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IA 5 – Wildland Fire

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IA 5 Tasked Agencies	
Primary Agencies	Office of the State Fire Marshall
Supporting Agencies	
Adjunct Agencies	

1 Purpose

- The purpose of this annex is to provide a framework for the coordination of state resources to help ensure the safety of life and property following a major fire event.
- This annex identifies the major response and recovery activities undertaken by the listed state and adjunct agencies in response to a fire event.
- More specific information on floods as a hazard in Oregon can be found in the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan located at:
 - <http://www.oregonshowcase.org/index.cfm?mode=stateplan&page=part3>

2 Policies

- Activation
 - Procedures in this annex will be implemented as outlined in the Oregon Emergency Operations Plan, Basic Plan.
 - Procedures in this annex may be automatically implemented under the following conditions:
 - When determined necessary by OEM and the Office of the State Fire Marshal.
 - When any area in Oregon experiences a major fire event.
- This annex identifies the major response and recovery activities undertaken by state and adjunct agencies in response to a fire event.

3 Situation and Assumptions

[TO BE DEVELOPED]

4 Concept of Operations

[Update as appropriate for a Major Fire event]

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- In accordance with the Emergency Operations Plan for the State of Oregon, the Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) will likely be fully activated.
- Tasking priorities for state resources will be determined in conjunction with local officials and approved by the State ECC.
- Oregon Emergency Management will have the lead on coordination of resources requested from local officials.
- Requested equipment, materials, supplies and personnel will be secured through State resources and/or mutual aid agreements, or purchasing.
- State supporting agencies will respond to the ECC as required to provide response and recovery resources to local governments upon assignment from the ECC Operations Officer.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

[Update as appropriate for a Major Fire event]

5.1 Primary Agency:

[TO BE DEVELOPED]

5.2 Supporting Agencies

[TO BE DEVELOPED]

5.3 Adjunct Agencies

[TO BE DEVELOPED]

6 Hazard Specific Information – Major Fire

6.1 Definition

A wildfire is an instance of uncontrolled burning in grasslands, brush or woodlands. Statistical reports show an increasing wildfire threat in the West, along with an increasing vulnerability to such fires, due to the increasing number of homes in fire-prone areas. Comparative diagrams between the natural forest of 150 years ago and the forests of today reveal a significant alteration of the latter, as a result of human activities. The costs of fighting the wildland fires today, including using heavy equipment, helicopters, office and communications equipment, and feeding and housing responders, can easily exceed reasonable expectations, particularly when covered at taxpayers' expense.

Wildfires are a common and widespread natural hazard in Oregon. Fire is a critical component of the forest and rangeland ecosystems found in all portions of

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the state. Over 41 million acres of forest and rangeland in Oregon are susceptible to wildfire, which may occur during any month of the year, but usually occur between July and October. In addition to wildland/urban interface fires, Oregon experiences wildland fires that do not threaten structures, and also occasionally has prescribed fires. The principal type affecting Oregon communities is interface fire, which occurs where wildland and developed areas intermingle with both vegetation and structures combining to provide fuel. As more people have moved into wildland interface areas, the number of large wildfires impacting homes has escalated dramatically. The areas of highest risk are in central, southwest, and northeast Oregon. Fuel, slope, weather, and development are key components in wildfire hazard identification.

6.2 Frequency

Table 1 below describes some of the historic fires in Northwest Oregon over the past 150 years.

Table 1 History of Wildfire in Oregon

Year	Fire Name	Number of Acres Burned
1848	Nestucca	290,000
1849	Siletz	800,000
1853	Yaquina	482,000
1865	Silverton	988,000
1868	Coos Bay	296,000
1933	Tillamook	240,000
1936	Bandon	143,000
1939	Saddle Mountain	190,000
1945	Wilson River/Salmonberry	180,000
1951	North Fork/Elkhorn	33,000
1966	Oxbow	44,000

6.3 Territory at Risk

The climate and nature of vegetation make Central and Eastern Oregon more vulnerable to wildland fire. However there are regions West of the Cascades which are also exposed to a wildland fire hazard.

IA 5. Wildland Fire**6.4 Effects**

Although low-intensity fires are often beneficial to the forest environment, intense fires are destructive to plant and soil systems. The risk increases as western populations continue to move into wildland areas.

Wildfire is one of the few hazards human beings think they can control. The twentieth century has been marked mostly as a period of fire suppression. Only in the past 20 years have wildland fires been accepted as necessary and sometimes useful in removing fuel buildup and the threat of more catastrophic fire. The imbalance created by fire suppression coupled with enhanced development in and near wildland areas has created a serious public policy dilemma: when to fight a fire and when to let it burn.

As a response to the destructive western fire season of 1987 and the great Yellowstone fires of 1988, the National Commission on Wildfire Disasters was created by the Wildfire Disaster Recovery Act of 1989. The commission was asked to consider the environmental and economic effects of wildfires and to recommend changes in federal policies, particularly in the management of federal forests that are becoming increasingly susceptible to wildfire. It concluded that, while strengthening cooperative firefighting abilities, improving community programs that encourage safe development in areas intermixed with wildlands, reducing public tolerance (or incentives) for construction of fire-prone structures, and implementing sound federal policies are all important, they are likely to fall short unless basic changes are made in federal land management practices. Past policies that focused on preventing or excluding fire have resulted in old, overgrown forests that represent an acutely disaster-prone environment. To avert future disasters, a chief recommendation is a call for ecosystem management that prevents such forests from developing.

6.5 Predictability

Wildfires occur most often in the spring, summer and fall. Given the relationship between the climatic factors and the occurrence of wildland fires, it is likely that wildfires can often be forecasted. Moreover, advanced monitoring technology makes it possible for an early detection.

7 Supporting Documents

None at this time.

8 Appendices

None at this time.