



Secretary Brooke L. Rollins

April 28, 2026

To: Chief, U.S. Forest Service
Deputy Chief of Fire & Aviation Management, U.S. Forest Service

From: Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Subject: 2026 Direction to Wildland Fire Leadership

Building on last year's joint commitment, I want to share important updates ahead of the 2026 fire season and reaffirm U.S. Department of Agriculture's unwavering commitment to wildland fire preparedness and response, the safety of firefighters, the public, and the landscapes we serve.

As you all know, wildfires pose an escalating threat to communities across all 50 states. No longer confined to the West, wildfires cause massive tolls to lives, health, property, and economic prosperity to Americans across the country. This is an all-hands-on-deck, year-round situation that requires precision, efficiency and effective response to tackle.

The Western United States experienced a notably dry winter, resulting in below average snowpack and early season fuel conditions that heighten the risk to communities, critical infrastructure, and our public lands. The official national fire outlook reflects these conditions and anticipates an early start and elevated potential across much of the West. Our readiness, professionalism, and coordination have never been more critical. The U.S. Department of Agriculture stands ready to engage and empower our wildland firefighting workforce to deliver results and protect American lives, homes, and livelihoods, in close coordination with the Department of the Interior and other partners.

We recently announced a realignment and reorganization of the U.S. Forest Service, that drives our commitment to be vigilant and proactive when addressing the threat of catastrophic wildfire. While we expect many positive outcomes from our reorganization, I want to be absolutely clear: this reorganization does not affect our wildland fire leadership, operations, or resources. Fire management—including preparedness, response, and suppression—will continue without interruption or degradation. Our firefighters, incident management teams, and support partners remain fully empowered and equipped to act decisively.

Our highest priorities remain clear: supporting and protecting our firefighters, promoting public safety and awareness, strengthening interagency coordination, and ensuring rapid and effective response to every incident—wherever it occurs.

Key Priorities for 2026:

- Accelerate initial attack and use a full suppression strategy, in coordination with our interagency partners, across all land jurisdictions to suppress fires early and limit growth.
- Expand hazardous fuels treatments using both mechanical means and prescribed fire to reduce landscape vulnerabilities, where conditions allow.
- Enhance coordination with Federal, Tribal, state, and local partners to ensure rapid and unified responses.
- Maintain workforce readiness through targeted training, pre-positioning of resources, and operational integration guided by the new organizational framework.

Under President Trump’s leadership and bolstered by robust interagency collaboration, we continue to build a national wildland fire system that is modern, adaptive, and resilient to evolving threats. Using the tools available to us, while continuing to drive new methods and strategies forward, we will ensure complete coverage of wildfire threat in every capacity we are responsible for. The Wildland Urban Interface continues to grow year after year, with more Americans facing danger than ever before. By expanding our use of new technologies, growing our awareness of what new threats lie ahead, and equipping our workforce with the knowledge and training they need to be successful, we will rise to the challenge of increasingly devastating wildfire.

Thank you for your service, your dedication, and your unwavering commitment to safeguarding the American people. Let’s remain vigilant. And as always, let’s work together to protect our lands, our communities, and our fellow Americans. As we begin this fire year, know that I stand firmly behind you and deeply appreciate the work you do every day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brooke L. Rollins', with a large, stylized initial 'B' and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brooke L. Rollins

Secretary

U.S. Department of Agriculture