




**United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER
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March 27, 2009

Memorandum

To: All Regional Directors, All Regions
Attention: Forestry/Fire Management

From: Acting Director, Branch of Wildland Fire Management 

Subject: Updated Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy

Last year the Wildland Fire Leadership Council agreed to key changes in the way we implement federal wildland fire policy. To facilitate those changes, the Fire Executive Council (FEC) has approved the attached *Guidance for Implementation of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* to ensure consistent implementation of *Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy – 2001* (1995/2001 Federal Fire Policy). An advanced copy of this memorandum and the guidance document has been sent to the Regional Fire Management Officers via email.

The following elements remain unchanged in the 2009 revision and will continue to guide our implementation of federal wildland fire policy:

- The *1995/2001 Federal Fire Policy* is affirmed to be sound and the Guiding Principles and Policy Statements provide clear direction for the Federal wildland fire management program.
- Any management response to a wildland fire on federal land will continue to be based on objectives established in the applicable Land/ Resource and/or Fire Management Plan and the response defined in existing plans may be followed until they are reviewed, amended or updated to reflect revised guidance.
- There is no change in the objective for initial attack actions on human-caused wildfire – we will continue to suppress these fires to minimize negative consequences with respect to firefighter and public safety.

In the revised guidance document you will encounter the following changes:

- Terminology has changed - Wildland fire is a term describing any non-structure fire that occurs in the wildland. Wildland fires are categorized into two distinct types:
 - Wildfires – Unplanned ignitions and planned ignitions that are declared wildfires. The wildfire term is to be applied to all unplanned ignitions, including events formally termed wildland fire use.
 - Prescribed fires – Planned ignitions

- A wildland fire may be concurrently managed for one or more objectives and those objectives can change as the fire spreads across the landscape, encountering new fuels, weather, social conditions, and governmental jurisdictions.

In addition, the revised guidance reaffirms the need to work collaboratively with state, local and tribal fire managers as well as public and nongovernmental organizations in the management of wildland fire. It also emphasizes the need to conduct fire management planning which is intergovernmental in scope and at landscape scale, and help prepare for the eventuality of wildland fire crossing jurisdictional boundaries.

The federal wildland fire agencies are working together to develop unified direction and guidance for agency/bureau manuals, directives, handbooks, guidebooks, plans, agreements and other pertinent documents to complete final implementation of this guidance. We are revising and developing accountability standards, performance measures, and monitoring systems to assess if resource and protection objectives are met during the management of wildland fires. We recognize this will not happen overnight and realistically look for this to be a 3-5 year process. We will be working with you and your staff to make this transition successful.

For further information, please contact Dennis Dupuis at 208.387.5041, Dalan Romero at 208.387.5372 or Mary Taber at 208.387.5042.

Attachment