



**Socorro Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
New Mexico**

2004

Fire Management Plan

Signature Page

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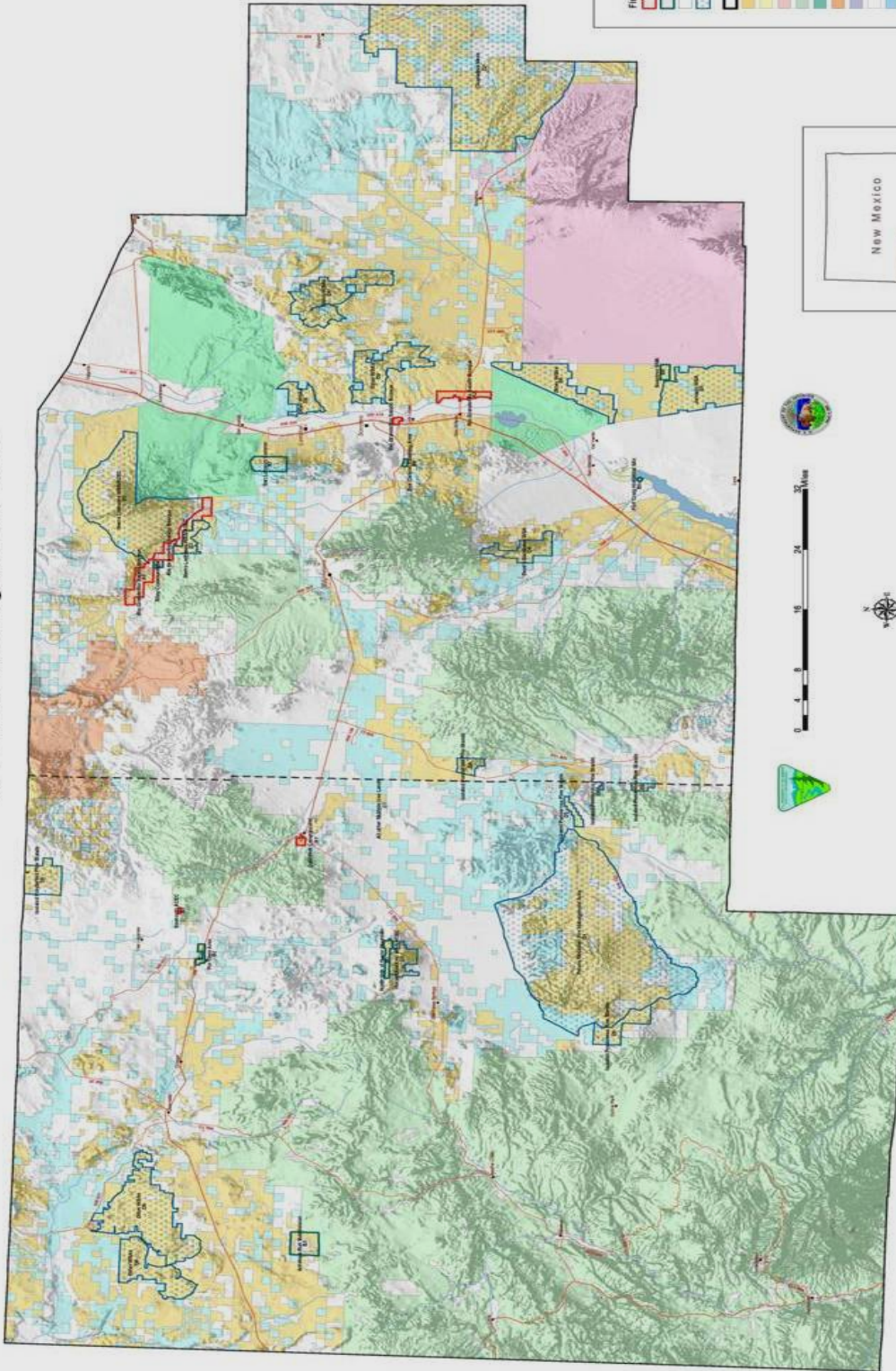
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SFO Fire Management Units



Legend

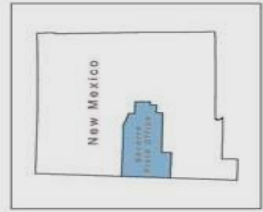
Fire Management Units

- Category A (Red)
- Category B (Orange)
- Category C (Yellow)
- Category D (Light Green)
- Category E (Green)

Fire Office Boundary

Boundaries of Land Management

- State of California
- Dept. of Defense
- Forest Service
- Park & Wildlife Service
- Total
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- State Office of Fire
- County Boundary
- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- Water
- Others



This map was prepared by the San Francisco Fire Department, Fire Management Division, as a result of a study conducted by the Fire Department, Fire Management Division, in 1997. The map is based on the data provided by the Fire Department, Fire Management Division, in 1997. The map is based on the data provided by the Fire Department, Fire Management Division, in 1997.

Produced by the San Francisco Fire Department, Fire Management Division. No warranty is made by the Fire Department, Fire Management Division, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information shown on this map. The Fire Department, Fire Management Division, is not responsible for any errors or omissions on this map. The Fire Department, Fire Management Division, is not responsible for any errors or omissions on this map.

I Introduction

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Socorro Field Office Fire Management Plan (FMP) is to identify and integrate all Wildland fire management guidance, direction, and activities required to implement national fire policy and fire management direction from the following: Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review-1995 and 2001; The Interagency Fire Management Plan Template; and A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment: 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan.

The Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy states that every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved fire management plan. This FMP is a strategic plan that defines a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires based on the approved land management plan. This FMP provides for firefighter and public safety; it includes fire management strategies, tactics and alternatives, and values to be protected. It addresses public health issues and is consistent with resource management objectives, activities of the area, and environmental laws and regulations.

This FMP addresses the full range of fire management activities. This includes fire planning, fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives, prevention, preparedness, and education. It addresses the role of mitigation, post-fire rehabilitation, fuels reduction, and restoration activities in fire management. Implementation of this FMP will provide a safe, cost effective fire management program in support of land and resource management plans through planning, staffing, training, equipment, and management oversight.

B. Relationship to Environment Compliance

All fire management objectives, constraints, and activities contained within this plan are consistent with the following source documents: Bureau of Land Management, (BLM), Socorro Resource Management Plan 1989, that is currently being revised. Upon signing the Record of Decision for the revision, this implementation plan will be modified as needed. All recommended actions will be analyzed further under the National Environmental Policy Act, (NEPA), the Interim Management Plan for managing wilderness and all other applicable guidelines before these actions are implemented.

C. Collaboration

This plan is a stand alone Fire Management Plan written with consideration of the interagency cooperation between fire and resource management agencies within the area covered by this plan. Local firefighting agencies are governed by the Joint Powers Agreement, 2004, reviewed and signed at the local level. Other cooperators include: Socorro and Catron Counties, Cibola National Forest, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Sevilleta NWR, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, and local Volunteer Fire Departments through the New Mexico State Forestry (NMSF) Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD).

D. Authorities

- Protection Act of September 20, 1922 (42 Stat. 857; U.S.C. 594).
- Taylor Grazing Act of June 28, 1934 (48 Stat. 1269; U.S.C. 315).
- Reciprocal Fire Protection Act of May 27, 1955(69 Stat. 66; 42 U.S.C. 1856, 1856a).
- Economy Act of June 30, 1932 (47 Stat. 417; 31 U.S.C. 686).
- The Federal Land Management and Policy Act of 1976 (FLPMA) (Public Law 94-579; 43 U.S.C. 1701).
- Disaster Relief Act, Section 417 (Public Law 93-288).
- 2001 Annual Appropriations Acts for the Department of the Interior.
- United States Department of the Interior Manual (910 DM 1.3).
- 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.
- 2001 Updated Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy Update).
- 1998 Departmental Manual 620 Chapter 1, Wildland Fire Management General Policy and Procedures.

II. Relationship to Land Management Planning and Fire Policy

The Fire Management Plan has been tiered to decisions contained within the Socorro Resource Management Plan, August 1989, the Interim Wilderness Guidance, and the Federal Wildland Fire Policy. These plans provide the basis for the development of fire management goals and objectives.

The FMP derives overall program guidance from the following:

- 1998 BLM Handbook 9214, “Prescribed Fire Management” describes authority and policy for prescribed fire use on public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.
- September 2000, “Managing the Impacts of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment.”
- October 2000, National Cohesive Strategy goal is to coordinate an aggressive, collaborative approach to reduce the threat of wildland fire to communities and to restore and maintain land health.
- August 2001, “Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment - 10 Year Comprehensive Strategy” provides a foundation for wildland agencies to work closely with all levels of government, tribes, conservation, and commodity groups and community-based restoration groups to reduce wildland fire risk to communities and the environment.
- May 2002, “Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment, 10 Year Comprehensive Strategy – Implementation Plan”.
- August 2002, “Healthy Forests - An Initiative for Wildfire Prevention and Stronger Communities.”

Goals Related to Fire and Fuels Management from the Resource Management Plan

- Human Life: Protect human life, both the public and firefighters. This is the single, overriding priority in fire management.
- Property and Resources: Protect human communities, their infrastructure, and the natural resources on which they depend. Other property and improvements will be protected.

Setting priorities among human communities, other property, and natural resources will be based on the values to be protected, human health and safety, and the costs of protection. The risk of wildfire to communities and property will be reduced using

the full range of options available to fire managers, including prescribed fire, wildland fire use for resource benefit, and mechanical fuels reduction.

- Ecosystem Sustainability: Where possible, allow wildland fire to function as an essential ecological process and natural change agent in fire-dependent ecosystems.
- Wildlife components, including Special Status Species (Federally Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, and Candidate Species, BLM Sensitive Species and State Species of Concern): Protect, maintain, preserve, and/or restore habitats necessary for the conservation of species, and the ecosystems upon which they depend, to maintain viable and diverse populations of native terrestrial and aquatic species including special status species.
- Vegetation components: Improve ecosystem health and maintain or restore the range of ecological conditions in which native floral and herbaceous components thrived and evolved.
- Cultural, Historical and Paleontological: Protect high value cultural, historical and paleontological resources.
- Designated Special Areas: Protect the characteristics that warranted designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs), Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), National Monuments and National Conservation Areas.

Natural and Biological Resource Objectives

- Air: Meet federal and state air quality standards through proper management of emissions.
- Flora and Fauna– Threatened and Endangered Species: Ensure that BLM actions will not reduce the likelihood of survival or recovery of any listed species or destroy or adversely affect or modify designated critical habitat to those species.
- Water: Meet Federal and State water quality standards and prevent degradation through Best Management Practice (BMP) during and after fires and vegetative treatments.
- Visual: Meet established Visual Resource Management (VRM) class objectives through appropriately planning fuel reduction treatments. VRM will be a consideration for any post-fire erosion control and other burned area rehabilitation and restoration needs.

- Public Lands Health: Meet Standards for Public Lands Health through appropriately planning fuel reduction treatment projects. These standards will be considered for all phases of treatment irregardless of the environment the treatment is taking place in (grasslands, brushlands, woodland and forest).

Resource Use Objectives

Vegetation: Fire and fuels management and related actions will reduce the amount of forest, shrub, and grass lands that are characterized as Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) 2 and 3.

- where fire regimes have been moderately to significantly altered from their historical ranges
- where there is a moderate to high risk of losing key ecosystem components
- where vegetative attributes have been significantly altered from their historical range
- where fire return frequencies have departed from their historical frequencies by more than one return interval

Wilderness/Wilderness Study Areas: Fire and fuels management actions will meet the wilderness non-impairment mandate for Wilderness Areas. For Wilderness Study Areas fire and fuels management will strive to avoid unnecessary impairment that would affect the suitability toward wilderness designation of these areas. **The ultimate goal would be to return fire to its natural role in these ecosystems.**

III. Wildland Fire Management Strategies

A. General Management Considerations

BLM is a partner in the “New Mexico Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) for Interagency Wildland Fire Protection”. This is an agreement among the Federal wildland fire management agencies and the New Mexico State Forestry Division to coordinate wildland fire management activities. Under the JPA, New Mexico is divided into initial attack areas. In each of these areas, one agency agrees to take the lead in providing initial attack protection to all lands, regardless of ownership. This provides an equitable exchange of protection and workload, and allows the use of the “closest forces” concept for fire suppression. The net result is a more efficient and effective interagency suppression organization throughout the state.

