



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

**Order No. 3448**

**Subject:** Establishment of the U.S. Wildland Fire Service

Sec. 1. **Purpose.** This Order further implements provisions of President Trump’s June 12, 2025, Executive Order (EO) 14308, titled “Empowering Commonsense Wildfire Prevention and Response,” and Secretary’s Order (SO) 3443, titled “Elevating and Unifying DOI’s Wildland Fire Management Program,” by establishing the U.S. Wildland Fire Service (“USWFS”) and providing for unification into USWFS of the disparate wildland fire operations and activities of the Department of the Interior (Department or DOI). It is intended to create an efficient unified organization that will provide the highest level of management and support for the full spectrum of DOI’s wildland fire operations for the benefit of the American people, while also avoiding disruption to the wildland fire mission during the transition.

Sec. 2. **Authorities.** This Order is issued under the authority of sections 2 and 5 of Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1950 (64 Stat. 1262), as amended; EO 14308; the Department’s authorities relating to its Bureaus’ land management activities; and relevant statutes that authorize or relate to wildland fire management, preparedness, suppression, response, pre- and post-fire activities, and recovery.

Sec. 3. **Background.** The Department’s Wildland Fire Management Program provides fire mitigation and response on more than 500 million acres of public and Tribal lands managed by four Bureaus — (1) Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), (2) Bureau of Land Management (BLM), (3) National Park Service (NPS), and (4) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Within the Office of the Secretary, the Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) coordinates related policy and budget matters to ensure a unified, consistent execution of the fire mission among these four Bureaus and the Office of Aviation Services (OAS) maintains aviation safety standards and provides Department-wide oversight, coordination, and aircraft services to support DOI missions, with a significant emphasis on wildland fire operations.

DOI executes its wildland fire mission through more than 4,000 permanent wildland fire professionals and thousands of seasonal personnel, each of whom are committed to meeting the growing challenge of wildland fire prevention and response. Additionally, the Department manages substantial firefighting equipment and other assets in various locations across the country, including aviation assets, and engages in numerous support agreements with State, local and Tribal firefighting organizations. Ensuring the proper strategic alignment and centralized planning and management of these wildland fire personnel, their associated human resource systems, and their necessary supporting physical, programmatic, and partner-based assets is a critical component of the Department’s effort to create USWFS.

In EO 14308, the President directed the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to consolidate their wildland fire programs to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of those programs. In furtherance of that direction, SO 3443, issued on September 10, 2025, directed the establishment of USWFS within DOI and required DOI's four wildland fire Bureaus—BIA, BLM, NPS, and FWS, and including OWF and OAS—to develop a plan to consolidate authority and management of the wildland fire program, with implementation to commence on January 12, 2026. The resulting plan, in recognition of the substantial effort that will be needed to complete the transition to USWFS and the requirement that the consolidation not negatively impact wildland fire operations, focuses on a phased approach to elevating, modernizing, and streamlining DOI's wildland fire management operations activities within USWFS.

This unification of fire programs within USWFS will allow the Department to better respond to the increasing risks that wildland fire presents to people, property and infrastructure, as well as the hazards faced by firefighters every day. This historic effort will modernize wildland fire management to support the long-term resilience of America's public lands, while enhancing national security and economic competitiveness. Through the establishment of USWFS, and as set forth in the transition plan, the Department will:

- Streamline the chain of command and decision-making by aligning Bureau fire personnel into USWFS, while maintaining coordination with the land management Bureaus.
- Simplify and align budget structures, allocations, and spending.
- Establish programmatic authority within USWFS.
- Standardize compensation policies, position descriptions, and retirement benefit structures to ensure equitable pay, consistent classification, efficient recruitment, and strengthened retention across the unified wildland fire workforce.
- Improve interagency and stakeholder coordination.
- Enable more strategic use of resources across landscapes.
- Establish an integrated wildland fire intelligence and data capability.
- Uphold DOI's treaty and trust responsibilities to Tribes.

Following unification, USWFS will maintain close coordination with Bureau leadership and staff on all wildland fire-related land management issues, ensuring that all activities remain fully integrated with local resource management priorities. Geographic area and local wildland fire leadership will ensure that resources, personnel, and equipment are ready to meet wildland fire management needs across DOI-managed landscapes.

**Sec. 4. Establishment of the United States Wildland Fire Service.** Effective on the date of this Order, there is established within the Office of the Secretary the United States Wildland Fire Service. USWFS will be responsible for all aspects of the Department's wildland fire operations and activities. The Director of USWFS will report to the Secretary or his designee and receive

administrative support from the Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget (AS-PMB). The current leader of each respective Bureau’s wildland fire program, often referred to as Fire Directors, as well as OWF and OAS directors, are hereby realigned and will report to the Director, USWFS, with additional wildland fire personnel to be realigned as soon as practicable after the date of this Order.

