

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
LAND USE AND MANAGEMENT**

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**1.1 What is the purpose of this chapter?**

A. This chapter:

(1) Provides policy for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) staff, volunteers, and contractors performing duties related to our wildland fire management program (including planning, preparedness, training, response, post-fire rehabilitation, and prescribed fire), and

(2) Describes the responsibilities for fire management activities on our lands.

B. Employees can find more detailed guidance and procedures online in the *Fire Management Handbook*.

**1.2 What is the scope of this chapter?** This chapter applies to all Service offices and programs—not just those in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

**1.3 What are the authorities for this chapter?** The authority for managing the Service fire program is in Part 620 of the Departmental Manual, Wildland Fire Management, which cites the relevant statutes that authorize and provide the means for managing wildland fires on lands under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior or adjacent to our lands.

**1.4 What terms do you need to know to understand this chapter?** See the National Wildfire Coordinating Group online glossary for the definitions of terms we use in this chapter.

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**1.5 Who is responsible for the Service’s fire management program?** Table 1-1 lists the responsibilities of Service employees for the fire management program. (The table order does not imply a chain of command.)

<b>Table 1-1: Responsibilities for the Fire Management Program</b>	
<b>These employees...</b>	<b>Are responsible for...</b>
<b>A. The Director</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Ensuring we have a safe and effective fire management program,</li> <li>(2) Approving or declining to approve fire management policy, and</li> <li>(3) Representing, or delegating someone else to represent, the Service on senior leadership wildland fire policy groups such as the Wildland Fire Leadership Council and the Federal Fire Policy Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>B. The Chief - National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Overseeing and implementing a safe and effective fire management program for the benefit of the Fish and Wildlife Service, and</li> <li>(2) Ensuring there is written policy for the program.</li> </ul>
<b>C. Regional Directors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Appointing a Regional Fire Management Coordinator and providing a written delegation of authority for those duties (see section 1.5E);</li> <li>(2) Ensuring that fire management direction is:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Clear and available to employees, and</li> <li>(b) Included into resource management plans;</li> </ul> </li> <li>(3) Ensuring employees performing duties related to our wildland fire management program:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Follow Departmental and Service policies (including National Wildfire Coordinating Group standards), and</li> <li>(b) Are trained, certified, and available to participate in the wildland fire program locally, Regionally, and nationally as the situation demands; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>(4) Designating a Regional representative to the Line Officer Team;</li> <li>(5) Approving fire management plans and ensuring they meet Federal fire management policies, or appointing a designee to do so;</li> <li>(6) Ensuring wildland fire management staff coordinate and exchange personnel, equipment, supplies, services, funds, and cost sharing among the signatories to the Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response agreement at the State or geographic area level;</li> <li>(7) Identifying and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of other Regional staff who may oversee the fire management program;</li> <li>(8) Reviewing and approving emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation plans with a cost of less than \$500,000;</li> <li>(9) Ensuring that any prescribed fire that becomes a wildfire or results in an air quality violation is reviewed within 60 days of the wildfire or incident and review results are reported to the Director within 90 days;</li> </ul>

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Table 1-1: Responsibilities for the Fire Management Program	
These employees...	Are responsible for...
	<p>and</p> <p>(10) Reviewing and approving prescribed fire plans and wildfire strategy and decision documents or delegating this duty to a Regional Refuge Supervisor or Project Leader, but only if they meet the training requirements in <a href="#">section 1.11</a>.</p>
<b>D. The Chief, Branch of Fire Management</b>	<p>(1) Advising the Director and other Service personnel on issues related to the fire management program;</p> <p>(2) Coordinating with the Department's Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) and other bureaus on budget, policy, and program issues and interagency coordination;</p> <p>(3) Providing leadership, technical direction and coordination of fire management planning, policy development, and procedures and, when necessary, supporting our employees responding to emergency incidents other than wildfires;</p> <p>(4) Establishing and managing Serious Accident Investigation Teams to investigate wildland fire-related serious accidents and develop written reports as required by 240 FW 7.</p> <p>(5) Representing the Service on the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, as delegated by the Director;</p> <p>(6) Representing the Service on Departmental wildland fire policy groups such as the Interior Fire Executive Council;</p> <p>(7) Updating the <i>Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations</i>, <i>Fire Management Handbook</i>, and the <i>Fire Business Reference Guide</i>;</p> <p>(8) Establishing fire management standards, requirements, and procedures based on Service, Departmental, and interagency policies;</p> <p>(9) Managing large fire cost reviews and fire-related serious accident investigations according to policy (see <a href="#">section 1.17</a>);</p> <p>(10) Approving requests for long-term fire severity funding;</p> <p>(11) Chairing the National Fire Leadership Team;</p> <p>(12) Approving requests for emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation funding that are in an approved plan (see <a href="#">section 1.15</a>); and</p> <p>(13) Supervising and managing a staff to provide oversight and support to the Regional fire management programs.</p> <p>(14) Reviewing and approving emergency stabilization and burned area</p>

