

## Chapter - 5 Wildland Fire Prevention

### A. Introduction

The implementation of Wildland Fire Prevention programs saves lives, reduces suppression costs, property loss and the disruption of daily life in Indian Country. There are numerous prevention strategies and actions available to Tribes and Agencies that can be used to effectively reduce unwanted person caused fires. Wildland fire ignitions, damage to natural resources by unwanted wildfires, and the threat to firefighter and public safety can be reduced by using these strategies, and integrating prevention actions into existing preparedness programs.

Person caused wildfire is the highest ignition source of wildland fires in Indian Country. When coupled with the extensive nature of wildfire regimes that have been altered from historic levels, person caused fires pose a greater threat to life, property, and our natural and cultural resources than do natural ignitions.

### B. Wildland Fire Prevention Program Guidance

The Bureau released the *Wildland Fire Prevention Handbook* in 2006, to be revised in 2008. This handbook, designated as *Indian Affairs Manual (IAM), Part 90, Chapter 1.4 C, 6 (H)*, provides detailed policy and guidance for all aspects of the wildland fire prevention program. The information presented in this chapter is operational policy and guidance and is not intended to replace the content of the Handbook. The Regional WUI/Prevention Specialists, or the BIA-NIFC Deputy Fire Use Specialist, should be consulted for guidance outside the scope of this chapter or the handbook.

#### 1. Current Program

The Bureau's prevention program capability has increased nationally and regionally with the addition of six WUI/Prevention positions placed strategically throughout the nation to serve all of Indian Country. The employees, Region's they serve, and phone numbers are identified in Appendix 5-1. Consult your local mobilization guide for further contact information.

#### 2. Prevention Planning

Wildland Fire Prevention Plans (WFPPs) are required to secure long-term prevention program funds. Chapter 3 of the *Prevention Handbook*

(5-B above), describes the requirements and process for developing a WFPP and obtaining funding for its implementation. Refer to the Handbook or communicate directly with the Regional Prevention staff for further prevention planning assistance.

### **3. Funding Opportunities for Prevention Activities**

#### **a. Wildland Fire Management (WFM) Accounts**

Tribes and Agencies may use preparedness, emergency operations, and/or hazardous fuels funds to support a prevention program.

The following programs may be used independently or together to meet prevention program needs:

##### **1) WFPP Implementation:**

An approved WFPP is required to be eligible for prevention program funds. Funding to implement a prevention plan must be requested annually. A Tribe or Agency must demonstrate a commitment to the implementation of the WFPP to be considered for recurring program funds for the life of the plan. The WFPP may require periodic updates to assess and mitigate new prevention issues and to support continued program funding.

- For a position to be eligible for full funding from the wildland fire prevention program funds, 80% or more of the duties must be directly related to prevention activities. This includes wildland fire investigation.
- Prevention personnel are funded from preparedness (92T00) and therefore do not accrue a savings in program dollars when assigned to fire suppression for their base-eight.

##### **2) Low Complexity:**

Funding may be requested to meet the basic needs of Tribes and Agencies when a prevention plan would be of little benefit. These funds are limited to each year and may be used to procure prevention training, technology, equipment and supplies. Prevention tasks would be performed as collateral duties. These funds may be recurring if sufficient funding is available. However, a written request must be provided to the Regional Office for

approval, be concurred with the Regional Prevention staff, before being sent to NIFC.

- 3) **Severity:**  
The identification of prevention actions is critical to the development of a severity request; see Chapter 4, Section J of this guide for severity request criteria and procedures. Severity requests are routinely prepared by Agencies/Tribes experiencing or expecting to experience severe fire danger. Severity funds may be used to fund prevention teams, augment patrols, develop and implement local prevention campaigns, i.e., community risk assessment and mitigation plans, community outreach and education, and addressing a local arson problem. Agencies and Tribes are encouraged to include prevention activities in severity requests. The funding request for prevention activities must be submitted with the Agency Severity request to the Regional Office. These are not recurring funds.
- 4) **Supplemental funding:**  
The purpose of prevention supplemental funding is to provide a mechanism to request funding for special projects or needs that exceed an Agency/Tribe regular budgeted prevention funding. Funds used in this program are non-recurring and based on availability. The Regional Office will be informed by the Regional Prevention Specialist when supplemental funding is available. These accounts may be created and funded at the Regional and/or National level. Prevention program supplemental funding associated with these accounts has very specific and limited use. Requests must be submitted on the Supplemental Request form to the Regional Office. The Supplemental Request form can be obtained from the Regional Prevention Specialists.

