

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
Natural Resource Commission**

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**ITEM**

**19**

**DECISION**

**TOPIC**            **Contract with Prairie Rivers RC&D for Federal Excess Firefighting Equipment and Fire Training**

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Commission approval is requested for a one year-service contract with Prairie Rivers RC&D of Ames, Iowa. The contract will begin on October 1, 2009 and terminate on September 30, 2010. The total amount of this contract shall not exceed \$122,202.60. DNR shall have the option to renew this contract as long as this contract and any extensions do not exceed a six-year period.

This contract will be one hundred percent funded through the following United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service grants: Volunteer Fire Assistance, Volunteer Fire Assistance – National Fire Plan, Expanding Prescribed Fire on Private Lands, S&PF Redesign: Integrated Approach to Mitigate and Manage Invasive Plants in Forested Land and Hazard Mitigation Wildland Urban Interface, received pursuant to the authority provided in Iowa Code section 455A.24(13). The federal grant dollars that fund this contract can be used only as specified in the Forest Service/IDNR grant agreements.

The Iowa Forestry Bureau within the DNR has worked with the United States Forest Service (USFS) for over sixty years to deliver financial, technical and related assistance to Iowa's rural fire departments to assist them with wildland firefighting. This partnership has expanded to training firefighters, natural resource professionals and private citizens in the utilization of prescribed fire to encourage the management of fire dependent ecosystems such as oak woodlands, savannas and prairies. Wildland firefighting courses are also offered to insure the safe utilization of prescribed fire. The Forest Service requires that fire training be presented by instructors that meet the National Wildfire Cooperative Group (NWCG) standard.

Fighting wildland fires requires specialized equipment. Rural fire departments often operate with limited equipment budgets. The Iowa Forestry Bureau and the USFS have assisted Iowa's fire departments by obtaining no cost federal excess equipment that can be utilized or converted to meet the wildland firefighting needs of specific fire departments. The ability to screen and procure federal excess equipment requires specialized training and certification to meet USFS and Department of Defense Standards.

The authority of the Forest Service to work with individual states is found in the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program which is authorized in Section 10(b)3 of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (PL 95-313, as amended by the Forest Stewardship Act of 1990 (PL 101-624). The Forestry Bureau is authorized to enter into these agreements in Chapter 456A.24 (13) of Iowa Code.

It is the mutual desire of the DNR and the RC&D to assist the DNR and local rural fire departments in acquiring federal excess equipment for wildland fire preparation, readiness and control and to provide training to firefighters, natural resource professionals and private citizens in prescribed and wildland firefighting techniques. It is the belief of the cooperating parties that the project specified below will be to their mutual benefit, the benefit of Iowa's fire dependent ecosystems and to the benefit of the people of Iowa.

Paul J. Tauke, Forestry Bureau Chief/State Forester  
Conservation & Recreation  
September 10, 2009