

**File Code:** 1230; 5130**Date:** August 6, 2021**Route To:**

**Subject:** Delegation of Authority and Leader's Intent for the Trail Creek, Alder Creek, Christiansen, and Black Mountain fires –Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Salmon-Challis and Bitterroot National Forests, Bureau of Land Management Western Montana District, National Park Service Big Hole National Battlefield; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Central and Southwestern Land Offices; and Idaho Department of Lands Eastern Supervisory Area.

**To:** Mr. Morales Incident Commander (Southern Area Blue Incident Management Team)

Welcome to the public lands managed by the Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Salmon-Challis, Bitterroot National Forests, Big Hole National Battlefield, and BLM Western Montana District, and the communities of Wisdom, Wise River, Sula Montana and Gibbonsville and North Fork, Idaho. This letter serves as your delegation from the relevant agencies for the authority to manage the Trail Creek, Alder Creek, Christiansen Fires, and Black Mountain, as well as the authority for initial attack response to new ignitions within the IMT-established Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) areas within the boundary of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest and the area east of Skinner Meadows to the private property boundary on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge (the Horn). You will assume responsibility for managing the incidents on **Sunday, August 8 at 0700**.

This delegation carries the full responsibility for all aspects of management including the assigned firefighting resources, tactical and logistical equipment, facilities, costs, and the rehabilitation of areas impacted as a result of suppression actions identified in the suppression repair plan.

We have attached our *Leader's Intent Statement* and the following documents:

- WFDSS Decisions
- Medical Emergency Evacuation Plan
- MPHAT 2021 COVID direction
- B-D NF COVID Medical Response Plan
- Northern Rockies Coordinating Group Community & Structure Protection Guidelines
- Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Bear Guidance
- Out of State EMTs in MT
- 2021 Dillon Interagency Briefing Guide
- 2021 National Fire Year Themes
- Bitterroot NF Incident Guidelines - 2021

**Agency Administrators and Representatives:**

Eric Winthers, Agency Administrator, Beaverhead-Deerlodge and Bitterroot, NFs  
Molly Ryan, Agency Representative, Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF  
Troy Waskey, Agency Representative, Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF  
Anton Brennick, Agency Representative, Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF



Chuck Mark, Agency Administrator, Salmon, Challis NF  
 Ken Gebhardt, Agency Representative, Salmon-Challis NF  
 Katie Stevens, Agency Administrator, Western Montana District Manager BLM  
 Lindsey Babcock, Primary Agency Administrator BLM (Butte Field Office) (Alder Creek)  
 Amanda James, Agency Administrator BLM (Dillon Field Office)  
 Hoyt Richards, Agency Administrator Montana DNRC  
 Tim Egan, Agency Administrator's Representative Montana DNRC  
 Pat Brown, Agency Administrator, Idaho Department of Lands  
 Steve Thede, Agency Administrator, Big Hole National Battlefield  
 Ashley Adams, Agency Administrator, Big Hole National Battlefield  
 Mandi Wick, Agency Representative, Big Hole National Battlefield  
 Jimmer Stevenson, Agency Representative, Big Hole National Battlefield  
 Katy Matthews, Agency Representative, Big Hole National Battlefield

Our Agency Administrators/Representatives will be available to you throughout your time on these incidents. Plan for a daily meeting between you and the AAs before the Planning meeting. A time can be identified that works for all parties.

We very much look forward to working with you on these fires and expect you to actively discuss strategies and tactics with us or our representatives. We are hoping for a safe and successful assignment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Cheri Ford  
 Forest Supervisor, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Matt Anderson  
 Forest Supervisor, Bitterroot National Forest

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Charles A. Mark  
 Forest Supervisor, Salmon-Challis National Forest

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 Date

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 Kathryn Stevens  
 Western Montana District Manager, BLM

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Tim Egan  
 Dillon Unit Manager Montana DNRC

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 Date

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Tom Rice  
Beaverhead County Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pat Brown  
Eastern Area Manager, Idaho Department of Lands

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Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike O'Herron  
Area Manager, Southwestern Land Office, Montana Department of Lands

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steve Thede  
Superintendent, Big Hole National Battlefield

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I accept this delegation of authority:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Morales, Incident Commander

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Leaders' Intent

**Leaders' Intent for the Trail Creek, Alder Creek, Christiansen, and Black Mountain Fires – Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Salmon-Challis and Bitterroot National Forests; Big Hole National Battlefield (NPS); Bureau of Land Management Western Montana District; Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Central and Southwestern Land Offices; Idaho Department of Lands, Eastern Area.**

