

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

Effective Date:

Series: Public Lands

Part 620: Wildland Fire Management

Chapter 1: Policy and Program Management

Originating Office: Office of Wildland Fire

620 DM 1

1.1 **Purpose.** This chapter documents the authorities and policies for an integrated, coordinated, and comprehensive Department of the Interior (DOI) Wildland Fire Management Program. Policy for specific Wildland Fire Management Program areas is addressed in 620 DM 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6; additional policy pertinent to the Wildland Fire Program can be found in 604 DM 2.

1.2 **Scope.**

A. The policy in this chapter applies to all DOI bureau and office activities involving wildland fire management.

B. The program encompasses all types of wildland fire management activities that impact: (1) DOI's lands, facilities, infrastructure, and resources; (2) Tribal Trust and Restricted Lands and Insular Areas; (3) the ability of the Department to execute essential functions; and (4) assistance to other units of government under Federal laws, Executive Orders, and other agreements.

1.3 **Authorities.** Statutes and references that apply to the Wildland Fire Program are listed in Appendix 1.

1.4 **Definitions.** Definitions for terms used in Part 620 are provided in Appendix 2.

1.5 **Policy.** It is the policy of DOI to provide an integrated, intergovernmental approach to the management of wildland fires for fire managers, subordinate leaders, and fire fighters; and adhere to the *Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, 1995*; the *Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, 2001*; the *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, 2009*; *A National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, 2014*; and the *Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy, 2015*.

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1.6 **Guiding Principles.** The wildland fire management program is founded on the following guiding principles and core values:

- A. Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.
- B. The role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent will be incorporated into the planning process.
- C. Fire Management Plans, programs, and activities support land and resource management plans and their implementation.
- D. Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities.
- E. Fire management programs and activities are economically viable, based upon values to be protected, costs, and land and resource management objectives.
- F. Fire Management Plans and activities are based upon the best available science.
- G. Fire Management Plans and activities incorporate public health and environmental quality considerations.
- H. Federal, State, tribal, local, interagency, and international coordination and cooperation are essential.
- I. Standardization of policies and procedures among federal wildland fire management agencies is an ongoing objective.

1.7 **Program Vision and Objectives.** The vision of DOI's Wildland Fire Management Program 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 following objectives support this vision:

- A. Risk Management and Risk Reduction. Assure management of risk to people, communities, and natural and cultural resources, is the fundamental principle used to make informed decisions in all fire management programs. Minimize the risk to people, communities, and natural and cultural resources, by assessing the potential benefits of actions, severity of concerns, and probabilities of occurrences to reduce risk.
- B. Ecological. Meet DOI bureau/office missions using the wildland fire management program to conserve natural and cultural resources, and maintain and restore ecological health.
- C. Collaboration. Implement the wildland fire management program through internal and external collaboration and partnerships.

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1.8 Risk Based Wildland Fire Management. The DOI uses a risk-based methodology approach to develop policy, manage programs and budgets, and evaluate program outcomes and performance. This approach is comprised of:

- A. Assessment of risk based on wildfire likelihood, intensity, and consequences to values.
- B. Multi-year plans that establish strategies for managing risk to values.
- C. Monitoring tools to measure the effectiveness of managing wildfire risk to values over time.

1.9 Policy Development and Issuance.

A. Office of Wildland Fire. The Office of Wildland Fire, in collaboration with bureaus/offices, develops DOI's Wildland Fire Management policy. Wildland Fire Management Policy must be consistent throughout DOI and must promote and encourage interoperability with other federal and non-federal wildland fire organizations and entities. The Office of Wildland Fire may determine, when necessary for consistency and interoperability within DOI, or with other agencies, that certain policies apply to all bureau/office programs. Policy is issued in the following forms:

- (1) Departmental Manual.
- (2) Policy Memoranda. Memoranda may be used to provide policy with limited duration or serve as interim policy until incorporated into the Departmental Manual and/or appropriate Departmental Handbook.
- (3) Departmental Handbooks. Handbooks supplement Departmental Manual Chapters and provide guidance to implement the operational aspects of the wildland fire management program. Departmental Handbooks include procedures, processes, protocols, or similar provisions that are mandatory for all employees, supervisors, or managers. Departmental Handbooks are issued in accordance with 011 DM 5.