Appropriate uses:

- Invitational travel for prevention specific wildland fire prevention and education training for those locations currently not receiving prevention funding.
- Purchase of support items such as fire investigation kits, prevention materials, educational materials, for those locations currently not receiving prevention funding.
- The development and printing of educational materials such as brochures, flyers and banners

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to be used for special events where large numbers of visitors are expected, i.e., Large Tribal rodeos, fairs, pow-wows, Memorial Day weekend camping.

- Additional Fire Danger Rating Signs.

### Prohibited Uses:

- Salaries & support costs for any position
- Employee Benefits
- Overtime
- Motorized vehicles and suppression equipment
- Medical Claims
- Travel for regular government employees attending a non - prevention, education or fire investigation training
- Purchase of capitalized equipment.

Contact your Regional Prevention Specialist in your Region for additional information on how to request this funding and its funding limitations.

### 5) WUI Funds:

WFPP funds are also eligible through the WUI Program. Prevention needs are entered in the Community Assistance portal of the National Fire Plan Operating Reporting System (NFORS) annually by May 1 of each year. Community Wildland Prevention Plans (CWPP, or equivalent) development, risk assessments, mitigation plans, the Student Conservation Association-Fire Education Corps, and FIREWISE Conferences are examples of programs eligible for WUI funds. These and other regional and national initiatives should be coordinated through the Regional WUI/Prevention Specialist.

### 6) Department of the Interior (DOI) Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan for Emergency Workers Program:

The DOI AD Pay Plan allows for the performance of prevention duties when regular employees are not available and when fire danger is very high or extreme. Patrols, homeowner risk assessments, and signing are examples of prevention actions that may be funded under the AD Pay Plan. These are not recurring funds.

#### 4. Prevention Program Monitoring and Review

Monitoring and review is the responsibility of the Regional office, Agency, and Tribe. WFPPs should be revised as often as necessary to make program adjustments and apply new prevention strategies that address current prevention issues. Documentation of prevention activities and results is not only necessary, but vital to demonstrate program success. Annual prevention program reviews are to be conducted as part of the preparedness program reviews and should include the Regional Prevention Specialist to insure funding intent is met. See Chapter 4, Section C, page 4-9.

#### 5. Wildland Fire Investigation

a. Policy

[This section will be superseded upon approval of the BIA Wildland Fire Investigation Handbook.]

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), *90 IAM Part 90, Chapter 1*, policy is to investigate all wildfires occurring on lands held in trust or restricted status for Indian Tribes to determine the specific cause and origin. It is imperative that the wildland fire office work hand in hand with the Office of Justice Services (OJS) on all suspicious wildfire cause determinations.

- A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been signed which defines the roles and responsibilities of OJS and BIA Branch of Wildfire Management at the national level regarding wildland fire investigations. The most recent version of this MOU can be obtained from the Regional Prevention Specialists.
- At the local level, OJS and Fire Management must develop and implement a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to further outline the roles and responsibilities of each entity at the local unit in regards to wildfire cause and determination. Refer to the standard operating procedure (SOP) and the investigation (INVF) protocol in the Prevention Handbook for further explanation and detail.

b. National Fire Investigation Teams

A Tribe, Agency or Region may request, through BIA-NIFC, a wildland fire investigation team (INVF Team) to assist if local

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resources are not available when additional investigative resources are needed.

- For information on how to request or participate on a BIA Arson Investigation Team, contact the Regional Prevention Specialist.
- For additional information refer to the new 2008 BIA Wildland Fire Investigation Handbook.

### **6. National WeTip Program**

WeTip is a national anonymous tip hotline for reporting wildland arson. BIA-NIFC maintains an annual agreement to provide an anonymous tip hotline for Indian Country regarding Arson. The tip hotline number is 1-800-472-7766 (1-800-47-ARSON). For more information regarding the WeTip program contact your Regional WUI/Prevention Specialist.

APPENDIX 5-1

**BIA Regional Wildland Fire Prevention Specialists**

**Eastern Oklahoma and Southern Plains:**

*Pat McDowell, (405) 609-8872*

**Western, Navajo, and Southwest:**

*Val Christianson, (505) 563-3375*

**Rocky Mountain and Great Plains:**

*Vacant, (406) 247-7949*

**Alaska and Northwest:**

*Len Diaz, (503) 231-6806*

**Midwest and Eastern:**

*Gary Hilton, (612) 725-4526*

**Pacific:**

*Jim Nanamkin, (916) 978-6148*