

We are now soliciting comments from the public on this guidance. Once the 21 day notice period is complete, all comments will be considered, revisions will be made to the guidance documents as needed, and final guidance will be made available to internal and external stakeholders. Comments related to this draft guidance document should be sent to:

Michele.Witecha@Wisconsin.gov

Handbook #: 4325.1

Subject: Chapter 6 – Partner Agreements

Manual Code Owner: Trent Marty

Fire Management: This handbook applies to all DNR employees with fire management responsibilities and/or such oversight and their respective supervisors. This handbook was established primarily to ensure statewide consistencies and to develop a system utilizing knowledgeable staff to make decisions regarding fire management/wildfire suppression. This handbook is an update to handbook #4325.1 and will rescind and replace the existing Fire Management Handbook. The handbook was revisited and updated by the Bureau of Forest Protection and the notable changes/updates are as follows:

- Creation of a Partner Agreements chapter, with the following new policy sections:
 - Partner Agencies in Fire Suppression and Management – Fire Departments
 - o Fire Department Advisory Council
 - o Memorandums of Understanding
 - o Forest Fire Protection Grant Program
 - o Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)
 - o Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP)
 - o Equipment Use Agreement for Rural Fire Defense
 - Other partnering agencies include County Sheriff's Departments Dispatch, County Sheriff's Offices, Local Police Departments, Wisconsin State Patrol, Emergency Medical Services, Office of Emergency Management, Department of Defense, Department of Natural Resources (adjoining states), USDA Forest Service, US Department of Interior, National Park Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact.
 - Sale of Fire Suppression Equipment to Fire Departments & Non-profit Organizations

CHAPTER 6: PARTNER AGREEMENTS

PARTNER AGENCIES IN FIRE SUPPRESSION AND MANAGEMENT

The Division of Forestry fire management program is predicated on the cooperation of many partners. These partners deserve our time and respect. In order to be most efficient and effective, fire staff must develop relationships with all of the cooperating agencies. These relationships are the basis for trust and cooperation in order to meet the needs of the public and the statutory responsibilities on wildland fires for the Division of Forestry.

Fire Departments

In the DNR fire management program, local fire departments are a vital partner in the suppression of wildfires. Fire departments look to the Division of Forestry for guidance, training and expertise in wildland fire issues through the following actions, which fire staff should implement:

1. Annually offer the “Basic Wildland Fire Suppression for Wisconsin Fire Departments” training course at the county level

Fire department personnel turnover continues to be felt in small local volunteer fire departments. In fact, over 2,000 new firefighters are being instructed on entry level structural fires every year. The instruction of new firefighters in wildland fire suppression is required to allow continuity of safe and efficient operations on the fire ground. Annually instructing this basic wildland training program on a county basis will give new firefighters the skills needed to be effective partners.

2. Annually offer every fire department a wildland fire training course

Offering a one-night wildland fire training to all fire departments in Protection areas will enhance and improve skill levels in each fire department. Division of Forestry expectations and leadership in wildland fire can be showcased in these trainings. A prepackaged training session will be provided by the Forest Protection Bureau for use in these trainings. A different training package will be released each year for use in fire department winter training sessions.

3. Quarterly contact of local Fire Chiefs

Continued training and contact with local fire departments is essential to maintain relationships and trust. Quarterly contact maintains connection with fire department partners on issues such as Forest Fire Protection Grants, fire equipment, and training.

4. DNR response on every wildland fire

The Department of Natural Resources is tasked with the responsibility for forest fires in Chapter 26 of the State Statutes. Fire departments have a concurrent responsibility for fire in towns; however, the DNR is the primary authority and responsibility. In order to fulfill that responsibility, DNR response to all wildfires is essential, and expected whenever possible.

Fire departments (FD) play a vital role in wildfire suppression in Wisconsin. The Division of Forestry is the leader in this important endeavor. Through cooperation, the protection of life, property and resources from wildland fires can be accomplished for the citizens of the State of Wisconsin.

Fire Department Advisory Council (FDAC)

Purpose: To strengthen partnerships between the Department of Natural Resources and the rural fire service in Wisconsin. To advise and assist the state forester on operational issues related to the Department’s forest fire program and to provide for an effective rural community fire protection program. Furthermore; to assist the Department in advising the management of the Forest Fire Protection Grant Program.

