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Date: June 28, 2005

Route To:

Subject: Wildland Fire Situation Analysis Most Cost Effective Alternative

To: Regional Fire Directors

Congressional Appropriation language for FY 2005 instructed the USDA Forest Service “*to implement direction for the identification of the “most cost effective” wildland fire situation analysis alternative by October 1, 2005, and report the percentage of fire events that adopt this alternative under the wildland fire situation analysis computer decision support system beginning in fiscal year 2006.*”

The following is the definition the USDA Forest Service will use to identify the most cost effective alternative: **The most cost effective wildland fire situation alternative is the one where the number displayed for Expected Suppression Cost is the lowest.**

The “most cost effective alternative” can be readily identified within the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis software application on the Comparison/Matrix worksheet of the application (see Attachment).

The expected suppression cost considers the estimated costs of success and failure against the probabilities of a target outcome occurring. It is not a requirement to select this alternative, however it does need to be identified. If it is not selected, supporting rationale for this decision must be included within the Decision Section. Examples of justifications for not selecting the most cost effective alternative may include not meeting safety objectives, or poor performance in meeting resource or other objectives.

This process requires the use of a decision tree (FSM 5131.2e). The identification process for the most cost effective alternative is consistent with current Forest Service Manual direction concerning least suppression cost option found in FSM 5131.13.4.

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Enclosure: Briefing Paper

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