The Socorro Field Office participates in interagency coordination of wildland fire operations between the field office, the Gila National Forest, the New Mexico State Forestry Division - Socorro District, Sevilleta NWR, and Bosque del Apache NWR.

There is currently a proposal to realign the zone boundaries so that the majority of Socorro County would fall into the Albuquerque Zone (ABZ), with the majority of Catron County remaining in the Gila Zone. This would require the field office to coordinate with both the ABZ and GLZ. Fire Management Officers from the Socorro Field Office, Albuquerque BLM Field Office, Cibola National Forest, Bosque del Apache NWR, Sevilleta NWR, El Malpais National Monument, Southern Pueblos Agency, State of New Mexico, Zuni Agency and the City of Albuquerque would have representatives on the ABZ board under this proposed boundary change. Both zone boards coordinate interagency efforts on fire prevention and education, dispatching, training, fuels management, suppression, rural fire assistance and preparedness.

These zone boards and the interagency approach they represent is guided by the 2001 update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy, the Implementation Procedures Reference Guide, the Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment and the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy. Currently, these boards represent the participating federal and state agencies and provide local governments the assistance necessary to address wildland fire management issues.

The fire management program is based on a foundation of sound science. Research will support ongoing efforts to increase our scientific knowledge of biological, physical and sociological factors. Information needed to support fire management will be developed through an integrated interagency fire science program. Scientific results of these efforts will be made available to managers and will be used in the development of the FMP and implementation plans.

B. Wildland Fire Management Goals

The goals of the Fire Management Program are:

- Firefighter and public safety are the highest priority in every fire management activity.
- Identify appropriate management response (AMR) goals, objectives, and constraints by specific Fire Management Units (FMU's) within the Fire Planning Units (interagency).
- Work collaboratively with communities at risk within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) to develop plans for risk reduction. This includes communities within Socorro and Catron counties and their rural fire departments. Community level programs and projects are currently underway in Datil, Pie Town, Magdalena, and Horse Mountain. Fuels reduction projects are currently in progress adjacent to the communities of Datil, Pie Town, Horse Mountain subdivisions and Magdalena.

- Allow wildland fire to protect, maintain and enhance public resources, and as nearly as possible, be allowed to function in its ecological role when appropriate for the site and situation. Within the Socorro Field Office projects are implemented to return grass dominated fuels to a cyclic return of fire. Isolated Ponderosa stands are being treated to maintain these stands and protect them from high intensity wildfires. Projects are underway to enhance habitat for both desert bighorn sheep and elk populations cooperatively with Socorro's Wildlife resource staff and private and state wildlife organizations.
- Create an integrated approach to fire and resource management across the landscape and agency boundaries. This approach will be designed to meet the desired outcomes of Land and Resource Management Plans. Socorro's approach includes planning for Wildland Fire Use (WFU) with adjacent land management agencies including the Gila National Forest, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the New Mexico State Forestry Division, aligning FMU's and providing agreements for cross boundary cooperation for fire use events.
- To provide a program that fosters interagency interaction, cooperation and effectiveness for all fire management activities. The program should be evident within all levels of the agencies, cooperators, and other public entities. Currently Socorro BLM is looking and planning for a more interagency approach to fire management. Shared resources and projects are ongoing and increasing with local agencies including US Fish and Wildlife Service, Cibola National Forest, Gila National Forest, New Mexico State Forestry Division and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District.

C. Wildland Fire Management Options

Fire management specialists in concert with resource specialists from other disciplines determined fire management categories, management objectives and the appropriate management response for each FMU. The fire management categories are as follows:

FMU Category "A": Areas where fire is not desired at all.

General description: This category includes areas where mitigation and suppression is required to prevent threats to life and property. It includes areas where fire never played a large role historically in the development and maintenance of the ecosystem, or because of human development, fire can no longer be tolerated without significant loss, or where fire return intervals are very long.

Fire Mitigation Considerations: Emphasis should be focused on prevention, detection, and rapid suppression response and techniques that will reduce unwanted ignitions and threats to life, property, natural and cultural resources.

Fire Suppression Considerations: Virtually all wildland fires would be actively suppressed and no fire is prescribed except as required to combat an immediate threat to firefighter or public health and safety.

Fuel Treatment Considerations: Non-fire treatments employed. Unit costs for prescribed fire would be too prohibitive to implement efficiently. Pile burning of mechanically removed vegetation is acceptable.

FMU Category “B”: Areas where unplanned wildland fire is not desired because of current conditions.

General Description: Fire plays a natural role in the function of the ecosystem, however these are areas where an unplanned ignition could have negative effects unless some form of mitigation takes place.

Fire Mitigation Considerations: Emphasize prevention/mitigation programs that reduce unplanned ignitions and threats to life, property, natural and cultural resources.

Fire Suppression Considerations: Fire suppression is usually the objective of unplanned wildfire.

Fuel Treatment Considerations: Fire and non-fire fuels treatments are utilized to reduce the hazardous effects of unplanned wildfire. Restoration treatments may consist of multiple non-fire treatments before the use of fire will be considered.

FMU Category “C”: Areas where wildland fire is desired, but there are significant constraints that must be considered for its use.

General Description: Fire is a desirable component of the ecosystem; however, ecological, social or political constraints must be considered. These constraints could include air quality, threatened and endangered species considerations, or wildlife habitat considerations.

Fire Mitigation Considerations: Programs should mitigate potential threats to values before ignitions occur and reduce unwanted human ignitions.

Fire Suppression Considerations: Ecological and resource constraints along with human health and safety are considered in determining the appropriate suppression response on a case-by-case basis by the incident commander or line officer. Areas in this category would generally receive lower suppression priority in multiple wildland fire situations than would areas in “A” or “B” FMUs.

Fuel Treatment Considerations: Fire and non-fire fuels treatments may be utilized to ensure constraints are met or to reduce any hazardous effects of unplanned wildfire. Treatments may consist of multiple non-fire treatments before the use of fire is considered.

FMU Category “D”: Areas where wildland fire is desired, and there are few or no constraints for its use.

General Description: Areas where unplanned and planned wildland fire may be used to achieve desired objectives, such as, improving vegetation, wildlife habitat or watershed conditions.

Fire Mitigation Considerations: Implement programs that reduce unwanted human-caused ignitions, as needed.

Fire Suppression/ Use Considerations: These areas offer the greatest opportunity to take advantage of the full range of options available for managing wildland fire under the appropriate management response. Health and safety constraints will apply. Fire use considerations similar to those described for Category “C” may be identified if needed to achieve resource objectives. Areas in this category would be the lowest suppression priority in a multiple fire situation.

Fuel Treatment Considerations: There is generally less need for hazardous fuel treatment in this category. Prescribed fire for hazardous fuel reduction is not a priority except where there is an immediate threat to health and safety. If treatment is necessary, both fire and non-fire treatments may be utilized, as allowed by the resource management plan. Prescribed fire to obtain desired resource/ecological condition is appropriate.

Wildland Fire Use:

In the Socorro Field Office Wildland Fire Use (WFU) is not approved at this time. The areas being considered for WFU are the Pelona Mountain, Horse Mountain, and Sierra Ladrones FMUs. The update of the Pelona FMU plan is scheduled to be completed in 2005, but the plan for the Sierra Ladrones FMU still needs to be developed. Horse Mountain requires further evaluation and treatments within the adjacent FMU before WFU can be considered.

D. Descriptions of the Wildland Fire Management Strategies by Fire Management Unit

Common to All FMU's:

1. Fire regime/condition class

Advanced succession and woody plant expansion have caused undesired ecological changes within the field office. These changes include increased stand density in ponderosa pine and piñon/juniper stands, loss of perennial grasslands, and expansion of piñon/juniper woodlands and desert scrublands. These type of conversions often correspond to losses of native biodiversity, decreased sustainability, and altered fire regimes.

The dominant vegetation types occurring in the field office include Southwestern Ponderosa Pine, Desert Grassland, Desert Scrublands, Middle Rio Grande Bosque, and Piñon/Juniper woodlands. Each vegetation type evolved with a distinct fire frequency, severity, and suite of effects which provided for long-term sustainability. Within these vegetation types, management activities such as fire suppression, livestock grazing, urbanization, and the

spread of invasive species have changed these fire regimes. Fuel treatment applications outlined in this FMP intend to move landscapes and fire regimes closer to their historic conditions.

For a given vegetation type, the fire regime condition class (FRCC) concept describes the degree of departure in: (1) vegetation structure, and (2) fire frequency/severity. This measure describes both the health of the fire regime, and also the appropriateness of the vegetation community for the site. Condition Class 1 corresponds to landscapes where these variables are intact, while Condition Class 3 landscapes have highly altered ecological integrity. Condition Class 2 includes lands having moderate departure in fire regime health and structural integrity. At this point in time the field office does not have a detailed break down on condition class by FMU but is currently working with the State fire ecologist and hopes to have a break down by FMU and condition class by the end of fiscal year 2005.

2. Fire Management Objectives

Goal: Hazard reduction around the urban interface.

Objectives

Reduce hazardous fuels by the use of mechanical and prescribed fire where applicable around communities at risk from wildfire. Continue and expand fuels reduction projects adjacent to communities and subdivisions within Catron and Socorro counties. Continue implementing community based preparedness planning in Catron County.

Goal: Suppress all unwanted wildland fires with minimum cost, using an appropriate suppression response, while protecting values at risk.

Objectives

Use an Appropriate Management Response (AMR) to manage all fires in accordance with management objectives based on current conditions and locations.

Goal: Establish or update cooperative agreements to maximize coordination with agencies' cooperators.

Objectives

Review all existing agreements annually, updating or changing them as necessary to promote full cooperation in mutual fire management.

3. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

The use of trained resource management specialists on wildland fires is recommended for all fires over 10 acres in size or when the Fire Management Unit has special requirements in association with resource values.

The full range of available responses are available to implement protection objectives for unplanned ignitions:

- Monitoring and holding actions to check or confine spread
- Monitoring with pre-planned contingency actions
- Monitoring actions
- Control and extinguishment

Criteria to use for developing a management response:

Risk to firefighters and public health and safety

Land and Resource Management Objectives

Weather

Fuel conditions

Threats and values to be protected

Cost efficiencies

Management strategies and action points will be based on fire activity and location. Normally, specific actions or combinations of actions will be determined on site by the incident commander or fire use manager.

Fuel Management Treatment Target Acreage

It is expected that the 2004 update to the RMP that specifically covered Fire and Fuels Management would be in place for 20 years until updated again. In the description of each FMU the acres treated for wildland fire use, prescribed fire, and non-fire treatments are based on this best case scenario from the RMP update. The acres treated are based on an annual target, the actual annual acres will probably never be treated in a given year. Some years no acres may be treated in a given FMU but in other years more acres may be treated, but over the 20 years it should average out.

At such time, further analysis such as the fuels module in the Fire Program Analysis (FPA) or other risk assessment models such as LandFire are developed fuel treatment priorities by FMU may be modified.

Once the burn acre target has been met, from either planned or unplanned ignitions, a review of objectives and strategies will be initiated to develop new suppression criteria on all wildland fires.