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<b>Table 1-1: Responsibilities for the Fire Management Program</b>	
<b>These employees...</b>	<b>Are responsible for...</b>
<b>E. Regional Fire Management Coordinators (RFMCs)</b>	<p>rehabilitation plans with a cost greater than \$500,000;</p> <p><b>(1)</b> Providing programmatic leadership and technical expertise to Regional Directors to establish and manage the fire program;</p> <p><b>(2)</b> Providing guidance for all fire management activities in the Region including coordination, training, planning, fire equipment, reviews, and evaluations;</p> <p><b>(3)</b> Managing the Region's fire management budget and accounts and coordinating fire management budget issues within the Region and with the Fire Management Branch;</p> <p><b>(4)</b> Approving the use of short-term fire severity funds for units within the Region;</p> <p><b>(5)</b> Assisting with intra-agency and interagency wildland fire management needs;</p> <p><b>(6)</b> Representing the Region on the Geographic Multi-Agency Coordinating Group and implementing the decisions of the group as they affect their areas;</p> <p><b>(7)</b> Serving as the liaison between the Fire Management Branch and Regional leadership in matters related to fire;</p> <p><b>(8)</b> Serving on the National Fire Leadership Team (see <a href="#">section 1.6</a>); and</p> <p><b>(9)</b> Supervising and managing a staff to provide oversight and support to the zone/district /refuge fire management programs.</p>
<b>F. Project Leaders</b> (includes Refuge Managers)	<p><b>(1)</b> Establishing an effective wildland fire management program on lands under their jurisdiction;</p> <p><b>(2)</b> Ensuring staff develop a fire management plan for all burnable lands they manage, that the plan is up-to-date, and that the Regional Director or his/her designee has approved it;</p> <p><b>(3)</b> Acting as or assigning a qualified Fire Management Officer for the field office (see <a href="#">section 1.5G</a>) if necessary;</p> <p><b>(4)</b> Ensuring personnel hired in dedicated, fire-funded positions are available for dispatch to off-refuge/interagency wildfire and prescribed fire management operations;</p> <p><b>(5)</b> Meeting the fire management training requirements established for their positions;</p> <p><b>(6)</b> Approving and implementing fire management implementation plans (e.g., prescribed fire plans and preparedness plans) and wildfire decisions;</p> <p><b>(7)</b> Collaborating with interagency partners and regulators on fire-</p>

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Table 1-1: Responsibilities for the Fire Management Program	
These employees...	Are responsible for...
	<p>related issues and plans;</p> <p><b>(8)</b> Ensuring every wildfire is investigated to determine and document cause. Where evidence indicates the fire was caused by arson or negligence, the Project Leader must protect evidence and should initiate a fire investigation if appropriate. Investigations may range from getting the responding fire crew to document the cause to asking a qualified arson investigator to perform a criminal investigation;</p> <p><b>(9)</b> Ensuring assigned staff meet the training, experience, fitness, and medical requirements for wildland fire qualifications;</p> <p><b>(10)</b> Approving or delegating someone else to approve Incident Qualification Cards;</p> <p><b>(11)</b> Ensuring a review takes place for any prescribed fire that becomes a wildfire or that results in an air quality violation; and</p> <p><b>(12)</b> Ensuring the use of fire management funds follow policy and Departmental guidance.</p>
<b>G. Fire Management Officers (FMOs)</b>	<p><b>(1)</b> Managing and providing leadership to the fire management programs at the local level, including single refuges or a group of refuges/units (zone or district);</p> <p><b>(2)</b> Determining program requirements to implement land use decisions through the fire management plan;</p> <p><b>(3)</b> Negotiating interagency agreements and representing the Service on local interagency fire and fire aviation groups; and</p> <p><b>(4)</b> Performing the duties described for the position in the <i>Fire Management Handbook</i> and the <i>Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations</i>.</p>

