

Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact

Article I

The purpose of this Agreement is to promote effective prevention, presuppression and control of forest fires in the Lake States Region of the United States and adjacent areas of Canada by the member States by providing for mutual aid in prevention, presuppression and control of forest fires among the member states and for procedures that will facilitate such aid, and by the establishment of a Board to coordinate the services of the member States and perform such common services as they deem desirable.

Article II

This Compact shall become effective for those States ratifying it whenever any two or more of the States of Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin have ratified it.

Any Province of the Dominion of Canada which is contiguous with any member State may become a party to this Compact by taking such action as its laws and the laws of the Dominion of Canada may prescribe; however, this Compact shall not obligate the rendering of assistance to such Province under Articles VI and VII unless federal legislation authorizing this compact is enacted. In the event that the Dominion of Canada or any part becomes a member to this Compact, the term "states" shall include within its meaning the term "Province" and the procedures prescribed shall be applied in the instances of such Provinces in accordance with the forms and practices of the Canadian Government.

Any State not mentioned in this Article which is contiguous with any member State may become a party to this Compact subject to unanimous approval of all members of the Board of the member States.

Article III

Each State joining in this Compact shall appoint two representatives to a board hereby designated as the Lake States Forest Fire Protection Board. One shall be the State's forest fire supervisor or officer holding an equivalent position responsible for forest fire control in the state. The second representative shall be another member of the State's forest fire protection organization. The State Forester shall be an ex-officio member. In the event that any Province of the Dominion of Canada becomes a member it shall designate two members and an ex-officio member who will approximate this pattern of representation to the extent possible under the laws and practices of the Province. This Board shall be a body corporate with powers and duties set forth herein.

Article IV

It shall be the duty of the Board to determine from time to time such methods, practices, circumstances and conditions as may be found for enhancing the prevention, presuppression and control of forest fires

in the area comprising the member States, to coordinate the plans and the work of the appropriate agencies of the member States and to coordinate the rendering of aid by the member States to each other in fighting forest fires.

The Board shall develop cooperative program plans for the area covered by this compact.

The Board agrees to consult with and advise the appropriate administrative agencies of the States which are a party to this Compact regarding problems with the prevention, presuppression and control of forest fires and recommend the adoption of such actions as deemed advisable.

The Board shall have the power to recommend to the signatory States any and all measures that will help in the prevention, presuppression and control of forest fires.

Article V

The Board shall biennially elect from its members a chairman and vice chairman. The Board shall appoint such officers or employees necessary to put the provisions of this Compact into effect and shall fix and determine their duties and qualifications. The board shall adopt such by laws for the conduct of its business and may meet at any time or place but agree to meet at least once each calendar year.

A majority of the members of the Board representing the signatory States shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of its general business. Motions of members present shall be carried by a simple majority except as stated in Article II. No action of the Board imposing any obligation on any signatory State shall be binding unless a member from such signatory State has voted in favor thereof.

Article VI

Whenever a member state requests aid from any other member State in controlling or preventing forest fires, the State agrees to render all possible aid to the requesting State which is consonant with the maintenance of protection at home.

Article VII

Whenever the forces of any member State are aiding another member State under this Compact, the employees of such State shall operate under the direction of the officers of the State to which they are rendering aid and be considered agents of the State they are rendering aid to and, therefore, have the same privileges and immunities as comparable employees of the State to which they are rendering aid.

No member State or its officers or employees rendering aid within another state pursuant to this Compact shall be liable on account of any act or omission on the part of such forces while so engaged, or on account of the maintenance or use of any equipment or supplies in connection therewith to the extent authorized by the laws of the State receiving the assistance.

Any member State rendering outside aid pursuant to this Compact shall be reimbursed by the member State receiving such aid for any loss or damage to, or expense incurred in the operation of any equipment and for the cost of all materials, transportation, wages, salaries and maintenance of personnel and equipment incurred in connection with such request. Nothing contained herein shall prevent any assisting member State from assuming such loss, damage, expense or other cost or from loaning such equipment or from donating such services to the receiving member State without charge or cost.

For purposes of this Compact, personnel shall be considered employees of each sending State for the payment of compensation to injured employees and death benefits to the representatives of deceased employees injured or killed while rendering aid to another state pursuant to this Compact.

The Board shall formulate procedures for claims and reimbursement under the provisions of this article.

Aid by a member state to an area subject to federal jurisdiction beyond the borders of such State shall not be required under this Compact.

Article VIII

When appropriations for the support of the Board or for the support of common services maintained by the Board are necessary, the Board shall allocate the costs evenly among the member States.

The Board shall keep accurate books of account, showing in full its receipts and disbursements, and the books of account shall be open at any reasonable time to the inspection of representatives of the respective signatory States.

On or before the first day of March of each year, the Board shall submit to the respective State Forester of the signatory States a full and complete report of its activities for the preceding calendar year.

Article IX

The Board may accept any and all donations, gifts, and grants of money, equipment, supplies, materials and services from the federal or any local government, or any agency thereof and from any person, firm or corporation, for any of its purposes and functions under this Compact, and may receive and use the same subject to the terms, conditions, and regulations governing such donations, gifts and grants.

Article X

Nothing in this Compact shall be construed to authorize or permit any member State to curtail or diminish its forest fire fighting forces, equipment, services or facilities and it shall be the duty and responsibility of each member State to maintain adequate forest fire fighting forces and equipment to meet normal or anticipated demands for forest fire protection within its borders.

Nothing in this Compact shall be construed to limit or restrict the powers of any member State to provide for the prevention, control and extinguishment of forest fires or to prohibit the enactment or enforcement of State laws, rules or regulations intended to aid in such prevention control and extinguishment of forest fires in such State.

Nothing in this Compact shall be construed to affect any existing or future Cooperative Compact between the United States Forest Service and a member State.

Article XI

The Compact may request the United States Forest Service to act as a research and coordinating agency of the Lake States Forest Fire Protection Compact in cooperation with the appropriate agencies in each State.

Article XII

This Compact shall continue in force and remain binding on each State signing it until such State takes action to withdraw therefrom. Such action shall not be effective until sixty (60) days after notice thereof has been sent to all other member States.

In the event of termination of this compact, any property acquired as the result of this compact which is held jointly by the member states shall become the property of the state where the property is located at the time of termination upon payment by that state to the other member states of the fair market value of the other member states ownership in the property. In the event the state where the property is located does not desire to acquire sole ownership of the property, the property shall be disposed of as

provided by the laws of the state where the property is located and any proceeds shall be returned to the member states in proportion to their ownership in the property.

Should there be any surplus moneys at the time of termination, those moneys shall be returned to the member states in proportion to the contributions of the states.

Article XIII

Nothing in this Compact shall obligate the funds of any state beyond those approved by appropriate legislative action.