FIRE MANAGEMENT UNIT PRIORITIES

Fire Management Unit Name	FMU Category -Number	Priority Ranking		
		Suppression	RX Fire / Non-fire Fuels Treatment	Community Assistance / Protection
Socorro Nature Area	A-1	High	High	Moderate
Riley Community	A-2	High	Moderate	Moderate
Sawtooth ACEC	A-3	High	Low	Low
Fort Craig	A-4	High	Moderate	Moderate
Datil Well	B-1	High	High	High
Horse Mountain Interface	B-2	High	Moderate	High
Pie Town	B-3	High	High	High
Antelope Run	B-4	High	Moderate	Moderate
San Lorenzo Canyon	B-5	Low	Moderate	Low
Unspecified / All Other	C-1	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Pelona Mountain	D-1	Low	Low	Low
Horse Mountain	D-2	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Sierra Ladrones	D-3	Low	Moderate	Low
Devil's Backbone	D-4	Low	Moderate	Low
Jornada	D-5	Low	Low	Low
Other WSA's	D-6	Low	Low	Low
Chupadera Mesa	D-7	Low	Moderate	Low
Isolated Ponderosa Pine Stands	D-8	Low	Moderate	Low

Fire Management Unit (FMU) Description:

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Suppression	High
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	High
Community Assistance / Protection	Moderate

Fire Management Unit Name: Socorro Natural Area
Category/Number: A-1

1. Location:

Socorro Natural Area is located in the Rio Grande River corridor 6 miles north, northeast of Socorro, NM. The Natural Area is 120 acres in size and is surrounded by private lands. This area is utilized as an Environmental / Visitors area with structures and improvements. Fifty percent of the Natural Area is adjacent to private lands and fifty percent is adjacent to Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District lands .

2. Characteristics:

This area is typical of the Rio Grande Bosque ecosystem, a system recently dominated by salt cedar, (*Tamarix chinensis*). The primary disturbance regime in the absence of Salt Cedar is flooding. With the introduction of salt cedar fires burn often and remove native vegetation producing a monoculture. The BLM and citizen groups are involved in restoring native vegetation to the area.

At present a management plan has not been developed for this area. Ongoing activities include use as a nature center and activity area for area residents. Trails and small improvements are located within the 120 acre area of the Natural Area.



3. Wildland Fire History:

Human caused fires are a substantial risk on lands adjacent to the FMU due to the spread potential in the exotic salt cedar. Recent fire history is dominated by large destructive fires fueled by salt cedar in surrounding lands. There are no recorded fires within this FMU.

4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime II / Fire Regime Condition Class 3

This area does not support large fast moving fire under historical conditions. Due to the introduction of an exotic species, native species composition and structure have been substantially altered.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

Native species are at risk from a non-characteristic fire regime within the FMU. Adjacent agricultural improvements are at risk. The Natural Areas infrastructure, (outbuildings, informational signs, trails and other structures), are at risk. Ongoing mechanical and chemical removal of exotic species maintains a system with lower fire potential. Continue partnerships with other local management and volunteer groups to improve and maintain adjoining areas of the Bosque.

6. Communities at Risk:

Fire is a threat from outside and inside the Natural Area. The adjoining area is agricultural with scattered homes, farm buildings and crop lands. To the east the river corridor is

managed by Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. Lands are wild in nature and fires may spread to and from these lands fueled by exotic vegetation and consuming native vegetation. During dry seasons fires may start from both lighting and human causes.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Control all fires to less than 1 acre.
- b. Protect native species such as cottonwood and willow.
- c. Implement and maintain interagency agreements for fire suppression between local agencies and cooperators
- d. Eliminate salt cedar by 100% within 5 years.
- e. Reduce the likelihood of wildfires from an outside source through fire prevention strategies and cooperative fuels management activities.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Maintain agreements with local firefighting resources to provide quick response to this FMU. Cooperate with closure requests from adjacent land management agencies during high fire danger time periods.

Prescribed fire:

Continue to eliminate fuels from area after mechanical and chemical treatment, using pile burning techniques.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Continue 100% treatment and removal of non-native vegetation.

Mechanical:

Continue to cut and pile exotic vegetation.

Chemical:

Treat exotic vegetation with prescribed herbicide as mechanical removal proceeds per site specific environmental assessment. Place area on a maintenance schedule for re-treatment as needed.

Biological:

Biological treatment may be considered as needed by a site specific plan.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

Continue restoration as exotics are removed. Refer to Socorro Natural Area Management Plan as plan is developed and completed.

Fire Management Unit Name: Riley Community

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Category/Number: A-2

Suppression	High
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Moderate
Community Assistance / Protection	Moderate

1. Location:

The ghost town of Riley lies north of Magdalena on the Rio Salado. Riley is a small urban interface area surrounded by BLM lands. Acreage of the FMU is 640 acres. The town site continues to be used by descendents of original settlers.

2. Characteristics:

This FMU is characterized by scattered piñon/juniper and desert scrub. The community is an historical / cultural site. Upland vegetation has a low occurrence of wildfire. Most fires are single tree and are likely to go unreported. Spread potential is low due to lack of fine fuels. The Rio Salado drainage bisects the community and poses a fire threat from the drainage due to the exotic salt cedar, (see A-1). Treatment is underway for the removal of salt cedar on BLM lands within the Rio Salado.

3. Wildland Fire History:

The Rio Salado drainage is highly flammable due to Salt Cedar intrusion and poses increasing threat by human ignition. There is no recorded fire history for this area. The desert shrub community has little to no fire history due to the lack of interspaced fuels. Wildfire burn in the desert shrub during periods of high moisture due to the resulting grass growth.

4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime II / Fire Regime Condition Class 3 within the Rio Salado drainage. Condition Class 1 represents the desert shrub community.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

The historical / cultural values are to be protected by managing surrounding BLM lands to insure no adverse affect upon the cultural traditions and urban interface community. Chemical and mechanical treatments will be utilized to buffer the area from wildfire. Future conditions, as treatments continue, may change the category to B to allow for prescribed fire

to maintain the FMU.

6. Communities at Risk:

The historic town site of Riley is of concern along the Rio Salado drainage where fire poses a threat to private residences and native vegetation.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Control all fires to less than 1 acre.
- b. Implement and maintain interagency agreements for fire suppression between local agencies and cooperators.
- c. Removal and maintenance of salt cedar from the Rio Salado drainage by 2007.
- d. As condition class is returned to historical condition within drainages, develop plans to include prescribe fire alternatives within the Fire Management Unit.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Provide for quick response to wildfires with cooperator agreements for initial attack response to this area.

Mechanical:

Reduce threat of wildfire spread to private property by implementing a fuels reduction project on adjacent BLM lands, post chemical treatment, by 2006.

Chemical:

Participate as an ongoing partner with other federal, state and local agencies to remove exotics from the Rio Salado drainages.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

Work with interagency partners to develop restoration plans and actions to maintain native vegetation within the Rio Salado drainage.

Fire Management Unit Name: Sawtooth ACEC

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Category/Number: A-3

Suppression	High
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Low
Community Assistance / Protection	Low

1. Location:

The Sawtooth ACEC is located northwest of Datil, NM in an area characterized by steep ridges and foot slopes. This FMU is listed “as fire not desired” due to the sensitivity of rhizome fleabane to fire. The Sawtooth ACEC is approximately 120 acres.

2. Characteristics:

The soils in this FMU are highly erodable sandstone and clay. Piñon/juniper is the dominant vegetation. Vegetation is sparse. Sawtooth ACEC is inhabited by a small population of rhizome fleabane, (Erigeron rhizomatous). This species is listed as a threatened plant under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

3. Wildland Fire History:

Lightning is a significant cause of fire in the area. There is no recorded fire history for this management unit.

4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime II, Condition Class is 1.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

Rhizome fleabane, (Erigeron rhizomatous); this species is listed as a threatened plant under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Fuels are generally inadequate to carry fire over most of the area but fire suppression is desired to protect the plant species. Fires from adjoining areas will be managed to protect this area.

6. Communities at Risk:

No communities are at risk within or adjacent to this area.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Control all fires to less than one acre and prevent wildland fire from entering the FMU.
- b. Utilize minimum impact suppression tactics to reduce disturbance of vegetation and soils; rehabilitate suppression actions as needed. No heavy equipment will be used in this FMU.

- c. Utilize Resource Advisor on all fires within and adjacent to this FMU.
- d. Monitor plant response to fire to determine fire impacts to this rhizome fleabane.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Limit mechanical suppression disturbance to life and property concerns. The use of engines and vehicles within the FMU should be determined by consultation with resource advisors prior to actions.

No fire management fuels treatment will be initiated until rhizome fleabane is monitored to determine fire impacts.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

Minimum impacts will be used on all suppression actions. A rehabilitation plan will be initiated by the Resource Management staff after any suppression action. Monitoring should be initiated by resource staff with any fire intrusion within this FMU.

Fire Management Unit Name: Fort Craig

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Category/Number: A-4

Suppression	High
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Moderate
Community Assistance / Protection	Moderate

1. Location:

The Fort Craig Historical Site is a Civil War era fort located on a bench above the Rio Grande River 25 miles south of Socorro. Fort Craig FMU is 160 acres in size.

2. Characteristics:

Fort Craig is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and will be managed for protection of cultural resource value, public interpretation, future scientific study and to improve recreational opportunities. Vegetation consists of creosotebush, (*Larrea tridentata*) and grasslands. The area has been fenced from grazing for many years. Damage to historical artifacts could occur from fire.

3. Wildland Fire History:

There is no known fire history within this FMU. In 1993, a Bosque fire burned close to this FMU, creating spot fires and burning a total of 1,160 acres outside of the FMU. Fire spread was checked by the use of air tankers and retardant.

4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime II, Fire Regime Condition Class 2 and 3 along the Rio Grande River corridor just outside of the FMU.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

The history of Fort Craig is important nationally due to both Civil War activity and as an Army stronghold in the region to discourage Apache warfare. Historical artifacts and structural remains within this FMU are susceptible to fire.

6. Communities at Risk:

No communities are at risk within this FMU. The value of the historical site and the recreational value, including caretaker facilities, require Wildland Urban Interface mitigation measures.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Control all fires to less than one-half acre.
- b. Utilize minimum impact suppression tactics that limit surface disturbance to the greatest extent possible. Suppression tactics should be limited to hand line and hose lay with no vehicle access off of maintained public roads and walking paths.
- d. Initiate and maintain a fire prevention and mitigation plan by 2006 including non-fire strategies for protection.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Request a Resource Advisor, (Archeologist), to be present for all wildfire or fuel reduction treatments. Suppression activities should limit surface disturbance to the greatest extent possible. Vehicles should not be used off of maintained roads and trails.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Develop a plan outlining measures to protect and maintain a fire buffer or fuels reduction project. This plan could utilize mechanical, (hand mowing, chemical treatment, livestock

utilization), to reduce fuels and provide a buffer to wildland fires. Reduce fuels along high use visitor areas such as trails and interpretative areas.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

Rehabilitation plan would be initiated by the resource area archeologist including an inventory of damage and a plan to stabilize area from further damage.

Fire Management Unit Name: Datil Well Campground

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Category/Number: B-1

Suppression	High
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	High
Community Assistance / Protection	High

1. Location:

The Datil Well Campground is located adjacent to the town of Datil at the site of an historic well used in cattle drives up until the 1970's. Datil Campground, a high use recreational area, is located within the FMU. The area totals 680 acres and is an isolated parcel of BLM land. Vegetation in the area is primarily piñon/juniper with grass understory. A short nature trail loops through the area with interpretation of local natural resources. At this time no wildfire is desired in this area due to its recreational use and proximity to the community of Datil and adjacent private property with structures.

2. Characteristics:

This FMU is characterized by rolling low hills, dominated by piñon / juniper woodlands. The area is showing encroachment by young piñon / juniper. Grass dominates the understory but is not continuous. Western and northern areas of the FMU contain small Ponderosa Pine stands which are developing an understory of piñon / juniper. The area is culturally significant due to its location and the well site along the Historic Magdalena Livestock Driveway.



3. Wildland Fire History:

Lightning is a significant cause of fire in the adjoining area. Due to high recreational use and proximity to the community of Datil there is a high probability of human caused fire. There is no recorded fire history within the FMU.

4. Fire regime/condition class:

The Fire Regime for this FMU is I and II , Fire Regime Condition Class is Class 2.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

Recreational and Cultural resource values are a concern for protection within this FMU. A wildfire would decrease the recreational values of this area. A wildland urban interface is located on the boundaries of this FMU that require timely suppression response. Projects have been implemented to mechanically reduce fuels by creating a fuel break surrounding this area. Further mechanical fuels reduction projects will be implemented to lower the condition class and allow for management ignited prescribed fire to maintain this area.