**1.6 What are the different groups established to coordinate the fire management program among bureaus and agencies, and what do they do?** There are several groups that govern or influence wildland fire management policy at the Interagency, Departmental, and Service level (see Table 1-2).

Table 1-2: Groups Managing the National Fire Program	
Group	Description
<b>INTERAGENCY GROUPS</b>	
<b>Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officials from Federal, State, tribal, county, and municipal agencies.</li> <li>• Provides senior executive level oversight and coordination of wildland fire management.</li> </ul>
<b>Federal Fire Policy Council (FFPC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bureau Directors and Departmental executives.</li> <li>• Provides senior executive level policy and budget oversight and coordination for Federal wildland fire management programs.</li> </ul>

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<b>Table 1-2: Groups Managing the National Fire Program</b>	
<b>Group</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Wildland Fire Executive Council (WFEC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives from Federal, State, tribal, and local governments and non-governmental organizations.</li> <li>• Provides coordinated, national-level wildland fire leadership, direction, and program oversight in support of the WFLC.</li> </ul>
<b>National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives from the Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Association of State Foresters, Intertribal Timber Council, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency – U.S. Fire Administration.</li> <li>• Primary responsibility is to provide leadership by establishing and maintaining consistent interagency policy, standards and guidelines, qualifications, communications for training, equipment, qualifications, and other operational functions.</li> </ul>
<b>National Multi-Agency Coordinating (NMAC) Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives from the Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Association of State Foresters, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency – U.S. Fire Administration.</li> <li>• Manages wildland fire operations on a national scale and establishes priorities among geographic areas when firefighting resource shortages are likely.</li> </ul>
<b>Geographic Multi-Agency Coordinating (GMAC) Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives from the primary Federal and State fire management agencies within a geographic area.</li> <li>• Manage wildland fire operations and establish wildfire priorities within the geographic area.</li> <li>• The United States is divided into 11 geographic areas for dispatching firefighting resources. If a wildland fire grows to the point where local personnel and equipment are insufficient, the responsible agency contacts the Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) to ask for help.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of the Interior Group</b>	
<b>Interior Fire Executive Council (IFEC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bureau Fire Directors, their supervisors, and the Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Director.</li> <li>• Provides coordinated interagency Federal executive level leadership on wildland fire policy, budget, direction, and program oversight.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Groups</b>	
<b>Line Officer Team (LOT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives from each Region and each level of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS).</li> <li>• Advises and promotes a safe, effective, and integrated fire management program in NWRS.</li> <li>• Team responsibilities are in the <i>Fire Management Handbook</i>.</li> </ul>

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Table 1-2: Groups Managing the National Fire Program	
Group	Description
National Fire Leadership Team (NFLT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Fire Management Coordinators, the Fire Management Branch Chief, and Deputy Chief.</li> <li>Provides leadership, coordination, and guidance for the Service fire program.</li> <li>Team responsibilities are in the <i>Fire Management Handbook</i>.</li> </ul>

**1.7 What are the elements of the Service’s fire management program?** Table 1-3 lists the elements of our fire management program and the sections where policy on each element can be found.

