

Topic: USG/GOG Cooperation Efforts in Response to Wildfires

Date: May 8.2008

Background: Following the devastating wildfires in Greece in 2007, the USG and GOG initiated a 2-year cooperative effort to exchange information and technical experience in wildfire management. Several activities are being implemented or have been identified as potential opportunities for 2008 (below). During and after the 2008 fire season, USG and GOG will continue to explore opportunities to develop a comprehensive, collaborative program on wildfire management.

The United States Forest Service (USFS) and Hellenic Fire Brigade (HFB) Collaboration:

Aerial Supervision Training: April 26 – May 24, 2008

USFS is hosting 2 HFB officers and 2 Hellenic Air Force (HAF) pilots for training and exposure to supervision of aerial resources and coordination with ground-based operation during wildfire incidents. Four weeks of U.S.-based training includes:

- Air Attack Group Supervisor Training Course (S-378): April 27-May 11, 2008 in Sacramento, CA
- Air Service Module (ASM): Following the course training, Greek personnel will be assigned to an aerial attack platform and/or an ASM module at an air tanker base for 2 weeks of practical training in Redding, CA and Albuquerque, NM.

Wildland Fire Fighting Crew Experience: May 10 – July 5, 2008

HFB will send four personnel to the U.S. for 8 weeks of training in May and June, 2008. HFB will be assigned to a 'Hotshot' crew on the Angeles National Forest in California for two weeks of refresher training in fighting wildfire incidents, followed by six weeks of practical experience in fighting wildfires and organizing and managing ground crews.

Wildland Fire Investigation Training: May 5-17, 2008

The HFB requested knowledge about US methods of wildland fire investigation. Three USFS instructors traveled to Greece for 2 weeks in May 2008 to assist with preparation and instruction of a modified Wildland Fire Cause Determination and Fire Prevention course for 25-30 Greek participants.

Fire Prevention: Fall 2008

The HFB expressed an interest in working with USFS to exchange information on public awareness and education programs to prevent fires. Personnel from HFB will travel to the US in fall 2008 to examine U.S. programs and activities related to fire prevention.

USFS and Greek Forest Department Collaboration:

Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER): October 14-27, 2007; Fall 2008

A team of seven USG specialists traveled to Greece in October, 2007 to work with the General Directorate of Development and Protection of Forests and Natural Environment in the Ministry of Rural Development and Food to address post-fire emergency impacts and share response and mitigation tools. The Joint Greek and US BAER team conducted a case study in the Kladeos water basin using the USFS BAER post-fire analysis process.

As follow-up, the USFS will host a Greek delegation to the U.S. in Fall of 2008 to exchange information on post-fire rehabilitation techniques and receive training in the USFS BAER process.

International Seminar on Forest and Natural Resources Management: October 6-21, 2008

1-2 Greek participants will attend a three-week course on forest and natural resources management in the U.S. At the seminar, natural resource professionals from around the world will engage in an intensive program that will promote the transfer of knowledge and examine ideas and approaches to improve the management of natural resources in their respective countries and regions.

Fire Prevention: Fall 2008

USFS will host a team of Greek specialists to the U.S. to exchange information on fire prevention techniques and programs. Participants will examine forest management techniques and community action programs designed to reduce fire risk, as well as education and media campaigns targeting main causes of wildfires.

The United States Forest Service (USFS) and Hellenic Ministry for the Environment Physical Planning and Public Works

Post-Fire Response in Protected Areas: Summer 2008

USFS will work with personnel from the Hellenic Ministry of Environment Physical Planning and Public Works to share best practices for post-fire assessment and response in protected areas.