

CHAPTER 2 – THE RESPONSE ORGANIZATION

I. General

This Chapter of the Annex describes the organization to be used to coordinate State agencies support of the Division of Forestry's response during wildfire events. It describes the unified command structure the various agencies will work under to control and suppress wildfires. Also it addresses the circumstances under which the unified structure will support Forestry in its response to wildfires. Following the catastrophic fires in Florida during the summer of 1998, State and federal agencies developed new and updated strategies to deal with serious statewide wildfire. A major change since 1998 was in the organization of statewide oversight. In 1999, a Unified State Command comprised of in-state personnel was utilized. The Unified State Command structure will be the process used to manage serious wildfire events.

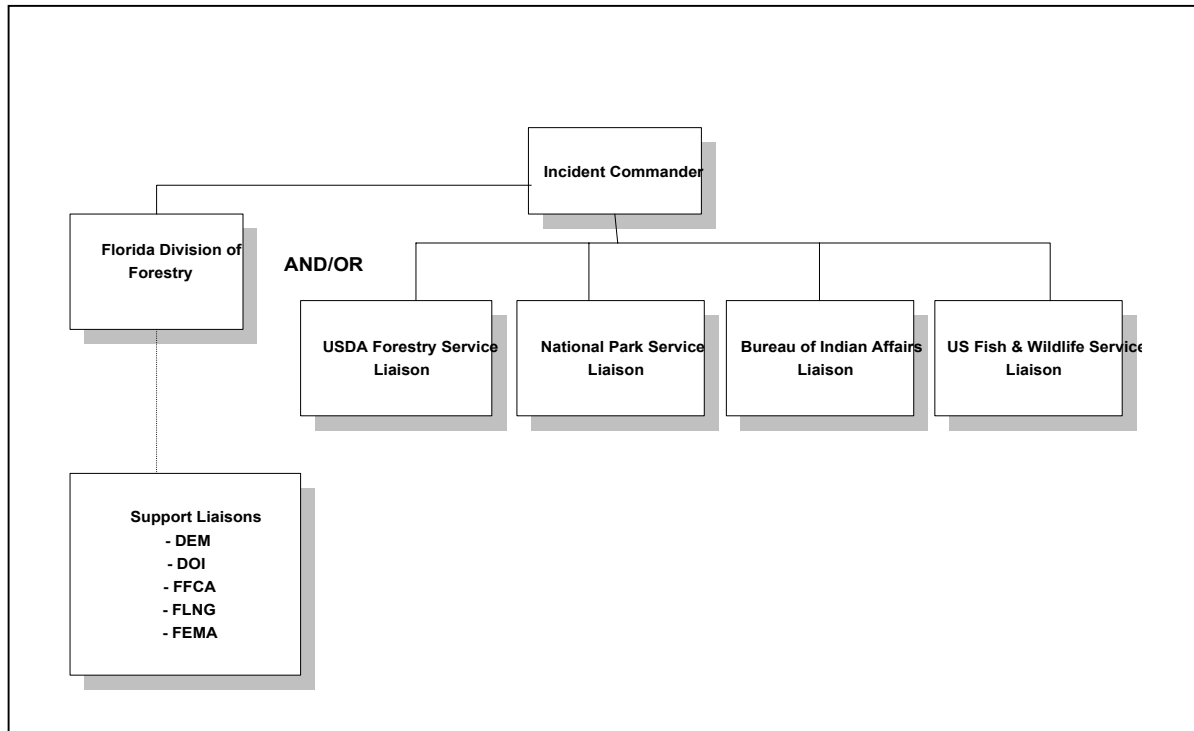
II. Response Organization

The Unified State Command is established as conditions warrant based on a joint decision by the State Forester and the Forest Supervisor of the National Forest in Florida and/or a representative of the Department of the Interior. Unified State Command is organized like a State Multi-agency Coordination (MAC) group, but with the important difference being that the Unified State Command also retains operational command of resources as well as provides logistical coordination.

The Unified State Command is set up so that an Incident Commander is provided from the primary jurisdictional agencies on which the wildfires are occurring. Unified State Commanders will include the Florida Division of Forestry and either the USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, or the Bureau of Indian Affairs (**see Exhibit One**).

In addition to the incident commanders and jurisdictional agency liaisons, the Command Staff will also include liaisons from several key support agencies. These support agencies include the Division of Emergency Management, Division of State Fire Marshal, Florida Fire Chiefs Association; Florida National Guard and if involved the Federal Emergency Management Agency (**see Exhibit One**).

EXHIBIT 1 UNIFIED COMMAND ORGANIZATION



III. Responsibilities

A. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Service, Division of Forestry

The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Forestry has statutory responsibility for the suppression of wild land fires in the State of Florida. The Division of Forestry has the lead role in determining when a State Unified Command will be established. In consultation with other State and federal partners, the Division of Forestry will appoint one member of their organization and at least one alternate to serve as State incident commander. The incident commander will determine the scope and structure of the unified command for the wild land(s) burning in the State.

B. Division of Emergency Management

The Florida Division of Emergency Management has statutory responsibility for coordinating State and local support to the Division of Forestry in the response and recovery from wild land fires. A liaison will be appointed to coordinate the Division's support role. Various support elements will be initiated as requested by the incident commander.

C. Florida Fire Chiefs Association

The Florida Fire Chiefs Association provides the Division of Forestry logistical support through the services of fire departments throughout the State. This support effort will be initiated according to the Florida Fire Chiefs Association's Disaster Response Plan that is activated by request of for Emergency Support Function 4, Firefighting.

D. Division of State Fire Marshal

The State Fire Marshal appoints an emergency coordination officer for Emergency Support Function 4, Firefighting. Emergency Support Function 4 is responsible for logistical request from State and local governments for firefighting resources. These resources are then dispatched according to the requirements of the Florida Fire Chiefs Association Disaster Response Plan.

IV. Delegation of Authority

Incident Management Team(s) for the incidents will be organized in Unified Command with liaisons from the Division of Emergency Management and the Division of State Fire Marshal or the Florida Fire Chiefs Association.