#### General Expectations for the IMT:

- ✓ ***Our core value is human safety.*** As the Incident Commander, you are responsible for the overall safety of all firefighters assigned to the incident and we expect that every decision you make takes into account long and short-term risk of exposure without creating unnecessary risks.
- ✓ In PL 5, the reality is we are resource limited. The current situation demands that we commit our fire resources only in instances where they have a high probability of success of protecting life, property and other identified values at risk and they can operate safely and effectively. We will rely on the tested principles of risk management in determining our strategies and tactics. For the Forest Service, at this time, for all these reasons, managing fires for resource benefit is a strategy we will not use. While currently in PL5 with scarce resources, strong communication between the team and agency administrators is required.
- ✓ Be diligent with your efforts to minimize exposure of COVID 19 amongst the Team and resources. Keep in mind that working this fire and managing the risks of COVID are not separate, but rather integrated into all safety and risk conversations. The following protocols will need to be implemented:
  - Explore all options to maximize participation in virtual meetings including public meetings.
  - Face covering/mask and physical distancing requirements – everyone will follow COVID- 19 prevention and mitigation guidance, regardless of vaccination status, which will include at a minimum physical distancing and mask/face covering use in vehicles, offices and so forth unless alone in an enclosed space or actively engaged in field activities such as fireline operations.
  - Utilize daily individual screening tool, distributive operations, spike camps, boxed meals, community cooler mitigations, remote briefings, decentralized staging areas, virtual and remote participation, and module as one (updated) to the maximum extent possible.
  - Expand the scope of the Wildland Fire Incident COVID-19 Tracker during PL5 to include required reporting of all COVID-19 cases experienced by incident-going personnel to maintain a high level of awareness of potential impact on resources. Agency-specific reporting should also continue as required.
  - Require all personnel who are exposed but are not fully vaccinated follow MPHAT guidance in regard to not physically reporting to work during the time period that they should be quarantining following an exposure to another person who was diagnosed with COVID-19.
  - All personnel that have been fully vaccinated that become symptomatic are required to follow MPHAT guidance in regard to not physically reporting to work and notify their supervisor of their symptoms.

- As practical, isolate all resources in module units to prevent cross contamination between resources.
- ✓ Firefighter and public safety will be of the utmost importance in the management of this incident.
- ✓ These fires will be safely, efficiently, and mindfully managed until all of the incident objectives are successfully obtained. This includes maintaining command and control of the incident operations, especially when the availability of resources is limited.
- ✓ Minimize exposure to firefighters and the public, to reduce potential of serious accidents or injuries.
- ✓ Values at risk will be protected by using the appropriate resources to implement tactics in locations with reasonable probabilities for success.
- ✓ Minimize suppression damage to the land and natural resources.
- ✓ Maintain and improve relationships by communicating and listening to local partners, landowners, and community leaders.
- ✓ You are expected to provide a respectful, professional, and harassment-free work environment. Your personal leadership in work environment improvement actions will be foundational to ensuring we are caring for our fire response personnel according to our shared values. Elements of this expectation include:
  - Assigning or ordering a Human Resource Specialist to the incident
  - Taking prompt action if any human resource issues occur on this incident. We expect to be regularly briefed and that all issues be resolved by the end of your assignment. At a minimum, HRSP interviews will have occurred within 24-hours. Outcomes and resolutions should immediately follow the interviews.
  - Reporting all alleged incidents of any form of harassment to the Agency Administrator immediately after learning of the issue.
  - Immediately address critical issues and keep everyone safe by actively promoting interventions addressed in the risk factors for sexual harassment identified in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission *Chart of Risk Factors for Harassment and Responsive Strategies* located at <https://www.eeoc.gov/chart-risk-factors-harassment-and-responsive-strategies>.

### **Incident Objective and Requirements:**

- *Incident Objectives/Requirements* and courses of actions items related to safety will be prioritized over the other critical values at risk.
- Base all your actions on the *Incident Objectives and Requirements* and *Course of Action* as stated in the published Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) decisions.
- If a new WFDSS Decision is required, we will discuss the new strategy and corresponding tactics and document any key decisions within the WFDSS program.
- **Safety**
  - Follow the policy for national work/rest guidelines for shift and assignment lengths for all incident personnel.

- Document on the ICS-215R the use of LCES, ensuring all personnel comply with the 10 Standard Fire Orders and mitigate the 18 Watch-Out Situations.
- If appropriate, ensure the use of night tactical operations are thoroughly assessed including the risk and benefits of conducting two operational periods per day, and documented on the ICS-215R.
- Follow CDC Covid guidelines.
- **Coordination (*individual/agency names & phone #s in IMT In-Briefing*)**
  - Continue to hold cooperators' meetings with virtual option, as needed/requested by the cooperators
  - Work with the applicable County Sheriffs (may include any of the following: Beaverhead, Lemhi, Butte-Silverbow, Anaconda-Deerlodge, and Ravalli), Fire Wardens, B-D FMO, County DES Coordinators, and DNRC FMO, Western District BLM FMO, to develop operational plans and, if needed, evacuation plans.
  - Work closely with the assigned Resource Advisors, to ensure fire suppression impacts to natural and cultural resources are minimized. Consult with them regarding the use of heavy equipment, retardant avoidance areas, noxious weed best management practices, aquatic invasives, and threatened and endangered species.
  - Ensure trash and recycling are kept orderly. Adhere to the B-D Bear Food Storage Order.
  - Develop a public information plan for the incident within 24 hours and please include the Bitterroot and Salmon-Challis National Forests on that plan. Additionally, consider internal staff, external partners, and interested publics in the following communities:
    - Dillon, MT
    - Jackson, MT
    - Wisdom, MT
    - Wise River, MT
    - Dewy, MT
    - Divide, MT
    - Anaconda, MT
    - Darby, MT
    - Sula, MT
    - Gibbonsville, ID
    - Salmon, ID
  - In the event of an accident, implement the Medical Emergency Evacuation Plan, working through Dillon Interagency Dispatch Center, and immediately notify Agency Administrators and our representatives, the Forest Safety Officer, and the Forest Duty Officer. If an accident takes place on state protection, immediately notify DNRC Line Officer. Also notify the Forest IBA to coordinate medical paperwork for any injured employees. ***If there is a serious accident or injury, please notify all Agency Administrators directly.***