6. Communities at Risk:

The town of Datil is located adjacent to this FMU. This includes private property and homes located on the boundaries of BLM lands.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Control all wildfires to less than one acre.
- b. Implement and maintain interagency agreement for fire suppression between local agencies and cooperators.
- c. Continue mechanical fuels reduction beyond the existing fuel break to complete 40 acres yearly over the next six years.
- d. Put in place a fire prevention plan for the campground by 2006.
- e. Institute a maintenance program that includes prescribed fire within the ponderosa pine stands and grass dominated land within the FMU.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

A fuel break is in place around the perimeter of the FMU but spread potential would still be high from spotting ahead of a moderate to large fire. Limit wildfire size to less than one acre by quick response and using the Datil Volunteer Fire Department and Cibola National Forest for initial attack. Off road vehicle

activities. Use use should be limited to life and property issues during suppression minimum impact suppression tactics for suppression actions.

Prescribed Fire:

Prescribed fire plans will be developed in conjunction with mechanical projects for grass dominated areas and ponderosa pine stands. Prescribed fire treatments will be planned to maintain a 5 to 15 year burn rotation for identified sites within the FMU.

Mechanical:

Mechanical treatment will be limited to hand thinning and piling including pile burning, until up to 30% of the FMU is treated. Treatments can be Agency accomplished or contracted. Treatments will be prescribed to maintain the recreational values of the area.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

An Emergency Stabilization Plan will be initiated by the Renewable Resources staff as needed.

Fire Management Unit Name: Horse Mountain Interface

Category/Number B-2

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

1. Location:

The Horse Mountain Interface FMU is located on the north side of the Horse Mountain WSA. This FMU buffers the WSA from growing sub-divisions south of Datil in Catron County. There are approximately 2,500 acres within this FMU.

Suppression	High
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Moderate
Community Assistance / Protection	High

2. Characteristics:

Fuels consist of dense piñon / juniper, isolated meadows and ponderosa pine stringers running from Horse Mountain down into the sub-divisions. The WSA and ACEC are managed to protect wildlife species, primitive recreation and scenic values. The FMU is managed to create a buffer area to reduce the potential of high intensity fire moving through the sub-divisions from or to the WSA. There is currently a 100-foot wide fuel break along the boundary of the private lands.



3. Wildland Fire History:

Lightning is the predominate cause of wildland fires in the FMU and surrounding area. There is no recorded fire history for this FMU. With the growth of communities to the north of the FMU, human starts add to the risk to both the adjacent WSA and the communities themselves.

4. Fire regime/condition class:

The Fire Regime within this FMU is II and the Fire Regime Condition Class is Class 2 and 3.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

The presence of sub-divisions on the boundary of a special management area requires unique restraints and measures to implement a fire plan. This includes a managed buffer zone with planned protection, mitigation, and community involvement. A fuel break has been constructed along the boundary and planning is underway to implement further mechanical treatments and a prescribed fire program for maintenance in this FMU.

6. Communities at Risk:

Several growing subdivisions are adjacent to the FMU. To implement a Fire Use program within the WSA, (FMU D-2), continued fuels reduction and community planning are required for implementation of this program.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Continue to contain/control wildland fires until such a time as planning and fuels reduction is complete. Limit fire size to 10 acres within this FMU.
- b. Use minimum suppression impacts tactics within the FMU. Off road vehicle use is limited to life and property issues during suppression actions.
- c. Develop a fuels management plan to maintain the FMU as a buffer between the adjacent subdivisions and the Horse Mountain Fire Management Unit, (D2).
- d. Support a risk assessment plan for wildland fire risks with the local agencies and cooperators by 2006.
- e. Implement a fuels reduction plan to enhance the existing fuel break and begin treatment within 2 years.
- f. Educate local residents about fire and fuels management activities in the FMU.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Suppression actions should utilize local Volunteer Fire Departments (VFD's) for initial attack. Due to the lack of vehicle access and land status as a WSA, fires will need to be evaluated for an appropriate response within the guidelines of this plan and the guidelines for WSA. Utilize a resource management specialist to assist in the appropriate response. The use of fire a information specialist may be required for any continuing suppression actions to keep local residents informed.

Wildland Fire Use:

WFU opportunities are limited within the FMU until fuels treatments and mitigation with local subdivisions are complete. Fire Use will be considered when a WFU Plan is initiated for Horse Mountain FMU, (D-2). Conditions and contingencies need to be defined.

Prescribed Fire:

Prescribed fire will be planned and utilized in conjunction with mechanical treatments to maintain this FMU to Fire Regime Condition Class 1, or a condition that limits the intensity and spread of wildfires to local subdivisions.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Mechanical:

Mechanical treatments are limited with sections of the FMU designated as a WSA. Hand thinning and pile burning may be utilized until broadcast prescribed fire can be used.

Chemical:

Not at this time but resource specialist may look at chemical treatments as an alternative to mechanical treatments.

Biological:
None at this time.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

No plans or actions are anticipated at this time.

Fire Management Unit Name: Pie Town

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Category/Number: B-3

Suppression	High
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	High
Community Assistance / Protection	High

1. Location:

Pie Town is a small community located between Datil and Quemado on US Hwy 60. BLM managed lands are located on three sides of Pie Town. The FMU consists of approximately 840 acres. This FMU is highly used by locals and is crisscrossed by numerous roads and power lines. Located on the northeastern area of the FMU is a radio telescope, Very Large Baseline Array (VLBA), managed by the National Science Foundation. Located in the southwestern area of the FMU is an abandoned sawmill.

2. Characteristics:

The BLM lands within the FMU are considered urban interface. Private homes are often located on the border with no distinct boundary. Power lines and roads crisscross The FMU and a 5 acre abandoned sawmill adjoins private lands. Fuels consist of piñon / juniper scattered ponderosa pine with a grass understory. The eastern sections of the FMU have been utilized as a fuel wood gathering site for many years. A mechanical fuels reduction project was started in 2002 and continues using mechanical treatments and prescribed fire treatments.

3. Wildland Fire History:

Lightning is a significant cause of fire in the adjoining area. As an urban interface area there is a high potential for human caused wildfires. In 1996 a small fire started at the sawmill site and smoldered for 3 weeks before being fully extinguished.

4. Fire regime/condition class:

The Fire Regime within this FMU is I and II, the Fire Regime Condition Class is 2 and 3.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

Private property borders all areas of this FMU except on the north where there is a section of New Mexico State land. The FMU should be managed as an urban interface area requiring fuels management, prevention / mitigation programs, and interagency agreements for suppression.

6. Communities at Risk:

The community of Pie Town is located adjacent to BLM lands on a ridge top, surrounded by moderately dense wildland fuels. These interface fuels, though not exceedingly heavy, could carry a fire from or to BLM lands.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Control all wildfires to less than 1 acre.
- b. Implement and maintain interagency agreements for fire suppression between local agencies and cooperators.
- c. Continue fuels reduction projects within this FMU to completion of treatments of BLM lands adjacent to Pie Town.
- d. Support a risk assessment plan for wildland fire risks with the local agencies and cooperators by 2006.
- e. Develop and implement a mitigation plan for the abandoned sawmill by 2007.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Contain and control wildfires at less than one acre by utilizing local VFD's when possible. BLM lands are within this FMU are close to homes and town limits.

Prescribed Fire:

Develop and implement a prescribed fire plan for the FMU to reduce and then maintain Condition Class 1. Acreage will depend on fuel condition and type. 56 acres are currently proposed.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Mechanical:

Treatment is on going with hand thinning and piling along the perimeter of BLM lands and Pie Town. Further treatment continued to be planned and implemented to prepare the FMU for prescribed fire as a maintenance tool. Utilize agency personnel and fire wood permits to remove thinned material.

Chemical:

Not at this time but resource specialist may look at chemical treatments as an alternative

to mechanical treatments.

Biological:

Not planned at this time.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration

Develop and implement a plan for removal and restoration of the sawmill site adjacent to private lands.

Fire Management Unit Name: Antelope Run

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Category/Number: B-4

Suppression	High
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Moderate
Community Assistance / Protection	Moderate

1. Location:

Antelope Run subdivision is an urban interface area surrounded by BLM lands approximately 20 miles southwest of Quemado and 10 miles east of the Arizona border. There are approximately 4,400 acres within this FMU.

2. Characteristics:

Fuels consist of piñon /juniper and grassland in rolling hills.

3. Wildland Fire History:

Fire history includes a 1,185 acre fire within the FMU in 1999, started by a trash fire on private lands.

4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire regime within this FMU is II; Fire Regime Condition Class is Class 2 and 3.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

The presence of sub-divisions on the boundary of a BLM lands requires special restrains and measures in the implementation of a fire plan. This includes a managed buffer zone with planned protection, mitigation and community involvement.

6. Communities at Risk:

Antelope Run / Catron County

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Control all wildfires at 100 acres or less. Within one mile of structures contain wildfires at a minimum acreage.
- b. Implement and maintain interagency agreement for fire suppression between local agencies and cooperators for fire suppression.
- c. Develop and implement a plan for fuels reductions projects within this FMU by 2006.
- d. Develop a prevention / mitigation plan for wildland fire risks at the Antelope Run community level.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Implement an interagency agreement with local cooperators to initial attack fires due to distance from Socorro. Contain and control or fires at a minimum acreage within one mile of structures.

Wildland Fire Use:

No Wildland Fire Use is planned at this time

Prescribed Fire:

No prescribed fire is planned at this time until planning is complete.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Mechanical:

No mechanical treatments are planned at this time until planning is complete.

Chemical:

No chemical treatments are planned at this time until planning is complete.

Biological:

No biological treatments are planned.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

There are no rehabilitation or actions planned at this time.

Fire Management Unit Name: San Lorenzo Canyon

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Category/Number: B-5

Suppression	Low
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Moderate
Community Assistance / Protection	Low

1. Location:

San Lorenzo Canyon, a rugged scenic canyon land area bordering the Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge, is located 10 miles northwest of Socorro, NM. The area is primarily used for hiking, sightseeing, photography, picnicking and camping. There are 1,097 acres within this FMU.



2. Characteristics:

San Lorenzo Canyon’s significant resources include wildlife habitat, and scenic values.

3. Wildland Fire History:

Lightning is the predominate cause of wildland fires in the FMU and surrounding area. There is no fire history recorded within this FMU.

4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime within this FMU is I and II, Fire Regime Condition Class is generally is Class 1 and 2.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

San Lorenzo Canyon is used as a recreational area. salt cedar is present and currently being treated and removed. Uncontrolled wildfire would detract from the recreation value and damage the riparian area of the canyon.

6. Communities at Risk:

No communities are at risk.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Utilize appropriate management response to manage wildfire within this FMU.
- b. Utilize natural barriers and roads for containment.
- c. Utilize minimum impact suppression tactics.
- d. Use education/ interpretation signing for wildfire or prescribed fire events.
- e. Implement an agreement with adjoining land managers for wildland fire use by 2007.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Manage wildland fire for resource benefits utilizing natural barriers to contain fires. Utilize natural barriers and roads for containment. Suppression actions require minimum impact suppression tactics. Contact adjoining land management agencies addressing resource constraints and suppression tactics.

Wildland Fire Use:

Work with Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge and New Mexico State Forestry to implement a Wildland Fire Use Plan.

Prescribed Fire:

Pile burning should be initiated in conjunction with mechanical exotic plant removal.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Mechanical:

Cut and pile exotic salt cedar.

Chemical:

Continue to treat remaining salt cedar as needed.

Biological:

Not planned at this time.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

Areas treated for salt cedar should be managed through the San Lorenzo Canyon Recreation Management Plan dated August 2001.

Fire Management Unit Name: All Lands Not Specified by Selected Category

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Category/Number: C-1

Suppression	Moderate
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Moderate
Community Assistance / Protection	Low

1. Location:

This FMU is non-specific to area or acreage and covers a variety of fuel types. There are 1,004,520 acres in this FMU.

2. Characteristics:

This FMU covers a large variation of characteristics. Fire and fuels management will be introduced as needed by resource management, interagency cooperator requests, changes in land status, population growth, and other considerations. Over the life of this plan areas may be designated to other management categories as the characteristics change. Wildland fire use is desired but must be considered on a case by case basis with developed constraints.

