



---

## Southern Area Coordination Center

**File Code:** 5100

**Date:** June 5, 2003

**Route To:**

**Subject:** Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) Implementation

**To:** State Interagency Coordination Centers  
National Park Service Regional Office  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Regional Office  
Bureau of Indian Affairs Regional Office

The Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) is now a reality. NWCG, USFS and DOI issued direction on implementation is on the ROSS website @ [ross.nwcg.gov/](http://ross.nwcg.gov/).

ROSS has been in the implementation phase for more than a year. The Southern Geographic Area has completed most of the dispatch module training. It is important that we continue to follow through, so we can begin to derive the benefits the system will deliver.

Each office has a unique set of customers; staffing; computer support; agency missions and constraints; and a mixture of manual and/or automated resource ordering and status systems. The transition from a long tradition of manual ordering and status keeping to an automated network of programs and systems brings change—both obvious and hidden.

The Southern Area Implementation Plan required statusing of our resources beginning April 1, 2003. It also indicates the Southern Area will utilize ROSS dispatch as of June 15, 2003. If units and managers need help meeting these timeframes, there are many ways to achieve this, i.e., the ROSS website, the ROSS helpdesk, and the ROSS partners and team members.

The Southern Area has always provided support to other areas of the country year-round. Wildland resource orders are not the only orders that will be processed through the ROSS system. The Southern Area is extensively involved with Presidential declared disasters and emergencies and Secretarial declared emergencies as they occur. From a national perspective, "fire season" is year-round and non-fire incidents can and will occur at anytime. To receive an assignment, a resource must be statused in ROSS as "available." In other words, resources will need to be in the system prior to an event in order to be assigned. It is critical that we use ROSS to maintain the status of overhead, crews, equipment, and aircraft—this includes resources that are available only to your local unit.

Prior to the implementation of ROSS, the primary method of declaring resource availability within the Southern Area was via an "availability list" which was faxed to SACC by the Interagency Coordination Centers. There was also a "shopping list" (resource request list) posted on the SACC website displaying outstanding resource order requests. Personnel often reviewed the "shopping list" prior to deciding when they wanted to make themselves and other resources available.

The process with ROSS will work as follows:

1. When an incident occurs, whether it will be locally, regionally, or nationally—dispatchers will be looking at the Resource Status Modules to process the order.
2. If none of the required resources are shown as “available” at that time, then the order will be considered “unable to fill” (UTF) and sent to the next closest center to process.

As dispatching traffic moves from a voice-based system to a computer-based system, the non-computer users will not be hearing about incident activity or resource commitments. A new methodology of awareness must be derived, taught, and used. Dispatchers will no longer be using the phone to find a resource; they will be looking into ROSS for the available resource. Either a resource is available (which could be locally, regionally or nationally) or it is not. Our commitment is to continue the shopping list concept; however, it will be an UTF list. It should be noted that a UTF order will have been sent to another Geographic Coordination Center.

The key component to making ROSS successful is to ensure that units, managers, employees, and contractors have a clear understanding of how the ROSS statusing system works and how it affects their opportunities to participate in assignments or details. Listed below are action items that must be accomplished:

1. The State Interagency Coordination Centers and their field units must select and agree on the appropriate method of reporting the status of resources into ROSS; whether by phone, fax, or web.
2. Employees, supervisors, and contractors will need to have an honest and open discussion of whom, when, and how they or their resources will be statused.
3. With the qualifications of each person being entered into ROSS, management will need to ensure that each person’s skills are best used (e.g., in the highest position for which they are qualified or are they a trainee). The same consideration will be needed for other resources.
4. It will be up to each agency and unit to decide exactly how the availability status is accomplished. However, it is ultimately up to the employee, supervisor, and contractor to be proactive in the process.
5. In order to complete the implementation phase, State Coordination Centers need to ensure that the ROSS Readiness Review has been completed.

State Interagency Coordination Centers  
National Park Service Regional Office  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Regional Office  
Bureau of Indian Affairs Regional Office

Please direct questions to any of the Southern Area ROSS Partners listed on the SACC website @ <http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/sacc>.

*/s/Marc G. Rounsaville*  
MARC G. ROUNSAVILLE  
Director, Fire and Aviation

cc:  
Fire and Aviation Staff  
Pat Boucher, FWS  
Jeff Brice, NPS  
Tracy Robinson, BIA