

**FEDERAL AID  
FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
PO Box 25526  
Juneau, AK 99802-5526

**FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANNING FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT  
PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**STATE:** Alaska

**GRANT AND SEGMENT NR:** W-33-5

**WORK LOCATION:** Region III

**PROJECT NR:** 24.0

**PERIOD:** 1 July 2006 – 30 June 2007

**PROJECT TITLE:** Fire Management Planning for Wildlife Habitat

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**Project Activities and Accomplishments**

ACTIVITY 1: Represent the department on the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (AWFCG) and related Committees and Task Groups.

**Accomplishments:**

- Represented the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) at quarterly meetings and monthly teleconferences of the AWFCG and meetings of the Fuels and Prescribed Fire Committee; and participated in the following committees and task groups: (1) Air Quality and Smoke Management Committee; (2) Fuels and Prescribed Fire Committee; (3) Fire GIS Committee; and (4) Fire Plan Task Group.
- Represented the ADF&G at meetings of the Fire Research and Applications Committee and the Fire Effects Task Group.
- Represented the ADF&G at meetings of the Fire Prevention, Education and Awareness Committee.

ACTIVITY 2: Participate in the two annual fall fire reviews sponsored by the AWFCG and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ANDR), Division of Forestry (DOF), respectively.

**Accomplishments:** Attended the Interagency Fall Fire Review and the DOF Fall Fire Review.

ACTIVITY 3: Annually evaluate and comment on the selection of fire management options (Critical, Full, Modified, and Limited) under the Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan (AIWFMP) and recommend changes.

**Accomplishments**

- Worked with the DOF Fairbanks Area Fire Management Officer (FMO) to increase the Limited Management Option on the Minto Flats State Game Refuge (MFSGR) by 280,720 acres. This land was previously classed as either Full or Modified Management. The change was coordinated with ADNR Division of Mining, Land and Water, the US Department of the Interior (USDO I) Bureau of Indian Affairs, the USDO I Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Tanana Chiefs Conference and Seth-de-ya-ah Corporation (Minto Village Corporation).

- Contacted Division of Wildlife Area Biologist throughout interior, south-central and northwest Alaska for review of the wildland fire management options in their areas. Maps of the existing fire management option boundaries, the AIWFMP, the fire management option change procedure forms, contact information for DOF and/or BLM Fire Management Officers, and instructions were provided. The McGrath Area Biologist recognized the need for major changes in his area but did not have resources to address the issue during this reporting period. Other area biologists did not request any changes.

ACTIVITY 4: Develop and promote department policies and positions relative to fire management.

**Accomplishments:** Continued to advocate for active management of wildland fires to meet land, resource and protection objectives and avoid future catastrophic fires in developed areas where initial attack is highly effective at excluding fire. As currently implemented, the AIWFMP will increase both protection and ecological problems near developed areas in the long term by creating unnatural expanses of spruce-dominated forest. Federal fire policy currently does not allow active management (intentional manipulation of fire behavior to achieve desired results in contrast to passive "fire use" which only allows for natural fire spread) of wildland fires on federally managed lands, even those in the Limited Management Option. However, active management of fires is permissible under state policy and can be implemented on state land. We seek changes in the AIWFMP to encourage active management of fire starts in the Full and Modified Management Option areas as well as the more remote Limited Management areas. Currently, the default initial response in the Full and early season Modified areas is to suppress fire starts regardless of burn conditions, effectively deferring burning to periods of extreme conditions rather than taking advantage of times when fires are more manageable. Thus far, most members of the AWFCG seem unwilling to make significant changes to the AIWFMP.

ACTIVITY 5: Review and comment on state and federal fire-related policies and procedures.

**Accomplishments:**

- Continued to seek changes in Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation permitting requirements and fees for prescribed burning.
- Commented on short-comings of the federal "fire use" policy and the confusion caused by the misleading terminology, and encouraged further policy change to allow active management of wildland fire to meet program objectives.

ACTIVITY 6: Meet with federal, state and local level administrators to discuss fire-related policies, procedures or issues.

**Accomplishments:**

Discussed state and federal fire policies during the Interagency Fall Fire Review and the DOF Fall Fire Review, and advocated for change at every possible opportunity. Met periodically with the human-fire-interactions group at the University of Alaska Fairbanks to discuss fire-related policies, procedures or issues relative to various research projects currently underway.

ACTIVITY 7: Facilitate department staff involvement in fire-related issues.

**Accomplishments:**

- Provided fire information and maps to Region III Division of Wildlife Conservation staff during the fire season and attempted to help area biologists interact more effectively with fire managers.
- Worked with the DOF Fairbanks Area FMO to plan management strategies for two wildland fires on the MFSGR (2006 fire 611251 and 2007 fire 73711277) and kept staff apprised of their status.

ACTIVITY 8: Identify and review appropriate literature to maintain expertise on fire management issues.

**Accomplishments:** Reviewed research papers and other literature on fire-related issues.

ACTIVITY 9: Prepare news releases, guest editorials, brochures and other written media on fire-related issues.

**Accomplishments:** Did not prepare materials because there were few wildland fires and lack of suitable conditions for planned prescribed burns.

ACTIVITY 10: Interact with broadcast media on fire-related issues.

**Accomplishments:** Did not prepare interact with broadcast media because there were few wildland fires and lack of suitable conditions for planned prescribed burns.

ACTIVITY 11: Prepare an annual budget, work plan, and documents needed to satisfy Federal Aid and other reporting requirements.

**Accomplishments:** Submitted a FY06 performance report and FY08 work plan to Federal Aid, and submitted a FY08 budget request.

**Submitted by:** Roy A. Nowlin, Region III Management Coordinator