3. Wildland Fire History:

There have been 82 fires within this FMU for a total of 37,287 acres. Twenty seven fires have been human caused burning 4,501 acres

4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime is I, II and III and spans all fuel types within the Socorro Field Office. Condition class is a combination of Class 1, 2 and 3.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

On a case by case basis specific plans will be used to identify objectives, values at risk and constraints. Burn Plans, Wildland Fire Situation Analysis and Environmental Assessments will be used to manage prescribed treatments as outlined in the National Fire Plan, (2001)

6. Communities at Risk:

See National Fire Plan: "20 Communities Initiative" Accomplishment Report (2001-

2003), USDA Forest Service Southwest Region publication.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Utilize appropriate management response to manage wildfire within this FMU.
- b. Coordinate with Resource Area staff to identify and protect sensitive resources and any changes in resource status within this FMU.
- c. Generally do not burn more than 15- 20% of any single allotment during one year. Work with permittees to assess grazing and other resource needs.
- d. Utilize minimum impact suppression tactics, use natural and man-made barriers wherever possible.
- e. Manage fire and fuels projects to be safe and cost efficient.
- f. Develop and implement prescribed fire, mechanical, chemical and biological means to return Fire Regime Condition Class to its historical range. Treat an average of 4,000 acres a year over a five year period.
- g. Prioritize fuels projects which will reduce fuel loading within or adjacent to urban interface. Work with interagency and local organizations to identify and develop projects.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Suppression actions will be initiated as Appropriate Management Response on a conservative and informed basis. NFDRS indices, regional fire loads, availability should guide the decision process.

Wildland Fire Use:

No Wildland Fire Use Plan is in place at this time.

Prescribed Fire:

Develop and implement projects that meet Resource Management goals and include plans that achieve fuels reduction. Develop plans which consider cyclic maintenance and treatment to maintain the historic fire regime. Maintain urban interface fuels projects to sustain the post treatment condition. Plans should be maintained to allow multiple projects to be available year to year. Implement projects that are cost effective, utilizing other land management agency's projects to add on or tier projects when available. Develop projects with a shelf life for years when prescribed fire is not available as a tool.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Mechanical:

Develop and maintain projects in conjunction with BLM, local cooperators and private resource management objectives.

Chemical:

Develop and maintain projects in conjunction with BLM, local cooperators and private resource management objectives.

Biological:

Biological treatments are not used at this time.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

Post fire and rehabilitation projects will be planned as needed by Resource staff for suppression actions and other fuels treatments.

Fire Management Unit Name: Pelona Mountain

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Category/Number: D-1

Suppression	Low
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Low
Community Assistance / Protection	Low

1. Location:

The Pelona Mountain FMU includes the Pelona Mountain WSA located in Catron County, at the southwest edge of the Plains of San Augustine, approximately 29 miles southwest of Datil. To the south and west, buffered by some private lands, is the Gila National Forest. To the north is a large area of state land centered on Luera Mountain. Checkerboard parcels of private, state and BLM lands make up other boundaries. There are few roads and ranches within the 114,735 acre of this FMU.

2. Characteristics:

The Pelona Mountain FMU is characterized by rugged canyons and rough hilly to mountainous terrain. Elevations vary from 6,000 to 9,212 feet. The major vegetative associations include ponderosa pine, piñon / juniper stands and grasslands. Fire has played a major role in the ecosystem in the past and efforts to restore fire to the ecosystems of the Socorro Field Office have concentrated here. There is potential to manage fire on an interagency basis that would include NM State Forestry, Gila National Forest and various private land holders



3. Wildland Fire History:

Fire history includes 14 fires for a total of 37,289 acres. The Chance Fire in 2001 burned 32,860 acres. Lightning is the predominate cause of wildland fires in the FMU and surrounding area.



4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime is I, II and III, Fire Regime Condition Class is a combination of Class 1, 2 and 3.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

Values at risk to be protected include elk, deer and raptor wintering and nesting habitats. Scenic values, recreational uses, and grazing utilization could be impacted. Bat Cave, a highly significant archaeological site, on the National Register of Historic Places, is within the FMU.

6. Communities at Risk:

No communities are at risk.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Initiate a Wildfire Use Plan for the Pelona Mountain FMU. Develop the plan utilizing other agencies and cooperators to allow for a wider area of opportunity. Complete plan by 2006. Until plan is completed use other strategies to manage wildland fire.
- b. Generally, do not burn more than 15- 20% of any single allotment during one year. Work with permittees to assess grazing and other resource needs.
- c. Allow fire to play a more natural role in maintaining native plant communities.

- d. Utilize minimum impact suppression tactics and natural barriers for suppression actions.
- e. Initially reduce heavy fuel loading in some locations using prescribed fire.
- f. Use prescribed fire to maintain acceptable levels of fuels in specific locations where it is not maintained by prescribed natural fire or suppression fires. Develop a cyclic rotation treating 1,000 acres a year over a ten year period.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Utilize Appropriate Management Response until Fire Use Plan is completed and prescriptions can be used for response guidance.

Wildland Fire Use:

Unplanned ignitions will be evaluated through the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis or other process to determine size and limitations. Develop a Fire Use Plan for this FMU in conjunction with the Gila National Forest and New Mexico State Forestry.

Prescribed Fire:

Prescribed fire will be used to pre-treat or maintain areas not maintained by Fire Use. Ponderosa Pine stands that are not regularly burned or are in need of a narrowly defined prescription would be prioritized for treatment. Develop burn plans that cover large areas and may be utilized for cyclic maintenance prescribed burns.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Mechanical:

No mechanical treatments within the WSA. Use mechanical treatments outside of WSA for preparing areas for prescribed fire as needed.

Chemical:

None at this time but resource specialist may look at chemical treatments as an alternative to mechanical treatments outside of the WSA.

Biological:

No biological treatments are planned at this time.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

Post fire and rehabilitation projects will be planned as needed by Resource staff for suppression actions and other fuels treatments.

Fire Management Unit Name: Horse Mountain **Fire Management Priority Ranking:**

Category/Number: D-2

Suppression	Moderate
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Moderate
Community Assistance / Protection	Low

1. Location:

The Horse Mountain FMU is located approximately 25 miles southwest of Datil. The FMU is relatively small but similar to Pelona Mountain except for an urban interface area on the north side and three cabins in a canyon on the east. Wildfires in the area have been managed using an aggressive control strategy because of the urban interface. A hazardous fuels reduction project along the north boundary (Horse Mountain Interface, B-2), was begun in 1995 and will continue. A 2,200 acre prescribed burn was implemented in 1997 to reduce fuels and restore fire to the area. As the hazardous fuels reduction projects continue in the adjoining FMU, fire will be allowed to play an increasing role on Horse Mountain. Horse Mountain FMU is 6,384 acres.

2. Characteristics:

As noted above, the FMU is similar to Pelona Mountain FMU with the exception of the urban interface area on the north side where it is adjacent to B-2 Horse Mountain Interface.

3. Wildland Fire History:

There have been two recorded fires within this FMU totaling 7.5 acres. Lightning is a significant cause of fire within the FMU.



4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime for this FMU is I and II and Condition Class is generally Class 2.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

Values at risk are minimal within the FMU and fire is desired as a treatment. Constraints are noted below under Communities at Risk.

6. Communities at Risk:

The area directly to the north of this FMU is categorized as B: “Where unplanned wildfire is not desired because of current conditions”. Refer to B-2 Horse Mountain FMU for a treatment plan. Further fuels treatment and community prevention / mitigation is needed before WFU can be fully utilized in this unit.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Utilize Appropriate Management Response within this FMU until a Fire Use Management Plan is in place. Limit fire size to 100 acres with consideration to the north side interface.
- b. No motorized vehicles are allowed in this FMU.
- c. Develop a Management Plan to better guide the use of fire in both B-2 and D-2.
- d. As stated in the objectives for B-2, develop a program to educate local residents about fire use within the Horse Mountain WSA.
- e. Utilize minimum impact suppression tactics as much as possible within the FMU.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Use Appropriate Management Response in the evaluation of suppression strategies. The FMU is rugged in areas and access may be difficult. The FMU is also within view of local communities and wildfires may become a threat to these communities. Guidance on suppression strategies should remain conservative until mitigation and planning is complete in Interface (B-2) FMU.

Wildland Fire Use:

No Fire Use until Horse Mountain Interface, (B-2), objectives are attained.

Prescribed Fire:

Prescribed fire will be used in conjunction with management of FMU B-2 and as prescribed to reduce areas of heavy fuels to better enhance Fire Use opportunities.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Mechanical:

Not available as an option.

Chemical:

Not available as an option.

Biological:

Not available as an option.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

No plans at this time for post fire rehabilitation.

Fire Management Unit Name: Sierra Ladrones

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Category/Number: D-3

Suppression	Low
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Moderate
Community Assistance / Protection	Low

1. Location:

The Sierra Ladrones are located in the north-central portion of Socorro County approximately 15 miles northwest of the community of Socorro. Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge borders the FMU on the southeast quadrant of the mountain. The FMU covers approximately 65,821 acres.

2. Characteristics:

The jagged peaks of the Sierra Ladrones pose a prominent landmark as they rise from the Rio Grande Valley from approximately 5,200 feet to an elevation of 9,176 feet. The sharp relief characterized by rocky cliffs, mesa rim rock, badlands, and steep slopes cut by numerous canyons and ravines, is accented by vegetative variations from mesa grasslands to the piñon juniper woodlands, to ponderosa, aspen, and Douglas fir coniferous forests.



3. Wildland Fire History:

There is no recorded fire history for this FMU. Lightning is the predominate cause of wildland fires in the FMU and surrounding area.

4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime for this FMU is I, II and III and Condition Class is generally Class 1 and 2.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

The desert big horn sheep population is negatively impacted by the closed canopy nature of the fuels within the FMU by providing hiding cover for predators. A prescribed fire treatment plan will eliminate the fuel concentration on the upper slopes of the Ladron Mountains. Lower slopes will be managed to maintain wintering habitat and grazing.

6. Communities at Risk

No communities are at risk.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Utilize Appropriate Management Response within this FMU until a Fire Use Management Plan is in place. Generally, do not burn more than 15- 20% of any single allotment during

- one year. Work with permittees to assess grazing and other resource needs.
- b. Allow fire to play its natural role over areas that are not grazed due to topography.
 - c. Utilize minimum impact suppression tactics.
 - d. Use management ignited prescribed fire to maintain acceptable levels of fuels in locations where it is not maintained by natural ignitions.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Utilize Appropriate Management Response within this FMU until a WFU Management Plan is in place.

Wildland Fire Use:

A WFU Plan is not in place at this time.

Prescribed Fire:

Prescribed fire will be used over large portions of the FMU to remove brush species and open areas of closed canopy piñon / juniper. desert bighorn sheep are a major target species to benefit from the prescribed fire treatment in this FMU.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Mechanical:

Not available as an option.

Chemical:

Not available as an option.

Biological:

Not available as an option.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

No fire rehabilitation or restoration actions are planned.

Fire Management Unit Name: Devil's Backbone

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Category/Number: D-4

Suppression	Low
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Moderate
Community Assistance / Protection	Low

1. Location:

The Devil’s Backbone FMU is a long ridge extending south off of the Magdalena Mountains. The location is approximately 20 miles southwest of Socorro. Access to this area is difficult due to rugged terrain. There are approximately 12,800 acres within this FMU.

2. Characteristics:

The Devil’s Backbone FMU generally consists of desert grassland and desert shrubs. Fire has played a significant role in maintaining the open character of the area with wildfires burning in the FMU in both 1988 and 1995. The FMU is proposed for desert bighorn sheep introduction and planning is underway for prescribed fire introduction.

3. Wildland Fire History:

Fire history includes 2 fires for 1,915 acres. Lightning is the predominate cause of wildland fires in the FMU and surrounding area.

4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime for this FMU is II and III and Condition Class is generally Class 1 and 2.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

Agreements should be initiated with adjoining land owners and managers to facilitate Fire Use planning.