B. Bureaus/Offices. Bureaus/offices may adopt bureau/office-specific policy that is more but not less restrictive than DOI policy. Bureau/office policy must not detract from the intent of DOI's policy. To maintain consistency and coherence, and to maximize the ability to easily interoperate with each other and other federal and non-federal partners, bureaus/offices are encouraged to minimize adopting unique policy. Bureaus/offices may issue supplemental policy in a form that best meets their needs.

1.10 Wildland Fire Budget Formulation and Execution Process. The budget formulation and execution process is a transparent and collaborative process between the Office of Wildland Fire and bureau/office fire executives and Directors. The Office of Wildland Fire is responsible

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for managing DOI's budget and financial activities related to wildland fire management programs, including managing all aspects of the budget process for DOI's Wildland Fire Management Account. Activities include, but are not limited to: budget planning, formulation, and presentation; budget execution and allocation of funds to bureaus/offices; establishment of program performance metrics; tracking and evaluating program activities to ensure proper implementation, consistency, and compliance with national policies, standards, and regulations; and coordinating budget functions and activities with DOI's Office of Budget and bureaus/offices as well as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, and other Federal agencies.

1.11 **Wildland Fire Information and Technology.**

A. Management of wildland fire information and technology is accomplished collaboratively and in coordination with other programs and organizations, including bureau/office wildland fire management programs, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, and other federal and non-federal partners. Working with those partners, the DOI uses a risk management and governance approach to standardize wildland fire business processes and provide standardized information and technology services. Services should be provided in a timely, consistent, reliable, innovative, and cohesive manner to meet business requirements and priorities of the wildland fire management program.

B. Management of wildland fire information and technology is based on an integrated and cohesive structure that maintains the integrity of reporting relationships of personnel. Within this framework, standardized project development, life-cycle management and steady-state investment practices are utilized to result in best-value and continuously improving returns. This structure also provides a clear interface between DOI and USDA investment decision making and provides a unified capability to identify information technology requirements and priorities, efficiently make investment decisions, and manage all of the investments as a single portfolio.

C. Management of wildland fire information and technology adheres to four principal goals:

(1) **Systems and Applications.** Standardized, integrated solutions, and services that enable informed, timely, and documented business decisions.

(2) **Data and Information.** Accurate, consistent, reliable, and accessible data and information across landscapes, organizations, applications, programs, and platforms.

(3) **Infrastructure and Connectivity.** A secure, integrated environment that enables efficient, effective, voice and data interconnection, and accessibility regardless of organization affiliation, or user location.

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(4) Technology and Innovation. Technology, research, and innovation to enable and enhance wildland fire business.

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Appendix 1

Wildland Fire Management Authorities

1. Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, December 2, 1980 (Pub. L. 96-487, 94 Stat. 2371).
2. Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, December 18, 1971 (Pub. L. 92-203, 85 Stat. 688; 43 U.S.C. 1601).
3. Clean Air Act, July 1955 (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.).
4. Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1995 (Pub. L. 103- 332).
5. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, May 22, 1974 (Pub. L. 93-288, 88 Stat. 143; 42 U.S.C. 5121).
6. Economy Act June 30, 1932 (41 U.S.C. 686).
7. Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act, October 29, 1974 (Pub. L. 93-498, 88 Stat. 1535, 15 U.S.C. 2201) as amended.
8. Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act, 1977 (Pub. L. 95-224, as amended by Pub. L. 97-258, September 13, 1982; 96 Stat. 1003; 31 U.S.C. 6301 thru 6308).
9. Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 1976 (Pub. L. 94-579, 43 U.S.C. 1701).