Table 1-3: Elements of the Service’s Fire Management Program	
Element	Section
<a href="#">Safety</a>	1.8
<a href="#">Regional Fire Management</a>	1.9
<a href="#">Planning</a>	1.10
<a href="#">Training</a>	1.11
<a href="#">Preparedness</a>	1.12
<a href="#">Wildfire Prevention</a>	1.13
<a href="#">Wildfire Response</a>	1.14
<a href="#">Wildfire Rehabilitation</a>	1.15
<a href="#">Prescribed Fire and Hazardous Fuel Treatments</a>	1.16
<a href="#">Evaluations, Investigations and Reviews</a>	1.17
<a href="#">Communications and Outreach</a>	1.18
<a href="#">Funding</a>	1.19

**1.8 What are the Service’s requirements for ensuring safety of employees and the public?**

**A.** Employee and public safety supersedes all other fire management program priorities.

**B.** The primary means by which we prevent accidents and injuries in wildland fire operations is through aggressive risk management. Risk is reduced through training, mitigating hazards, and using safety equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) combined with comprehensive risk management. Employees performing fire management activities must:

**(1)** Adhere to fire management policies and procedures for safety, training, and equipment, including:

**(a)** Part 620 of the Departmental Manual (DM),

**(b)** For air operations, parts 350 through 353 of the DM and part 330 of the Service Manual,

**(c)** Procedures in the *Fire Management Handbook*, and

**(d)** Parts 240 through 244 of the Service Manual, Occupational Safety and Health;

**(2)** Use PPE and other required field gear in accordance with the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* and the *Fire Management Handbook*; and

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**(3)** Report wildland fire-related accidents according to 054 FW 1, Serious Incident Notification Procedures and 240 FW 7, Accident Investigation and Reporting. Refer to the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* for details.

**C.** We investigate incidents and accidents to improve effectiveness and safety of fire operations. Investigations are systematic inquiries to collect and interpret facts, identify causes, and develop control measures to prevent recurrence. Service Manual chapter 240 FW 7 establishes investigation requirements for serious and non-serious accidents, fire shelter deployments, and entrapments, including who is responsible for conducting the investigations.

**1.9 How do the Regions manage their fire programs?** Regions are responsible for providing safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land, natural, and cultural resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, and equipment.

**A.** The Regional Fire Management Coordinators assist Refuge Supervisors and their Project Leaders to integrate fire as an ecological process into resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale and across jurisdictional boundaries.

**B.** Each Project Leader managing units with burnable vegetation must:

**(1)** Incorporate fire management into all other aspects of refuge management;

**(2)** Ensure employees are available for fire assignments during periods of high Regional or national fire activity while still meeting mission requirements; and

**(3)** Ensure management staff have access to and are familiar with the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*, *Fire Management Handbook*, the unit's fire management plan, and all other fire policies and procedures.

**1.10 What are the planning requirements for the fire program?** Fire management planning is a collaboration on an interagency basis with the involvement of all partners who share our boundaries.

**A.** Every Project Leader managing lands with burnable vegetation must write a Fire Management Plan (FMP) unless the Regional Director determines and documents that an FMP is not necessary for that particular station. The Regional Director or delegate must approve the plan.

**(1)** The FMP is a strategic plan that defines a unit's program to manage wildland fire. It is a step-down plan from the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) or Habitat Management Plan (HMP). The Project Leader writes and revises these other plans in concert with the FMP so that the goals and objectives of all the plans are consistent and compatible. Unit level operational plans such as preparedness plans, dispatch plans, and prevention plans supplement the FMP.

**(2)** FMPs must be consistent with firefighter and public safety; protection values; and land, natural, and cultural resource management plans. The *Fire Management Handbook* specifies additional requirements for FMPs.

**(3)** The Project Leader must:

**(a)** Annually review the FMP using the review process in the *Fire Management Handbook*;

**(b)** Revise the FMP when significant changes occur, or amend the FMP for minor revisions. The Project Leader and the FMO must sign amendments and attach them to the existing plan; and

**(c)** Coordinate a review of FMPs with appropriate specialists at the Regional level and ensure the Regional Director approves them.

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- B.** If a unit does not have an approved FMP, suppression of all fires is the only option; no prescribed fires may be implemented.
- C.** The Regional Fire Management Coordinator must keep copies of approved FMPs (including annual reviews) in the Regional office files.

**1.11 What are the Service's requirements for fire management training?** Only trained and qualified personnel may participate in fire management duties.

