Chapter 17
Fuels Management

Introduction

The purpose of the Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFR) programs within the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Forest Service (FS) is to reduce hazardous fuels (HF) and risks to human communities and improve the health of the land by creating fire-resilient landscapes and restoring fire-adapted ecosystems.

The DOI and FS, along with other federal, state, tribal, and local partners, will work to ensure effective HFR treatment efforts are collectively planned and implemented. These efforts will be consistent with the direction provided in:


Policy

The federal fire agencies use the Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide (NWCG PMS 484) to manage prescribed fire activities. This guide provides standardized procedures specifically associated with the planning and implementation of prescribed fire.

Policy, project planning and implementation priorities, and standards common to all agencies:

- The safety of firefighters and the public is the number one priority when planning and implementing HFR treatment projects;
- All HFR treatment projects will support resource management objectives as identified in their agency specific Land/Resource Management Plans;
- All HFR treatment projects will have plans that contain measurable objectives;
- All HFR treatment projects will comply with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and all other regulatory requirements;
- All HFR management projects will be tracked and progress will be reported within required timeframes; and
- All HFR projects will be monitored to determine if treatment objectives were met and to document weather, fire behavior, fuels information, and smoke dispersion. Evaluation reports are to be completed and maintained in the project file.

Some programmatic differences are identified in the following agency specific documentation and serve as agency specific direction.
• BLM - Refer to IM No. FA IM 2015-003
• FWS - Refer to Fire Management Handbook, Chapter 17
• NPS - Refer to RM 18
• FS - Refer to FSM 5140

Reporting HFR Accomplishment

The HF module of the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) is the national system for submitting proposed projects for approval, tracking accomplishments of the program, reporting performance, measuring accomplishments, and accountability for all agencies in the Department of Interior.

Department of Agriculture hazardous fuels treatment accomplishments for the Forest Service are entered into the Forest Service Activity Tracking System (FACTS) as the official system of record for tracking and reporting. This data is shared with NFPORS to facilitate interagency joint reporting needs.

Information on FACTS can be found at: http://fsweb.fctol.wo.fs.fed.us/frs/facts/index.shtml. Acres treated through Forest Service funded State Fire Assistance grants are recorded directly in NFPORS.

Reporting Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring (FTEM)

Anytime a wildfire starts in or interacts with a fuel treatment area, interagency policy requires that we document the outcome to examine whether the treatment had the desired effect of reduced fire behavior and/or provided opportunities to firefighters for effective management of the wildfire.
• BLM - Refer to (IM No. OF&A 2013-027) for FTEM guidance
• FWS - Refer to Fire Management Handbook, Chapter 17
• NPS - Refer to RM 18 and Documenting Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program Treatment Effectiveness Memo, 10/09/2012
• FS - Refer to FSM 5140

Policy Regarding Planned HF Treatments Burned in a Wildfire

For DOI agencies, acres burned in a wildfire may only be reported in the NFPORS HFR Module as “Fire Use” if all the following conditions are met:
• The area burned was in a pre-existing NFPORS treatment unit;
• NEPA is complete;
• The planned objectives were met; and
• The accomplishment is approved by a Regional Fuels Specialist.
• BLM- Offices will complete a fuels treatment effectiveness assessment and input appropriate information into the Fuels Treatment Effectiveness
Monitoring (FTEM) online tool for all wildfires which start in, burn into, or burn through any portion of a fuel treatment area that has been completed and reported in the Hazardous Fuels Module of the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) from fiscal year 2003 to present. If offices have wildfire/treatment intersections that have occurred prior to 2003 or are not in NFPORS, as long as offices can document that fuels dollars were expended on these treatments and the wildfire is recorded in the Wildland Fire Management Information (WFMI) system, the record should be entered into FTEM. It is important that treatment data entered into FTEM are consistent with the NFPORS, and that wildfire information is consistent with the WFMI system. Refer to FA IM-2015-001.

- **FS-** Direction for reporting accomplishments from unplanned ignitions is found in the annual program direction issued by the Washington Office and the corresponding business rules for reporting accomplishments including those from unplanned ignitions can be found in the FACTS support page at: http://fsweb.ficolo.fs.fed.us/frs/facts/support/documents/index.shtml.

### DOI Reporting of Wildfire Acres That Meet Resource Management Objectives

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

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

### Prescribed Fire During Preparedness Levels 4 and 5

Approval is required for implementation of prescribed fires at national preparedness Levels 4 and 5 (Refer to the National Mobilization Guide).

- **FWS-** National Preparedness Level 5 concurrence from Headquarters, Branch of Fire Management must be obtained utilizing Preparedness Level 5 Prescribed Fire Concurrence Form.
Federal Agencies Assistance


Agencies will enter into separate agreements for personnel and other resources provided for planning and implementation of (hazardous fuels management program) treatments and activities. This may or may not result in an exchange of funds subject to the applicable statutory authority used.

- **FS-** USFS units will make every attempt to establish agreements in advance when planning to utilize resources from cooperating agencies to implement or respond as contingency resources for prescribed fire. However, for prescribed fire activities and exigent circumstances, where an agreement was not executed and funds were not obligated prior to commencing work, a ratification may not be necessary if an approved agreement is executed and funds obligated on I-web within 30 calendar days of the start of work. See FSH 1509.11 Chapter 10, Section 15.81.

Hazard Pay/Environmental Differential for Prescribed Fire Implementation

Current policy is that hazard pay will not be paid for any prescribed fire. Under certain circumstances, (i.e. low level flight operations), hazard pay or environmental differential may be warranted. Offices should contact their servicing personnel office with specific questions.

Non-NWCG Agency Personnel Use on Prescribed Fire

For information regarding use of non-NWCG agency personnel on prescribed fires, see Chapter 13.

Use of Contractors for Prescribed Fire Implementation

Agencies can contract to conduct all or part of the planning and implementation of prescribed fire operations and/or all or part of mechanical treatments for HFR projects.

If a contractor is actively involved in igniting, holding, or mopping up an agency prescribed fire, a Contracting Officer’s Authorized Representative (COR) or Project Inspector (PI) will be on site (exceptions can be made for late stage mop up and patrol) to ensure that the prescribed fire objectives are being met and that the terms of the contract are adhered to. The Agency Administrator and/or FMO
will determine the qualifications required for the agency representative (COR or PI).

- *FS*- Contractors must meet requirements for any specific skill positions for prescribed fire operations as described in NWCG PMS 310-1 or FSH 5109.17 for positions not found in the PMS 310-1 (e.g. RXB3). Reference FSN 5140.

**Use of AD Pay Plan for Prescribed Fire**

Refer to the DOI Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (Casuals) for information regarding the use of emergency workers for prescribed fire. The DOI AD Pay Plan does not allow for use of Casuals for mechanical or chemical reduction projects.

Forest Service does not have this authority.

**Activation of Contingency Resources**

In the event contingency resources are activated, sending units should respond and support the requesting agency immediately.

**Non-Prescribed Fire HFR Activities**

For policy, guidance, and standards for implementation of non-prescribed fire hazard fuel reduction treatments (e.g. mechanical, biological, chemical), refer to agency specific policy and direction.