Interagency Fire Management Plan Template
April 9, 2009

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

Purpose of an FMP *- The fire management planning process and requirements may differ among agencies. However, for the following federal agencies, Forest Service (FS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the National Park Service (NPS), a common purpose of a fire management plan is to provide decision support to aid managers in making informed decisions on the management of wildland fires. The FMP includes a concise summary of information organized by individual fire management unit (FMU) or grouping of FMUs.*

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

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

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

All agencies are required to use Chapters 1, 2, and 3 with the major headings below (in bold). DOI agencies are required to also use Chapters 4 and 5, and may opt to add additional chapters or sections if deemed necessary.

1. Introduction

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

- State the reasons for developing the FMP.
- Provide a general description of location of the area covered by the FMP with vicinity map and agencies involved.
- Briefly describe land ownership, significant resources, mission or direction for the

area and different management designations (e.g. wilderness, timber harvest areas, research natural areas, cultural/religious areas, habitat management areas) for agencies participating in the planning effort.

2. Policy, Land Management Planning and Partnerships

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

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

These may include:
- national interagency and departmental policy (e.g. National Fire Plan, Departmental manuals),
- agency specific policies (e.g. Handbooks, Manuals, Direction, strategic plans)
- unit specific policies (e.g. tribal direction, unit specific CFRs), and
- compliance and authorities (e.g. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA) and any programmatic agreements involved).

2.2 Land/Resource Management Planning (LMP)
Identify documents that relate to the area covered by the FMP including interagency efforts.

Examples include:
- land management plans,
- habitat management plans,
- resource management plans,
- forest management plans,
- comprehensive conservation plans, and
- regional management plans such as the Northwest Forest Plan.

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

Examples include:
- interagency planning teams (e.g. local groups that share boundaries, FPA partners),
- non-federal agencies/departments,
- tribal government, and
- internal interdisciplinary planning teams.

3. Fire Management Unit Characteristics

This chapter is split into two sections. The first section, (Section 3.1), deals with information common to the entire planning area. The second section, (Section 3.2), contains information unique to individual FMUs. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 must be used

together for a complete representation of FMU characteristics and management (see NWCG glossary for the definition of FMU).

The primary purpose of developing FMUs in fire management planning is to assist in organizing information in complex landscapes. The process of creating FMUs divides the landscape into smaller geographic areas to more easily describe physical, biological, and social characteristics, and depict associated planning guidance based on these characteristics. The information contained in these sections may be used for incident decision support (e.g. Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS)), and incident management.

If possible, FMUs should be developed through interagency efforts and interactions consistent with each unit's land management objectives to facilitate cooperative fire management across boundaries.

As an FMP is being written, local planners will determine the amount of detail to be included in the area-wide considerations section (3.1) versus the detailed FMU section (3.2). For example, an area of low complexity may have most or all of the information outlined in the area-wide section (3.1), and little additional information outlined in the individual FMU section (3.2). Conversely, large complex landscapes may have few common characteristics and considerations between FMUs, and may have most information contained in the FMU specific sections.

3.1. Area-wide Management Considerations
The intent of this section is to document overall wildland fire management program guidance and characteristics common to all FMUs. Section 3.2 provides opportunity to discuss FMU specific characteristics.

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

  Examples of these goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and desired conditions are:
  o firefighter and public safety,
  o using fire to restore ecosystem health,
  o response to unplanned ignitions,
  o management actions that will be implemented to ensure cost effectiveness of the fire management program,
  o desired plant community composition and structure, and
  o constraints common to all FMUs (e.g. restrictions on retardant use, preventing spread of invasive species through washing of vehicles).

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

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

<u>3.2 Fire Management Unit - Specific Descriptions</u>
The intent of this section is to describe the unique characteristics of each FMU. The organization within this section is at the discretion of the agency. It should be made clear and noted in this section that information contained in 3.1 is applicable and additive to information contained in 3.2. The purpose of the notice would be to alert the reader/user that the following FMU information may not stand-alone.

FMU characteristics must be described. Examples are:
- physical and biological description of FMU (e.g. topographic features, fuel types, special conditions that may result in extreme fire behavior, access, Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC), high value concerns, special areas),
- jurisdictional boundaries (e.g. adjacent or intermingled federal, private, tribal, state, county ownership),
- communities and other values at risk within and adjacent to FMU, and
- fire behavior and weather descriptions (e.g. Energy Release Component (ERC) tables, past fire behavior and perimeter histories, control problems).

FMU management guidance must be described. Examples are:
- FMU specific objectives (e.g. response objectives, fire intensity levels, fire frequency concerns),
- FMU specific desired conditions (e.g. desired vegetation conditions),
- description of approved wildland fire management strategies, (use of wildland fire to achieve resource benefits and fuels treatments such as prescribed fire, mechanical or other treatments),
- potential size and scope of vegetation treatments to meet both fire and land management goals,
- FMU specific guidelines, constraints, or mitigation considerations (e.g. Minimum Impact Suppression Techniques (MIST), minimum suppression in special areas, retardant or chemical limitations, etc.), and
- Burned area emergency stabilization and rehabilitation considerations if applicable, for example:
  - emergency post-fire hydrological and geological concerns (e.g. potential for flash floods and debris flows),
  - values to be protected such as T&E species, cultural concerns, wilderness, areas of special concern, water quality, invasive species, infrastructure,
  - potential treatments which may include preapproved treatments from programmatic plans (e.g. site stabilization treatments, public warning systems, point protection, seeding, herbicide application),
  - allowable actions or local restrictions.