**A.** Fire personnel must meet our training and qualification standards for the positions they occupy. Supervisors must not dispatch or assign personnel to wildfire or prescribed fire duty if they are not qualified.

**(1)** Unless specified otherwise in the *Fire Management Handbook*, Fish and Wildlife Service personnel engaged in any type of wildland (wildfire or prescribed) fire activity must meet the training, experience, and physical fitness levels listed for the position they hold (see the *NWCG Wildland Fire Qualification Guide* (PMS 310-1). They must also participate in the Service's Medical Program (see 242 FW 4).

**(2)** Employees hired and funded with preparedness or hazardous fuels reduction funds must also meet PMS 310-1 requirements.

**B.** Staff participating in wildfire and prescribed fire positions must possess a current Incident Qualification Card for the duties they will perform.

**(1)** All units with fire management responsibilities must establish an Incident Qualification Card certification process.

**(2)** We encourage units working with other Federal, State, tribal, or local agencies to participate on an interagency qualification and certification committee and work with that committee to establish qualification processes.

**C.** Regional NWRS Chiefs and Refuge Supervisors who oversee a fire program on Service lands must attend an interagency fire management leadership course. Regional Refuge Supervisors, in consultation with Regional Fire Management Coordinators, determine the appropriate fire management training and experience requirements for their Project Leaders or the Project Leaders' designees based on guidance in Chapter 4 of the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations.

**D.** Employees in Interagency Fire Program Management-covered positions must meet the NWCG qualification and training requirements for their positions.

**E.** Wildland firefighters performing arduous duties must participate in the Service Medical Standards Program.

**(1)** Refuge Law Enforcement (LE) Officers who serve in positions with an arduous wildland fire fitness requirement must complete the Health Screening Questionnaire (Form FS-5100-31) and pass the arduous work capacity test annually.

**(2)** The medical exams that Refuge LE Officers must take at regular intervals fulfill the requirements for arduous duty wildland fire positions, so it is not necessary for them to take both the Refuge LE Officer medical exam and the Wildland Fire Arduous medical exam.

**(3)** LE Officers must provide proof to the incident qualifications and certification system account manager that they passed the Refuge LE Officer medical exam before they can get an Incident Qualification Card for wildland fire work.

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**(4)** Service units must not administer, assist with, or sponsor physical fitness testing as the certifying agency for non-Federal participants.

**1.12 What are the Service's requirements for fire management preparedness?** Project Leaders managing lands with burnable vegetation must:

**A.** Provide and oversee safe, cost-effective fire management programs by making sure their staff are prepared and trained for fire operations, including appropriate planning, staffing, training, equipment, and management oversight.

**(1)** Non-certified employees with operational, administrative, or other skills support the wildland fire management program as necessary.

**(2)** Agency administrators are responsible and accountable for making employees available to participate in the wildland fire management program.

**B.** Maintain a minimal initial attack capability using qualified unit staff or by putting agreements or contracts in place to ensure capability.

**1.13 What are the requirements for wildfire prevention?** Project Leaders may impose public use and access restrictions in times of high fire danger. They should coordinate restrictions with other affected agencies whenever possible. These public use restrictions include:

**A.** Restricting fire use in back-country (e.g., no cooking or warming fires outside developed sites);

**B.** Restricting public use activities (e.g., back-country access, cancellation of permits, smoking restrictions);

**C.** Restricting refuge operations or contract activities (e.g., halting construction, blasting, chain saw use); and

**D.** Totally or partially closing Service lands to the public.

**1.14 What are the requirements for wildfire response?** Every wildfire on our lands requires a management response.

**A. Determining the response to wildfire:**

**(1)** We base our response to wildfire on:

**(a)** The likely consequences to firefighter and public safety and welfare;

**(b)** Ecological, social, and legal consequences of the fire;

**(c)** The circumstances under which a fire occurs; and

**(d)** Cost-effectiveness.

**(2)** Wildfires can be managed wholly or in part to benefit resource objectives if these strategies are addressed in the FMP and associated land management plans.

**(3)** Managing fire on non-Federal lands is only allowable if covered under a current written agreement. The agreement must address processes for reimbursement, responder training and qualifications requirements, reporting responsibilities, and investigative requirements.

