

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** – *Reference BLM Fuels Management Manual 9214 and Handbook 9214-1, Chapter 5.*
- **NPS** – *Refer to RM 18.*
- **FWS** – *Refer to Fire Management Handbook, Chapter 17.*

- 1 • **FS** – Refer to FSM 5140.
- 2 • **BIA** – Refer to Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Management Business Rules,
- 3 July 2008.

4 **Reporting Fuels Management Accomplishments**

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

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

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

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

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

- 23 • **BLM** – *Offices will complete a fuels treatment effectiveness assessment and*
24 *input appropriate information into the Fuels Treatment Effectiveness*
25 *Monitoring (FTEM) online tool for all wildfires which start in, burn into, or*
26 *burn through any portion of a fuel treatment area that has been completed*
27 *and reported in the Hazardous Fuels Module of the National Fire Plan*
28 *Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) from fiscal year 2003 to*
29 *present. If offices have wildfire/treatment intersections that have occurred*
30 *prior to 2003 or are not in NFPORS, as long as offices can document that*
31 *fuels dollars were expended on these treatments and the wildfire is recorded*
32 *in the Wildland Fire Management Information (WFMI) system, the record*
33 *should be entered into FTEM. It is important that treatment data entered*
34 *into FTEM are consistent with the NFPORS, and that wildfire information*
35 *is consistent with the WFMI system. Refer to FA IM-2015-001.*
- 36 • **NPS** – Refer to RM 18 and Documenting Hazardous Fuels Reduction
37 Program Treatment Effectiveness Memo, 10/09/2012.
- 38 • **FWS** – Refer to Fire Management Handbook, Chapter 17.
- 39 • **FS** – Refer to FSM 5140.
- 40 • **BIA** – Refer to Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Treatment Effectiveness
41 Final Guidance Memo, 06/05/2013.

1 Reporting Planned Fuels Treatments Burned in a Wildfire

2 For NPS and FWS, 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 ○ **BLM** – *Offices will report (using instructions from Attachment 1 of IM*
11 *FA-2017-034) all acres burned in a naturally-caused wildfire*
12 *(accomplishments of resource objectives for known human-caused fires*
13 *will not be reported) that accomplish resource objectives in the HFR*
14 *module of NFPORS when:*
 - 15 ▪ *An interdisciplinary team approach is used to determine the*
16 *specific burned acres where LUP resource objectives were met by*
17 *wildfire; and*
 - 18 ▪ *An Agency Administrator approves the determination and notifies*
19 *the State Fuels Lead/Specialist. Together they ensure appropriate*
20 *reporting in NFPORS.*
 - 21 ○ **FS** – *Acres burned from an unplanned natural ignition may be*
22 *reported as “Fire Use” accomplishment if the resulting fire effects*
23 *meet objectives from the Land and Resource Management Plan or*
24 *project-specific NEPA decision document. Human-caused wildfires*
25 *may not be counted as accomplishment toward target regardless of the*
26 *outcome. See Reporting of Wildfire Acres That Meet Resource*
27 *Management Objectives section below for additional information.*
 - 28 ○ **BIA** – *Refer to Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Management Business*
29 *Rules, July 2008, page 36.*

30 Reporting of Wildfire Acres That Meet Resource Management Objectives

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

- 1 • The LRMP/FMP supports attainment of resource benefit through use of
2 fire;
- 3 • An interdisciplinary approach is used to determine whether the LRMP/FMP
4 objectives were met; and
- 5 • Line manager approves the determination.
 - 6 ○ **FWS** – Reporting will take place in FMIS, not in the NFPORS Non-
7 National Fire Plan module. Reference FMIS User Guide at
8 <https://fishnet.fws.doi.net/regions/9/nwrs/fire/FMR/FMIS1>.
 - 9 ○ **FS** – Direction for reporting accomplishments from unplanned
10 ignitions is found in the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Treatments
11 Tracking and Accomplishments Reporting Requirements document
12 posted on the FACTS support page at
13 <https://fsweb.ftcol.wo.fs.fed.us/frs/facts/support/documents/index.shtml>.