6. Communities at Risk:

There are no communities at risk.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Utilize Appropriate Management Response within this FMU until a Fire Use Management Plan is in place. Generally, do not burn more than 15- 20% of any single allotment during one year. Work with permittees to assess grazing and other resource needs.

- b. Allow fire to play a more natural role in maintaining native plant communities.
- c. Utilize minimum impact suppression tactics.
- d. Use management ignited prescribed fire to maintain acceptable levels of fuels in locations where it is not maintained by natural ignitions.
- e. Use prescribed fire to meet objectives for desert bighorn sheep habitat improvement. Implement prescribed fire plan by 2006.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Utilize Appropriate Management Response within this FMU until a Fire Use Management Plan is in place.

Wildland Fire Use:

No Wildland Fire Use Plan is in place at this time.

Prescribed Fire:

Prescribed fire will be used over portions of the FMU to improve areas for desert bighorn sheep habitat. Plans are in place for a prescribed fire in 2005.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Mechanical:

Not available as an option.

Chemical:

Not available as an option.

Biological:

Not available as an option.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

No fire rehabilitation or restoration actions are planned.

Fire Management Unit Name: Jornada

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Category/Number: D-5

Suppression	Low
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Low
Community Assistance / Protection	Low

1. Location:

Jornada FMU is located east of the Rio Grande River and south of the Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge. Access to this area is poor and there are limited resources at risk. There are 26,859 acres in this FMU.

2. Characteristics:

The Jornada consists of rugged lava flows with desert grassland vegetation. The area had several wildfires over the past years, all of which were monitored from the air due to poor access, rugged topography, and limited resources at risk.

3. Wildland Fire History:

Fire history includes two fires for a total 12,100 acres. Lightning is the predominate cause of wildland fires in the FMU and surrounding area.

4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime for this FMU is II and Condition Class 1.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

There are no known values at risk within this FMU.

6. Communities at Risk:

There are no communities at risk.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Utilize Appropriate Management Response within this FMU until a WFU Management Plan is in place. Generally, do not burn more than 15- 20% of any single allotment during one year. Work with permittees to assess grazing and other resource needs.
- b. Allow fire to play its natural role over to maintain native plant species.
- c. Utilize minimum impact suppression tactics.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Utilize Appropriate Management Response within this FMU until a WFU Management Plan is in place.

Wildland Fire Use:

No WFU Plan is in place at this time.

Prescribed Fire:

No prescribed fire treatments are planned for this FMU.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Mechanical:

Not available as an option.

Chemical:

Not available as an option.

Biological:

Not available as an option.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

No fire rehabilitation or restoration actions are planned.

Fire Management Unit Name: Other Wilderness Study Areas

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Category/Number: D-6

1. Location:

Other Wilderness Study Areas within the Socorro Field Office have limited fire application. There are 6 selected areas within this FMU comprising a total of 136,156 acres.

Suppression	Low
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Low
Community Assistance / Protection	Low

2. Characteristics:

This FMU has limited ground fuels to carry fire and fire history is limited for these areas.

3. Wildland Fire History:

Lightning is the predominate cause of wildland fires in the FMU and surrounding area. There is no fire history for this FMU.

4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime for this FMU is II and Condition Class 1 and 2.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

There are no known values at risk within this FMU.

6. Communities at Risk:

There are no known communities at risk.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Utilize Appropriate Management Response within this FMU until a Fire Use Management Plan is in place. Generally do not burn more than 15- 20% of any single allotment during one year. Work with permittees to assess grazing and other resource needs.
- b. Allow fire to play its natural role to maintain native plant species.
- c. Utilize minimum impact suppression tactics.
- d. Utilize prescribed fire to meet overall wilderness and resource management objectives where WFU or other strategies do not meet those objectives.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Utilize Appropriate Management Response within this FMU until a Fire Use Management Plan is in place.

Wildland Fire Use:

No Wildland Fire Use Plan is in place at this time.

Prescribed Fire:

There are no planned prescribed fire treatments at this time.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Mechanical:

Not available as an option.

Chemical:
Not available as an option.

Biological:
Not available as an option

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

No fire rehabilitation or restoration actions are planned.

Fire Management Unit Name: Chupadera Mesa

Category/Number: D-7

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Suppression	Low
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Moderate
Community Assistance / Protection	Low

1. Location:

Chupadera Mesa is an elevated mesa with rolling to rough topography. The FMU is located on the eastern boundary of the Socorro Field Office north of Highway 380. There are 109,760 acres within this FMU.

2. Characteristics:

The dominant vegetation is piñon / juniper. Both older growth and encroaching stands are present. Both wildfires and prescribed fires have been effective in removing encroachments over large areas. Several thousand acres have been treated and restored to grassland using fire. These treatments benefit wildlife, watershed, and livestock grazing within the FMU.

3. Wildland Fire History:

Fire history includes six fires of 19,175 acres within this FMU. Lightning is the predominate cause of wildland fires in the FMU and surrounding area.



4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime for this FMU is I and II and Condition Class 1 and 2.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

There are no known values at risk within this FMU.

6. Communities at Risk:

There are no known communities at risk

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Utilize Appropriate Management Response within this FMU until a WFU Management Plan is in place. Generally, do not burn more than 15- 20% of any single allotment during one year. Work with permittees to assess grazing and other resource needs.
- b. Allow fire to play its natural role to maintain native plant species.
- c. Utilize minimum impact suppression tactics.

- d. Utilize prescribed fire where Appropriate Management Response does not meet resource goals.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Utilize Appropriate Management Response within this FMU until a Fire Use Management Plan is in place.

Wildland Fire Use:

No WFU Plan is in place at this time. Unplanned ignitions will be evaluated through the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis or other process to determine size and limitations. Consult with resource management specialist and allotment permittees for planning and specific strategies.

Prescribed Fire:

Prescribed fire should be used over portions of the FMU to remove brush species, open areas of closed canopy piñon / juniper and maintain grasslands.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Mechanical:

Not available as an option.

Chemical:

Not available as an option.

Biological:

Not available as an option.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration

No fire rehabilitation or restoration actions are planned.

Fire Management Unit Name: Isolated Ponderosa Pine Stands

Category/Number: D-8

Fire Management Priority Ranking:

Suppression	Low
Prescribed Fire / Non Fire Fuels Treatment	Moderate
Community Assistance / Protection	Low

1. Location:

Isolated ponderosa pine stands are scattered throughout the center portion of the Field Office area. Geographic names include Kellog Canyon, Chavez Draw, Dusty, Horse Mountain, Southwest Pelona, and Cox Camp. There are approximately 24,242 acres within this FMU.

2. Characteristics:

These ponderosa pine stands are particularly valuable because they add diversity to landscapes dominated by piñon / juniper. Treatments have been planned but need updating. There is potential for cooperative treatments with the Gila and Cibola National Forests.

3. Wildland Fire History:

There have been four fires totaling 42.6 acres within this FMU. Lightning is the predominate cause of wildland fires in the FMU and surrounding area.



4. Fire regime/condition class:

Fire Regime for this FMU is I and II and Condition Class 1 and 2.

5. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints:

Lands managed by the Socorro Field Office include only a few areas with ponderosa pine stands. These stands are at risk from encroaching piñon / juniper and past fire suppression. Maintenance of these stands should be planned to include a rotating prescribed fire schedule.

6. Communities at Risk:

No communities are at risk.

7. Fire Management Objectives:

- a. Utilize Appropriate Management Response within this FMU until a Fire Use Management Plan is in place. Generally, do not burn more than 15- 20% of any single allotment during one year. Work with permittees to assess grazing and other resource needs.
- b. Develop Fire Use plans with other agencies where lands adjoin these fire management

- units.
- c. Allow fire to play a more natural role in maintaining native plant communities.
 - d. Utilize minimum impact suppression tactics.
 - e. Initially reduce heavy fuel loading in some locations with mechanical treatments.
 - f. Use prescribed fire to maintain acceptable levels of fuels in specific locations where it is not maintained by Wildland Fire Use.

8. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression:

Utilize Appropriate Management Response within this FMU until a Fire Use Management Plan is in place.

Wildland Fire Use:

No WFU Plan is in place at this time. Agreements should be initiated to include these FMU's within boundaries designated for WFU with other land management agencies such as the Gila and Cibola National Forests.

Prescribed Fire:

Prescribed fire will be used within the FMU to remove encroaching piñon / juniper and to maintain healthy ponderosa pine stands not maintained by appropriate management response.

Non-fire Fuels Treatments:

Mechanical:

Utilize mechanical treatments to prepare, or as an alternative to prescribed fire.

Chemical:

Not planned at this time.

Biological:

Not planned at this time.

9. Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration:

No fire rehabilitation or restoration actions are planned.

IV. Wildland Fire Management Program Components

A. Wildland Fire Suppression

1. Fire History

Between 1984 and 2003 approximately 72 percent of fires in this field office were lightning caused and generally occurred between the months of May and August. Human caused fires were usually associated with main travel corridors. The average number of fires during this time period was six fires per year burning an average of 802 acres per year. High average acreage is associated with large fire years.

'Heavy' fire years (greater than 1000 acres), occur in four of ten years and "light" fire years (less than 1000 acres), occur in six of ten years. The heavy fire years of 1994, 1995, 1999, 2000, are associated with drought cycles immediately following significant 'grass growing' El Nino events, while light fire years are during El Nino events or after two to three years of drought as grass fuels are grazed off. These occurred in 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2002, 2003.

The fire season in the Socorro Field Office begins as early as February at the lowest elevations, depending on winter moisture, and continues until the summer monsoons arrive, generally in mid-July but sometimes extending into August. The strength-of-force period extends from April through July with suppression resources being dispatched nationally during August and September.

Multiple fire days are rare with an average of less than one multiple fire day per year. When multiple fire days occur, it is generally early in the season as ditches and fields are burned and then again during June when conditions are dry and extensive dry lightning storms occur.

Project fires have occurred only one time over the past ten years (Chance Fire 2000) in the Socorro Field Office. The majority fires are Type 4 and 5 with an average of one Type 3 incident per year.

Initial attack within the Socorro Resource Area boundaries is based on closest available resources. Incidents are manned with interagency cooperation between Socorro BLM, Bosque Del Apache and Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuges, Cibola National Forest and New Mexico State Forestry Division, Socorro District. The majority of initial attack responses are 'assists to other agencies'.

An increasing number of urban interface areas are included within the Socorro Field Office. These include Horse Mountain, Antelope Run, Coyote Creek, and the communities of Pie Town, Riley and Datil, all with adjoining BLM lands. Catron County as of January 2004, has 82 listed subdivisions.

2. Fire Weather and Fire Danger

The Field Office supports a variety of fuel types, including grass, piñon / juniper, ponderosa pine, and mixed-conifer.

The following table represents best available information on fuel complexes within the Field Office and expected fire behavior during the fire season.

Mixed Conifer (Timber/Litter Fuel Group)			
Fuel Model	Rate of Spread, ch/hr	Flame Lengths, ft.	Fire Characteristics
8	2 - 10	1 – 3	Surface fires only; potential for independent crown fire at high wind-speeds.
Ponderosa Pine (Timber/Litter and Grass Fuel Group)			
9	7 – 25	2.0 – 5.3	Surface fires only; potential for independent crown fire at high wind-speeds.
2	0 - 103	0 - 11	Continuous and rapid spread under high wind conditions.
Piñon-Juniper Woodland (Timber/Litter Fuel Group)			
8	2 – 5	0.9 – 1.9	Only under low wind conditions
6	28 – 83	4.7 – 10	Only closed-canopy conditions under high wind speeds of over 20 mph at 20 feet.
Grasslands/Sagebrush (Grass Fuel Group)			
1	0 – 311	0 – 8.4	Fires burn out quickly
2	0 – 103	0 – 11	Continuous and rapid spread under high wind conditions.

3. Suppression and Preparedness Actions

The operational roles of the BLM in the wildland/urban interface are wildland firefighting, hazardous fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. Structural fire suppression is the responsibility of tribal, State, or local governments as described in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations.

