

## Chapter 17 Fuels Management

### Introduction

The purpose of the Fuels Management (FM) programs within the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Forest Service (FS) is to reduce hazardous fuels 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 FM 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 (PMS 484)* to manage prescribed fire activities. This guide provides standardized procedures specifically associated with the planning and implementation of prescribed fire.

Fuels Management – 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 projects/treatments;
- All projects/treatments will support resource management objectives as identified in their agency-specific Land/Resource Management Plans;
- All projects/treatments will have plans that contain measurable objectives;
- All projects/treatments will comply with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and all other regulatory requirements;
- All projects/treatments will be tracked and progress will be reported within required timeframes; and
- All 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 *FA IM 2015-003*.
- **NPS** – Refer to *RM 18*.

- 1 • *FWS* – Refer to *Fire Management Handbook, Chapter 17*.
- 2 • *FS* – Refer to *FSM 5140*

### 3 **Reporting Fuels Management Accomplishments**

4 The Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFR) Module of the National Fire Plan  
5 Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) is the national system for  
6 submitting proposed projects for approval, tracking accomplishments of the  
7 program, reporting performance, measuring accomplishments, and  
8 accountability for all agencies in the Department of Interior.

9 Forest Service fuels management accomplishments are entered into the Forest  
10 Service Activity Tracking System (FACTS) as the official system of record for  
11 tracking and reporting. This data is shared with NFPORS to facilitate  
12 interagency joint reporting needs.

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

### 16 **Reporting Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring (FTEM)**

17 Anytime a wildfire starts in or interacts with a fuel treatment area, policy for all  
18 agencies requires that we document the outcome to examine whether the  
19 treatment had the desired effect of reduced fire behavior and/or provided  
20 opportunities to firefighters for effective management of the wildfire.

- 21 • *BLM* – *Offices will complete a fuels treatment effectiveness assessment and*  
22 *input appropriate information into the Fuels Treatment Effectiveness*  
23 *Monitoring (FTEM) online tool for all wildfires which start in, burn into, or*  
24 *burn through any portion of a fuel treatment area that has been completed*  
25 *and reported in the Hazardous Fuels Module of the National Fire Plan*  
26 *Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) from fiscal year 2003 to*  
27 *present. If offices have wildfire/treatment intersections that have occurred*  
28 *prior to 2003 or are not in NFPORS, as long as offices can document that*  
29 *fuels dollars were expended on these treatments and the wildfire is recorded*  
30 *in the Wildland Fire Management Information (WFMI) system, the record*  
31 *should be entered into FTEM. It is important that treatment data entered*  
32 *into FTEM are consistent with the NFPORS, and that wildfire information*  
33 *is consistent with the WFMI system. Refer to FA IM-2015-001.*
- 34 • *NPS* – Refer to *RM 18 and Documenting Hazardous Fuels Reduction*  
35 *Program Treatment Effectiveness Memo, 10/09/2012.*
- 36 • *FWS* – Refer to *Fire Management Handbook, Chapter 17*.
- 37 • *FS* – Refer to *FSM 5140*.

**1 Regarding Planned Fuels Treatments Burned in a Wildfire**

2 For DOI agencies, acres burned in a wildfire may only be reported in the  
3 NFPORS Hazardous Fuels Reduction Module as “Fire Use” if all the following  
4 conditions are met:

- 5 • The area burned was in a pre-existing NFPORS treatment unit;
- 6 • The accomplishment has been approved from the Regional and/or National  
7 level;
- 8 • NEPA is complete; and
- 9 • The planned objectives were met.
  - 10 ○ *FS* – Acres burned from an unplanned natural ignition may be  
11 reported as “Fire Use” accomplishment if the resulting fire effects  
12 meet objectives from the Land and Resource Management Plan or  
13 project-specific NEPA decision document. Human-caused wildfires  
14 may not be counted as accomplishment toward target regardless of the  
15 outcome. See *Reporting of Wildfire Acres That Meet Resource  
16 Management Objectives* section below for additional information.

