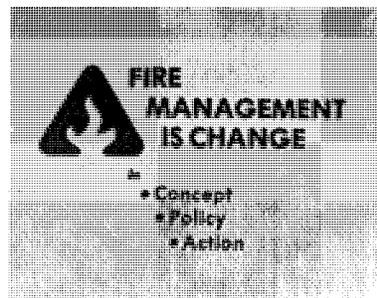


From Fire Control to Fire Management, A Major Policy Change in the Forest Service

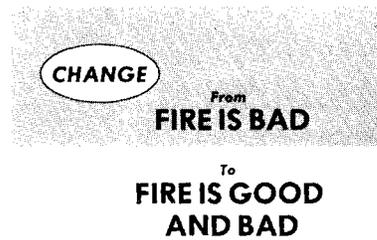
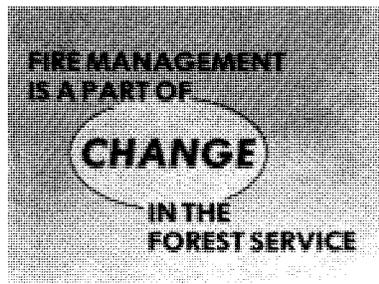
HENRY W. DeBRUIN
*Director of Fire and Aviation Management
Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C.*

FIRE management is change: It is a change in concept, a change in policy, and a change in action. The Forest Service is changing. It still qualifies as an old-line traditional outfit with a great history and heritage—but it is changing. Fire management is also a part of this greater change.



HENRY W. DEBRUIN

We are determined to save the best of the past as we change a basic concept from fire is bad to fire is good and bad. A wilderness fire management plan now allows for natural prescribed fire. The first plan was developed for the White Cap Drainage for the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, Bitterroot National Forest, Idaho. The plan prescribed modified suppression actions based upon fire history, ecological analysis and seasonal weather patterns. A similar plan is being



considered for a part of the Gila Wilderness, Lincoln National Forest, New Mexico. In the southern coastal plain of the United States, a plan called DESCON (Designated Control Burn System), recognized certain wildfires burning under conditions of prescribed fire can achieve land management objectives. These wildfires will not be suppressed as long as prescribed objectives are met. On the other hand, we have not lowered our resolve to attack and quickly suppress wildfires and to do it with a high regard for personal safety and environmental protection. Our attack capability has improved through use of the concept of "total mobility" to move people, equipment and supplies. Total mobility is achieved by prepositioning suppression forces and maximizing efficient movement of prevention and fire-fighting resources. We use it to cross agency boundaries in a demonstrated cooperative spirit of Federal and State agencies working together to reduce fire losses.

FROM FIRE CONTROL TO FIRE MANAGEMENT

EXAMPLE

FIRE BY PRESCRIPTION
WHITE CAP
DESCON
GILA
TOTAL MOBILITY

CHANGE

From
CONTROL
AS THE FOCAL POINT
To
LAND MANAGEMENT
AS THE FOCAL POINT

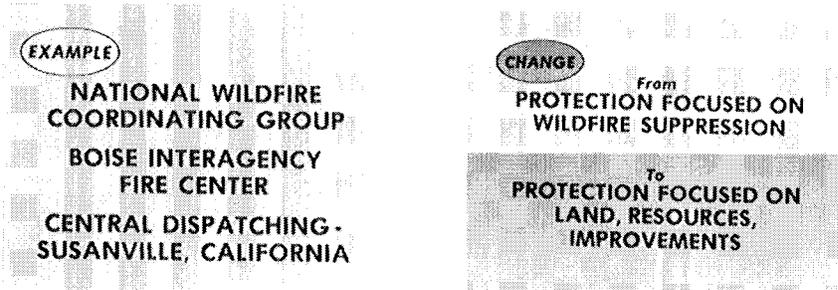
We are changing from FIRE CONTROL, a simplistic approach, easily communicated and understood, to FIRE MANAGEMENT, a complex scientific approach, not so easily communicated or understood. The substance of the change while reflected in many of our current activities, will be developed to a larger degree by our actions in the coming years. Without lowering our capabilities as a top-notch fire suppression outfit, we are focusing our performance on other aspects of professional fire management such as fuel management and fire prevention. The task is accomplished by reducing the flammability of the forest fuels, preventing man-caused fires, maintaining an attack force to extinguish wildfires, and making fire management an integral part of land use planning. Our purpose is to protect lives, property and the National Forests from wildfire and to manage fire to meet the needs of people now and in the future.

EXAMPLE

REDUCING
THE FLAMMABILITY
OF ALL FOREST LANDS
FIRE AS A TOOL
IN LAND USE MANAGEMENT

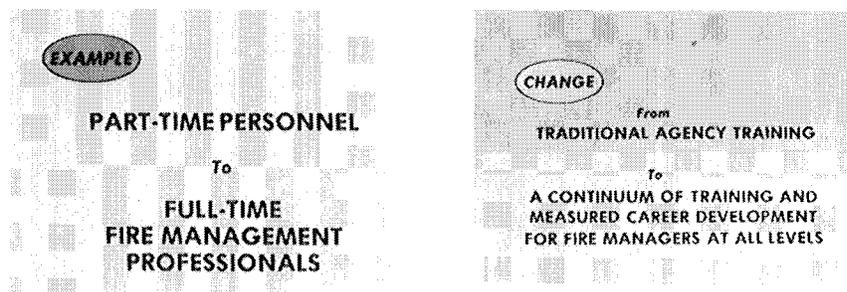
CHANGE

From
"GO IT ALONE"
To
INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION
AND
NATIONAL COORDINATION