- **Human Resources:**
  - Take quick and decisive action to address disciplinary problems that could jeopardize firefighter or public safety in or around camp or on the incident.
  - Ensure all personnel understand they have the right to reasonable accommodation and to work in a work environment free of discrimination and harassment.
  - If the number of assigned personnel reaches 300, assign a Human Resources Specialist (HRSP).
  - Ensure the HRSP documents any corrective actions regarding civil rights and employee conduct, listing any follow-up actions required. *If there is a serious CR/HR incident, please notify all Agency Administrators directly.*
  
- **Recordkeeping:**
  - Create and maintain incident folders on the FTP site per Regional Protocols on a daily basis. Daily IAP and Map updates need to be posted on this site.
  - Ensure your accurate records and locations for all accountable property ordered and deployed on this incident.
  
- **Cost Management:**
  - Evaluate all management actions on a cost-vs-benefit basis to achieve objective of containing the fire.
  - If necessary, implement cost share agreements and document decisions related to cost sharing, keeping the IBA informed on decisions affecting the agreements developed by the applicable agency.
  - Monitor incident costs, maintain a cost summary, and keep us informed for inclusion in the Periodic Assessment.
  - Be responsive to changing conditions such as right sizing your IMT and organization as appropriate.
  - Cache and Buying Team orders will be accounted for and returned to the cache or Forest. If fire crosses protection boundaries, engage in conversations with applicable line officer or representative to discuss returning ordered items.
  - If the fire crosses protection boundaries assure that costs are tracked in such a manner that a cost share agreement can be accommodated.
  
- **Structure Protection:**
  - Follow the *2021 Northern Rockies Coordinating Group Community & Structure Protection Guidelines* on federal lands.
  - The objective for structure protection is to prevent the wildfire from reaching private land and structures. If necessary, work closely with State and County for structure protection off federal lands.
  - We expect you to ensure that safe, appropriate, cost effective, and reasonable tactical actions for which wildland fire fighters are trained and equipped are taken.
  - Decisions to invest in protecting property and landscapes must weigh the values at risk, probability of occurrence, and probability of success against the cost of implementing the protection strategy and firefighter exposure.

- Use of tactics such as gelling, wrapping, extensive hazardous fuels modification, setting up sprinkler systems around individual homes, and utilization of specialized structure firefighting resources are expected to be rare exceptions, and we expect to be consulted prior to implementation.

### **Private Land Considerations**

State and Private Forestland Owners pay fire protection assessment to the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL). Fire suppression operations on State and Private Forestland must include placing high value on timber resources including standing timber, as well as plantations. Expectations for firefighting on State and Private Forestland within Federal protection areas are:

- While planning and executing fire suppression actions, be mindful of the financial values associated with state and private timber;
- Minimize threats and potential impacts to state and private timber by using tactics that keep fire away from these areas;
- Minimize acres burned by using full suppression tactics and keeping the fire size as small as practical;
- Use tactics, practices, and behavior that respect the property and timber value of forestland owners.
- Most of the private forestland threatened by the fire is patented mining claims, many with historical significance and remnant structures. Keeping the fire away to protect active mining infrastructure and historic cultural resources is important, however, standard IDL and Forest Service policies regarding structure protection– which are essentially identical - apply.

**Idaho and Montana Cooperators and AA**, please continue to communicate and work closely with:

- Pat Brown, Eastern Area Manager IDL (208) 681-2782
- Larry Vogel, CDT trail advisor (208) 303-8125, Geoff Fast backup
- CDT Coalition, (303) 996-2759
- Steve Penner, Lemhi County Sheriff – (208) 993-3004
- Treva Wing, Lemhi County Emergency Services Coordinator/Emergency Manager (208) 940-2529
- Dan Peters, North Fork Fire Protection, Chief (208) 993-9745
- Idaho Transportation Department, 208-334-8000
- Idaho Power, Ralph Wing 208-940-0922 or Amber Larna 208-721-0475
- Mike O'Herron, MT DNRC, Southwestern Land Office, Missoula, (406) 240-4199
- Thayer Jacques, MT DNRC, Hamilton Unit, Hamilton, (406) 210-0373

### **End of Assignment:**

Your IMT will be evaluated on how well you met the delegation of Authority and the Agency Administrator's Intent.



At the completion of your assignment, you will receive a written Performance Evaluation from us prior to your departure. Certain evaluation elements, such as accountable and property control, claims investigation/documentation, and financial and payment documentation, may not be completed at that time but will be incorporated in the final evaluation.