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10. Federal Property and Administrative Services Act, 1949 (40 U.S.C. 471; et seq.).
11. Healthy Forests Restoration Act, December 3, 2003 (Pub. L. 108-148, 16 U.S.C. 6501) [As Amended Through Pub. L. 110-246, Enacted May 22, 2008].
12. Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (Pub. L. 93-638, 88 Stat. 2203).
13. National Indian Forest Resources Management Act, November 28, 1990 (Presidential Order 101-630, Pub. L. 101-630).
14. National Park Service Organic Act (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1, 2, 3, and 4).
15. Administration of the National Park Service (67 Stat. 495; 16 U.S.C. 1.b (1)).
16. National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, October 15, 1966 (Pub. L. 89-669, 80 Stat. 927; 16 U.S.C. 668dd through 668ee, as amended).
17. National Environmental Policy Act, January 1, 1970 (Pub. L. 91-190; 83 Stat. 852, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347).
18. Oregon and California Act, August 28, 1937 (50 Stat. 875; 43 U.S.C. 1181e).
19. Protection Act of September 20, 1922 (42 Stat. 857; 16 U.S.C. 594).

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20. Reciprocal Fire Protection Act, May 27, 1955 (69 Stat. 66, 42 U.S.C. 185a).
21. Supplemental Appropriation Act, September 10, 1982 (Pub. L. 100-428, 96 Stat. 837).
22. Taylor Grazing Act, June 28, 1934 (48 Stat. 1269; 43 U.S.C. 315).
23. Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (Pub. L. 108-278, 118 Stat. 868).
24. Tribal Self-Governance Act of 1994 (Pub. L. 103-413).
25. Wildfire Suppression Assistance Act, April 7, 1989 (Pub. L. 100-428, 42 U.S.C. 1856).
26. Wilderness Act, September 3, 1964 (Pub. L. 88-577, 78 Stat. 890, 16 U.S.C. 1131, 1132).
27. Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species, February 3, 1999.
28. Executive Order 13751, Safeguarding the Nation from the Impacts of Invasive Species, December 5, 2016.
29. National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-57).
30. The Reclamation Act of June 17, 1902 (32 Stat. 388; 43 U.S.C. 391).

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31. Soil and Moisture Conservation Act of 1935 (49 Stat 163).

32. Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement (FLAME) Act of 2009 (Pub. L. 114-38).

Wildland Fire Management References

1. Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review, December 2005.
2. Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, January 2001.
3. Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, February 2009.
4. A National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, April 2014.
5. The Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy, May 2015.

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Appendix 2

**Wildland Fire Management Definitions
(For Part 620 DM)**

For the purposes of 620 DM the following definitions are used.

1. **Hazard.** A condition or situation that exists within the working environment capable of causing physical harm, injury, or damage.
2. **Risk.** The likelihood or possibility of hazardous consequences in terms of severity or probability.
3. **Risk Management.** The process whereby management decisions are made and actions taken concerning control of hazards and acceptance of remaining risk.
4. **Safety.** A measure of the degree of freedom from risk or conditions that can cause death, physical harm, or equipment or property damage.

All other terminology related to wildland fire management is found in the National Wildfire Coordinating Group Glossary. <http://www.nwcg.gov/glossary-of-wildland-fire-terminology>

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Chapter 2: Responsibilities and Governance

Originating Office: Office of Wildland Fire

620 DM 2

2.1 **Purpose.** This chapter describes the governance structure and responsibilities for implementing the Department's Wildland Fire Management program.

2.2 **Wildland Fire Management Governance.** The following groups develop and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders through shared governance whenever possible.

A. Wildland Fire Leadership Council. The Wildland Fire Leadership Council is established by Memorandum of Understanding signed the Department of the Interior (DOI), Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to provide an intergovernmental mechanism to support development, implementation, and coordination of Federal fire management policy.

B. Federal Fire Policy Council. The Federal Fire Policy Council is chartered by DOI, USDA, and DHS, and provides a common national federal agency approach to wildland fire management, including:

(1) Ensuring that wildland fire management policies, programs, activities, and budgets are coordinated and consistent among and between the member agencies.

(2) Striving for coordinated and consistent policies and programs with non-Federal partner and cooperator agencies.

(3) Establishing strategic policy and program direction.

(4) Providing coordinated recommendations to the Secretaries for DOI, USDA, and DHS; and

(5) Resolving inconsistencies among and between Federal wildland fire programs.

