **FLIGHT FOLLOWING / FREQUENCY MANAGEMENT**

CRC will flight follow per Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) direction for aircraft ordered through them. If radio communication problems develop, CRC will coordinate with adjacent dispatch centers to provide flight following.

### **FIXED WING BASE MANAGEMENT**

There are no permanent air tanker bases in Routt County.

### **SINGLE ENGINE AIR TANKER (SEAT) BASES**

When a combination of factors or events, as agreed to by the Sheriff and DFPC, creates a situation that warrants pre-positioning of a SEAT in Routt County, the Sheriff or designee should request pre-positioning through the DFPC Fire Duty Officer. Factors may include, but are not limited to, multiple starts within a 24-hour period, high occurrence of dry lightning, or persistent Red Flag Warnings. DFPC will notify participants to this plan when a SEAT is pre-positioned in Routt County.

Each agency should follow its normal resource request procedure to request a SEAT for use on an incident, regardless of whether the SEAT is pre-positioned in Routt County or not.

### **LEAD PLANE / AIR ATTACK ACTIVATION**

The determination to use a lead plane or air attack on an incident will be made by CRC using established dispatch procedures.

### **AVIATION REQUESTS AND OPERATIONS**

The primary way to order aircraft with the exception of MMA is by radio through the applicable Interagency Dispatch Center. The order should be made on the federal incident command frequency/channel found in the Craig Field Operations Guide. This will help confirm that ground resources on the incident have communication with incoming aviation resources.

Requests for air support SHALL include (1) name of individual acting as ground contact; (2) radio frequency for ground contact (identified by CRC); (3) current and potential threats and values at risk; and (4) nearest base of operations. (Refer to the CRC Operations Guide for air to ground radio frequencies)

Ordering National Guard helicopters for wildland fire or medical extraction will be done through the appropriate agency dispatch ordering process to the Rocky Mountain Coordination Center, who will contact DFPC and the State of Colorado Office of Emergency Management. Aircraft assigned to an incident shall have the appropriate radios installed and functional along with a letter of authorization for the current year signed by the USFS and DOI. When appropriate, a helicopter manager will be assigned to each aircraft ordered or every two (2) aircraft ordered depending on the type of aircraft and mission(s).

The State of Colorado's MMA program is comprised of two (2) Pilatus PC-12 airplanes outfitted with infrared and color sensors operated by sensor operators from the DFPC management staff. The primary mission of the program is to provide near real time information to ground forces during initial attack on wildfires. ICs can order these aircraft to detect and recon wildland fires and aid them in making sound tactical decisions, improving the safety and efficiency of the response. To order the MMA, call the State Emergency Operations Line at (303) 279-8855 or by contacting CRC.

#### WILDFIRE EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND

The Wildfire Emergency Response Fund (WERF) was created by the legislature, C.R.S. 24-33.51226, to assist local jurisdictions with initial attack on state and private lands within Colorado. Any County Sheriff, municipal fire department, or fire protection district within Colorado, acting as the Requesting Agency, may request reimbursement from this fund. WERF will reimburse, if funds are available, the official Requesting Agency the cost of eligible resources. This fund will be utilized to assist on non-federal lands only. DFPC will pay the cost of eligible wildland firefighting aviation resources on behalf of the Requesting Agency, in accordance with the funding guidelines to the extent that funding is available.

By agreement with the federal agencies, invoices for aircraft use covered by the fund will be sent to the DFPC. Upon receipt of the federal invoice, the fund will pay for documented eligible costs. Invoice costs not covered by WERF will be forwarded to the jurisdiction that ordered the aerial resource.

#### COLORADO FIREFIGHTING AIR CORPS

The Colorado Firefighting Air Corps (CFAC) (C.R.S. §24-33.5-1228) program is intended to assist local jurisdictions beyond WERF with initial attack wildland fire response on state and private lands within the state of Colorado. Any County Sheriff, municipal fire department, or fire protection district within Colorado may request aviation resources as the official Requesting Agency, utilizing ordering procedures defined in this County OP. DFPC will pay the cost of eligible wildland firefighting aviation resources on behalf of the Requesting Agency, in accordance with the funding guidelines to the extent that funding is available.

## **Billing Procedures**

### **REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES AND CLAIMS**

Federal agencies may submit bills and statements for reimbursements from the County for federal suppression on non-federal lands to DFPC. DFPC will make such reimbursement and subsequently invoice the County as appropriate.

Request for DFPC reimbursement will be sent to the DFPC Fort Collins office within thirty (30) days after incident resources are released. All invoices are required to have proper documentation before the process for payment can be completed. This will include information on personnel time, equipment time, and rates of pay. The DFPC will attempt to make payment as soon as possible after receiving the invoice.

