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## Chapter 09 Fire Management Planning

### Policy and Implementation

Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved Fire Management Plan (FMP). FMPs are strategic plans that define a program to manage planned and unplanned ignitions based on the areas approved Land or Resource Management Plan (L/RMP). FMPs must provide for firefighter and public safety; include fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives; address values to be protected and public health issues; and be consistent with resource management objectives, activities of the area, and environmental laws and regulations.

For complete historical interagency policy and implementation guidance, see [http://www.nwcg.gov/branches/ppm/fpc/archives/fire\\_policy/index.htm](http://www.nwcg.gov/branches/ppm/fpc/archives/fire_policy/index.htm)  
<http://www.nifc.gov/policies.htm>

### Purpose

The fire management planning process and requirements may differ among agencies. However, for all agencies, the FMP contains strategic and operational elements that describe how to manage applicable fire program components such as: response to unplanned ignitions, hazardous fuels and vegetation management, burned area emergency stabilization and rehabilitation, prevention, community interactions and collaborative partnerships roles, and monitoring and evaluation programs.

The FMP includes a concise summary of information organized by fire management unit (FMU) or units. Each FMP should be updated as new information becomes available, as conditions on the ground necessitate updates, or when changes are made to the L/RMP.

For an example of FMP templates, see:

- **DOI-** <http://www.nwcg.gov/branches/ppm/ifpc/library.htm>
- **FS-** <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/fire/fmp/>

### Wildland Fire Management Objectives

A wildland fire may be concurrently managed for one or more objectives as specified in the L/RMP and FMP. Objectives can change as the fire spreads across the landscape and are affected by changes in fuels, weather, topography; varying social understanding and tolerance; and involvement of other governmental jurisdictions having different missions and objectives.

**1 Concepts and Definitions**

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3 For further clarification of concepts and definitions that follow, refer to  
4 *Terminology Updates Resulting from Release of the Guidance for the*  
5 *Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2009), April 30,*  
6 *2010 (NWCG #024-2010), and the *Guidance for Implementation of Federal**  
7 *Wildland Fire Management Policy, February 13, 2009.*

8

**9 Land/Resource Management Plan**

10 A document prepared with public participation and approved by the agency  
11 administrator that provides general guidance and direction for land and resource  
12 management activities for an administrative area. The L/RMP identifies fire's  
13 role in a particular area and for a specific benefit. The objectives in the L/RMP  
14 provide the basis for the development of fire management objectives and the fire  
15 management program in the designated area.

16

**17 Fire Management Plan**

18 A Fire Management Plan (FMP) identifies and integrates all wildland fire  
19 management (both planned and unplanned ignitions) and associated activities  
20 within the context of the approved L/RMP. The FMP is supplemented by  
21 operations plans, including but not limited to preparedness plans, preplanned  
22 dispatch plans, fuels treatment plans, and prevention plans. FMPs assure that  
23 wildland fire management goals and objectives are coordinated.

24

**25 Fire Management Unit**

26 The primary purpose of developing Fire Management Units (FMUs) in fire  
27 management planning is to assist in organizing information in complex  
28 landscapes. The process of creating FMUs divides the landscape into smaller  
29 geographic areas to more easily describe physical/biological/social  
30 characteristics and frame associated planning guidance based on these  
31 characteristics. FMUs should be developed through interagency efforts and  
32 interactions to facilitate common fire management across boundaries.

33

34 An FMU can be any land management area definable by objectives that set it  
35 apart from the management characteristics of an adjacent FMU (e.g.  
36 management constraints, topographic features, access, values to be protected,  
37 political boundaries, fuel types, and major fire regime groups). The FMU may  
38 have dominant management objectives and pre-selected strategies assigned to  
39 accomplish these objectives.

40

**41 Wildland Fire**

42 Wildland fire is a general term describing any non-structure fire that occurs in  
43 vegetation and/or natural fuels including both prescribed fire and wildfire.

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**1 Fire Type**

2 Wildland fires are categorized into two distinct types:

- 3 • Wildfires- Unplanned ignitions or prescribed fires that are declared
- 4 wildfires.
- 5 • Prescribed fires- Planned ignition.

**7 Response to Wildland Fire**

8 Responses to wildland fire will be coordinated with all affected  
9 agencies/cooperators regardless of the jurisdiction at the ignition point. Fire, as  
10 a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management  
11 plans and activities on a landscape scale, and across agency boundaries.

12  
13 Management response to a wildland fire on federal land is based on objectives  
14 established in the applicable L/RMP and FMP. A wildfire may be concurrently  
15 managed for more than one objective. Unplanned natural ignitions may be  
16 managed to achieve L/RMP and FMP objectives when risk is within acceptable  
17 limits.

- 18 • *FS- All wildfires will have a protection objective.*

19  
20 Initial response to human-caused wildfires will be to suppress the fire at the  
21 lowest cost with the fewest negative consequences with respect to firefighter and  
22 public safety.

- 23 • *FS- Human caused fires and trespass fires must be suppressed safely and*  
24 *cost effectively and must not be managed for resource benefits.*
- 25 • *BLM- All known human caused fires, except escaped prescribed fires, will*  
26 *be suppressed in every instance and will not be managed for resource*  
27 *benefits.*

28  
29 Response to wildland fire is based on ecological, social, and legal consequences  
30 of the fire. The appropriate response to the fire is dictated by:

- 31 • The circumstances under which a fire occurs
- 32 • The likely consequences to firefighter/public safety and welfare
- 33 • The natural/cultural resource values to be protected

**35 Initial Response**

36 Initial response is the immediate decisions and actions taken to react to an  
37 ignition. These decisions and actions may include a management or initial  
38 decision to postpone taking action on the ground based on conditions, safety,  
39 and/or competing priorities.

**41 Initial Attack**

42 This type of initial response is an aggressive action to put the fire out consistent  
43 with firefighter and public safety and values to be protected.

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**1 Extended Attack**

2 Suppression activity for a wildfire that has not been contained or controlled by  
3 initial attack or contingency forces and for which more firefighting resources are  
4 arriving, en route, or being ordered by the initial attack incident commander.  
5 See *NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire Terminology, November 2008*.

6

**7 Wildfire Suppression**

8 Management action to extinguish a fire or confine fire spread.