

## **Appendix A: Understanding Fire Management Options**

Federal and state suppression agencies and land managers developed the **Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan** in the 1980s after acknowledging that fighting every Alaska wildfire was not only financially and logistically impossible, but often ecologically harmful. The plan was developed to help Alaska:

- Establish priorities agreed upon by all of the interagency suppression agencies.
- Outline a range of suppression responses that could be applied across ownership boundaries.
- Balance suppression costs with resources to be protected.
- Accommodate land management objectives, including providing for the natural role of fire in some Alaska ecosystems, that are fire dependant.

Under the plan, land managers or owner(s) choose one of the following four fire management options for lands under their jurisdiction or ownership.

### **Critical Management Options**

This option gives the highest priority to suppression action on wildland fires that threaten human life, inhabited property, or designated physical developments and structures designated as National Historic Landmarks. These wildland fires are given priority over all others and receive immediate and aggressive suppression efforts.

### **Full Management Option**

This option was established for the protection of uninhabited private property, designated cultural and historical sites, and other high-value natural resource areas that don't involve protection of human life and inhabited property such as commercial timber stands. Aggressive suppression action is taken, subject to the availability of resources. These wildfires receive priority after Critical fires.

### **Modified Management Option**

With this flexible option, response to wildfires depends on the fire danger level. It provides more protection when fire danger is high, there is probability for significant fire growth, and the probability of containment is low. A lower level of protection is provided when the fire danger lessens, typically later in the summer, or when there is low potential for fire growth. The intent is to balance acres burned with suppression costs and accomplish land and resource management objectives.

### **Limited Management Option**

This least-aggressive option applies to areas where the cost suppression may exceed the value of resources to be protected, where suppression may be more damaging than the wildfire or where fire is beneficial to the fire dependent ecosystem. Limited fires receive

the lowest priority for resources. Wildfires in this option will be allowed to burn under the influence of natural forces within predetermined areas while continuing protection of human life and site-specific values.

### **Opportunities for Public Input**

Land managers/owners periodically review boundaries of fire management options and may amend boundaries due to changes in land use, protection needs, laws, mandates or policies.

The previous information is from the Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan which is available on-line at:

<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/pdfs/98AIFMP.pdf>