C. Fire Executive Council. The Fire Executive Council is chartered by the Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Homeland Security (DHS), and DOI to provide a common,

integrated, and coordinated Federal agency approach to wildland fire policy, leadership, budget, and program oversight. It is responsible for:

- (1) Ensuring that wildland fire management policies, programs, activities, and budgets are coordinated and consistent among and between the member agencies.
- (2) Establishing policy and program direction for Federal wildland fire program implementation.
- (3) Providing coordinated recommendations to the Federal Fire Policy Council and resolving inconsistencies among and between Federal wildland fire programs; and
- (4) Ensuring policy and program coordination and integration with non-fire management programs and activities as well as non-Federal partners and cooperators.

D. Fire Management Board. The Fire Management Board is chartered by the Fire Executive Council to provide a mechanism for coordinated and integrated federal wildland fire program management and implementation. The Fire Management Board, taking strategic policy and program direction from the Fire Executive Council, directs, coordinates and oversees the development and implementation of Federal wildland fire policy and programs to provide consistent and cost-effective program management.

E. National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). The National Wildlife Coordinating Group is chartered by the Fire Executive Council, the Chair of the National Association of State Foresters Forest Fire Protection Committee, and the President of the Intertribal Timber Council, to provide national leadership to develop, maintain, and communicate interagency standards, guidelines, qualifications, training, and other capabilities that enable synchronized operations among federal and non-federal entities. These standards, guidelines, qualifications, training, and other capabilities are adopted by individual agencies as policy or best practices. The NWCG facilitates implementation of approved standards, guidelines, qualifications, and training.

F. Fire/Resources Executive Committee (F/REC). The F/REC provides cohesion and consistency among bureaus/offices and ensures effective implementation and oversight of the Emergency Stabilization (ES) and Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) programs in the Department. The F/REC reviews and makes recommendations to the Director, Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) on requests for redistribution of funding authority. The F/REC is comprised of executives from bureau/office wildland fire and resource management programs along with the Director, OWF.

G. Interior Burned Area Emergency Response Coordinators (IBAER). The IBAER is chartered under the F/REC to provide integrated and consistent program coordination and implementation for ES and BAR programs and coordination with long term recovery and restoration activities of the bureaus/offices. The IBAER will provide program and policy advice and recommendations to the F/REC. The IBAER will provide advice and recommendations on ES or BAR redistribution requests and program-wide BAR expenses to the F/REC.

H. Wildland Fire Information and Technology Executive Board. The Wildland Fire Information and Technology Executive Board (Executive Board) is a partnership between DOI and the USDA, US Forest Service to lead and oversee the wildland fire information and technology program and investment portfolio. The Executive Board develops and maintains a multi-year comprehensive plan of all investments and program support, and develops strategies, policies, and investment recommendations for review and approval. The Executive Board establishes appropriate interagency mechanisms to coordinate the implementation of the wildland fire information and technology program in a manner that efficiently organizes and manages the work of information and technology personnel and other resources from multiple agencies and organizations.

I. Investment Review Boards. The DOI and USDA chief information officers are members of the Executive Board and work together to make joint decisions approving wildland fire information and technology strategies, multi-year plans, and individual investment proposals to ensure coordination of strategy and investment decisions between the mission business requirements of wildland fire management and other programs in both agencies; and to ensure coordination with the Chief Information Officer with respect to policy, infrastructure, and service delivery. Each department follows its respective information management and technology investment management process to move decisions forward as agreed upon by the Executive Board.

2.3 Responsibilities.

A. Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget.

(1) Provides leadership and oversight for the Department's Wildland Fire Management program and ensures that DOI establishes and maintains a Wildland Fire Management Program that implements the guiding principles and policies set forth in 620 DM 1.

(2) Coordinates and consults with senior elected and appointed leadership in other federal agencies, States, Tribes, and other entities on wildland fire management programs and policies.

(3) Provides advice and assistance to the Secretary on the Wildland Fire program, policy, and performance of the responsibilities set forth in 620 DM 1.

(3) Ensures effective consultation, collaboration, communication, and coordination with the Program Assistant Secretaries.

B. Program Assistant Secretaries.

(1) Ensure that bureaus/offices under their jurisdiction establish and implement Wildland Fire Management Programs described in Part 620 DM.

(2) Participate in wildland fire governance and coordination activities to promote common, consistent, and effective Wildland Fire programs and policies.