Fire Management Handbook

Membership: 10 members appointed by the DNR Secretary to indefinite terms of appointment. The FDAC has statewide geographic representation along with Intensive, Extensive and Cooperative fire protection area representation. Representation includes major state wide fire service organizations including the State Fire Chief's Association and Wisconsin State Firefighters Association.

Memorandums of Understanding

The [Fire Department/DNR Memorandum of Understanding for Mutual Aid and Fire Suppression Services](#) (Form 4300-061) serves as the basis for the FD/DNR fire suppression relationship. It provides for reciprocal mutual aid. That is; the DNR agrees to assist FDs when possible, and the FDs agree to assist the DNR when possible.

This agreement applies to all FD wildfire suppression efforts in DNR fire protection areas, Extensive or Intensive. This agreement applies also to FD wildfire suppression efforts only on DNR-owned lands in the Cooperative fire protection areas.

All fire departments entering into agreement with the DNR must answer the question pertaining to billing the DNR for fire suppression efforts on initial attack and extended attack fires. Initial attack fires are defined as the first hour of forest fire suppression. Extended attack fires are defined as those fires that additional resources are necessary to control the wildfire, and is generally when suppression efforts exceed one hour.

Advantages for fire departments that choose not to bill the DNR for initial attack include:

1. An extra 10 points scoring on the Forest Fire Protection Grant application. These extra points are used in the funding category where the grant funds run out. That is, the higher scoring grant applications get all of their requests in that category funded first before lower scoring applications.
2. Fire Departments will still have the ability to pass on suppression costs through the billing system they may have in place.
3. There is less paperwork involved for the fire department with a wildfire response.

The MOU agreements will be in effect as soon as signatures are obtained. Fire departments will be eligible for the new reimbursements rates after the new MOU agreement is in effect. A signed fire suppression agreement is a requirement of eligibility for the Forest Fire Protection Grant program.

Forest Fire Protection Grant Program

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry offers grants to fire departments statewide. These grants, called Forest Fire Protection (FFP) grants, are funded through State Forestry Funds and Federal dollars through grants from the United States Forest Service. The intent of the FFP grants is to improve initial attack wildland fire suppression capabilities in all local fire departments. Successful applicants will have a positive impact on the prevention, detection and suppression of wildland fires in all of the communities served by the fire department.

The FFP grant program is a 50/50 cost share program. That is, that the grantee must use its own resources to fund the entire project and, upon completion, request reimbursement for up to 50 percent of the eligible costs. The maximum FFP grant award is \$10,000 (\$20,000 total project costs) for fire departments. The minimum FFP grant award is \$750 (\$1,500 total project costs). Eligible county fire associations can receive a maximum grant award of \$25,000.

Only projects with a wildland fire emphasis are considered. To be eligible for the FFP grant, the following factors are considered:

1. The fire department already has a signed fire suppression agreement (MOU) with the DNR.
2. The fire department is in a DNR organized fire protection area.
3. The fire department has a majority of members meeting NFPA 1051 standards for firefighter training.

Fire Management Handbook

4. The fire department was awarded an FFP grant in the last funding cycle (extra ranking points are given to those skipped in the last cycle).

Grant funds can be used to purchase wildland fire materials in the following categories in priority order:

1. Firefighter Personal Protective Equipment
2. Wildland Fire Training
3. Wildland Fire Prevention/ Wildland Urban Interface Materials
4. Wildland Fire Suppression Tools, Equipment, Supplies or Materials
5. Dry Hydrants/Water Resources
6. Communications Equipment
7. Mapping, Rural Numbering or Location Devices (GPS)
8. Off Road Vehicles for primarily Wildland Fire Suppression (Brush Trucks, ½ to 5 ton and ATVs)

A complete listing of eligible items can be found on the [FFP Grant Program website](#).

The annual timeline for each FFP grant cycle follows:

May 1 - FFP grant opens for applications

July 1 – Deadline for applications

Oct 1 – Successful applications awarded FFP grants

Apr 15 – All FFP grant reimbursements due and all grants closed out.

The FFP grant application packet is also available [online](#). Contact the DNR Community Financial Assistance staff person that oversees state fire protection grants.

Additional grants are available from the federal government at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/grants/>.

