

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:

- *Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (January 2001)*
- *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (February 13, 2009)*

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.

- 1 • *BLM - Refer to IM No. FA IM 2015-003*
- 2 • *FWS - Refer to Fire Management Handbook, Chapter 17*
- 3 • *NPS - Refer to RM 18*
- 4 • *FS - Refer to FSM 5140*

6 **Reporting HFR Accomplishment**

7
8 The HF module of the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System
9 (NFPORS) is the national system for submitting proposed projects for approval,
10 tracking accomplishments of the program, reporting performance, measuring
11 accomplishments, and accountability for all agencies in the Department of
12 Interior.

13
14 Department of Agriculture hazardous fuels treatment accomplishments for the
15 Forest Service are entered into the Forest Service Activity Tracking System
16 (FACTS) as the official system of record for tracking and reporting. This data is
17 shared with NFPORS to facilitate interagency joint reporting needs.

18
19 Information on FACTS can be found at:
20 <http://fswb.ftcol.wo.fs.fed.us/frs/facts/index.shtml>. Acres treated through Forest
21 Service funded State Fire Assistance grants are recorded directly in NFPORS.

23 **Reporting Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring (FTEM)**

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25 Anytime a wildfire starts in or interacts with a fuel treatment area, interagency
26 policy requires that we document the outcome to examine whether the treatment
27 had the desired effect of reduced fire behavior and/or provided opportunities to
28 firefighters for effective management of the wildfire.

- 29 • *BLM - Refer to (IM No. OF&A 2013-027) for FTEM guidance*
- 30 • *FWS - Refer to Fire Management Handbook, Chapter 17*
- 31 • *NPS - Refer to RM 18 and Documenting Hazardous Fuels Reduction*
32 *Program Treatment Effectiveness Memo, 10/09/2012*
- 33 • *FS - Refer to FSM 5140*

35 **Policy Regarding Planned HF Treatments Burned in a Wildfire**

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37 For DOI agencies, acres burned in a wildfire may only be reported in the
38 NFPORS HFR Module as "Fire Use" if all the following conditions are met:

- 39 • The area burned was in a pre-existing NFPORS treatment unit;
 - 40 • NEPA is complete;
 - 41 • The planned objectives were met; and
 - 42 • The accomplishment is approved by a Regional Fuels Specialist.
- 43
44 • *BLM- Offices will complete a fuels treatment effectiveness assessment and*
45 *input appropriate information into the Fuels Treatment Effectiveness*

1 *Monitoring (FTEM) online tool for all wildfires which start in, burn into, or*
2 *burn through any portion of a fuel treatment area that has been completed*
3 *and reported in the Hazardous Fuels Module of the National Fire Plan*
4 *Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) from fiscal year 2003 to*
5 *present. If offices have wildfire/treatment intersections that have occurred*
6 *prior to 2003 or are not in NFPORS, as long as offices can document that*
7 *fuels dollars were expended on these treatments and the wildfire is recorded*
8 *in the Wildland Fire Management Information (WFMI) system, the record*
9 *should be entered into FTEM. It is important that treatment data entered*
10 *into FTEM are consistent with the NFPORS, and that wildfire information*
11 *is consistent with the WFMI system. Refer to FA IM-2015-001.*

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

18 **DOI Reporting of Wildfire Acres That Meet Resource Management** 19 **Objectives**

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

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

38 **Prescribed Fire During Preparedness Levels 4 and 5**

39
40 Approval is required for implementation of prescribed fires at national
41 preparedness Levels 4 and 5 (Refer to the *National Mobilization Guide*).

- 42 • ***FWS-** National Preparedness Level 5 concurrence from Headquarters,*
43 *Branch of Fire Management must be obtained utilizing Preparedness Level*
44 *5 Prescribed Fire Concurrence Form.*

1 Federal Agencies Assistance

2

3 Reference Section VI of the *Interagency Agreement For Wildland Fire*
4 *Management among the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs,*
5 *National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States*
6 *Department Of The Interior, and the Forest Service of the United States*
7 *Department Of Agriculture, effective 2011-2015.*

8

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

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

21

22 Hazard Pay/Environmental Differential for Prescribed Fire
23 Implementation

24

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

29

30 Non-NWCG Agency Personnel Use on Prescribed Fire

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

34

35 Use of Contractors for Prescribed Fire Implementation

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

40

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

1 will determine the qualifications required for the agency representative (COR or
2 PI).

- 3 • *FS- Contractors must meet requirements for any specific skill positions for*
4 *prescribed fire operations as described in NWCG PMS 310-1 or FSH*
5 *5109.17 for positions not found in the PMS 310-1 (e.g. RXB3). Reference*
6 *FSN 5140.*

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

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

14
15 Forest Service does not have this authority.

17 **Activation of Contingency Resources**

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

22 **Non-Prescribed Fire HFR Activities**

23
24 For policy, guidance, and standards for implementation of non-prescribed fire
25 hazard fuel reduction treatments (e.g. mechanical, biological, chemical), refer to
26 agency specific policy and direction.