(3) Provide advice and assistance to the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget in fulfilling their responsibilities under Part 620 DM.

C. Deputy Assistant Secretary – Public Safety, Resource Protection, and Emergency Services.

(1) Ensures coordinated and consistent DOI-wide Wildland Fire Management programs, policies, and activities.

(2) Ensures that the budget for wildland fire management is formulated, allocated, and executed to implement the provisions of Part 620 DM.

(3) Provides direction and oversight for the Office of Wildland Fire.

(4) Ensures Program Assistant Secretaries are engaged in decision making with respect to wildland fire management policies, programs, and budgets.

(5) Provides advice to the Secretary, Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management, and Budget, and heads of bureaus/offices with respect to wildland fire management policies, programs, and budgets.

(6) Provides direction and oversight for wildland fire information and technology programs and portfolios; and coordinates through the Executive Board a common program and portfolio with the interagency communities.

(7) Serves as the liaison to the Office of the Chief Information Officer and other DOI entities for all wildland fire program information and technology investment plans, strategies, proposals, and related activities.

D. Office of Wildland Fire.

(1) Manages coordinated development, oversight, and evaluation of wildland fire management policies, programs, and budgets.

(2) Ensures integrated and coordinated wildland fire management programs, policies, and activities with other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, and other entities.

(3) Coordinates wildland fire management support of DOI's emergency preparedness and response responsibilities for all hazards.

(4) Provides advice to the Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget; Deputy Assistant Secretary – Public Safety, Resource Protection, and Emergency Services; and other DOI senior leadership with respect to wildland fire management policies, programs, and budgets.

E. Heads of Bureaus and Offices.

- (1) Establish and implement wildland fire management programs and activities to implement the provisions of Part 620 DM.
- (2) Issue policies and procedures necessary to implement the provisions of Part 620 DM.
- (3) Ensure coordination among the Office of Wildland Fire and other bureau/office programs and activities.
- (4) Provide advice and assistance to their respective Assistant Secretary in fulfilling their responsibilities under Part 620 DM.
- (5) Participate in wildland fire governance and coordination activities to promote common, consistent, and effective wildland fire programs and policies.
- (6) Ensure that wildland fire management program direction is clear, available, and understood by agency administrators and employees.
- (7) Ensure that employees are trained, certified, and available to participate in wildland fire management programs at local, regional, and national levels.
- (8) Improve the efficiency of wildland fire management by facilitating coordination and exchange of 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 level.

F. Director, United States Geological Survey.

- (1) Establishes and maintains science, technology, and information programs in support of DOI's Wildland Fire Management Program.
- (2) Coordinates wildland fire science, technology, and information programs with other Federal and non-Federal agencies.
- (3) Provides advice and assistance to the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget in fulfilling their responsibilities under Part 620 DM.

G. Bureau Fire Executives.

(1) Provide strategic leadership within their respective bureaus to implement wildland fire management programs and activities under Part 620 DM.

(2) Provide direction and oversight necessary to implement effective, efficient, and safe wildland fire management programs and activities.

(3) Ensure coordination among wildland fire and other bureau/office programs and activities.

(4) Advise and collaborate with the Office of Wildland Fire in developing, implementing, and overseeing consistent wildland fire management policies, programs, and budgets.

(5) Participate in wildland fire governance and coordination entities to promote common, consistent, and effective wildland fire programs, policies, and activities.

I. Bureau Fire Directors.

(1) Provide management, coordination, direction, and oversight for their respective bureau's wildland fire management programs.

(2) Ensure coordination among wildland fire and other bureau programs and activities.

(3) Provide advice and assistance to respective bureau directors, fire executives, and agency administrators in fulfilling their responsibilities under Part 620 DM.

(4) Provide technical advice and expertise in the development of Departmental handbooks, manuals, and other documents necessary to implement wildland fire management programs, policies, and activities.

(5) Advise and collaborate with the OWF in developing, implementing, and overseeing consistent wildland fire management policies, programs, and budgets.

(6) Participate in wildland fire governance and coordination entities to promote common, consistent, and effective wildland fire programs, policies, and activities.