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

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

- 24 • **BLM** – The State Director or designee will approve prescribed fire at
25 National or Geographic Area Preparedness Level 4 or 5.
- 26 • **NPS** – At National Preparedness Level 4 or 5, concurrence from NPS
27 Branch of Fire Management must be obtained prior to implementing
28 prescribed fires. At Geographic Area Preparedness Level 4 or 5, NPS
29 Regional Fire Management concurrence must be obtained prior to
30 implementing prescribed fires.
- 31 • **FWS** – During Geographic Area Preparedness Level 4 or 5, written
32 concurrence from RFMC is required prior to ignition. During National
33 Preparedness Level 5, concurrence from Headquarters, Branch of Fire
34 Management must be obtained prior to implementing prescribed fires. Refer
35 to FMH, Chapter 17 for additional information.
- 36 • **FS** – The Regional Forester will approve or disapprove new prescribed
37 fires or continue existing prescribed fire at National Preparedness Levels 4
38 and 5 or if National Fire Danger Rating System forecasted adjective rating
39 is “Extreme” for the county that the prescribed fire is located or any
40 adjacent county. Reference FSM Interim Directive WO-ID-5140-2017-1.
- 41 • **BIA** – At National Preparedness Levels 4 and 5, prescribed fire (Rx)
42 applications can be initiated or continued if the proposed action is
43 approved by an agency at the Regional level. The approval must be based
44 on an assessment of risk, impacts of the proposed actions on Area resources

1 *and activities, and include feedback from the GMAC. At National*
2 *Preparedness Level 5, for Rx applications to be initiated or continued that*
3 *require additional support of resources from outside the local unit or*
4 *require resource ordering of an IMT, the Regional Fuels Specialist must*
5 *prepare a written justification to request permission to implement a new*
6 *prescribed fire and submit to the BIA Director of Fuels Management. A*
7 *National MAC representative will assess risk and impacts of the proposed*
8 *action(s) and present to NMAC for review prior to proceeding. The final*
9 *decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.*

10 **Federal Agencies Assistance**

11 Reference Section VI of the *Interagency Agreement for Wildland Fire*
12 *Management among the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs,*
13 *National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States*
14 *Department of The Interior, and the Forest Service of the United States*
15 *Department of Agriculture, effective 2011-2015.*

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

- 20 • **FS** – *USFS units will make every attempt to establish agreements in*
21 *advance when planning to utilize resources from cooperating agencies to*
22 *implement or respond as contingency resources for prescribed fire.*
23 *However, for prescribed fire activities and exigent circumstances, where an*
24 *agreement was not executed and funds were not obligated prior to*
25 *commencing work, a ratification may not be necessary if an approved*
26 *agreement is executed and funds obligated on I-web within 30 calendar*
27 *days of the start of work. See FSH 1509.11 Chapter 10, Section 15.81.*
- 28 • **BIA** – *Refer to Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Management Business Rules,*
29 *July 2008, pages 23-24.*

30 **Hazard Pay/Environmental Differential for Prescribed Fire** 31 **Implementation**

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

36 **Non-NWCG Agency Personnel Use on Prescribed Fire**

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

1 Use of Contractors for Prescribed Fire Implementation

2 Agencies can contract to conduct all or part of the planning and implementation
3 of prescribed fire operations and/or all or part of mechanical treatments for fuels
4 management projects. Contractors must meet NWCG 310-1 qualification
5 requirements and agency standards for specific skill positions for prescribed fire
6 operations.

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

- 14 • **FS** – *Contractors must meet requirements for any specific skill positions for*
15 *prescribed fire operations as described in NWCG PMS 310-1 or FSH*
16 *5109.17 for positions not found in the PMS 310-1 (e.g., RXB3). Reference*
17 *FSM 5140.*
- 18 • **BIA** – *Refer to Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Management Business Rules,*
19 *July 2008, pages 22.*

20 Use of AD Pay Plan for Prescribed Fire

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

25 Forest Service does not have this authority.

26 Activation of Contingency Resources

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

29 Non-fire Fuels Management Activities

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