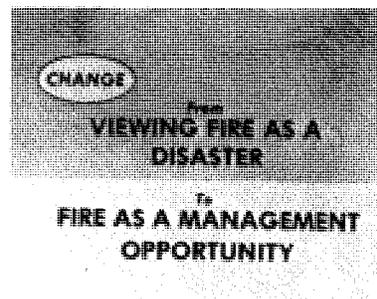
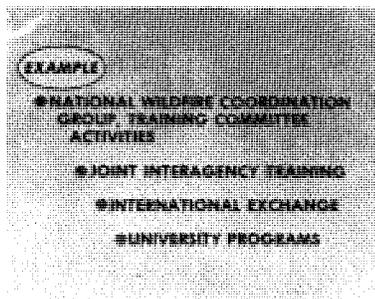
The changes we are making cannot be done alone. These changes must be made through people. Our goal is a consortium of professional scientists from all agencies working out national objectives and priorities in a climate of searching for facts and truth and efficient public service.

One effective way to work is through the National Wildfire Coordination Group, which serves as a common ground for Federal and State representatives to plan and carry out fire management coordination and cooperation. Another exemplary example of interagency cooperation and coordination, is the Boise Interagency Fire Center, where the Weather Service, NOAA, USDA; Bureau of Land Management, USDI; and Forest Service, USDA, are joined together in the common goal of reducing fire losses. On a smaller scale, this is also demonstrated at the Forest Service—BLM central dispatching facility at Susanville, California.

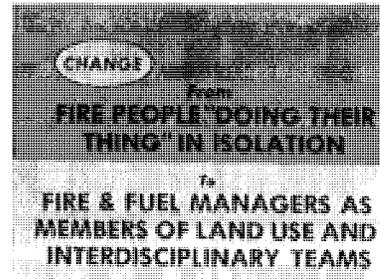
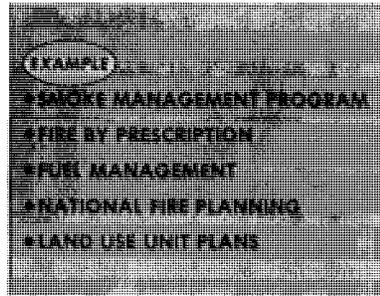


FROM FIRE CONTROL TO FIRE MANAGEMENT

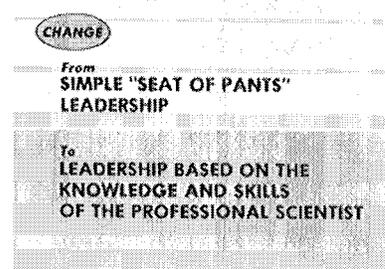
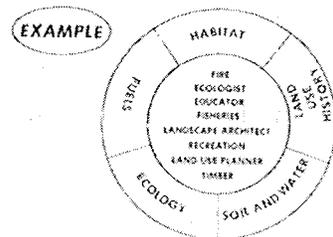
To this job, we are moving from part-time fire personnel to full-time fire management professionals. As we tool up for fire management, we will maintain an attack force to suppress wildfires aggressively and quickly, but our focus will be on land, people, resources and improvements. Experienced professionals will use fire for forest disease control, planting site preparation, reducing the flammability of fuels, and improvement of wildlife habitat.



Development and progress of fire management depends on a continuum of training and measured career growth for fire managers at all levels. To help fulfill this goal, the Training Committee of the National Wildfire Coordination Group provides impetus and direction for joint interagency training. Also assisting is the Fire Management Group of the FAO North American Forestry Commission, which facilitates international fire management exchange programs. In addition, university post graduate study, symposiums, short courses, etc., are essential to the forward progress of fire management.

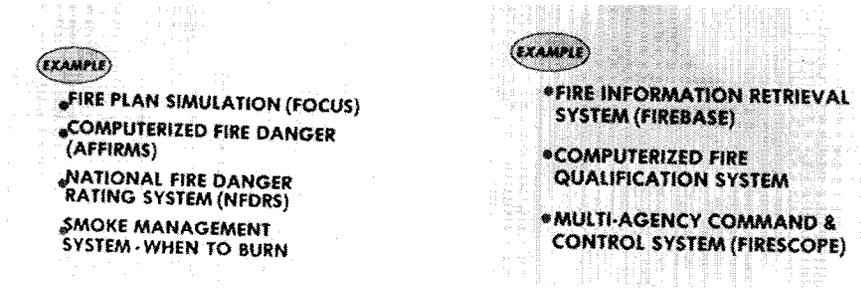


Fire no longer can be viewed only as a disaster but should be seen as an over all management opportunity. To make this change, we need more research, greater knowledge, new skills, continuous training, and career growth.

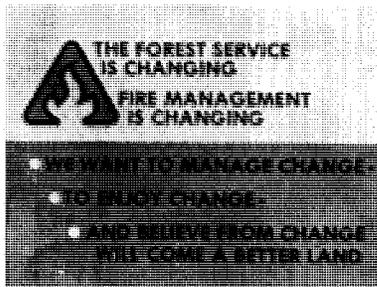


We see fire managers as active members on Land Use Planning Teams and other interdisciplinary activities. Fire is not an independent force in nature. It can affect every aspect of forest ecology, so fire management must be an integral part of land use planning.

FROM FIRE CONTROL TO FIRE MANAGEMENT



The keystone to fire management's future services is the continued development of new futuristic programs with emphasis on computer applications. The examples illustrate some of our current accomplishments.



The goal of this entire effort is to manage change, to enjoy change, because we believe from the changes we are making, will come a better land.