



RUSSIAN FEDERATION FIRE 2002 SPECIAL

PART V

Main Goals of Forest Fire Protection in the Russian Federation Recommendations of the Round Table held at the All-Russian Forestry Congress

Moscow, 26 February 2003

Rationale

The annually burned area of the Forest Fund of the Russian Federation is five times higher as compared with timber cut area. The value of the fire damages is equal with the value of the whole national profit of the forestry sector.

The wildfire management policy in our country is directed to active attack in all available priority zones (active firefighting zones) as well as in the other countries. The active firefighting zones are more than 2/3 of the total area of the Forest Fund of the Russian Federation except of northern and extended areas of Siberia and Far East. The forest fire protection policy is based on a concept of prevention activities, in time detection and initial attack, increasing of fire fighting resources while increasing of burning area. However, this concept works perfect for moderate fire danger only.

Main reasons for the critical situations are the varying of number of fires and burning areas nationwide and imperfection of the forest protection system and its financing.

On the actively protected area 20,000 to 37,000 wildfires are burning annually affecting 0.5 to 5.5 million ha. Between 75 and 95% of the total area affected is usually concentrated in three to four regions with extreme fire conditions. These fire conditions appearing in different areas make it impossible to establish levelled fire fighting efforts in all regions to meet the required standards for extreme conditions. That is why it is needed to build a flexible forest protection system that is able to provide control on the whole territory.

More than 95% of the area annually affected is burned by large fires, mostly in remote areas. Fire fighting results in these areas depend on timely detection and rapid initial attack. However, during the period 1991-2002 the number of smokejumpers and helirappellers has been reduced by more than two times, flight hours for aerial patrolling have been reduced by about ten and total aerial operations by about four times. The weakening of aerial fire operations and personal resulted in an increase of the value of fire damages as well as the expenses for fire fighting operations - much more than saved on aerial operations.

Introduction

During the All Russian Forestry Congress in Moscow, 24-28 February 2003, a Round Table on "Main Goals of Forest Fire Protection in the Russian Federation" was held on 26 February 2003. A total of 310 participants included forestry and fire management specialists of Russia as well as foreign countries and the leader of the GFMC, Mr. J.G. Goldammer. The recommendations of the Round Table were presented to the audience of more than 5000 foresters at the Kremlin Conference Center.

Recommendations

After listening and discussing reports on the Round Table the 310 participating forestry and fire specialists agreed that wildfires remain the main factor, rendering negative influence on the ecological and economic resource potential of forests of Russia.

According to the opinion of wildfire specialists and fire scientists of Russia and foreign countries the main reasons of growing number of large wildfires and area burned is an undue detection of wildfires, a weak monitoring system, weakening of the Aerial Forest Fire Protection Service *Avialesookhrana*, and lack of appropriate finances.

The participants of the Round Table agreed, that it is necessary to include the following action items into resolution of the convention in order to successfully implement the "Concepts of Forest Service Development for the period

2003-2010" and the Federal Program "Ecology and Natural Resources of Russia 2002-2010" approved by the Government of the Russian Federation:

1. Increase of the number of lookouts and fire stations in the responsibility zones of ground forces. Improvement of equipment of fire stations by modern fire engines, tools, radio and transport in accordance with standards (implementation period: 2003 – 2010).
2. Rise the number of smokejumpers and helirappellers, number of aircraft up to required level for aerial fire operations. To develop and approve the normative documents for the in time planning of preventive and operative manoeuvres of fire fighting teams and resources.
3. Create in the territories protected by *Avialesookhrana* in Ural, Siberia and Far East three Interregional Fire Centres for operative fire detections and liquidation of wildfires burning under extreme conditions and provide operative help (implementation period: 2003 – 2006)
4. Continue the development of the wildfire monitoring system, based on joint complex use of ground forces, aircraft, spaceborne sensors and modern telecommunication equipment, as well as GIS technologies and systems of lightning detection. Improve the methods of fire weather forecasting. During 2003 - 2004 realize the development of new satellite system of international cosmic wildfire monitoring system.
5. Attract more attention to fire preventive activity and prescribed burning operations. Delineate the protected territory by priority zones depending on ecological and economical values, following the example of Leningradskaya Oblast, Chitinskaya Oblast and Krasnoyarski Krai.
6. Provide in time financing of training and other preparations of aerial and ground forces, aircraft fuel reserves and other needs.
7. Increase the scientific and research works on forest fire protection up to the year 2010. Develop science-based approaches of fire management based on principles of nature. Provide further development of firefighting technologies using aircraft, use of new chemicals for improving efficiency of aerial firefighting systems. Increase the use of the automatic radio information systems for disseminating operative information.
8. Prepare proposals in 2003 to change some elements of forestry legislation, providing reinforcement of legal protection of forests, activation of regions of Russian Federation on financing of forest protection and other actions on their territory. Raise the responsibility of subjects of Russian Federation and local Government for forest fire protection and preventive operations.
9. In 2003 we foresters need to improve the rules and procedures of mobilizations of resources of other organizations - EMERCOM and the military - for fighting forest and peat fires.

The participants of the Round Table express their opinion that constructive decisions based on the recommendations will create the necessary conditions for essential improvement of forest protection of Russia, will reduce damage from wildfires and will save resource and ecological potential.

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