



The purpose of Fire Program Analysis (FPA) is explained in a number of documents, posted at <http://www.fpa.nifc.gov/Library/Memos/index.html>. These include the report on *Developing an Interagency Landscape-scale Fire Planning Analysis and Budget Tool (2001)*, the FPA charter, and language in the FY 2003 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill, 2003 (Report 107-564, HR 5093).

This document is intended to provide broad guidance for the formation of Fire Planning Units (FPUs) by identifying considerations relevant to this process. In addition, guidance and standards for modifying the boundaries of the Fire Planning Unit is included as Attachment 1.

### ***Management Considerations***

An FPU is the geographic scope of the landscape defined for the fire management analysis. An FPU consists of one or more Fire Management Units. FPUs may relate to a single administrative unit, a sub-unit, or any combination of units and sub-units. They are scalable, and may be contiguous or non-contiguous. FPUs are not predefined by Agency administrative unit boundaries, and may relate to one or more agencies. They may be described spatially.<sup>1</sup>

Fire Planning Units are developed to meet Congressional and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) intent for interagency fire management planning. Small land management units with limited fire management programs are included to incorporate all relevant fire management activities within the bounds of the FPU. Where feasible, FPU delineation should promote interagency partnerships and should avoid any fragmentation or duplication of initial response capabilities.

The FPU partnership of land management agencies should help to identify and develop common approaches to local issues associated with wildland fire management, such as fire preparedness organizations, response to fires in the wildland-urban interface (WUI), smoke management, or watershed protection. The FPU partnership is comprised of federal land management agencies, with State and Tribal governments encouraged to participate. Local governments and non-governmental organizations (e.g. the Nature conservancy) may also be invited to participate.

FPUs should be organized with the objective of achieving increases in collective effectiveness in fire program management. The geographic size and partnership scope of an FPU should be weighed against the size of working groups, the feasibility of scheduling meetings and coordinating management actions, and the challenges of arranging meeting locations for partners widely dispersed across large distances. While FPUs do not necessarily need to be geographically contiguous, or shaped in any predefined fashion, consideration should be given to the benefits and potential costs of splitting a large (or long) agency unit to participate in two or more FPUs. If an administrative unit is to be split between two or more FPUs, the workload associated with fulfilling all partnership responsibilities must be considered.

### ***Operational Considerations and Fire Program Analysis Planning Workload***

FPUs may be formed between interagency neighbors when there are existing cooperative agreements in

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<sup>1</sup> Glossary of Wildland Fire Terminology; PMS 205; October, 2006; Pg. 74

place, or where there have been previously successful mutual aid zones. Shared dispatch and/or operational centers that serve a common geographic area are a good test of the ability to transition into a good interagency FPU relationship. Where such relationships are not preexisting, the potential for their development and/or the potential for sharing initial response resources are good indicators of likely success in the formulation of an FPU.

Once potential FPU partners are identified, it is important to assess the volume and complexity of the workload of analyzing and managing the fire program resources in the FPU, and the capacity of FPU partner staff to accomplish the workload. Many complex relationships that span considerable distance may be a painstaking test of the FPU organization. If there are many dispatch locations and fire resources (e.g. engines, helicopters) to be evaluated in new and untested ways, potential FPU partners should be careful in assessing the capability of the FPU Planning team to collect, enter, and process data, run analyses, and work together to interpret results.

### ***Landscape considerations***

FPU should include interagency partners with similar or compatible land management goals and objectives and/or fire management goals and objectives. As the FPU structure is intended to enable partner land management units to perform more effectively and more efficiently, potential partners should consider whether benefits will accrue through fire management planning and operations across partner administrative boundaries. A significant consideration in choosing FPU partners is the pattern of land ownership and/or land management. Lands with intermingled ownership/management patterns and roughly contiguous ecosystem patterns that span partner boundaries are good candidates for inclusion in a single FPU. Where there are distinctly different land management objectives, or where ecosystems show distinct differences at the boundaries, there still might be other compelling reasons for partnering, like being in the same watershed or having existing management coordination or operational reasons.

### ***Summary***

A primary benefit of forming the FPU partnership is to establish, and/or improve, the working relationship among land management partners to help identify, and implement, fire program economic efficiencies and to increase overall organizational effectiveness across the FPU. This document has identified a suite of program, operational, and landscape considerations for proposed FPU development. The elements and considerations identified here should not be viewed as a complete and definitive list of factors for FPU creation. This document will be updated as additional policy direction and guidance is received.

**Current Contact Information is maintained at <http://www.fpa.nifc.gov/Contacts/>**

## **Attachment 1. Fire Planning Unit Boundary Change Procedures**

Fire Planning Unit (FPU) boundaries define the partners and lands that will be included for analysis, forming a fundamental cornerstone of the Fire Program Analysis (FPA) system. However, fire and fuels management activities are expected to have an influence both within and, potentially, on adjoining FPUs. Changes in FPU boundaries may be necessary in order to accommodate growth and changes in both the socio/political and fire environments.

Fire Planning Units were initially set up at the direction of Departmental and Agency Memoranda. It was recognized in these Memos that some boundaries will change over time as the FPA process matures. These guidelines cover the basic procedures for the management of boundary changes.

### **A. General**

1. Changes may be initiated by any of the FPU partners following procedures or business practices agreed to in their FPU charter. At a minimum the requester proposing the change(s) is responsible for (1) notifying affected partner(s), (2) providing either the electronic files or paper map products describing the changes.
2. Notify and include adjacent FPUs and coordinate with them any boundary change decisions.
3. Notify each affected Geographic Area (GA) FPA coordinating group by March 1st of any proposed FPU boundary changes. The GA FPA contact will inform their FPA Project representative in Boise.
4. The FPU will be responsible for documenting the decision and reasons for the change.
5. For the first year, GIS files conforming to FPA data standards will be submitted thru the GA FPA coordinating group to their FPA Project representative by April 1<sup>st</sup> of that year.
6. The FPA Project team will be responsible for updating the FPU database and insuring boundary changes are incorporated into the National FPU enterprise dataset and historical archive. The FPA Project will notify the FPU when the changes have been completed.
7. After the first year, the FPU Boundary database will be closed to changes from June 1<sup>st</sup> to March 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **B. Business Processes**

1. Review and update charter with new date and partner signatures
2. Update partner information and contacts
3. Revise any interagency agreements that need to reflect the changes.

As stated above, it was recognized early in the development of the Fire Program Analysis system that Fire Planning Unit boundaries will change over time from the initial delineation. The system is designed to allow for the change in boundaries. Changing a boundary will also require renegotiation between affected partners, with the Line Officer for each administrative unit being the deciding officials for accepting boundary changes.