

U.S. Forest Service 2004 WFSA Procedures

The following recommendations from the WFSA Working Team were accepted by the U.S. Forest Service Fire Directors on 2/26/04 at the Ontario California meeting.

- 1. Emphasize the need to produce well considered alternatives that display the full range of suppression options which share a common theme of cost accountability. Place the “least cost” alternative in perspective of the context of the analysis.**

Least Cost Alternative definition - A tactically implementable alternative, consistent with firefighter and public safety, which is expected to result in the lowest fire suppression cost of the compared alternatives.

The use of the word “expected” above refers to the use of a probability calculation of success and failure to arrive at the Expected Suppression Cost (see WFSA Plus 04.2 - Comparison/Matrix worksheet). The lowest value displayed to the right of the Expected Suppression Cost row identifies the least (or minimum) expected suppression cost alternative. This should be identified in the WFSA Comparison/Decision/Rational section. This alternative may or may not be selected - the requirement is only to identify it and if not selected provide compelling rational for why or why it was not selected.

The Federal Fire & Aviation Operations 2004 Action Plan provides further guidance on this concept - *Produce WFSA alternatives that display a full range of appropriate management response options. All alternatives must be developed with strong emphasis on cost accountability based on the values to be protected, with due consideration given to a minimum cost alternative.*

- 2. A minimum of two alternatives and one shared worst case outcome shall be developed for each analysis.**

- 3. Non Federal values can and should be included.**

Private land values may be included under the Values Threatened section. When including structure and property values use local county assessed values. Other values such as fences, power lines, tourism, etc. are also appropriate if they can be assessed and are defensible estimates. Do not include any values which may already be included within the NVC tables. Provide written documentation of sources and process when including these non-Federal assets. Additional guidance is provided by the *Interagency Strategy for the Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (6/20/03) Item # Suppression - “Fires are suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, and all values to be protected, consistent with resource objectives”* Page 32.

4. Recommended 2004 certification process: Continue with the process and dollar thresholds identified in 2003 - with clarifications on process.

Each FS Region will provide names and contact information of their WFSA representative(s).

WO - Alice Forbes - NIFC	R1 – Rich Lasko – RO, Fire and Aviation
R2 – Jim Krugman, Paul Langowski – RO, Fire and Aviation	R3 – Bill Waterbury – RO, Fire and Aviation
R4 – Patti Koppenol – RO, Fire and Aviation	R5 - Gary Biehl - RO, Fire and Aviation
R6 – Ken Snell (via Duty Officer), RO/SO (BLM State Office), Fire and Aviation	R8 – None identified
R9 – None identified	R10 – None identified

Procedures

The initial WFSA must be approved prior to initiation of a new strategy, and or within 12 hours of fire escaping. A Basic Wildland Fire Situation Analysis is recommended to define suppression objectives for the transition period between IA and extended attack operations (see Item #6 - Basic WFSA).

All certifications above Forest Supervisor or Regional Forester should be completed within 24 hours, or as negotiated, from the time a completed WFSA is submitted.

During the interim period suppression operations are conducted under the auspices of a locally approved WFSA which is awaiting certification from a higher level Line Officer.

There are two important concluding steps for a WFSA analysis - approval and certification. Local Agency Administrators have the authority to approve and certify WFSA’s (within suppression cost thresholds identified in Table 1). Cost thresholds have been established to guide the certification process, the approval of a WFSA and management of the incident are always retained at the local level, while the certification (authorization of suppression expenditures) can transfer to higher Agency Administrators when cost triggers have been reached. Local AA’s

may approve the target as well as the fallback strategy if they so chose when both have been well analyzed and the inclusion of both is identified within the documentation rationale. However, certification is only sought for the estimated suppression costs involved with the implementation of the target alternative, regardless of whether or not a fallback strategy was included within the approval process. When seeking certification from either the Regional Forester or the Chief, and a fallback is to be implemented, it should be resubmitted for certification as a separate strategy.

In certifying suppression costs, Line Officers share the fiscal accountability associated with outcomes. Regional Foresters and the Chief are certifying the process used is correct and in doing so authorize the expenditures that support the selected target outcome.

