Chapter 9

Fire Management Planning

Purpose

The purpose of fire management planning is to provide for firefighter and public safety, and outline fire management strategies and tactics that, when implemented, protect values and meet resource goals and objectives of the land and/or resource management plan. Planning strategically allows for responses to fire commensurate with risk, and movement towards desired conditions.

Fire planning products include a concise summary of information organized by fire management unit (FMU) or by other geospatially explicit representations of the landscape. These products should be updated as new information becomes available, as conditions on the ground necessitate updates, or when changes are made to the land/resource management plan (L/RMP).

Products may address: response to wildfire, hazardous fuels and vegetation management, burned area emergency stabilization and rehabilitation, prevention, community interactions and collaborative partnerships roles, and monitoring and evaluation of programs.

Fire management planning efforts should address the vision and goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (2014) (Cohesive Strategy).

The Cohesive Strategy vision is “To safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and as a Nation, live with wildland fire.”

The Cohesive Strategy goals are:

- Restore and maintain landscapes
- Fire-adapted communities
- Wildfire response

Policy

“Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale and across agency boundaries” (Review and Update of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, January 2001).

Fire management plans should be developed collaboratively between federal agencies and tribal, local, and state agencies to accomplish resource and protection objectives.

Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved fire management plan (FMP). Fire Management Plans are strategic plans that define a program to manage wildland fires based on the area's approved land management plan.
When practical, fire management plans (FMP) should contain mutually developed objectives for managing fires that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Fire management plans must provide for firefighter and public safety; include fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives; address values to be protected and values at risk; address the location and conditions under which resource and protection objectives can be met; consider public health issues; and be consistent with resource management objectives, activities of the area, and environmental laws and regulations. Fire management plans should be based upon the best available science.

**Agency Planning Guidance**

**Department of Interior (DOI)**

Fire Management Plans must be consistent with the DOI Interagency Fire Management Plan Framework and subsequent bureau direction. Fire management plan content may be represented in spatial, text-based and/or digital formats.

- The DOI framework is available at: https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/interagency-fire-planning-committee/resources
  - **BLM – FMP Template** is available at http://web.blm.gov/internal/fire/fpfm/planning.html.

**U.S. Forest Service (FS)**

Forest Service FMPs have been replaced with a combination of enhanced Spatial Planning contained in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) and the Fire Management Reference System (FMRS), a collection of plans required for fire program management, such as aviation, operations, dispatch, and fire danger operating plan products. Fire management planning will be a continuing effort to ensure that guidance represented spatially in WFDSS and the FMRS are consistent with LRMP direction, reflecting available fire response options to move from current to desired conditions.

The FS has replaced the FSH 5109.19 with a Fire Management Planning Guide that further describes Spatial Fire Planning and the Fire Management Reference System (FMRS). As allowed in the land and resource management plan (LRMP), fire response strategies should be consistent with the Cohesive Strategy and developed in collaboration with adjoining land managers. This Guide is at https://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/fire/fmp/.

**Other Resources**

For information on utilizing the spatial fire planning method in WFDSS, see the WFDSS Spatial Fire Planning Guide located on the WFDSS Training page at https://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss/WFDSS_Training.shtml.
Concepts and Definitions

For further clarification of concepts and definitions that follow, refer to:


Land/Resource Management Plan

A document prepared with public participation and approved by the agency administrator that provides guidance and direction for land and resource management activities for an administrative area. The L/RMP may identify fire's role in a particular area and for a specific benefit, or may contain general statements regarding the role of fire across the land management unit. Guidance contained in the L/RMP provides the basis for the development of strategic fire management objectives and the fire management program in the designated area.

Fire Management Plan

A plan that identifies and integrates all wildland fire management and related activities within the context of approved land/resource management plans. It defines a program to manage wildland fires (wildfire and prescribed fire). The plan is supplemented by operational plans, including but not limited to preparedness plans, preplanned dispatch plans, prescribed fire burn plans and prevention plans. Fire management plan’s assure that wildland fire management goals and components are coordinated.