### **RESOURCE USE RATES**

DFPC equipment use rates are computed annually. These rates apply to DFPC equipment, including those currently assigned to individual fire districts and those contracted with fire districts. A statewide Fire Equipment Agreement is in place for all DFPC equipment.

Fire Protection District and County equipment will be reimbursed at the rates shown on the current approved Colorado Resource Rate Forms (CRRF). These rates would apply to reimbursements for both Federal and County incidents.

CRRFs between state and federal agencies and FPDs for equipment and personnel listed in the OP will need to be completed every year. Costs for equipment not covered by such an agreement may not be reimbursed by the jurisdictional agency unless rates are mutually agreed to, in writing, at the time of hire. Rates will be based on the Fire Business Management Handbook.

Certain positions are not entitled to specific hazard pay differentials because the hazard has been considered in the classification of the position.

## **Cost Recovery**

The reimbursement process may not be finalized within the fiscal year in which the incident occurred. Agencies may need to carry over funds to cover costs estimated at the time of the fire.

## **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Personnel Policy**

N/A for this version.

### **Modification**

Modifications within the scope of this Operating Plan shall be made by mutual consent of the Parties, through the issuance of a written modification signed and dated by all Parties prior to any changes being performed. Any Party shall have the right to terminate their participation under this Operating Plan by providing six months' written notice to the other Parties.

### **Annual Review**

This Operating Plan should be reviewed annually. Program review will be held at the annual fire operating plan meeting in the spring. This Operating Plan will remain current until a revised Operating Plan is signed by all parties.

### **Duration of Agreement**

This Operating Plan is executed as of the date of last signature and remains in effect until a new Colorado Statewide Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement is signed or until this plan is modified or superseded. If the current Colorado Statewide Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement is superseded by a new Agreement, this Operating Plan may remain in effect to the extent that it does not conflict with provisions of the new Agreement, but only until such time that all activities and conditions can be incorporated into a new Operating Plan.

### **Previous Agreements Superseded**

All prior plans are hereby superseded.

**SIGNATURES**

Authorized Representatives

**ROUTT COUNTY SIGNATURES**

B. Melton  
Routt County Board of County Commissioners

2/22/2022  
Date

Garrett Wiggins  
Routt County Sheriff

3/3/2022  
Date

**COLORADO DIVISION OF FIRE PREVENTION & CONTROL SIGNATURE**

Derrick Charpentier  
Yampa River Region Battalion Chief

3/3/2022  
Date

**FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY SIGNATURES***Russell M Bacon*

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*Medicine Bow-Routt NF Forest Supervisor**3/3/2022**Date**Richard Maestas*

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*Medicine Bow-Routt NF Grants and Agreements**3/3/2022**Date**Elijah Waters*

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*Bureau of Land Management NW District Manager**3/10/2022**Date***PLAN ACCEPTANCE**

The Routt County Sheriff's Office serves in a support rather than a direct suppression role on wildfires, but as the state mandated "fire warden" for the county, the Sheriff may find it necessary to "call to his/her aid" FPD equipment and personnel to suppress wildfires outside his/her district boundaries on private land, or to assist with fire suppression on federal lands. Such assistance provides beneficial mutual aid from federal wildfire agencies to all lands within the county and enables county participation in the EFF, both beneficial to the FPDs. However, it is recognized that providing such aid may jeopardize a FPD's responsibility to provide a minimum level of service within its district. Therefore, providing such aid shall be at the discretion of the FPD's chief or designee.

FPDs will have direct supervision of their forces whether within or outside of their district. Typically, the sheriff will support the suppression efforts by facilitating requests for additional manpower, equipment, air resources, or activation of the Northwest Colorado Incident Management Team (IMT) to provide multi-jurisdictional or Unified Command during wildfire situations requiring extended attack. Such requests often involve obligation of county funding, so requests shall come from the Routt County Emergency Operations Director or the Routt County Sheriff per the Tactical

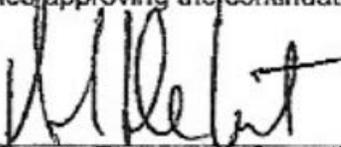
Operations Plan for Wildland Fires in Routt County and the Fifth Amended and Restated Memorandum of Understanding (Intergovernmental Agreement).

The Routt County Sheriff's Office will provide assistance as needed or requested as per CRS 3010-513.5 FPDs shall have the authority to bill Routt County for fire suppression services on all lands within the county, including the return of personnel and equipment to a back-in-service status, in accordance with CRS 30-10-513.5.

