



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fire Management Branch

Keeping Fire on Our Side

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages fire in order to conserve, protect and enhance habitat for fish, wildlife and plants on more than 550 national wildlife refuges, 70 national fish hatcheries and thousands of small wetlands and wildlife management areas. The Fire Management Branch is responsible for overall staff direction for the Service's fire management program, which is integral to ensuring the safety and health of human and biological communities.

The Branch, organizationally within the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), oversees:

- Policy development
- Budget development
- Operations & Standards development
- Interagency coordination
- Fire Management Planning
- Training development
- Preparedness
- Fuels Management
- Wildfire Suppression
- Wildland Fire Use
- Emergency Rehabilitation
- Fire Outreach and Education
- Program oversight/reviews



The Jack F. Wilson Building at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho.

Every national wildlife refuge with burnable acres has a detailed fire management plan that is part of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) process. These fire plans, especially as they incorporate guidance from the National Fire Plan and other Departmental direction, are increasingly important because of the continuing expansion of the wildland-urban interface.

The Service's traditional and ongoing use of fire since the 1930's to maintain refuge lands has led to a majority of its lands currently at low risk of sustaining loss of ecosystem components if a wildfire were to strike. Maintenance burning must continue at regular intervals to ensure these conditions remain safe.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages lands in every state and U.S. territory, and fire staff is located throughout the country. The Service's fire staff coordinates its activities with other federal, state and local agencies, and often provides wildland fire training to them.

The Service's Fire Management Branch is headquartered at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho, is a complex of agencies which also have wildland fire management responsibilities.

The Bureau of Land Management serves as the host agency at NIFC to the three other interior agencies: Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

The Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is also a resident at NIFC, along with representatives from the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA); and the National Weather Service (NWS) under the Department of Commerce.

These organizations at NIFC work together as an interagency partnership, coordinating on wildland fire management activities.

The Service is also an equal partner in the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) that determines standards for training, qualifications, and firefighting practices. The NWCG Executive Committee also includes the national fire directors and staff from the BIA, BLM, NASF, NPS, USFA, and USFS.

The Branch also serves as the contact for the Department of the Interior's Office of Wildland Fire in Washington, D.C.

For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fire program, please visit www.fws.gov/fire