United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

FWS/AFHC/BHR

Memorandum

To: Service Directorate

From **Acting** Director Marshall P. Jones Jr. MAR 12 2003

Subject: Service Fire Management Policy Clarification

Federal fire management activities have expanded the traditional role of Federal agencies beyond the boundaries of pubic land. New policies (e.g., 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, National Fire Plan, Healthy Forests Initiative) encourage prescribed fire assistance to private landowners, community education, and fuels reduction activities to help protect communities at risk from catastrophic fire.

The Service recognizes that prescribed fire is an important and acceptable tool to reduce hazardous fuels, restore habitat, remove exotic species, and reintroduce natural disturbance regimes for the benefit of wildlife. In keeping with the Service priority of developing and facilitating partnerships to accomplish our mission, this memorandum clarifies existing guidance concerning Service fire activities with our partners.

Effective immediately, Service fire management policy and implementation guidance apply to all Service fire management activities regardless of land ownership. The Branch of Fire Management, under the Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System, and the Branch of Habitat Restoration, under the Assistant Director for Fisheries and Habitat Conservation, will be working cooperatively to revise the appropriate Service Manual Chapters to reflect this change.

If you have any questions regarding this matter please contact Phil Street, Chief, Branch of Fire Management at (208) 387-5596 or Martha Naley, Chief, Branch of Habitat Restoration at (703) 358-2201.