Field staff are required to conduct a field check of all of the FFP grants awarded. [The Forest Fire Protection Grant Program Field Check Sheet](#) (Form 4300-048) document is required as part of NR 47 and the Federal Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act. This form provides the final check to ensure the intent and requirements of the FFP grant program are being met.

Considerations for field checks

1. For the field check ensure the FD has the items on hand for which were purchased and were reimbursed. Ensure the FD followed proper purchasing and inventory procedures (obtained **three** quotes [from catalog pages, web pages, etc.] on items > \$5,000), and have kept documentation/receipts/records to substantiate everything. It is also an opportunity for feedback from the grant recipients.
2. The Field Check Form will refer to the grant being federally or state funded. In the grant name, the middle section represents the fiscal year and then either F or S, indicating federal or state funding (i.e., FFP-14F-123 would mean federally funded in fiscal year 2014).
3. Field checks are required per NR 47 Phone field checks do not meet this requirement. If the FD purchased an item > \$5,000 and was federally-funded, a federal inventory sticker is required to be attached to the item and the item is to be maintained in the state inventory system.

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)

- Purpose: MABAS is a mechanism to be used for mutual aid for fire, rescue, and emergency medical services (EMS) and special operations services.
- Definition: MABAS is a prearranged mutual aid plan to provide assisting resources to an emergency situation in accordance with guidelines set by members of the system.
- Law: In 2005, the Wisconsin legislature passed Wisconsin Act 257 which gives the Department of Military Affairs through the Division of Emergency Management the authority to establish standards (through administrative rules; WEM 8) for a MABAS system to be used by emergency responders. NOTE: Act 257 does NOT require emergency agencies to participate in MABAS.
- Current Status: MABAS is in place for FDs in most of WI.
- Explanation: MABAS establishes “Box Cards” for specific types of emergency calls. A “Box Card” is a printed form containing details of departments, equipment and specialized personnel to respond to a given geographical area for a specific emergency.

For example; a structure fire occurs south of Montello. The Montello Fire Department (responsible agency) is dispatched as normal operating procedure. If the Incident Commander (IC) needs additional assistance, he would request a “first box alarm for a structure fire” from dispatch. The dispatcher would pull the MABAS box card for a structure fire and send the resources printed on that card: an engine from Pardeeville FD, a water tender from Kingston FD and an aerial from Portage FD. If additional assistance is needed, a “second box alarm for a structure fire” can be requested by the IC. An engine from Dalton FD, water tenders from Harris FD and Endeavor FD would be sent.

Box cards preplan lists of resources for each specific emergency, structure fires, automobile extrications, floods, wildland fires, etc.. Under MABAS, dispatchers just pull out box cards for specific emergencies as they are requested by the IC and contact that list of resources for response to the emergency.

Advantages

1. MABAS preplans mutual aid resources making decisions easier for the IC.
2. MABAS provides a written plan and agreement about mutual aid resources.
3. MABAS provides a framework to expand mutual aid regionally & statewide.
4. MABAS provides interoperability on large complex incidents.
5. Generally, MABAS pulls resources from a variety of locations which provides better emergency coverage by leaving some resources back. Ideally no station should be left empty under MABAS.

Division of Forestry Local Actions

Local DNR staff should work for the continued inclusion of DNR suppression resources with county dispatch for initial attack on wildland fires. This is necessary whether a county becomes a signatory or not into MABAS. Local DNR input into initial attack wildland fire dispatching is essential to maintain statutory responsibilities.

It should also be clear that the ordering of additional DNR resources will be the responsibility of a DNR employee. The design of additional MABAS wildland box alarms should include a “special instructions” comment that the DNR IC/forest ranger will call for additional DNR resources from within the DNR dispatch system. This will maintain Division of Forestry control and integrity of a statewide forest fire suppression system.

As per the DNR/FD MOU, should the fire department respond with more than the recommended or requested dispatch, only that equipment and personnel needed and actually used for suppression will be compensated at

Fire Management Handbook

the predetermined rate. Compensation for additional equipment and personnel may not be made to the fire department unless the DNR agrees it was reasonably necessary for suppression.

Further discussions with county MABAS about segregating wildland fire box cards into “wildland suppression” and “structural protection” wildland fire box cards to meet the needs of the local ICs will have to be addressed.

