

Sample Process and Guidelines for use of Heavy Equipment (dozers, tractors, etc.) in Fire Emergency Situations in National Forest Wilderness Areas

Note – The process and guidelines presented below do not represent new or existing Forest Service policy except where indicated.

Dozer Approval Authority

Only the Regional Forester may approve dozer use in Wilderness (FSM 2326.04c).

Information Needed for Approval

For dozer use requests, please provide the Regional Office with the following information needed to make an informed decision:

- 1) Why is the use of a dozer in wilderness the minimum requirement to achieve fire management objectives? (See the Motorized Equipment Need and Approval Form at: <http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=toolboxes&sec=fire2>)
 - Describe alternative tactics considered and why they are not feasible.
 - Explain why the bulldozer line is necessary in wilderness and why a line cannot be placed outside of wilderness.
- 2) What are the circumstances that prompt the need to consider using dozers in wilderness?
 - What are the potential consequences of not using dozers in this wilderness?
 - Define the threats to life and property.
 - Describe the inescapable urgency. What trigger point will activate using the dozer?
 - Is it feasible to utilize existing dozer lines in or outside of wilderness?
 - Describe the location, distance and width of dozer use proposed.
- 3) How will the wilderness resource be protected?
 - What are the operational guidelines for dozer line construction?
 - How will visual impacts be mitigated?
 - Describe plans for rehabilitating dozer lines after the fire.
 - Provide a map, whenever possible, showing fire boundary, wilderness boundary, and proposed dozer line.
- 4) Who are the primary contacts?
 - Provide the name and phone numbers of contact person(s) for the Regional Forester to call for further information.
 - Is there a Wilderness Resource Advisor assigned to the Incident Command team? Provide the name and contact information.

Process for Approval and Documentation

The Regional Forester or Deputy Regional Forester may verbally approve or not approve dozer use.

Within 24 hours or less of verbal approval, the Forest Supervisor shall submit to the Regional Forester a written request for dozer use, outlining the request as described above, including fire situation, suppression strategy and appropriate maps. This documentation will be used to prepare the written approval notification and will be added to the record of approval.

Approval and use of dozers in wilderness will subsequently need to be reported by the Forest Wilderness Data Steward as part of the annual Infra-WILD data request.