

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** – Refer to MS-9214 and H-9214-1.
- 24 • **NPS** – Refer to RM 18 and Documenting Hazardous Fuels Reduction
25 Program Treatment Effectiveness Memo, 10/09/2012.
- 26 • **FWS** – Refer to Fish and Wildlife Service Fire Management Reporting
27 Requirements and Timelines Memorandum FMB202015 - Establishment of
28 a Fuels Management Three-Year Program of Work.
- 29 • **FS** – Refer to FSM 5140.
- 30 • **BIA** – Refer to Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Treatment Effectiveness
31 Final Guidance Memo, 06/05/2013.

32 **Reporting Planned Fuels Treatments Burned in a Wildfire**

- 33 • **BLM** – BLM offices will report all acres burned in a naturally caused
34 wildfire that accomplish resource objectives in the Hazardous Fuels
35 Reduction module of NFPORS as “Fire Use” when:
 - 36 ○ An interdisciplinary team approach is used to determine the specific
37 burned acres where land use plan resource objectives were met by
38 wildfire; and
 - 39 ○ An Agency Administrator approves the determination and notifies the
40 State Fuels Lead/Specialist. Together they ensure appropriate
41 reporting in NFPORS.

- 1 *See instructions in the BLM Fuels Management and Community Assistance*
2 *Handbook, H-9214-1. Note that accomplishments of resource objectives*
3 *from known human-caused fires will not be reported.*
- 4 • **NPS/FWS** – *Acres burned in a wildfire may only be reported in the*
5 *NFPORS Hazardous Fuels Reduction Module as “Fire Use” if all the*
6 *following conditions are met:*
 - 7 ○ *The area burned was in a pre-existing NFPORS treatment unit;*
 - 8 ○ *The accomplishment has been approved from the Regional and/or*
9 *National level;*
 - 10 ○ *NEPA is complete; and*
 - 11 ○ *The planned objectives were met.*
 - 12 • **FS** – *Acres burned from an unplanned natural ignition may be reported as*
13 *“Fire Use” accomplishment if the resulting fire effects meet objectives from*
14 *the Land and Resource Management Plan or project-specific NEPA*
15 *decision document. Human-caused wildfires may not be counted as*
16 *accomplishment toward target regardless of the outcome. See Reporting of*
17 *Wildfire Acres That Meet Resource Management Objectives section below*
18 *for additional information.*
 - 19 • **BIA** – *Refer to Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Management Business Rules,*
20 *July 2008, page 36.*

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

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

- 36 • The LRMP/FMP supports attainment of resource benefit through use of
37 fire;
- 38 • An interdisciplinary approach is used to determine whether the LRMP/FMP
39 objectives were met; and
- 40 • Line manager approves the determination.
 - 41 ○ **BLM** – *Reporting will take place in the Hazardous Fuels Reduction*
42 *module in NFPORS, not in the NPORS Non-National Fire Plan*
43 *module. Reference the BLM Fuels Management and Community*
44 *Assistance Handbook H-9214-1.*

- 1 ○ **FWS** – Reporting will take place in FMIS, not in the NFPORS Non-
- 2 National Fire Plan module. Reference the FMIS User Guide.
- 3 ○ **FS** – Direction for reporting accomplishments from unplanned
- 4 ignitions is found in the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Treatments
- 5 Tracking and Accomplishments Reporting Requirements document
- 6 posted on the FACTS support page at
- 7 <https://fsweb.ftcol.wo.fs.fed.us/frs/facts/support/documents/index.shtml>.

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

- 9 Approval at the Regional or State Office level is required prior to ignition of
 10 prescribed fires at National Preparedness Levels 4 and 5. Approving officials
 11 should consider relative risks and opportunities as well as availability of local
 12 resources to implement without the need for additional outside resources that
 13 could add additional strain on resource availability nationally. To limit the
 14 potential for mixed messages when at GACC or National Preparedness Levels 4
 15 and 5, agencies should coordinate information on planned implementation of
 16 prescribed fires with interagency partners at the local, GMAC and NMAC
 17 levels.
- 18 ● **BLM** – The State Director or designee will approve prescribed fire at
 19 National or Geographic Area Preparedness Level 4 or 5.
 - 20 ● **NPS** – At National Preparedness Level 4 or 5, concurrence from NPS
 21 Branch of Fire Management must be obtained prior to implementing
 22 prescribed fires. At Geographic Area Preparedness Level 4 or 5, NPS
 23 Regional Fire Management concurrence must be obtained prior to
 24 implementing prescribed fires.
 - 25 ● **FWS** – During Geographic Area Preparedness Level 4 and 5, and National
 26 Preparedness Level 4, written concurrence from Regional Fire
 27 Management must be obtained prior to implementing a prescribed
 28 fire. During National Preparedness Level 5, written concurrence from
 29 Regional Fire Management and the Branch of Fire Management must be
 30 obtained prior to implementing a prescribed fire. Refer to FMH, Chapter 17
 31 for additional information.
 - 32 ● **FS** – The Regional Forester will approve or disapprove new prescribed
 33 fires or continue existing prescribed fire at National Preparedness Levels 4
 34 and 5 or if National Fire Danger Rating System forecasted adjective rating
 35 is “Extreme” for the county that the prescribed fire is located or any
 36 adjacent county. Reference FSM 5140.
 - 37 ● **BIA** – At National Preparedness Levels 4 and 5, prescribed fire (Rx)
 38 applications can be initiated or continued if the proposed action is
 39 approved by an agency at the Regional level. The approval must be based
 40 on an assessment of risk, impacts of the proposed actions on Area resources
 41 and activities, and include feedback from the GMAC. At National
 42 Preparedness Level 5, for Rx applications to be initiated or continued that
 43 require additional support of resources from outside the local unit or
 44 require resource ordering of an IMT, the Regional Fuels Specialist must

1 prepare a written justification to request permission to implement a new
2 prescribed fire and submit to the BIA Director of Fuels Management. A
3 National MAC representative will assess risk and impacts of the proposed
4 action(s) and present to NMAC for review prior to proceeding. The final
5 decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.

6 **Federal Agencies Assistance**

7 Reference Section VI of the *Interagency Agreement for Wildland Fire*
8 *Management among the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs,*
9 *National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States*
10 *Department of The Interior, and the Forest Service of the United States*
11 *Department of Agriculture, effective 2016-2021.*

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

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

26 **Hazard Pay/Environmental Differential for Prescribed Fire** 27 **Implementation**

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

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

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

35 **Use of Contractors for Prescribed Fire Implementation**

36 Agencies can contract to conduct all or part of the planning and implementation
37 of prescribed fire operations and/or all or part of mechanical treatments for fuels
38 management projects. Contractors must meet PMS 310-1 qualification
39 requirements and agency standards for specific skill positions for prescribed fire
40 operations.

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

- 8 • **BLM** – Refer to H-9214-1, Chapter 5-3, Contractor and Cooperator
9 Prescribed Fire Plan Development and Implementation.
- 10 • **FWS** – Refer to Fire Management Handbook Ch. 17 and 645 FW 1 for fuels
11 projects funded by the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and Coastal
12 Program.
- 13 • **FS** – Contractors must meet requirements for any specific skill positions for
14 prescribed fire operations as described in PMS 310-1 or FSH 5109.17 for
15 positions not found in the PMS 310-1 (e.g., RXB3). Reference FSM 5140.
- 16 • **BIA** – Refer to Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Management Business Rules,
17 July 2008, page 22.

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

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

- 23 • **FS** – Forest Service does not have this authority.

24 **Activation of Contingency Resources**

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

27 **Non-fire Fuels Management Activities**

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