Use Appropriate Management Response to suppress all fires in accordance with management objectives for the FMU based on current conditions and fire location. An appropriate response could vary from limiting a fire to the smallest size possible to monitoring or Fire Use.

The priority for a quick suppression response for the field office is to prevent wildland fires from spreading to private land, cultural resources and improvements on BLM lands. For any type of response, minimizing cost must be considered.

The field office has one small fire cache in Socorro.

Requirements for fire operations can be found in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations (2004).

See Section V-A of this plan for a complete summary of the current and proposed preparedness organization.

The field office will have an updated Fire Danger Operating Plan in 2005. As part of the plan, a Preparedness and Dispatch Response Matrix has been developed. On the next page is a copy of the matrix.

In some cases the engine crews will have to park their engine and hike into the fire for size up. If the distance is too great aerial observation may be required.

Preparedness and Dispatch Level Matrix

<u>STAFFING CLASS PREPAREDNESS LEVEL)</u>	<u>BURNING INDEX</u>	<u>FIRE DANGER</u>	<u>MANAGEMENT ACTIONS</u>
PL -1	0 – 10 (FIL -1)	<u>LOW</u> Initiating fires low intensity with low resistance to control; fine fuels drying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Normal tour of duty 0800 – 1630 •One engine dispatched initial attack response ▪Phone & radio monitored by ABZ / GLZ* until 1630 (or longer if initial attack is extended)
PL-2	11 – 21 (FIL-2)	<u>MODERATE</u> Initiating fires moderate intensity with low-moderate resistance to control; heavy fuels drying	All above plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Daily Roster/staffing reports to ABZ / GLZ started
PL-3	22 – 42 (FIL-3)	<u>HIGH</u> Initiating fires of moderate to moderate-high intensity with potential for spotting w/winds & passive crowning possible; all fuel classes available at high end BI	All Above Plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Consider increased patrols following dry lightning storms; •Predicted LAL between 4 – 6, bump up to LEVEL IV
PL-4	43 – 50 (FIL-4)	<u>VERY HIGH</u> Fires present moderate to high intensity and high resistance to control; escapes are common at high end BI; all fuels classes available for rapid combustion; air temps high, humidities low with high winds possible; spotting & intermittent crowning likely	All Above Plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Briefings for Agency Administrators (AA) as needed; •Advise ABZ / GLZ if extended staffing hours required; •Consider fire restrictions; fire safety messages distributed •Consider canceling planned prescribed-fires and postponing project work
PL-5	51 + (FIL-5+)	<u>EXTREME</u> High to extreme intensities with crowning, short-long range spotting common; project fires likely under high wind conditions	All Above Plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Consider: ordered-standby, cancel annual leave, etc. •Consider daily Briefings for AA and press releases issued regularly •Review AA Briefing package

The Preparedness and Dispatch Level Matrix is based on the National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) Weather Stations. Analysis used NFDRS Fuel Model C, Slope class 1 (0-25%), perennial herbs and climate class of 1 (semi-arid).

* Albuquerque Zone/Gila Zone (ABZ/GLZ)

4. Prevention

a. Annual Prevention Program

Annual fire prevention activities include participation in the Catron and Socorro County fairs and Magdalena “Old Timers Day” activities.

Prevention efforts will continue to increase in the future. The field office has the potential to participate in a wide variety of fire prevention activities due to the numerous small communities that surround the office. Interagency cooperation with both New Mexico State Forestry Division – Socorro District and Cibola National Forest has increased Socorro BLM visibility in fire prevention activities.

With the emphasis on Wildland Urban Interface areas, the office will be involved in implementing Firewise Councils and partnerships. Funding for community risk assessments has been proposed in 2005 for Horse Mountain, Datil and Pie Town.

b. Special Orders and Closures

The field office manager, or delegated acting, has authority to issue restrictions and closures. Fire restrictions and closures are normally put into place after conferring with other agencies within the Albuquerque and Gila / Las Cruces Zones. Generally, restrictions are instituted during times of high fire danger, high fire occurrence or both, and in time of drawdown of fire personnel due to high fire activity in the region.

c. Fire Training

The field office manager will ensure employees are trained, certified and available to participate in the wildland fire program locally, regionally, and nationally as the situation demands, as described in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations. Employees with operational, administrative, or other skills will support the wildland fire program as necessary and according to their capabilities.

Training and fitness requirements for all personal involved in fire/suppression support can be found in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Management. Anyone that wishes to be issued a red card must attend a firefighter refresher training course and successfully complete the work capacity test prior to May 1st annually.

d. Detection

Detection of fires within the Socorro Field Office is generally dependent upon reports from other agencies' lookouts, field office employees and the public. Patrols after periods of high lightning activity in high fire occurrence areas within the field office are routinely conducted on the ground, with some fire detection flights at dry times of the year. Interagency cooperation through the zones provides aerial detection coverage by coordinating flights for all the agencies. Each agency within the zone contributes to the cost of detection flights.

e. Fire Weather and Fire Danger

The field office has two permanent Remote Automatic Weather Stations (RAWS) that are used for NFDRS; one on Pelona Mountain and one on Chupadera Mesa. The office also has one Portable Micro-RAWS that is used for prescribed fire projects. The Socorro Field Office will be preparing an Operating Plan in 2005.

f. Aviation Management

The Fire Management Officer (FMO) has been designated as the Unit Aviation Officer. All flights involving field office employees need to be coordinated through the FMO. Local vendors are available and are ordered through Gila Zone Dispatch or the FMO.

g. Initial Attack

All fires within the field office will be managed consistently with preplanned dispatch protocols and in conformance with the resource management objectives identified in this plan. Tactics and strategies will be based on current and predicted weather and fire behavior. Firefighter and public safety is always the first priority. Use the following information for determining initial attack priorities.

The highest priority FMU's within the field office for initial attack are ranked as:

- A-1- Socorro Natural Area
- B-1- Datil Well
- B-2- Horse Mountain Interface
- B-3- Pie Town
- A-4- Fort Craig
- A-2- Riley Community
- B-4- Antelope Run
- A-3- Sawtooth ACEC

As fire complexity increases, additional staffing will be requested as appropriate and consistent with incident complexity.

f. Extended Attack

Extended attack overhead positions are available locally and within ABZ /GLZ. The availability of all resources are reported to ABZ /GLZ dispatch daily. These resources can be ordered as needed by the initial attack Incident Commander.

Direction for extended attack operations can be found in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (2004).

B. Wildland Fire Use

There are currently no approved Wildland Fire Use Plans for the Socorro Field Office.

C. Prescribed Fire

The prescribed fire program for the Socorro Field Office has been active over the last decade with the last three years inactive due to drought and a turnover in both the fire management and resource staff. Prescribed fire plans and NEPA documents are currently under review and revision, which may increase the prescribed fire workload for the field office. In the past, the management objectives were to enhance grasslands by reducing woody species that were encroaching into traditional grassland areas, treatment of isolated ponderosa pine stands, and various range and wildlife habitat improvement projects.

Due to the grass-based fuel types a cyclic fire return program was developed and is again being considered for future use. The return varies but most prescribed fire sites should be revisited seven to ten years after the initial treatment to maintain or enhance the desired condition. Fire Regime Condition Class is now giving the program a measurable value in determining further treatments.

Acres treated by prescribed fire:

2001 - 1,435
2002 - 174
2003 - 3,094
2004 - 110

The prescribed burn season starts before green-up in the late winter for burns taking place in the grassland communities such as sacaton grass. Burning can continue into the late spring in the ponderosa pine, and then start again before the monsoon season in early July in the piñon / juniper fuel type. Hand pile burning can also take place during

the monsoon season. Limited under-burning in ponderosa pine can start in the fall before snowfall, with slash pile burning resuming again during the winter months.

The fire management staff initiates most of the prescribed fire projects. Resource specialist input is developed through the weekly Environmental Analysis Team meeting where the core team for the office meets to discuss up-coming projects.

Prioritizations of projects are determined by the following:

- 1) Fuels reduction around a federally listed community at risk from wildfire:

Communities in Catron and Socorro counties listed in the 20 Communities listing.
- 2) Fuels reduction around communities of interest: Magdalena, NM
- 3) FRCC III lands.
- 4) FRCC II lands.
- 5) Maintenance of FRCC I lands.

Collaboration is ongoing with adjoining management agencies such as Cibola National Forest, New Mexico State Forestry Division, Bosque del Apache NWR, Sevilleta NWR, and Gila National Forest.

The office also conducts wildlife enhancement projects with contributed funds from the Sikes Act and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. In 2004 the office received about \$7,000 from the Sikes Act, while the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation contributed \$15,000.

Smoke Management/ Air Quality

Air Quality in the field office is good. There are no Class I airsheds or non-attainment areas within the field office. Permits for burning are obtained from the New Mexico State Environment Department (NMED) well in advance of any burning. A new program has been in place since January 2004 and refinement of the ventilation index has been ongoing this year.

Burning is only allowed when the ventilation index is good or better without a waiver from NMED. Routinely, waivers are requested that allows for burning under fair conditions for Wildland Urban Interface Projects.

Emission reduction techniques are used whenever possible on burn projects. These

techniques include firewood removal, using slash for erosion control, leaving unburned pockets of fuel and burning cured and dry slash.

D. Non-Fire Fuel Applications

Between 3,000 to 11,000 acres of mechanical/chemical fuels treatment projects are planned each year across the field office.

As of 2004, the field office has been unable to contract out any mechanical fuels reduction projects due to a lack of available local contractors. The National Fuels Management IDIQ contract does not have any New Mexico contractors on it, so the field office has been working with the Alamo School Board to develop some local contractors from the Alamo Chapter of the Navajo Tribe.

Since the advent of the National Fire Plan the mechanical fuels reduction workload has increased. The acres treated over the past four years were:

<u>FY</u>	<u>Mechanical</u>	<u>Chemical</u>
2001	22	0
2002	404	9,981
2003	1,194	13,000
2004	620	941

Fuel Treatment Summary RMP 2004 Update

A goal of treating 31,766 acres by prescribed fire and non-fire treatments annually for the field office was developed in the RMP update in 2004. The acreage figure was based on a full funding and staffing scenario. It is expected that this update to the RMP, that specifically covered Fire and Fuels Management, would be in place for 20 years until updated again. In the description of each FMU the acres treated is based on this best case scenario from the RMP update. Since these numbers are based on an annual target for the entire field office, the actual annual acres proposed for each FMU will probably vary from year to year. Once the target burn acres have been met, from either planned or unplanned ignitions, a review of objectives and strategies will be initiated to develop new suppression criteria on all wildland fires.

Proposed Annual Acres Treated by Type – Socorro Field Office

<u>Prescribed Fire</u>	<u>Mechanical</u>	<u>Chemical</u>	<u>Total</u>
20,485 acres	7,757 acres	3,524 acres	31,766 acres

E. Emergency Rehabilitation and Restoration

The field office does not have a Normal Fire Rehabilitation Plan. If emergency rehabilitation or restoration is needed, an interdisciplinary-burned area rehabilitation team will be formed, and plans will be developed at that time. Emergency fire rehabilitation based on FMU requirements would most likely be focused on:

- Slopes of 40% where surface erosion from water is likely.
- Temporary fences should be considered in areas where grazing pressure may inhibit re-establishment of native plants following wildfire.
- Re-seeding of natural vegetation to restore plant communities.
- Road obliteration or restoration.

F. Community Protection/Community Assistance

There are two areas of concern listed in the Federal Register (communities are not specified by name within the Federal Register), Catron County and the Middle Rio Grande Bosque. Within these areas of concern are numerous communities. Catron County through the “20 Communities Initiative”, is coordinating community protection / assistance and treatments and is currently finalizing a county-wide action plan. The Middle Rio Grande Bosque is in the early stages of organization through Socorro County and the Save Our Bosque Task Force. The area around the Village of Magdalena in Socorro County is also listed by the State of New Mexico as “at risk from catastrophic wildfire”.