Table 1. Agency Administrator WFSA Approval and Certification Thresholds

	\$2,000,000 <i>District Ranger</i>
Local Approval & Certification Level	\$2,000,001 - \$10,000,000 or Type 1 Team activation <i>Forest Supervisor</i>
Regional Office (Certification)	\$10,000,001 - \$50,000,000 <i>Regional Forester</i>
National Certification Level (Certification)	\$50,000,001

If a fire exceeds the initial selected alternative, ordering WFSA Analyst(s) should be considered to assist with a more in-depth analysis using the capabilities of the software and assisting with a well documented decision.

Qualifications Standards remain as in 2003:

Table 2. Regional Forester or Deputy Chief:

1. Attend an annual National Leadership Team Fire Preparedness Briefing, or
2. Qualified as a Type 1 or 2 Command and General Staff position.
Alternatives until qualification is obtained:
a. Participate in a Regional Line Officer Seminar covering the WFSA and Delegation of Authority process.
b. Conduct any WFSA certification process utilizing a Team consisting of a WFSA analyst/mentor and a qualified Line Officer.

Table 3. Forest Supervisor:

1. Participate in a minimum of 1 WFSA certification process and completed the National Fire Management Leadership course, or
2. Attend a Regional WFSA Training course, or
3. Qualified as a Type 1 or 2 Command and General Staff position.
Alternatives until the above qualification is obtained:
a. Attend a Regional Line Officer Seminar covering WFSA and
b. Assign a qualified Line Officer and WFSA Analyst to mentor and counsel throughout the WFSA development and certification process.

Table 4. District Ranger:

1. Participate in a minimum of 1 WFSA certification process and completed the Local Fire Management Leadership course, or
2. Attend a Regional WFSA Training course, or
3. Qualified in a Type 1 or 2 Command and General Staff position.
Alternatives until the above qualification is obtained:
a. Attend a Regional Line Officer Seminar covering WFSA and
b. Assign a qualified Line Officer and WFSA Analyst to mentor and advise throughout the WFSA development and certification process.

5. Develop certification standards that are consistent for all FS Regions.

Certification Checklist

Item	Yes/ No
1. Are KEY objectives for fire suppression identified and measurable?	
2. Are there a minimum of two alternatives (with identifiable differences in strategies and or outcomes analyzed?	
3. Are the values at risk adequately displayed and analyzed?	
4. Do alternatives have safety issues well documented and risk mitigation identified where needed?	
5. Is the rational for the selected alternative, whether or not least expected cost compelling?	
6. Were costing estimates derived with current data, are they relevant for this incident, and documented?	
7. Are the assigned probabilities for success in line with the current and expected situation and documented?	
8. Are critical resources listed and available to implement alternatives?	
9. Was the estimated suppression cost used for identifying the certifying official?	
10. Does the approving official meet qualification criteria?	

Regions may supplement this list as appropriate.

6. Update the current WFSA software to improve user understanding

WFSA Plus 04.2 has been released and is available for download from the WFSA web page - <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/wfsa/>. A Basic WFSA analysis has been developed with this version. It is intended for use when time and resources may be limited, e.g. initial WFSA when transitioning from IA to a new strategy. It may also be appropriate for less complex fires, e.g. District Ranger approval and certification. It should not be used beyond its designed intent.

7. Standards for those who instruct and present WFSA training and refreshers have been developed as guidelines for 2004.

- a) Attend a WFSA software operation training course, minimum of 16 hours.
- b) Have participated in developing a complex WFSA (minimum Type II IMT involved).
- c) Maintain currency by completing either (a) or (b) every two years.
- d) Maintain qualifications within the IQCS qualification system.
- e) Review and update as needed the section within the current Fire Management Leadership for Agency Administrators course pertaining to WFSA.

2004 WFSA Working Team

- Patty Koppenol – R4
- Rich Lasko – R1
- Ken Snell – R6
- John Szymoniak – Riverside Fire Lab/NIFC
- Bill Waterbury – R3
- Sue Vap – NPS
- Dave Lukens – USFS (retired)
- Dave Rittenhouse – USFS (retired)