Compliance

Compliance generally includes the full range of considerations and procedures defined by each agency to comply with laws such as (but not limited to); the National Environmental Planning Act (NEPA), Section 106 of the Archeological Resources Protection Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, Clean Air Act, Wilderness Act, Executive Orders, etc.

Spatial Fire Management Plan (SFMP)

A spatial fire management plan is a strategic plan that contains text based and spatially represented information that guides a full range of fire management activities and is supported by a land or resource management plan.

Spatial Fire Management Plan Mapsheet

A collection of one or more tables, graphics, maps or other information on a single page or poster.

Spatial Fire Management Plan Map Set

A compilation of all the mapsheets that make up a SFMP.
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Connection to Other Plans

Fire management plans (DOI) and/or spatial fire planning in WFDSS (FS) capture fire related direction and decisions from land/resource management plans (LRMP). If fire management direction and decisions were not adequately integrated into the existing LRMP, additional NEPA may be necessary.

Air Quality and Smoke Management

Clean air is a primary natural resource value in all federal units. Fire management activities which result in the discharge of air pollutants (e.g., particulates, carbon monoxide, and other pollutants from fires) are subject to, and must comply with, all applicable federal, state, interstate, and local air pollution control requirements, as specified by Section 118 of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 USC 7418). These requirements are the same substantive, procedural, and administrative requirements that apply to a private person or other non-governmental entity. The protection of these resources must be given full consideration in fire management planning and operations.

Coordination with a state or states air regulatory office is required during the development of resource and fire management plans in order to determine procedures for compliance with state air quality regulations. Each agency should consult with their fire management unit the proper procedures for obtaining coordination with the state or states in which the unit is located, or when notified by the state that an air pollution violation has occurred.

The NWCG Smoke Management Guide for Prescribed Fire 2020 Edition (PMS 420-3), is the primary technical reference and should be referenced when developing and implementing wildland fire management plans.

NIFC smoke management website: https://www.nifc.gov/standards.

The 2019 Dingell Act requires Type 1 fires to assign Air Resource Advisors to the maximum extent practicable and consideration of assigning Air Resource Advisors for Type 2 fires (site location of the statement in the act). This will provide smoke projections and provide capability for coordination with state, tribal and local air regulatory and public health agencies.

Air Quality Definitions

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)

Uniform air quality goals established by the EPA. The EPA designated two types of national air quality standards, primary which provides public health protection and secondary which provides public welfare protection.

Criteria Pollutants

Six common air pollutants: sulfur dioxide (SO2), nitrogen oxides (NOX), carbon monoxide (CO), particulate matter (PM10 & PM2.5), ground-level ozone (O3), and lead (Pb), designated by the EPA for which primary and secondary NAAQS have been established.
State Implementation Plan (SIP)
Section 110 of the Clean Air Act requires each state to adopt and submit to the EPA an implementation plan that provides for the implementation, maintenance, and enforcement of NAAQS in each Air Quality Control Region.

Federal Implementation Plan (FIP)
A federally-implemented plan used by the EPA to ensure air quality is maintained and enforced in accordance with established NAAQS. This plan is used when a state’s SIP is found unacceptable.

Attainment Area
A geographic area that meets the primary NAAQS established by the EPA.

Note: An area may meet the established NAAQS for one criteria pollutant, but have unacceptable levels for another. An area could be in attainment for one criteria pollutant and simultaneously in nonattainment for another.

Nonattainment Area
A geographic area that does not meet the primary NAAQS limits established by the EPA to protect public health and the environment.

Note: The EPA establishes time limits for nonattainment areas to achieve specified air quality goals and may further designate nonattainment areas as extreme, severe, serious, moderate, or marginal.

Maintenance Area
Geographic area previously designated nonattainment and subsequently redesignated to attainment, for a probationary period, due to achieving the NAAQS.