FMU safety considerations must be described. Examples are:
- gas lines,
- power lines,
- mine shafts,
- aviation hazards,
- restricted access due to hazards, and
- poisonous plants and venomous animals.

Detailed operational information may be contained in this section, or it may be placed in an appendix and referenced here. Examples include:

- permanent repeater locations, recommendations of successful temporary sites,
- radio frequencies,
- radio 'dead spots',
- communication plan,
- evacuation plan,
- water dip sites,
- helispots,
- remote automated weather stations (RAWS), and
- potential fire camp locations.

4. Wildland Fire Operational Guidance

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

The intent of this chapter is to document the procedures used in the area covered by the FMP to implement the wildland fire management program. The following sections and subsections should be addressed in this chapter, or a reference should be cited where this information can be found (e.g. in an appendix).

4.1. Management of Unplanned Ignitions

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

4.1.1 Preparedness

Examples include:

- preparedness (including training, qualifications, readiness, detection and aviation),
- cooperative or mutual aid fire management agreements,
- cost apportionment agreements,
- protection agreements,
- cross-boundary fire agreements,
- size up, initial response and extended response procedures,
- records management,
- Pre-planning and data acquisition for incident decision support processes and tools (e.g. WFDSS), and
- public interaction (e.g. information plans, Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) or equivalent).

4.1.2 Incident Management

Examples include:

- dispatching/obtaining resources (e.g. interagency dispatch centers, interagency teams, MAC groups),
- prioritizing allocation of resources,

- use of decision support tools (e.g. WFDSS, Farsite, Rapid Assessment of Values At Risk (RAVAR), etc.),
- processes for complying with regulatory requirements (e.g. smoke management, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), ESA),
- fire reporting requirements (forms such as 209s, 1202s, and updating systems of record such as Wildland Fire Management Information (WFMI) and Fire Management Information System (FMIS), and
- process for addressing suppression activity damage such as repairing firelines, camp clean up and stabilization, and other related damage needing immediate repair that are a direct result of fire management operations.

4.1.3 Emergency Stabilization

Immediate post wildfire actions needed to minimize the threat to life and health and prevent unacceptable degradation to natural and cultural resources (see Interagency Burned Area Emergency Response Guidebook).

Examples include:
- Planning and burned area assessments (anticipated data and technical specialists needed),
- Anticipated post-wildfire issues and values to be protected,
- Treatment maintenance and monitoring, and
- Reporting requirements (accomplishment reports and National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS)).

4.2 Burned Area Rehabilitation

Describe or reference applicable post-wildfire burned area rehabilitation (BAR) actions to repair or improve wildfire damaged lands unlikely to recover naturally or minor facilities damaged by the fire. Use the Departmental Manual (620 DM 3) and agency-specific direction for guidance. Also see Interagency Burned Area Rehabilitation Guidebook. Note that specific approved BAR treatments (i.e. three year plan) and constraints and recommendations are contained within either the area-wide (Section 3.1) or specific (Section 3.2) FMU descriptions.

Examples include:
- BAR planning requirements (e.g. technical specialists needed, timelines, data needs, etc),
- process and thresholds for determining ES and BAR teams,
- regional coordinator contact information,
- local resource specialist positions that may assist the teams,
- anticipated post-wildfire rehabilitation issues,
- standardized monitoring protocols,
- requirements for planning,
- funding processes,
- reporting requirements (accomplishment reports and NFPORS),
- Native American consultation,
- Endangered Species Act Consultation,
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and
- Public information and public concerns.

4.3. Management of Planned Fuels Treatments

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

Examples include:
- processes to identify and prioritize fuels treatments (e.g. consultations with communities, use CWPPs, interdisciplinary teams, risk assessments and mitigation plans),
- procedures for implementing prescribed fire (e.g. requirements for development of burn plan, responsibilities for preparing and approving prescribed fires, requirements for safety, qualifications, interagency prescribed fire guidance),
- procedures for planning, preparing and implementing non-fire treatments
- process for complying with regulatory requirements (e.g. NEPA, smoke, SHPO, ESA) ,
- treatment effects monitoring description,
- reporting requirements (NFPORS) and agency specific systems,
- fuels committees or local coordinating or special interest groups,
- funding processes.

4.4. Prevention, Mitigation and Education

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

Examples include:
- human caused ignition patterns and problems,
- fire investigation policies and procedures,
- closures/restricted access process,
- burn permit systems,
- law enforcement operating procedures and agreements,
- community involvement,
- Firewise,
- annual meetings with public, other agencies and local fire districts,
- education programs,
- community grant programs and assistance,
- CWPPs,
- memorandum of understanding (MOU),
- funding processes, and
- reporting requirements.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

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

The intent of this chapter is to document processes for determining whether the FMP is being implemented as planned and fire-related goals and objectives are being achieved.

Information obtained from monitoring and evaluations is used to update the FMP and land management plans.

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

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

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

References Cited (as appropriate)

Appendices – Optional