



Secretary Brooke L. Rollins

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM 1078-22

April 28, 2026

1. PURPOSE

This Secretarial Memorandum reaffirms and advances the U.S. Department of Agriculture's efforts to respond to and mitigate the escalating threat of wildland fire nationwide in 2026. It incorporates progress made toward fulfilling the President's Executive Order on Empowering Commonsense Wildfire Prevention and Response and Secretarial Memoranda 1078-017 on Improving the Performance of the National Wildland Fire System with Targeted Federal Reforms. It sets direction for the 2026 fire year and directs the Forest Service to complete remaining milestones, continue implementation and report measurable outcomes that strengthen national wildfire prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

2. AUTHORITIES

This Memorandum is issued under the Organic Administration Act of 1897 (16 U.S.C. §§ 473–482, 551); Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 (16 U.S.C. §§ 528–531); Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, as amended (16 U.S.C. §§ 1601–1614); Service First authority (16 U.S.C. 8544); and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (P.L. 108 148, as amended), along with Executive Order 14308 and the policies advanced in USDA SM 1078-017.

3. BACKGROUND

From day one of the Trump Administration, USDA leadership emphasized strong interagency collaboration and decisive action to protect communities from wildfire. In June 2025, Executive Order 14308, directed the Forest Service to streamline Federal wildfire capabilities, including consolidating the USDA and Department of the Interior (DOI) wildland fire programs to the maximum degree practicable and consistent with applicable law, and promote technology-enabled local strategies for land management and wildfire response and mitigation.

As of January 2026, USDA met all action item deadlines for the President's executive order. The Forest Service and interagency partners have updated national wildland fire governance structures and the primary interagency agreements that guide wildfire management, better aligned wildfire research programs with operational needs and firefighter safety, developed a technology roadmap to strengthen wildfire response capabilities and began standardizing performance measures for wildfire response times, unified risk mapping, risk-reduction outcomes, improved firefighter safety metrics and continue to work with states to create improvements to Geographic Area boundaries.

As the largest wildland firefighting force, USDA must continue to make progress on these important reforms and deliver on the President's vision for a more streamlined and modern federal wildfire response system.

Also, given the historic lack of winter snowpack, predicted above normal temperatures and drier than normal conditions across the western U.S., large wildfires are predicted to threaten homes, communities and natural resources this summer.

USDA must continue to make wildfire response our highest priority work while at the same time, paving a path for lasting reforms that will make our wildland fire force more efficient.

4. DIRECTIVES

Given that the Forest Service manages most of the federal firefighting aviation assets, all the firefighting logistical support contracts, and reduces wildfire risk through active management across more acres of land than any other federal entity, the agency must achieve the purpose set forth above, in close coordination with the Department of the Interior and other partners.

This Memorandum directs the Forest Service to continue to reform and respond, making any necessary revisions to regulations, guidance, policies or practices necessary to implement these directives, as appropriate and consistent with applicable laws.

- A. All USDA Mission Areas must ensure employees supporting wildfire response are ready for wildfire activity and maintain required qualifications.

- Sustain qualifications and surge capacity by keeping “red card” qualifications current across eligible staff.
- Pre-identify detail pools and incident surge roles (procurement, logistics, finance, IT) available for immediate support at Preparedness Levels 3 and above.
- Maintain a standing inventory of contracting and purchasing officers who can pivot to emergency wildfire support with pre-approved thresholds and streamlined review paths.
- At Preparedness Level 3 and above, non-fire workforce support to wildfire response is prioritized and lower-priority program work is adjusted.
- Will be committed to clear, transparent information sharing with the public and partners during wildfire activity that identifies tactics that are being used and why.

B. Risk-reduction treatments should be prioritized and accelerated around communities and critical infrastructure.

- The Forest Service shall establish outcome-oriented hazardous fuels performance measures that assess how treatments reduce wildfire risk and increase transparency.
- The Forest Service will work with the Environmental Protection Agency to eliminate regulatory barriers for prescribed fire and the use of fire retardant, including revising the exceptional events rule, and permitting requirements.

C. The Forest Service must take proactive measures to mitigate environmental and occupational health hazards for wildland firefighters.

- The Forest Service, with the Department of the Interior, shall assess and make recommendations to modernize Personal Protective Equipment.
- The Forest Service, with the Department of the Interior, will increase protections for firefighters by providing guidance around use of n95 masks, respirators, showers, laundry service, and dermal exposure mitigations.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

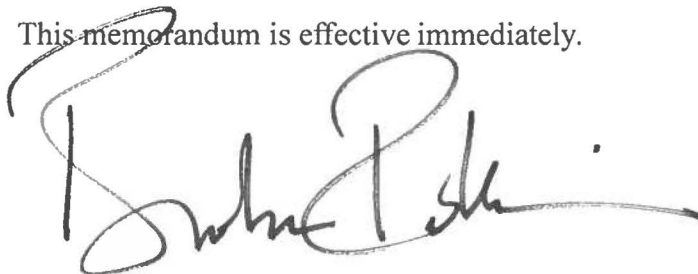
The Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment shall implement this memorandum in coordination with the Office of the General Counsel. In the absence of the Under Secretary or Deputy, the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service will carry out these responsibilities.

6. EFFECTS OF THE MEMORANDUM

This memorandum is intended to improve the internal management of the Department and to assure implementation of my expectations for USDA's approach to wildfire response and mitigation and is therefore not a final agency action within the meaning of such term in chapter 5 of title 5. This memorandum and any resulting report 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 memorandum and any Federal laws or regulations, the laws or regulations will control.

7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This memorandum is effective immediately.

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

Brooke L. Rollins

Secretary

U.S. Department of Agriculture