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## Chapter 09 Fire Management Planning

### Policy and Implementation

Fire, as a critical natural process will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale and across agency boundaries. Fire Management planning will reflect interagency and intergovernmental considerations. Individual federal agencies may develop distinctive but compatible planning products that result from their agency planning process.

Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved Fire Management Plan (FMP). FMPs are strategic plans that define a program to manage fuels as well as 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 and tactics; 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 agency-specific fire planning 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)

- *FS* - new guidance is anticipated for release in FY 2014 that replaces the FMP and meets the intent of the Interagency Fire Management Policy.

### Purpose

The fire management planning process and requirements may differ among agencies. However, for all agencies, resulting planning products contain 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.

Fire planning products include a concise summary of information organized by fire management unit (FMU) or by other geospatially explicit representations of the landscape. These products 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/>

**1 Concepts and Definitions**

2

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 guidance and direction for land and resource  
12 management activities for an administrative area. The L/RMP may identify  
13 fire's role in a particular area and for a specific benefit, or may contain general  
14 statements regarding the role of fire across the land management unit. Guidance  
15 contained in the L/RMP provides the basis for the development of strategic fire  
16 management objectives and the fire management program in the designated  
17 area.

18

**19 Fire Management Plan**

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

26

**27 Fire Management Unit**

28 The purpose of Fire Management Units (FMUs) in planning is to assist in  
29 organizing information in complex landscapes. The process of creating FMUs  
30 divides the landscape into smaller geographic areas to more easily describe  
31 physical/biological/social characteristics and frame associated planning  
32 guidance based on these characteristics.

33

34 A FMU can be any land management area definable by one or more objectives  
35 that set it 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.

44

45

46

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.

6  
7 **Wildfire Management Objectives**

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

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

14  
15 **Response to Wildfire**

16 Response to wildfire will be coordinated with all affected agencies/cooperators  
17 regardless of the jurisdiction at the ignition point.

18  
19 Management response to a wildfire on federal land is based on objectives  
20 established in the applicable L/RMP and FMP. A wildfire may be concurrently  
21 managed for more than one objective. Unplanned natural ignitions may be  
22 managed to achieve L/RMP and FMP objectives when risk is within acceptable  
23 limits.

- 24 • **FS-** *Human caused fires and trespass fires must be suppressed safely and  
25 cost effectively and must not be managed for resource benefits.*  
26 • **BLM-** *All known human caused fires, except escaped prescribed fires, will  
27 be suppressed in every instance and will not be managed for resource  
28 benefits.*  
29 • **FWS-** *All escaped prescribed fires will be suppressed. When reporting in  
30 FMIS, the cause of the wildfire will be "Escaped RX" and the narrative will  
31 document the link between the prescribed fire and the wildfire.*  
32 • **NPS-** *Refer to RM-18, Chapter 2 for further guidance.*

33  
34 Response to wildfire is based on ecological, social, and legal consequences of  
35 the fire. The appropriate response to the fire is dictated by:

- 36 • The circumstances under which a fire occurs;  
37 • The likely consequences to firefighter/public safety and welfare; and  
38 • The natural/cultural resource values to be protected.

39  
40 **Initial Response**

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

45

1 • **Initial Attack**

2 This type of initial response is an aggressive action to an unwanted fire  
3 consistent with firefighter and public safety and values to be protected.

4

5 **Extended Attack**

6 Suppression activity for a wildfire that has not been contained or controlled by  
7 initial attack or contingency forces and for which more firefighting resources are  
8 arriving, en route, or being ordered by the initial attack Incident Commander.

9 See *NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire Terminology*.

10

11 **Wildfire Suppression**

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

13

14 **DOI Reporting of Wildfire Acres That Meet Resource Management**  
15 **Objectives**

16

17 Acres burned in a wildfire that achieve resource management objectives as  
18 defined in Resource/Fire Management Plans (R/FMP) will be reported in the  
19 NFPORS Non-National Fire Plan (Non-NFP) portal. While strategies for  
20 managing individual wildfires are established through the fire management  
21 decision process, the identification of acres which achieved R/FMP objectives  
22 should be made after the fire is declared out, regardless of the fire management  
23 objective, strategy or tactic used. The determination of benefit must be based on  
24 land management objectives which are affected by fire severity, intensity, and  
25 other fire impacts. Post-fire impact, such as invasion of exotic species and the  
26 need for rehabilitation, should be considered in this determination. At a  
27 minimum, acres reported in the Non-NFP module must meet the following  
28 criteria:

- 29 • the R/FMP supports attainment of resource benefit through use of fire,
- 30 • an interdisciplinary approach is used to determine whether the R/FMP  
31 objectives were met, and
- 32 • line manager approves the determination.

33

34 For reporting policy regarding planned hazardous fuels reduction treatments  
35 burned in a wildfire, refer to Chapter 17 of this document.

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37 **FS Reporting of Wildfire Acres That Meet Resource Objectives**

38 The USFS provides direction for reporting accomplishment from unplanned  
39 ignitions in the annual budget advice and by Washington Office interim  
40 direction letters.

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