**B. Reporting a wildfire:** If a Service employee, volunteer, or contractor discovers a wildfire, the individual must report it to the appropriate authority (varies depending on the site). They must not try to suppress the fire

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unless they hold a current Incident Qualification Card. If the fire poses an imminent threat to human life, the employee may take action to protect life, but he/she may not engage in any other fire control activities.

**C. Non-wildland fire response:** Structural firefighting, including vehicle fires, are not part of our wildland fire management program. Regardless of training and qualifications, wildland fire personnel must not engage in structural or vehicle firefighting while on duty.

(1) Wildland fire personnel may only participate in protecting vegetation around a structure/vehicle or protecting a structure's exterior from approaching fire when they can do so safely.

(2) Cooperative agreements must not commit Service wildland fire personnel to structural or vehicle firefighting.

(3) Emergency medical response is not a primary function of our wildland fire management program. Wildland fire personnel may provide emergency medical care for employees and the public only within the scope of their training and licensure. Managers must not commit wildland fire personnel to planned medical responses as part of their normal duties.

**D. Emergency lighting and sirens:** Fire staff may only use emergency lighting and sirens en route to incidents if their Region has an approved Regional policy and their unit has an approved Refuge/Unit Emergency Lighting and Siren Plan.

(1) Use must be limited to imminent threat to life and public property.

(2) All light and siren equipment installed on emergency vehicles must comply with NFPA 1901 and 1906 standards.

(3) Regional policy must:

(a) Address the training requirements in NFPA 1002 and 1451,

(b) Establish oversight for emergency lighting and siren use, and

(c) Not supersede State and local safety and traffic laws or regulations. Personnel must comply with posted speed limits at all times, regardless of the type of response.

(4) Use of stationary emergency lighting is encouraged and does not require authorization.

**E. Investigating the cause:** The Project Leader is responsible for ensuring the investigation of every wildfire to determine cause. Where evidence indicates the fire was caused by arson or negligence (trespass), the Project Leader must protect evidence and initiate a fire investigation. This investigation may range from getting the responding fire crew to document the cause to requesting a qualified arson investigator to perform a criminal investigation. The Project Leader must notify the Regional Fire Management Coordinator of suspected arson.

**F. Alaska:** The Departmental Manual (620 DM 2) delegates authority to the Bureau of Land Management, Alaska Fire Service (AFS) to provide safe, cost-effective emergency wildland fire suppression services for all land the Department oversees in Alaska. While the AFS responds to wildfire incidents on our lands by providing the firefighters and equipment, the Service retains management responsibility, accountability, and decision authority for suppression activities.

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**1.15 What are the requirements for rehabilitating areas after wildfires?**

**A.** We must rehabilitate areas damaged by wildfire if they are unlikely to recover naturally. Our goal is to reestablish healthy, stable ecosystems that meet land and resource management objectives.

**B.** Requirements for the use of Departmental Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation funds are in the *Fire Management Handbook*.

**1.16 What are the requirements for prescribed fire and hazardous fuel treatments?**

**A.** We use prescribed fire and other hazardous fuel treatments whenever:

**(1)** It is an appropriate tool for managing and restoring our fish and wildlife resources and their habitats, or

**(2)** To reduce the risk of a wildfire threatening human life, property, and natural/cultural resources.

**B.** We manage all aspects of prescribed fire and other hazardous fuel treatments on Service lands. We also assist partners with funding, planning, or staffing off of Service lands if the treatment addresses Service goals at a landscape level. More information about prescribed fires and other hazardous fuel treatments both on and off of Service lands can be found in the *Fire Management Handbook*.

**C.** Before using prescribed fire and other hazardous fuel treatments, units must have:

**(1)** A current approved FMP that includes prescribed fire as a management option, and

**(2)** A current approved prescribed fire plan for the particular project. Our *Fire Management Handbook* details additional requirements for preparing, reviewing, approving, and implementing prescribed fire plans.