MABAS wildland fire box cards in Cooperative forest fire protection areas can include a “special instructions” comment to contact local DNR dispatch/area forestry leaders for the availability of DNR fire suppression resources. Notification of the DNR should occur on the “3rd alarm” MABAS box card in the Cooperative protection area whether DNR resources are requested to respond or not. Dispatch of DNR fire suppression resources to Cooperative fires will only occur with the approval of the area forestry leader or their designee.

Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP)

Purpose:	USDA Forest Service loans property to State Foresters under Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978. Title remains with USFS and must be inventoried within program guidelines.
WI Program Objectives:	Only acquire trucks for use by fire departments. No longer acquire any items for state use.
Current Inventory:	As of January 2014, 111 items on inventory (value of \$5,000 federal standard), 80 vehicles at local Fire Departments.
Disposal:	Contact FEPP disposal person who is responsible as the contact for FEPP disposal, maintains records, works through GSA web auction, cleaned up inventory list for FEPMIS (Federal Excess Property Management Information System). State inventory follow up will remove the FEPP item from the local state inventory list.
Use of FEPP:	Fire use only, 90% of use of FEPP equipment must be fire-related.
FEPP Use Agreements:	Federal requirements FEPP Agreement (Form 4300-030) lays out responsibilities of fire departments and the state DNR.
FEPP Inspections:	Federal requirements include physical check every two years. State requirements include annual inspection. Field personnel assigned FEPP inventory items are required to conduct an annual inspection. Federal inventory items are included on the local State inventory. Local Foresters are responsible for annual verification of the State inventory, which includes those Federal inventory items listed. The FEPP Annual Inspection Sheet (Form 9200-074) is the mechanism to conduct and document annual inspections.
FEPP Information:	FEPP Desk Guide available on line www.fs.fed.us/fire/partners/fepp/desk-guide

Equipment Use Agreement for Rural Fire Defense

[Federal Excess Personal Property Use Cooperative Agreement](#) (Form 4300-30) has been prepared to cover loaning fire suppression equipment, either General Services Administration (GSA) or other, to local volunteer fire departments.

Local Fire Department	1. Contacts local Department representatives. 2. Submits request for fire suppression equipment.
Local DNR Representative	3. Sends request to Area Forestry Leader.
Area Forestry Leader	4. Meets with fire department and determines equipment needs. 5. Requests equipment from Director, Bureau of Forest Protection through District Forestry Leader.

6. Meets with representatives of governing body for fire department to complete [Form 4300-30](#). Governing body is group responsible for fire department; it could be town board, village, or other body.
 7. Signs three copies of [Form 4300-30](#) and returns to Area Forestry Leader.
 8. Sends all three copies of [Form 4300-30](#) to District Forestry Leader.
 9. Approves and signs three copies of [Form 4300-30](#). Distributes forms as follows:
 - a. Original, Director, Bureau of Forest Protection.
 - b. Second copy, user fire department.
 - c. Third copy, area forestry leader concerned.
- Governing Body
- Area Forestry Leader
- District Forestry Leader

County Sheriff's Departments Dispatch

County Sheriff's dispatch centers are the first link in wildland fire response. Local DNR fire units are dependent on county dispatchers to notify and direct DNR and fire departments to initial attack incidents. Furthermore, county dispatch offices provide communications coverage during after-hours wildland fires and serve as the safety loop for DNR fire resources. Local DNR staff must maintain a relationship with the local county dispatch office. This can be achieved through regular contacts and through attending dispatch meetings.

County Sheriff's Offices

County Sheriff's Offices (SO) provide additional assistance on wildland fires. Sheriff's deputies can provide traffic control, additional law enforcement presence, criminal investigation expertise and a gateway to additional law enforcement resources. The SO is vital to effective, efficient and safe wildland fire operations. Building a strong relationship with this office and these deputies is essential.

Local Police Departments

Local police officers provide additional assistance on wildland fires. Officers can provide traffic control, additional law enforcement presence, criminal investigation expertise and a gateway to additional law enforcement resources. The local police are vital to effective, efficient and safe wildland fire operations. Building a strong relationship with these departments and these officers is essential.