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Chapter 3: Preparedness

Originating Office: Office of Wildland Fire

620 DM 3

3.1 **Purpose.** This chapter provides policy, objectives, and requirements for the Department of the Interior (DOI) Wildland Fire Preparedness program.

A. The purpose of the Preparedness program is to provide operational capability to prevent, protect against, and respond to wildfires.

B. Wildland fire preparedness includes all wildland fire management activities conducted in advance of wildland fire ignitions to ensure a safe, effective, and efficient wildland fire response to protect human life and, property, and other values; and to achieve land and resource management objectives established in land and resource management plans.

3.2 **Scope.** The policy in this chapter applies to all DOI bureau/office activities involving wildland fire preparedness.

3.3 **Policy.** It is the policy of DOI to ensure a safe, cost-effective wildland fire management program that supports land and resource management plans through planning, staffing, training, equipment, and management oversight.

3.4 **Objectives.** The objectives of DOI's Wildland Fire Preparedness program are to:

A. Provide a safe and effective risk-based wildland fire management program in collaboration with Federal, State, Tribal and local cooperators and partners.

B. Respond to wildland fire in a cost-effective manner to support agency goals and management objectives identified in land, resource, and fire management plans and execute each organization's role and responsibilities in the interagency fire community.

C. Provide managers with relevant information and procedures based on the best available science to protect human life, property, and other values; and achieve objectives established in land and resource management plans.

D. Coordinate timely assignment and mobilization of personnel, equipment, and supplies in support of wildland fires.

E. Assess program performance to determine capability and readiness to meet agency wildland fire management objectives.

3.5 Program Requirements. Bureaus/offices are required to do the following:

A. Develop a suite of unit-level, regional, and national shared wildland fire preparedness assets.

B. Base the Wildland Fire Management Program on bureau/office strategic plans, land and resource management plans, fire management plans, and agreements.

C. Proactively engage cooperators, partners, and the public to conduct wildland fire preparedness activities collaboratively.

D. Provide management oversight and support to coordinate, plan, fund, train, staff, and equip, a safe, efficient and cost-effective wildland fire management program.

E. Prepare and maintain a workforce (agency administrators, supervisors, support personnel, and firefighters), trained and qualified to develop and implement wildland fire management decisions. This includes workforce planning and development, priority setting, resource deployment, contingency development, and ensuring adequate management and supervision for every response based on current and forecasted activity and conditions.

F. Acquire, secure, and maintain information on fire weather, climatology, fuels, wildland fire activity and severity, values, risks and hazards, resources, costs and other factors to provide up-to-date information at initial response, geographic area, and national levels to support collaborative priority setting, resource deployment, contingency development, and ensure adequate management, supervision, and response to predicted changes in fire severity and activity.

G. Develop and maintain information management and decision support tools and capabilities to provide support at multiple scales to the workforce.

H. Require preparedness planning at national, regional, and unit levels and document that planning in mobilization guides, operating plans, initial response plans, fire management plans, or other documents.

I. Utilize a risk-based strategic budget formulation and allocation approach to analyze wildland firefighting capability requirements nationally, regionally, and locally, to make informed wildland fire management budget formulation and asset allocation decisions at multiple scales.

J. Require that every area with burnable vegetation has an approved fire

management plan in conformance with the area's approved land and resource management plan. Fire management plans must provide for firefighter and public safety; include acceptable fire management strategies and tactics; address values to be protected and public health issues; be consistent with land and resource management plan objectives and associated values; and comply with environmental laws and regulations.

3.6 **Handbooks.** Technical or detailed instructions, or information on specific activities that supplement policies and procedures in this chapter are set forth in one or more Departmental Handbooks, pursuant to 620 DM 1.1 A (3). The Handbooks are available at <http://elips.doi.gov>.

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Chapter 4: Wildfire Response

Originating Office: Office of Wildland Fire

620 DM 4

4.1 **Purpose.** This chapter provides policy, objectives, and requirements for the Department of the Interior (DOI) Wildfire Response program.

A. The purpose of the Wildfire Response program is to protect human life, property, and other values to meet objectives established in land and resource management plans.