**17 Reporting of Wildfire Acres That Meet Resource Management Objectives**

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

- 32 • The LRMP/FMP supports attainment of resource benefit through use of  
33 fire;
- 34 • An interdisciplinary approach is used to determine whether the LRMP/FMP  
35 objectives were met; and
- 36 • Line manager approves the determination.
  - 37 ○ *FWS* – Reporting will take place in FMIS, not in the NFPORS Non-  
38 National Fire Plan module. Reference FMIS User Guide at  
39 <https://fishnet.fws.doi.net/regions/9/nwrs/fire/FMR/FMIS1>.
  - 40 ○ *FS* – Direction for reporting accomplishments from unplanned  
41 ignitions is found in the *Hazardous Fuels Reduction Treatments  
42 Tracking and Accomplishments Reporting Requirements* document

1            *posted on the FACTS support page at*  
2            *<http://fsweb.ftcol.wo.fs.fed.us/frs/facts/support/documents/index.shtml>.*

### 3 **Prescribed Fire During Preparedness Levels 4 and 5**

4 Approval at the Regional or State Office level is required prior to ignition of  
5 prescribed fires at National Preparedness Levels 4 and 5. Approving officials  
6 should consider relative risks and opportunities as well as availability of local  
7 resources to implement without the need for additional outside resources that  
8 could add additional strain on resource availability nationally. To limit the  
9 potential for mixed messages when at GACC or National Preparedness Levels 4  
10 and 5, agencies should coordinate information on planned implementation of  
11 prescribed fires with interagency partners at the local, GMAC and NMAC  
12 levels.

- 13 • **BLM** – *The State Director or designee will approve prescribed fire at*  
14 *National or Geographic Area Preparedness Level 4 or 5.*
- 15 • **NPS** – *At National Preparedness Level 4 or 5, concurrence from NPS*  
16 *Branch of Fire Management must be obtained prior to implementing*  
17 *prescribed fires. At Geographic Area Preparedness Level 4 or 5, NPS*  
18 *Regional Fire Management concurrence must be obtained prior to*  
19 *implementing prescribed fires.*
- 20 • **FWS** – *During Geographic Area Preparedness Level 4 or 5, written*  
21 *concurrence from RFMC is required prior to ignition. During National*  
22 *Preparedness Level 5, concurrence from Headquarters, Branch of Fire*  
23 *Management must be obtained prior to ignition, utilizing the Preparedness*  
24 *Level 5 Prescribed Fire Concurrence Form. Reference FMH, Chapter 17.*
- 25 • **FS** – *The Regional Forester will approve or disapprove new prescribed*  
26 *fires or continue existing prescribed fire at National Preparedness Levels 4*  
27 *and 5.*

### 28 **Federal Agencies Assistance**

29 Reference Section VI of the *Interagency Agreement for Wildland Fire*  
30 *Management among the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs,*  
31 *National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States*  
32 *Department of The Interior, and the Forest Service of the United States*  
33 *Department of Agriculture, effective 2011-2015.*

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

- 38 • **FS** – *USFS units will make every attempt to establish agreements in*  
39 *advance when planning to utilize resources from cooperating agencies to*  
40 *implement or respond as contingency resources for prescribed fire.*  
41 *However, for prescribed fire activities and exigent circumstances, where an*

1        *agreement was not executed and funds were not obligated prior to*  
2        *commencing work, a ratification may not be necessary if an approved*  
3        *agreement is executed and funds obligated on I-web within 30 calendar*  
4        *days of the start of work. See FSH 1509.11 Chapter 10, Section 15.81.*

#### 5        **Hazard Pay/Environmental Differential for Prescribed Fire** 6        **Implementation**

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

#### 11       **Non-NWCG Agency Personnel Use on Prescribed Fire**

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

#### 14       **Use of Contractors for Prescribed Fire Implementation**

15       Agencies can contract to conduct all or part of the planning and implementation  
16       of prescribed fire operations and/or all or part of mechanical treatments for fuels  
17       management projects. Contractors must meet NWCG 310-1 qualification  
18       requirements and agency standards for specific skill positions for prescribed fire  
19       operations.

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

- 27       • *FS – Contractors must meet requirements for any specific skill positions for*  
28       *prescribed fire operations as described in NWCG PMS 310-1 or FSH*  
29       *5109.17 for positions not found in the PMS 310-1 (e.g., RXB3). Reference*  
30       *FSM 5140.*

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

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

36       Forest Service does not have this authority.

**1 Activation of Contingency Resources**

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

**4 Non-fire Fuels Management Activities**

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