Wisconsin State Patrol

The Wisconsin State Patrol is the primary law enforcement agency on Interstate Highways. The State Patrol will be involved in any wildland fire along the Interstate. Requesting traffic control and/or help in traffic management will be filled with State Patrol cars. Furthermore, shutting down traffic or traffic lanes will require coordination with State Patrol.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Local Emergency Medical Services are also an essential partner on the scene of wildland fires. Division of Forestry Emergency Medical protocols utilize local EMS for the treatment and transportation of victims. In many circumstances, local EMS is asked to stand by at wildland fire scenes. On major wildland fires, local EMS will be asked to stand by in case of accidents. If local EMS is requested to stand by at an incident for an extended period (i.e. project fire), compensation for the EMS unit should be considered.

Office of Emergency Management

The County and State Office of Emergency Management play a role in wildland fire management. Local County EM are involved in the management of emergency shelters and providing food for fire suppression personnel on major wildland fires. Planning and coordination with these Offices is an important link for local DNR fire staff to ensure. State EM also

plays a statewide coordination role on major wildland fires.

Department of Defense (DOD)

There are three military installations in Wisconsin (Fort McCoy, Volk Field and Camp Williams). These installations are generally restricted areas and require special procedures and instructions to gain access for wildland fires. Furthermore; there are areas of restricted airspace in some other locations of the state. If there is a military installation within your area boundaries, become aware of the correct procedure to gain entry and to be aware of any restrictions into that airspace.

Department of Natural Resources - Adjoining States

Cross border agreements with Minnesota and Michigan DNRs are in place. Annual meeting should occur to understand and review those suppression agreements. The agreements can be viewed under the Agency Agreements on the [FIRE Drive](#). The Fire Operations Specialist is responsible for maintaining these agreements.

USDA Forest Service, USDOL, Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs

The Department has different agreements and requirements with each of these agencies concerning prescribed fire, fire suppression, fire prevention, detection and billing. Annual meetings occur to understand and review those suppression agreements. The agreements can be viewed under the Agency Agreements on the [FIRE Drive](#). Most local staff provides fire protection of one or more types of these federally controlled lands and should be familiar with the agreements in place. The Fire Operations Specialist is responsible for maintaining these agreements.

Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact (GLFFC)

Signatories to this compact include the states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and the Provinces of Ontario and Manitoba. The compact agrees to assist one another in all issues related to wildfires such as training, prevention and suppression. Commonly, Wisconsin will utilize suppression aircraft from a compact partner. Local DNR fire staff should be familiar with those agreements and operational requirements of suppression aircraft.

SALE OF FIRE SUPPRESSION EQUIPMENT TO FIRE DEPARTMENTS & NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

In order to enhance the Department's ability to meet its statutory responsibilities to suppress forest fires in the State of Wisconsin, to strengthen the partnerships between the Department's fire fighting forces and the local fire departments that assist in meeting those responsibilities, and to ensure that those cooperating fire departments possess the proper equipment required for the suppression of wildfires, the Division of Forestry will provide, when available stock/materials allow, such equipment, at a cost, to those cooperating fire departments through the LeMay Forestry Center Stockroom at Tomahawk. The Division of Forestry will also provide, when available stock/materials allow, fire suppression equipment, at cost, to any bona fide nonprofit organization that has been certified by the Fire & Law Enforcement Section Chief in the Bureau of Forest Protection to be an active cooperator in any Department program that utilizes prescribed fire as a tool to meet Department goals in management and restoration of ecosystems.

Authorization to Purchase

No fire department or non-profit organization will be allowed to procure equipment through the LeMay Forestry Center Stockroom unless there is a written authorization for that department or organization to do so on file at the LeMay Forestry Center. The written authorization must certify that the fire department or non-profit organization meets the above criteria.

Authorization for cooperating fire departments must be signed by the appropriate area forestry leader. Authorization for cooperating non-profit organizations must be signed by the Fire & Law Enforcement Section Chief, Bureau of Forest Protection.

Once a letter of authorization is on file at the LeMay Forestry Center, orders for equipment can be placed directly with the Stockroom. Equipment available to non-DNR entities will be limited to such items as are necessary for the ignition and management of prescribed burns, and suppression of wildfires and are normally stocked by the LeMay Forestry Center. The LeMay Forestry Center will not do any special purchasing for any non-DNR organization, nor will they supply any equipment that is designed for the suppression of structural fires.