Following is a list of communities for planned funding through BLM for Community Risk Action Plans:

	Planned Completion
1) Horse Mountain, Catron Co.	FY05
2) Datil, Catron Co.	FY05
3) Pie Town, Catron Co.	FY05

Rural Fire Assistance Program

The field office has an active Rural Fire Assistance program. The Fire Management Officer engages local rural fire chiefs on the benefits of the program and provides assistance on grant preparation. To coordinate the distribution of Rural Fire Assistance Grants, an annual meeting is held with representatives from the New Mexico State Division of Forestry and the National Park Service.

Since 2001, rural fire assistance grants have been awarded to the following fire departments:

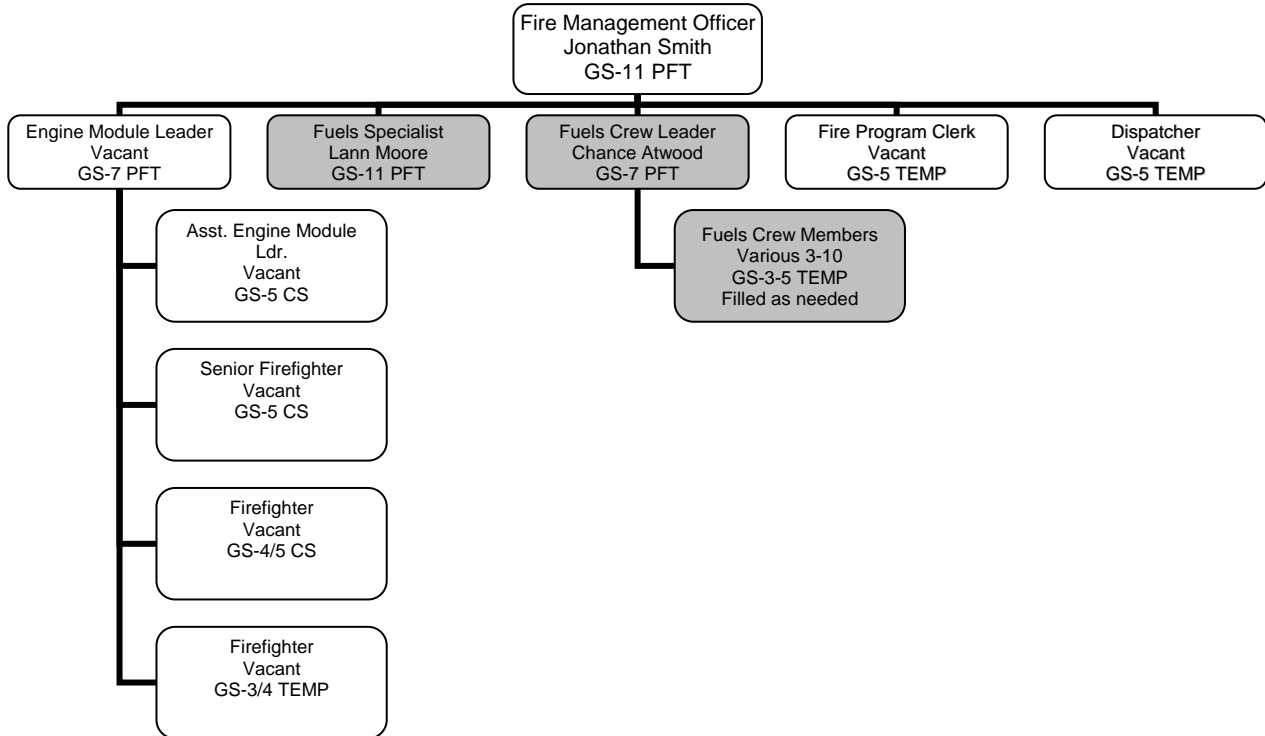
<u>Fire Department Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Datil	2001	\$5,850
Pie Town	2001	\$5,595
Quemado	2001	\$5,850
Coyote Creek	2002	\$17,298
Datil	2002	\$6,000
Horse Mountain	2002	\$19,331
Midway	2002	\$7,219
Pie Town	2002	\$4,320
Quemado	2002	\$7,062
San Antonio	2002	\$3,000
Datil	2003	\$20,000
Midway	2003	\$12,000
San Antonio	2003	\$16,000
Datil	2004	\$8,500
Coyote Creek	2004	\$16,000
Horse Mountain	2004	\$15,500
Hop Canyon	2004	\$12,700
San Antonio	2004	\$18,000
Midway	2004	\$12,500
Cruzville-Apache Creek-Aragon	2004	<u>\$12,600</u>
Total		\$301,725

V. – Budget and Organization

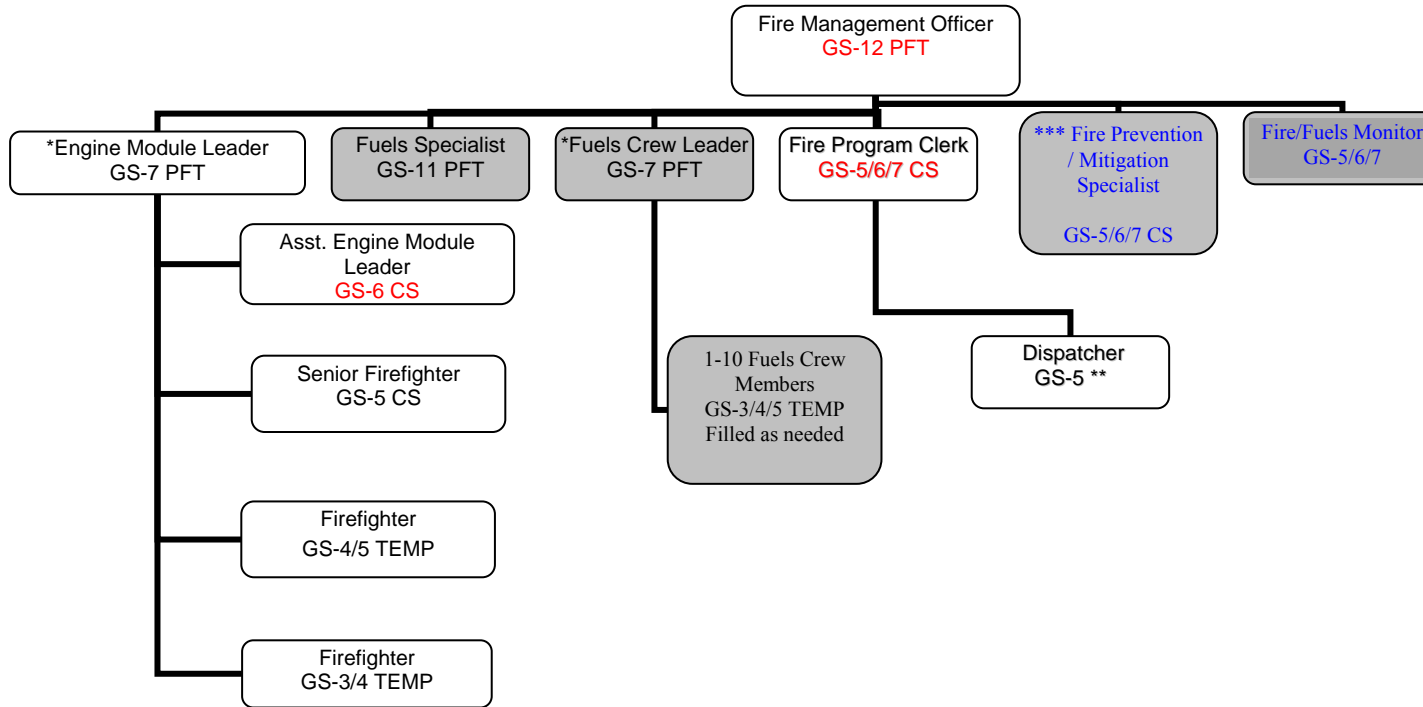
A. Budget and Organization

The tables below are the current organization and the proposed organization required to meet 100 percent of program objectives.

Socorro Field Office Fire / Fuels Organization Chart 2004



Socorro Field Office Fire / Fuels Organization Chart (Proposed)



Blue Text– Proposed new position

Red Text– Change in grade/ series

Gray Box – Funded through fuels

*** Partially funded by other accounts.**

**** Dispatch position funded partially with USFS & USFWS through agreement with dispatch oversight agency.**

***** Mitigation position shared with other BLM fire programs.**

Socorro Fire Management Program Support Costs

Resource	Current Staffing	Desired Staffing	Normal Activation	Sub Activity	Cost
Fire Management Officer	1	1	Yearly	2810	\$77,000
Fuels Specialist	1	1	Yearly	2823/2824	\$68,500
Fuels Monitor	0	1	Mar - Nov	2823/2824	\$33,750
Fuels Module Leader	1	1	Mar-Nov	2823/2824	\$46,000
Fuels Crew	10	10	Apr-Oct	2823/2824	\$120,000
Fire Program Assistant	1	1	Mar-Nov	2810/2823/2824	\$46,000
Dispatcher	1	1	Apr-Oct	2810	\$18,300
Risk/Mitigation/ Education Specialist	0	1	Mar-Oct	2810/2824	\$22,000
Type 6 Engine with 5 includes all cost	5	5	Mar – Oct	2810	\$102,800
Prevention Supplies and Materials				2810	\$5,000
Detection				2810	\$5,000
Albuquerque / Gila Zone Support				2810	\$20,000
Fire cache replacement				2810/2823/2824	\$15,000
Medical Testing				2810	\$5,000
Training / Travel				2810/2823/2824	\$25,000
Vehicles				2810/2823/2824	\$20,000
2810 Total					\$228,100
2823/2824 Total					\$234,500
Common to All					\$106,000
Total					\$568,600
Total Planned					\$624,350
Pro-rate for administrative support					\$39,802 \$43,704

B. Assistance Agreements and Intra/Interagency Agreements

The following agreements / documents pertain to fire management activities for the field office:

State of New Mexico Joint Powers Agreement between the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Forestry Division and the United States Departments of Agriculture, Energy, and Interior for interagency wildland fire protection. This agreement outlines how the federal agencies can work with the NM State Forestry Division when managing wildland fire.

Gila / Las Cruces Zone Joint Powers Operating Plan covers the operations of the Gila / Las Cruces interagency dispatch center and interagency fire management coordination procedures.

The following two documents will also apply to fire management activities for the field office after the proposed zone boundary realignment is finalized:

Albuquerque Zone Operations Plan covers the operations of the Albuquerque Zone dispatch center and initial attack responsibilities for the field office.

Albuquerque Zone Mobilization Guide covers the operational procedures for initial attack and other incident support activities for the field office.

C. Equipment Rental Agreements

The field office uses emergency equipment rental agreements prepared by the US Forest Service. Copies are stored in dispatch, the New Mexico State Office Administrative Services Office located in the field office headquarters in Albuquerque, and in the Socorro Field Office.

VI. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring:

The Socorro Field Office has established a systematic method of evaluating the fire management program to determine effectiveness of the program, assure accountability, assure accomplishment of priorities and to identify shortcomings.

Monitoring and evaluating of the fire program will occur to determine if the program and associated projects are meeting the various resource plans directions and to determine if the costs of implementing the fire program and management effects are occurring as predicted.

Monitoring of the prescribed fire, mechanical and chemical treatments will be carried out by various methods including photo points, on-site weather observations, fixed plots or transects, fire behavior observations or ocular estimates. Longer term monitoring may be conducted by resource area staff.

Monitoring related to wildland fire or fire related projects falls under the general

monitoring and evaluation guidelines outlined in the Resource Management Plan. Site specific monitoring needs are identified in analysis for individual fire related projects.

Evaluation:

Socorro Field Office conducts yearly preparedness reviews for fire suppression and aviation. Every four years the review is conducted by the National Fire Management Office and every two years the review is conducted by the State fire Management Office. Elements of the annual review can be found in the ‘Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations’ guide. Periodic reviews are conducted of the prescribed fire and fuels program.

Wildland fires of a complexity rating of Type III and prescribed fires that are a complexity rating of Type II are reviewed in “after action reviews” conducted with participating firefighters and other staff. Incident commanders of lower complexity incidents are encouraged to use reviews with their crews.

Safety reviews are conducted periodically as tailgate safety sessions and “six-minutes for safety” topics are used as discussion tools daily during fire season and regularly at other times of year.