



United States Department of the Interior

Office of the Assistant Secretary
Policy, Management and Budget
Washington, D.C. 20240

Memorandum

To: Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, Fish and Wildlife Service
Director, National Park Service
Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Indian Affairs

From: P. Lynn Scarlett, Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget

Subject: Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Funding
Action due: November 2, 2002

The \$20 million funding level provided by the House and Senate for the Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) subactivity of the Wildland Fire Management account for FY2003 is a significant reduction from recent appropriations. The Department must change its business practices in response to the reduced funding level. At the current funding level, the ESR program will not be able to meet all the objectives set forth in the Departmental Manual (620 DM 3, Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation).

The proposed funding level plus carryover from 2002 will provide the ESR program with a total of \$35 million for FY 2003. Proposed ESR funding requests for fires that occurred from 2000 through 2002 are estimated to be in the \$35 million to \$40 million range. Emergency stabilization and rehabilitation costs for fires that will occur in the coming year will add to the funding requirement.

A conference call was held on October 15, 2002 with your bureau ESR and fire budget managers to determine a course of action for this fiscal year. The following decisions were made during the conference call.

- Criteria were established for ranking projects and treatments to determine which ones can be funded this fiscal year. The criteria follow.
 1. Required Treatments
 - A. Health and safety (imminent danger, immediate threat to **life**)
 - B. Health and safety (imminent danger, immediate threat to **property**)
 - C. Municipal water source loss of capacity (not water quality)
 2. Emergency Stabilization Treatments
 - A. Threatened and endangered species habitat treatments (not enhancements)
 - B. Cultural heritage treatments to prevent further erosion of site (not inventory or

mitigation of the site)

C. Treatments to prevent invasive plant establishment

D. Resource protection treatments (site stabilization of soil)

3. Other Rehabilitation Treatments from 2000, 2001 or 2002

- Each bureau must evaluate each of its project plans to determine if the plan, or any portion of the plan, can be funded at this time. Review of all plans must be completed by November 2, 2002.
- Current and proposed ESR plans can only be implemented if they meet the criteria and if funds are available. However, contracts that have been awarded as of the date of this memorandum may continue.
- Funding for implementing fiscal year 2000, 2001, or 2002 ESR plans must be deferred until the plans are rated against the ESR criteria.
- Each bureau is to close out all 1999 and prior fiscal year ESR plans to make any unobligated funds available for high priority projects in FY 2003.
- As of the date of this memorandum, all project approvals will be restricted to the state/regional or national level offices. State/regional offices must receive approval of funding availability prior to committing and approving any project plans.
- Only those projects or treatments that meet the criteria #1 or #2 for 2002, 2001, or 2000 fires may be funded immediately.
- Projects or treatments that do not meet the criteria #1 or #2, will be funded as a second priority only if funding becomes available.
- If additional funding is obtained, criteria will be established to fund any outstanding project plans or treatments.
- A sum of up to \$5 million will be held in reserve to fund future plans.
- No equipment will be purchased by the ESR account without the approval of the ESR national bureau coordinators.
- No law enforcement or other support assistance actions beyond life-threatening situations will be funded.

If you have any questions concerning this topic please contact Wally Josephson, Office of Wildland Fire Coordination on 202-606-3053.