

Chapter - 3 Fire Management Program Planning

A. Fire Management Plans

1. Purpose

- a. The Departmental Manual, *Indian Affairs Manual Part 90* and *Federal Fire Policy* require a Fire Management Plan (FMP) for all areas with burnable vegetation. Each reservation/Tribe will have an approved FMP in place, which has been developed through a National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) compliant process by September 2004. A FMP defines and documents an organization's program to manage wildland fires. The FMP is based on approved resource management plans.
- b. FMPs will identify all appropriate planning documents such as Prescribed Fire Planning, Initial Attack Response Plans, Extended Attack Plans, Prevention Planning, Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Programmatic Planning, Air Operations Plans, etc.
- c. FMPs identify and integrate all wildland fire management and related activities within the context of approved land management plans. Wildland Fire Management (WFM) goals and components must be coordinated across administrative boundaries on a landscape basis. Bureau/Tribal or agency fire management decisions must be consistent or compatible across administrative lines.
- d. All Federal WFM Agency Directors signed the updated Interagency Fire Management Plan template on September 19, 2007. It directs agencies to develop a collaborative approach to working cooperatively and in developing an interagency FMP. The template is the approved format for the FMP.

2. Interagency Fire Management Plan Template Updated September 19, 2007

- a. **Preface.** Federal wildland fire policy requires that every area with burnable vegetation must have a fire management plan (FMP). Fires in areas without approved FMPs must be suppressed. Each plan will be based on the area's approved land management plan; in the absence of such a plan, the FMP may stand alone. Wildland fire management planning activities and program components (e.g., fuels management, initial response, etc.) for each agency will be coordinated across administrative boundaries.

CHAPTER 3 - PLANNING

- b. **Purpose of the FMP.** The fire management planning process and requirements may differ among agencies. However, for all agencies (Forest Service, BIA, BLM, FWS, NPS), a common purpose of a fire management plan is to provide decision support to aid managers in making informed decisions on the appropriate management response (AMR). The FMP includes a concise summary of information organized by fire management unit (FMU) or units.

In addition, for the DOI agencies, the FMP contains strategic and operational elements that describe how to manage applicable fire program components such as; response to unplanned ignitions, hazardous fuels and vegetation management, burned area emergency stabilization and rehabilitation, prevention, community interactions and collaborative partnerships roles, and monitoring and evaluation programs. The Forest Service will have related information in separate fire management reference documents.

Each FMP will evolve over time as new information becomes available, conditions change on the ground and changes are made to land/resource management plans.

- c. **Purpose of the FPM Template.** The purpose of the interagency fire management plan template is to provide a framework to facilitate cooperation across administrative boundaries. This template provides the minimum standard for FMP structure and content. The FMP has differing audiences and detail depending upon program complexities, agency need and direction. This template is designed for agency flexibility. Each agency may expand on this common template to meet agency specific needs, and that agency's approved template will dictate the final requirements for a unit's FMP.

The following is the current approved interagency FPM Template. All agencies are required to use Chapters 1, 2, and 3 with the major headings below (in bold). DOI agencies are required to use Chapters 4 and 5, and may opt to add additional chapters or sections if deemed necessary.

Fire Management Plan Template

1. Introduction

The intent of this Chapter is to introduce the reader to the area covered by the FMP.

State the reasons for developing the FMP. Provide a general description of location of the area covered by the FMP with vicinity map and agencies involved. Briefly describe land ownership, significant resources, mission or direction for the area and different management designations (e.g. wilderness, timber harvest areas, research natural areas, cultural/religious areas, habitat management areas) for agencies participating in the planning effort.

2. Policy, Land Management Planning and Partnerships

The intent of this Chapter is to establish the linkage between higher level planning documents, legislation and policies and the actions described in the document.

2.1 Fire Policy

Identify sources of guidance and direction that relate to actions described in the FMP.

