



United States Department of the Interior  
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Fire Management Branch  
National Interagency Fire Center  
3833 South Development Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83705



June 9, 2011

To: Regional Fire Management Coordinators, Regions 1-8  
From: Acting Chief, Branch of Fire Management   
Subject: FY2011 Wildland Fire Severity Program Oversight

The Department of the Interior (DOI) imposed a cap on severity authorizations and expenditures in FY 2007 due to the steady and significant increase in these expenditures over the previous six years. In FY 2011, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) severity authorizations are again capped at \$3,232,000. To manage and keep severity expenditures under this cap, the following procedures will be implemented.

- 2011 Severity Guidance can be found in Appendix E of the Fire Business Reference Guide (FBRG) found on the FWS Sharepoint website under Fire Management - Administration or at the following link:  
<http://sharepoint.fws.net/Programs/nifc/administration/default.aspx>
- The severity cost estimation worksheet has been updated for 2011 and must be completed based on realistic projections of actual need (number and days) rather than the maximum potential need. A link to a fillable worksheet may be found on page 51.
- Requests for extensions or overruns must be accompanied with an estimate of additional needs as well as year-to-date expenditures on prior approved authorizations.
- Short-term severity or "step-up" cost codes are established yearly (at the Regional level) as PER1, PER2, etc. (numeric value indicates the specific region utilizing short-term severity funding).
- Field Stations will email a final report to the RFMC and the FMB within 30 days of ending severity. The final report must include the following:
  - Severity expenditure report
  - Short narrative of fire activity

In addition to the procedures listed above, the following oversight procedures will also occur.

- DOI Fire Directors will re-negotiate bureau-specific authorization caps within the DOI cap if needed. In circumstances of extraordinary fire potential, the bureaus will work with the Office of Wildland Fire Coordination and request an increase in the DOI severity cap.
- FWS resources used to fill a Forest Service severity order will be outside the cap.
- Severity expenditures are subject to audit to insure that severity resources remained available to augment local resources and that the type and duration of resources generally matched the authorized severity plan and severity conditions.

While these additions are added to the severity request requirements, it is important to continue to follow the existing requirements when making a severity request.

- The need for fire severity funding should be anticipated. It is recommended to provide advanced notification of impending severity funding requests or severity funding extensions to the Regional Fire Staff.
- Requesting units should plan for five working days for review and approval when submitting severity funding requests.
- Requests must comply with the general requirements in the Fire Business Reference Guide and the Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations (Red Book), unless superseded by this directive.
- Severity requests may cover a maximum of 30 days. Supplemental requests may be submitted if severity conditions persist. Unless supplemental requests are approved, any unused severity authorization will expire after 30 days.
- Severity justification must identify collaboration and coordination with interagency partners and the general severity conditions within the geographic area.
- Regional Fire Management Coordinators may approve short-term severity requests for FWS individual field stations that will be charged to a PERx cost code. The annual total authorized is not to exceed \$300,000 per region and does not affect the cap.

Additional direction, templates, and format may be found at:

[http://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol\\_severity\\_funding.html](http://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol_severity_funding.html)

Questions may be directed to National Fire Operations Program Leader, Chris Wilcox, at 208-387-5599 or Budget and Planning Coordinator, Kathy Perez at 505-248-6812.

cc: Regional Chiefs, Regions 1-8  
Chief, Division of Natural Resources and Conservation Planning  
Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System