

**Airspace Coordination, 2006
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INTRODUCTION: Airspace Coordination has been an aviation safety program within the US Forest Service since the 1980's. The program is currently in transformation into Aviation Operations as a reflection of the expanded role that airspace coordination plays in tactics and operations. Airspace Coordination has also expanded into an "All Risk" program serving the needs of aviation fire suppression, volcano eruptions and hurricane response.

INTERAGENCY AIRSPACE COORDINATION GUIDE: The foundation document of the DOI and USFS is the Interagency Airspace Coordination Guide. Published in 2003 as a result of a comprehensive team effort that included FAA, BLM, USFS, BIA, NPS, and DoD aviation personnel. The Airspace guide promotes safe, consistent, and standardized approaches to issues involving airspace land management responsibilities. The Guide may be found at www.fs.fed.us/r6/fire/aviation/airspace.

2005 WILDLAND FIRE SEASON SUMMARY: The 2005 fire season arrived last across much of the West Coast. This is an extreme contrast to the current 2006 fire season! Warm rains lingered well into spring, fueling a bumper crop of grass and wildfires, that when cured, fueled fires from Southern California to NW Washington.

2005 NATIONAL WILDFIRE TOTALS: 66,546 fires for 8,686,716 Acres. The number and size of grassland fires last year served as an important reminder that wildfire risk is not limited to forest land and that acres alone do not tell the whole story. Huge range fires that burned in the SW where a wet winter allowed "flashy" fuels to flourish. Additionally, nearly half of the total acres burned was in Alaska.

CURRENT AIRSPACE COORDINATION TOOLS:

- **Interagency Airspace Coordination Guide**
- **Interagency Airspace Websites**
 - www.fs.fed.us/r6/fire/aviation/airspace

- **Automated Flight Following**
- **IAMS/CAHIS** (Initial Attack Mapping System – Computer Aided Hazard Identification System)
- **1255 National Firefighting Transponder Code**
- **Fire Traffic Areas (FTA's)**
- **Airspace Coordinators**
- **Airspace Posters**

2005 AIRSPACE COORDINATION

SENTRY EAGLE: Sentry Eagle is a multi-unit military training exercise hosted by the 173rd Fighter Wing based in Klamath Falls. The event includes an air combat exercise that tests the flying skills of military pilots of active duty, reserve and National Guard. The exercise was August 9-14th in Special Use Airspace in Southern Oregon and included a multitude of fighter jets, including F-15's, F-16's, F-18's involved. Two airspace coordinators were assigned to the exercise to coordinate tactical fire aviation responses with the Sentry Eagle flight operations. This unique collaboration led to an extremely successful military exercise with little or no impact to fire fighting responses!

MCCHORD RODEO: "Rodeo 2005" is Air Mobility Expeditionary Rodeo 2005, sponsored by the Air Mobility Command, is the Mobility Air Force's (MAF) readiness competition which is an air mobility competition held at the McChord AFB that consists of military aircraft from the United States and several foreign nations competing in airdrops, refueling and other events. BLM and the US Forest Service participated in early planning meetings to assure a successful competition with little or no impact to natural resources. Early coordination was the key to providing initial input to reduce or mitigate impacts.

NOTAM ENTRY SYSTEM: The US NOTAM office has activated a new procedure for inputting TFRs through their NOTAM Entry System (NES). This program requires the acquisition of a "Certificate" that allows a user to enter the NES Website (password protected) to request a TFR directly through the FAA NOTAM system. The TFR is sent to the associated ARTCC and the ARTCC processes the request. The program reduced typographical errors, rectifies latitude and longitudes to match the bearing and distance from a nav aid and provides an instant graphic of the requested TFR.

- 25 site visits were made
- 26 Certificates issued by the FAA US NOTAM office
- 68 user names registered with the FAA
- 87 participants trained to use the program
- 7 Air Route Traffic Control Centers (ARTCC) on line

INTERAGENCY AIRSPACE STEERING COMMITTEE: The IASC is the focal point for all interagency airspace coordination operational initiatives, proposals and issues. The IASC reports to the National Interagency Aviation Council (NIAC) under National Fire and Aviation Executive Board (NFAEB). The Interagency Airspace Steering Committee provides guidance for and standardization of airspace issues in wildland fire operations. This committee is dedicated to supporting ground and aerial firefighters while maintaining safe, effective, and efficient, operations in support of fire program objectives

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE AVIATION SAFETY MANAGEMENT – Sacramento McClellan Park

A new certificate program to educate emergency response personnel about critical factors involved in aircraft health management as well as decision making processes and communication skills. The program combines the expertise of the US Forest Service, University of California, Davis College of Engineering, US Davis and private corporations. This unique facility including a fire and emergency response aviation simulator is an outstanding resource for airspace training!

INTERAGENCY AIRSPACE AGREEMENTS: Letters of agreement were updated during 2005 with NAS Fallon, Nellis AFB and UTTR. 2006 will see additional agreements with Mountain Home AFB and NAS Whidbey.

UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS: The US Forest Service is in a partnership with NASA AMES to develop unmanned aircraft systems to support wildfire suppression. The goal is to be at the forefront of the application of small UA's for fire imaging. Three UA's were flown during a demonstration at Moffett Field in July, 2005. (MLB Bat, APV-3 and RMAX Rotorcraft. Another demo is planned for Spring, 2006. Overall goals of the Western States Fire Mission is to fly a 24 hour flight using an AltAir UA imaging fires with infra-red while handling on-board processing and delivering data in near real time. Delays for the 2005 test were due to telemetry problems.

HURRICANE RELIEF: The entire nation responded during the 2005 hurricane season. Airspace coordination was critical as first responders utilized aviation resources to provide relief and rescue. Approximately 13,000 Interagency employees have served more than 250,000 person days. At the peak of hurricane relief efforts, approximately 5,500 personnel were assigned to more than 30 different locations in seven states.

Airspace Coordination was provided through the National Response Coordination Center at FEMA Headquarters in Washington DC. ESF-1 (Emergency Support Function) is the name for the unit responsible for "transportation" of both evacuee's and commodities. ESF-1 is led by the Department of Transportation and consisted of DOT, FAA, DOD and USFS personnel.

LOOKING AHEAD: The early fire season of Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas is extreme and the National Weather Service has already issued warnings of Explosive Wildfire Behavior.