These include:

- National interagency and departmental policy (e.g. National Fire Plan, Departmental manuals)
- Agency specific policies (e.g. Handbooks, Manuals, Direction, strategic plans)
- Unit specific policies may be included if they exist (e.g. tribal direction, unit specific CFRs)
- Compliance and authorities may be included (e.g. NEPA, NHPA, ESA and any programmatic agreements involved).

2.2 Land/Resource Management Planning (LMP)

Identify documents that relate to the area covered by the FMP including interagency efforts.

Examples include:

- Land management plans,
 - Habitat management plans,
 - Resource management plans,
 - Forest management plans,
 - Comprehensive conservation plans,
- Regional management plans such as the Northwest Forest Plan.

CHAPTER 3 - PLANNING

2.3 Partnerships

Identify any internal and external fire management partnerships or planning teams that helped you develop this FMP. This information documents the level of cooperation occurring.

Examples include:

- Interagency planning teams (e.g. local groups that share boundaries, FPA partners)
- Non-federal agencies/departments
- Tribal government
- Internal interdisciplinary planning teams

3. Fire Management Unit Characteristics

The intent of this Chapter is to articulate specific objectives, practices and considerations common to all FMUs and unique to individual FMUs.

The primary purpose of developing FMUs in fire management planning is to assist in organizing information in complex landscapes. The process of creating FMUs divides the landscape into smaller geographic areas to more easily describe physical/biological/social characteristics and frame associated planning guidance based on these characteristics (see NWCG glossary for the definition of FMU). If possible, FMUs should be developed through interagency efforts and interactions to facilitate common fire management across boundaries.

As a plan is being written, each area will determine the amount of detail located within the area-wide considerations section below (3.1) versus the separate detailed FMUs section (3.2). For example, if an area is of low complexity or small size, then the area-wide description may contain most of the information and little is needed for each FMU. Conversely, large complex landscapes may have few common characteristics and may have most information contained in the FMU specific section.

The following sections provide guidance on what to include in this Chapter.

3.1 Area-wide Management Considerations

The intent of this section is to document overall wildland fire management program guidance and characteristics common to all FMUs.

Describe fire management related goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and/or desired future conditions as found in the appropriate LMP(s) that apply across all FMUs. Include fire management related goals that may come from non-fire program areas within the LMP or other planning documents.

Examples of these goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and desired conditions are:

- Firefighter and public safety,
- Using fire to restore ecosystem health,
- Use of appropriate management response (AMR),
- Cost containment,
- Desired plant community composition and structure,
- Constraints common to all FMUs (e.g. restrictions on retardant use, preventing spread of invasive species through washing of vehicles)

Identify area-wide guidance, such as regional initiatives that contain additional fire management goals or objectives (e.g. sage grouse strategies)

Describe any common characteristics (e.g. topography, fuels, prevailing winds) that may occur across all FMUs.

3.2 Fire Management Unit - Specific Descriptions

The intent of this section is to describe the characteristics of the FMU. The organization of this section is at the discretion of the agency

FMU characteristics must be described. Examples are:

- Physical and biological description of FMU (e.g. topographic features, fuel types, special conditions that may result in extreme fire behavior, access, FRCC, high value concerns, special areas),
- Jurisdictional boundaries (e.g. adjacent or intermingled federal, private, tribal, state, county ownership),
- Communities and other values at risk within and adjacent to FMU,
- Fire behavior and weather descriptions (e.g. ERC tables, past fire behavior and perimeter histories, control problems).

FMU management guidance must be described. Examples are:

- FMU specific objectives (e.g. appropriate management response objectives, fire intensity levels, fire frequency concerns),
- FMU specific desired conditions (e.g. desired vegetation conditions),
- Description of approved wildland fire management strategies (e.g. AMR, fuels treatments: prescribed fire or mechanical/other treatments allowed, wildland fire use),
- FMU specific guidelines, constraints, or mitigation considerations (e.g. MIST, minimum suppression in special areas, retardant or chemical limitations, etc.),
- Burned area emergency stabilization and rehabilitation considerations if applicable (e.g. seeding requirements or treatments in special areas).