**Sec. 5. Transition Period.** Recognizing the complexities inherent in the establishment and integration of the existing Bureau wildland fire programs into USWFS, there will be a transition period in which there may be overlapping authorities and responsibilities with respect to wildland fire management. During such period, the Department shall diligently operationalize the unified USWFS, while simultaneously ensuring that there is no negative impact on its missions due to the creation of USWFS.

**Sec. 6. Implementation Responsibilities.**

- a. Deputy Secretary. The Deputy Secretary is directed to ensure the prompt completion of the transition to full operations of USWFS, while ensuring that the transition to USWFS does not create a negative impact to the Department’s wildland fire operational capability, readiness, or other missions. The Deputy Secretary shall also ensure that USWFS and Bureau land-managers maintain clear lines of accountability, authority, and decision-making during the transition, including approving as necessary the transfer of any accountability, authority, and decision-making that may have been retained by the Bureaus during the transition to USWFS and with respect to ongoing Department operations.
- b. Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget. The AS-PMB is directed to take all necessary actions, including appropriate notifications, to effectuate the transfer of wildland fire program assets to USWFS, including:
  1. providing administrative support;
  2. determining the appropriate prioritization, phasing, notices, and associated steps required to effectuate the personnel realignment provided for herein;
  3. providing a report within 30 days regarding the status of the personnel realignment, including identifying remaining actions and whether any future steps are necessary to optimize the wildland fire workforce;
  4. taking appropriate steps to provide funding for USWFS, including making appropriate allocation decisions for the land-management wildland fire Bureaus and Offices as needed to minimize operational disruptions during the transition to the full USWFS operations;
  5. executing the transition of payroll, budget, financial systems, information technology infrastructure, and asset management processes to establish unified operational capability;

6. supporting issuance of relevant policy, directives, and guidance, as well as overseeing necessary revisions to the Department Manual; and
  7. ensuring the appropriate transfer of applicable Bureau and Office funds, programs, records, and property, to effectuate the full operationalization of USWFS.
- c. Assistant Secretaries and Bureau and Office Heads. Assistant Secretaries and Bureau and Office heads with existing wildland fire responsibilities are directed to, in coordination with the AS-PMB and the Director, USWFS, take all necessary actions to support the orderly transition of the wildland fire program from their organizations and workforces to USWFS, as directed by this Order.
- d. Director, USWFS. The Director, USWFS, in coordination with the Deputy Secretary, shall take immediate steps to finalize the organizational structure and deployment of USWFS, including:
1. issuing final organizational structures for USWFS;
  2. reviewing the current distribution of DOI fire response units and assets and protection responsibilities and determining the extent of any necessary redistributions of such units, assets, and responsibilities;
  3. engaging fully with, and assuming leadership roles as appropriate in, relevant existing coordinating bodies, such as the Wildland Fire Leadership Council;
  4. collaborating with land-management Bureau leadership to precisely identify those planning and decision-making activities that have been transferred to USWFS pursuant to this Order and those that remain with the Bureaus, as well as seeking leadership resolution for areas in which alignment has not been reached; and
  5. pursuing deeper engagement, transparency, mutual support, and interoperability among the USWFS and its Federal, State, Tribal, and local partners.

Sec. 7. **Delegation.** This Order delegates all authority necessary to the Director, USWFS, to fulfill the Department's wildland fire mission, including any existing or future wildland fire related statutory authorities applicable to any DOI Bureau or Office. It also delegates the authority necessary to carry out the transition of the wildland fire program from the existing bureaus and offices to USWFS, specifically encompassing the personnel management authority provided in 205 DM 8. To the extent that this delegation may conflict with other delegations to Bureau and Office leadership with respect to wildland fire personnel or asset management, this delegation supersedes such contrary delegation. This delegation expressly provides that decision-making authority over all suppression and response operational matters during the transition period resides in USWFS.

Sec. 8. **Limitation.** While wildland fire operational control, decision-making, and authorities are transferred to USWFS, nothing in this Order shall be construed as removing the current authorities and delegations applicable to the land-management Bureau fire directors. These fire directors and their associated chains of command will retain any operational authority necessary to provide for the uninterrupted accomplishment of the wildland fire mission during the transition period and until such time as they are notified of the cessation of their authority, such as when the relevant Bureau manuals are updated or contrary Departmental Manual or policy guidance is issued.

Sec. 9. **Effect of this Order.** This Order is intended to improve the internal management of the Department and to ensure implementation of the above-referenced EO and SO. This Order and any resulting reports or recommendations are not intended to and do not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person. To the extent there is any inconsistency between the provisions of this Order and any Federal laws or regulations, the laws or regulations will control.

Sec. 10. **Effective Date.** This Order is effective immediately and will remain in effect until it is amended, superseded, or revoked.

Jan 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Date:



Secretary of the Interior