**D.** Prescribed fire and other hazardous fuel treatments must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other legislation and policies related to endangered species, air quality, and historic preservation. At a minimum, the Project Leader or his/her designee must prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) for each prescribed fire plan unless:

**(1)** The unit's approved FMP or planning documents and the accompanying environmental document (Environmental Impact Statement, Environmental Assessment, etc.) adequately address the action, or

**(2)** A categorical exclusion covers the activity. The process for documenting the use of a categorical exclusion is in the *Fire Management Handbook*.

**1.17 How does the Service ensure continued effectiveness and improvement of the fire management program?** We use reviews, investigations, and evaluations to assess and improve the effectiveness and safety of organizational operations.

**A. Reviews:** We examine program elements such as program management, safety, leadership, operations, preparedness, training, staffing, business practices, budget, cost containment, planning, and interagency or intra-agency cooperation and coordination. Reviews do not have to be associated with a specific incident, and we conduct them to improve future operations (see the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*).

**(1)** Fire Management Officers or their designees perform Fire Preparedness Reviews annually for all units with fire management staffing.

**(2)** Regional Fire Management Coordinators perform Fire Program Reviews for all units with fire management staffing on an established schedule.

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(3) The Chief of the Fire Management Branch initiates Large Fire Cost Reviews for any wildfire (single or complex) on Service lands that exceeds \$10 million of combined Federal costs and for fires that we expect to meet one or more of the criteria identified in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*:

(4) All fire-related accidents, including entrapments, burn-overs, fire shelter deployments, and fire damage to equipment must be reported as described in 240 FW 7 and to the National Fire Operations Program Leader.

**B. Investigations:** We investigate accidents to collect and interpret facts related to an incident or accident, identify causes (organizational factors, local workplace factors, unsafe acts), and develop control measures to prevent recurrence. (Refer to 240 FW 7 and the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*). The Regional Fire Management Coordinator and the Chief, Branch of Fire Management have the authority to initiate or supersede fire-related reviews or investigations as deemed appropriate.

**C. Evaluations:** We use evaluations to monitor and determine the effectiveness of hazardous fuels reduction, emergency stabilization, and burned area rehabilitation treatments to accomplish objectives. The evaluations combine monitoring and analysis to determine whether we achieved treatment objectives and land management goals using the fire management treatments. Adaptive management techniques are used to determine if there is a need to change treatments or plans to achieve the desired effects.

**1.18 What are the communications and outreach requirements for the fire program?**

**A.** We enhance the public's knowledge and understanding of fire management through communication and outreach programs.

**B.** The Chief, Branch of Fire Management and Regional Fire Management Coordinators coordinate with other units and among Regions to present consistent messaging and representation of the program. Regional Fire Management Coordinators should participate on interagency committees to coordinate common fire prevention outreach and news releases to the media.

**C.** Project Leaders or their designees must work together with other units, local media, and affected groups and individuals to prevent wildfires and to promote fire management programs, including:

(1) Education on fire's natural role in the ecosystem, wildfire prevention, community wildfire protection, homeowner responsibility, and emergency evacuation; and

(2) Making plans and activities related to prescribed fire available, reporting information during wildfires, and addressing public questions and concerns. Project Leaders should describe outreach actions in prescribed fire plans and incident action plans to help with fire management operations. They should include:

(a) Any imposed limits on visitor activities to prevent wildfires,

(b) Any access restrictions in areas undergoing prescribed fire or wildfire,

(c) The impacts of smoke, and

(d) Any post-fire hazards.

**1.19 How is the fire program funded?**

**A.** Unlike most other Service funding sources, fire management funds are appropriated to the Department of the Interior rather than directly to the Service. The Department manages these funds, allocates the funding to bureaus, and establishes policy and guidance about (see [section 1.3](#)) use of funds and reporting requirements.

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**B.** The Service's *Fire Management Handbook*, *Fire Business Reference Guide*, and *NWRS Budget Allocation Handbook* provide additional detail and guidance on the use of these funds.

**C.** Fire Severity Funding: Units may request short-term or long-term fire severity funding when wildfire response resources are insufficient to meet the predicted fire workload on Service lands as described in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*.

/sgd/ James W. Kurth  
ACTING DIRECTOR

Date: March 20, 2012