FMU safety considerations must be described. Examples are:

- Gas lines,
- Power lines,

CHAPTER 3 - PLANNING

- Mine shafts,
- Aviation hazards,
- Restricted access due to hazards,
- Poisonous plants and venomous animals.

Also, operational information may be detailed or added as an appendix, such as: permanent repeater locations, recommendations of successful temporary repeater sites, radio frequencies, radio 'dead spots', and local communication plan; evacuation plan; water dip sites; helispots; remote automated weather stations (RAWS); and potential fire camp locations for Type 3 to Type 1 organizations.

4. Wildland Fire Operational Guidance

This chapter applies to DOI agencies only. Forest Service guidance is available separately.

The intent of this chapter is to document the procedures used in the area covered by the FMP to implement the wildland fire management program. The following sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 should be addressed either in this section, or a reference should be cited as to where this type of information can be found.

4.1 Appropriate Management Response

Describe or reference program procedures that should be in place for planning and responding to fires. Procedures to be included are dependent on local and interagency agency needs.

Examples include:

- Preparedness (including training, qualifications, readiness, detection and aviation),
- Cooperative or mutual aid fire management agreements,
- Cost apportionment agreements
- Protection agreements,
- Cross-boundary fire agreements,
- Size up, initial response and extended response procedures,
- WFIP and WFSAs procedures,
- Dispatching/obtaining resources (e.g. interagency dispatch centers, interagency teams, MAC groups),
- Prioritizing allocation of resources,
- Large fire cost management ,
- Processes for complying with regulatory requirements (e.g. smoke, SHPO, ESA)
- Public interaction (e.g. information plans, CWPPs) ,
- Reporting requirements (forms such as 209s, 1202s),
- Records management,
- Suppression damage repair.

4.2 Fuels Management

Describe or reference planning and implementation processes for fuels treatments by mechanical, chemical, biological or prescribed fire methods. Procedures to be included are dependent on local needs.

Examples include:

- Processes to identify and prioritize fuels treatments (e.g. consultations with communities, use of community wildfire protection plans - CWPPs), interdisciplinary teams, risk assessments and mitigation plans),
- Potential size and scope of vegetation treatments to meet both fire and land management goals,
- Procedures for implementing prescribed fire (e.g. requirements for development of burn plan, responsibilities for preparing and approving Rx fires, requirements for safety, qualifications, interagency prescribed fire guidance),
- Process for complying with regulatory requirements (e.g. NEPA, smoke, SHPO, ESA) ,
- Treatment effects monitoring description,
- Reporting requirements (NFPORS) and agency specific systems,
- Fuels committees or local coordinating or special interest groups,
- Funding processes,

4.3 Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation

Describe or reference emergency stabilization (ES) and post-fire burned area rehabilitation (BAR) planning and implementation. Use the Departmental Manual (620 DM 3) and agency-specific direction for guidance.

Examples include:

- Process and thresholds for determining ES and BAR teams,
- Regional coordinator contact information,
- Local resource specialist positions that may assist the teams,
- Considerations that should be addressed (e.g. values to be protected such as T&E species, cultural concerns, wilderness),
- Potential treatments that should be considered (e.g. programmatic plans),
- Anticipated post-fire recovery issues,
- Allowable actions or local restrictions,
- Standardized monitoring protocols,
- Requirements for planning,
- Funding processes,
- Reporting requirements (accomplishment reports and NFPORS).

CHAPTER 3 - PLANNING

4.4 Prevention, Mitigation and Education

Describe or reference wildland fire prevention, education, and mitigation strategies. Procedures to be included are dependent on local agency needs.

Examples include:

- Human caused ignition patterns and problems,
- Fire investigation policies and procedures,
- Closures/restricted access process,
- Burn permit systems,
- Law enforcement operating procedures and agreements,
- Community involvement,
- Firewise,
- Annual meetings with public, other agencies and local fire districts,
- Education programs,
- Community grant programs and assistance,
- CWPPs,
- Memorandum of understanding (MOU),
- Funding processes,
- Reporting requirements.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

This chapter applies to DOI agencies only. Forest Service guidance is available separately.