This acceptance of the Routt County Wildland Fire Management OP does not affect the mutual aid period or any other conditions between federal agencies, the County, the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention & Control, or FPD cooperators.

This acceptance of the Routt County Wildland Fire Management OP may be executed in counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which shall constitute one and the same instrument.

Agencies approving the continuation of this Plan through April 1, 2025:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Routt County Emergency Operations Director

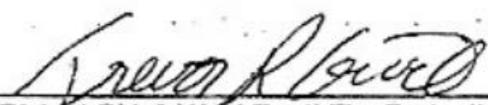
03/03/2022  
Date

**Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
District Chief, North Routt Fire Protection District

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
03/04/2022  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Chief, Oak Creek Fire Protection District

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
District Chief, West Routt Fire Protection District

03/03/2022  
Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Chief, Yampa Fire Protection District

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## ACRONYMS

AD	Administratively Determined
OP	Operating Plan
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	Bureau of Land Management – Northwest Colorado Fire Management Unit
CFAC	Colorado Firefighting Air Corps
CO-OEM	Colorado Office of Emergency Management
CRC	Craig Regional Dispatch Center
CRRF	Colorado Resource Rate Forms
DFPC	Colorado Division of Fire Prevention & Control
DTR	Digital Trunk Radio
EFF	Emergency Fire Fund
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FDOP	Fire Danger Operating Plan
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FMO	Fire Management Officer
FPD	Fire Protection District
GACC	Geographic Area Coordination Center
IAP	Incident Action Plan
IC	Incident Commander
ICP	Incident Command Post
ICS	Incident Command System
IFC	International Fire Code
MAC	Multi-Agency Coordinating
MOB	Mobilization
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MMA	Multi-Mission Aircraft
NFDRS	National Fire Danger Rating System
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NWCG	National Wildfire Coordinating Group
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RCC	Routt County Communications
RAWS	Remote Automatic Weather Stations
SEATS	Single Engine Air Tankers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDI	United States Department of the Interior
USFS	United States Forest Service – Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest and Thunder Basin National Grassland
WERF	Wildland Emergency Response Fund
WFDSS	Wildland Fire Decision Support System

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A            Authorized Agency Representatives and Directory of Personnel

APPENDIX B            USFS-R2 Fire Operations Guidance in Bark Beetle Stands

**APPENDIX A**

~~CONFIDENTIAL & PROPRIETARY INFORMATION~~



**APPENDIX B**

**USFS-R2  
Fire Operations Guidance in Bark Beetle Stands**

Due to altered fuel conditions, personnel operating within the bark beetle environment should be aware of the imminent danger presented by dead and dying trees, falling at an increasing rate across a broad forested landscape.

#### Purpose and Intent

Fire Operations Guidance is mindful of Foundational Fire Suppression Doctrine in the Forest Service. The first principle is: No resource or facility is worth the loss of human life, however the wildland fire suppression environment is complex and possesses inherent hazards that can---even with reasonable mitigation---result in harm to fire fighters engaged in fire suppression operations. In recognition of this fact, we are committed to the aggressive management of risk.

This guidance provides a collection of potential hazards unique to bark beetle forests, including appropriate practices that have evolved over time within the wildland fire service. It does not provide absolute solutions to the unlimited number of situations that will occur.

This guidance within bark beetle stands was provided with the intention of being used in conjunction with existing fire risk management documents. No further protocols or rules are necessary to make informed risk management decisions for fire operations in bark beetle stands. The following hazard guidance is provided:

#### Tactical Hazards

- Withdrawal and/or reassessment should be considered if any of the following are present:
  - Thunderstorms in the immediate vicinity.
  - Wind speeds are strong enough that canopy movement is observed<sup>1</sup>. (Consider that wind speeds at eye level in sheltered areas may not indicate the much greater winds aloft.)
  - Reliable communication cannot be established with the appropriate Dispatch Center and remain in place 24/7 when resources are engaged.
- Due to limited ingress or egress in remote areas or in terrain without vantage points, consider using an aerial platform for risk assessment and size up.

#### Potential Fire Behavior Hazards

- Due to increased potential of extreme fire behavior, when ERCs approach the 90th percentile, air reconnaissance should be on scene within 1 hour of detection.

- The following situations, though possible on any wildfire, may be accentuated in bark beetle stands:
  - Accelerated transition to crown fire (when needles are present)
  - Increased rate of spread (Surface fire)
  - Resistance to control (Heavy dead and down)
  - Frequent spotting, including long range (>.25 miles)

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<sup>1</sup> Beaufort Scale for Estimating 20-FT Wind speed, 2010 IRPG page 77

February 16, 2010