The intent of this chapter is to document processes for determining whether the FMP is being implemented as planned and fire-related goals and objectives are being achieved. Information obtained from monitoring and evaluations is used to update the FMP and land management plans.

Describe monitoring processes that will be used to measure achievement of FMP objectives. Procedures to be included are dependent on local agency needs.

Processes may include:

- Fire and non-fire treatment effects monitoring including broader scale long-term monitoring based on fire and land management objectives,
- Collaboration with other disciplines for monitoring broader resource management objectives,
- Information on annual performance (e.g. annual targets),
- Annual process to review and/or update the FMP, including triggers for major revisions.

Glossary

Use NWCG on-line glossary for common terms. Include full definition and references for agency or unit specific terminology.

Appendices – Optional

3. Procedures

- a. The FMP is supplemented by operational procedures such as preparedness plans, preplanned dispatch plans, prescribed fire plans, and prevention plans.
- b. In areas where Indian lands are not bounded by reservation boundaries and tracts are owned by individual allottees, a Regional Allotment Plan will be developed to identify how Indian Affairs will respond to the fire preparedness needs and requests of individual allottees.
- c. If there are no resource plans, the FMP may serve as a "stand alone" plan. As resource plans are developed, each FMP must be brought up to date insuring integration of resource goals and objectives.
- d. The management response to wildfires, regardless of source must be based on the resource management objectives of the area planned and guide the appropriate response through criteria and prescriptions. Wildfires must be suppressed in areas lacking an approved FMP or in which an FMP is not consistent with the *Federal Fire Policy*.
- e. FMPs on Indian Trust lands with historic large wildfire occurrence or potential for significant wildfires that could result in costly wildfire suppression should consider wildfire cost containment issues. The overall goal is the establishment of an effective linkage between land/resource management planning, fire management planning, project planning, and the preparation of Wildland Fire Situation Analyses (WFSA) for alternative management responses to large wildfires. The desired outcome is for land/resource management planning to provide a transparent, broad foundation that guides appropriate management responses to large wildfire, with the inclusion of historical and foreseeable suppression costs of large wildfires as a consideration in decision making.

B. Fire Program Analysis

1. Policy

Information on fire program policy is located in *Indian Affairs Manual, Part 90*.

2. Guidance

Fire Program Analysis (FPA) is currently under re-development. There will be no formal FPA analyses performed until the FPA program is completed and implemented. Implementation is scheduled to occur in June 2008. FPA guidance will be provided at that time. Current FPA information may be obtained at the following web site:
<http://www.fpa.nifc.gov/>.

C. Fire Season Length

1. Fire Season Determination

a. Historic Fire Occurrence

The FPA Historical Analysis (HA) program identifies the fire season for each fire planning unit (FPU) including the participating BIA/Tribal Units within the FPU using the most recent 10 years wildfire occurrence and weather statistics. BIA and Tribal fire occurrence information used in the FPA analysis must be derived from the Wildland Fire Management Information (WFMI) System.

D. Fire Program Complexity

1. Guidance

- a. In 1995, the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture developed and approved the *Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review*. In 1996, the Departments published the *Implementation Action Plan Report*, which outlined the requirements by Federal agencies to implement the new policy. Action Item 27 of the *Implementation Action Plan Report plan* states that agencies will “establish fire management qualifications based on program complexity, and staff existing and future agency administration and fire management vacancies with individuals who meet these qualifications and who are committed to accomplishing the total fire management program.”

These complexity standards, along with the guidance for applying the standards, were developed by a National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) task Group and included in the *Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards and Guide*, of January 2000.

- b. Every WFM program has been evaluated for the overall program complexity. Ultimately, the complexity rating for each program

determines the Fire Management Officer (FMO) Position grade level preparedness funding base salary request (i.e. GS 9/5, 11/5, or 12/5).

- c. The complexity rating process will use the factors identified in the BIA *Unit Complexity Analysis Rating Handbook*.
- d. Formal re-evaluations of Unit complexity ratings are suspended until further notice.