B. Wildfire Response consists of all activities conducted from the time a wildfire is reported until the fire is determined to be extinguished and the documentation is completed and filed.

4.2 **Scope.** The policy in this chapter applies to all DOI bureau/office activities involving wildfire response.

4.3 **Policy.**

A. It is the policy of DOI to make informed, risk-based decisions, for effective response on every wildfire. Initial response actions, including pre-positioning of fire response assets, will be risk-based and conform to policy and land and resource management plan objectives and take into consideration risk to life, prevailing and anticipated conditions, and the ability to accomplish objectives.

B. The protection of human life is the single, overriding priority. Setting priorities among protecting human communities and community infrastructure, other property and improvements, and natural and cultural resource will be based on human health and safety, the values to be protected, and the costs of protection. Once people have been committed to an incident, these human resources become the highest value to be protected.

4.4 **Objectives.** The objectives of DOI's Wildfire Response program are to:

A. Coordinate wildfire response with Federal, State, and local laws.

- B. Make risk-based decisions and take actions commensurate with the values of the DOI protected and managed lands and resources.
- C. Provide effective wildfire responses to meet bureau/office missions; protect lives, and communities, while conserving natural resources, and restoring ecological health.
- D. Disseminate current information on wildfire activities and conditions to interested parties.
- E. Incorporate individual and organizational resilience, learning, adaptation, and accountability principles in all wildfire response practices.

4.5 **Program Requirements.** To ensure consistent implementation of Federal wildland fire policy bureaus/offices must adhere to the following guidelines:

- A. Bureaus/offices must use common standards for all aspects of their fire management programs to facilitate effective collaboration among cooperating agencies.
- B. Bureaus/offices must review, update, and develop agreements that clarify jurisdictional inter-relationships and define the roles and responsibilities among local, State, Tribal, and Federal fire protection entities.
- C. Responses to wildland fire must be coordinated across all levels of government regardless of the jurisdiction at the ignition source.
- D. Fire management planning must be intergovernmental in scope and developed on a landscape-scale.
- E. Wildland fire is a general term describing any non-structure fire that occurs in the wildland. Wildland fires are categorized into two distinct types:
 - (1) Wildfires. Unplanned ignitions or prescribed fires that are declared wildfires; and
 - (2) Prescribed Fires. Planned ignitions.
- F. A wildland fire may be managed concurrently for one or more objectives. Objectives can change as the fire spreads across the landscape. Objectives are affected by changes in fuels, weather, topography; varying social understanding and tolerance; and involvement of other governmental jurisdictions having different missions and objectives.
- G. Management response to a wildland fire on Federal land conforms to objectives established in the applicable land and resource management plan, the relative risk to associated resource values, and the fire management plan.

H. Initial action on human-caused wildfire is to suppress the fire at the lowest cost with the fewest risks to firefighter and public safety.

I. Managers must use a decision support process to guide and document wildfire management decisions. The process will provide situational assessment, analyze hazards and risk, define implementation actions, and document decisions and rationale for those decisions.

4.6 **Handbooks.** Technical or detailed instructions, or information on specific activities that supplement general policies and procedures in this chapter are set forth in one or more Departmental Handbooks pursuant to 620 DM 1.1 A (3). The Handbooks are available at <http://elips.doi.gov>.

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Chapter 5: Wildland Fire Response Program in Alaska

Originating Office: Office of Wildland Fire

620 DM 5

5.1 **Purpose.** This chapter provides policy and guidance for the Department of the Interior (DOI) Wildland Fire Response Program in Alaska.

5.2 **Scope.** The policy in this chapter applies to all DOI bureau/office activities involving wildland fire response in Alaska.

5.3 **Program Requirements.** Nothing in this chapter relieves heads of bureaus/offices of management responsibility and accountability for activities occurring on their respective lands.

A. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) maintains and operates the DOI wildland fire suppression organization in Alaska with the primary intention of providing cost-effective suppression services and minimizing unnecessary duplication of suppression systems for DOI bureaus/offices. The BLM provides statewide mobility of wildland fire resources.

B. The BLM Alaska Fire Service (BLM-AFS) is authorized to provide safe, cost-effective wildland fire response consistent with approved land, natural and cultural resource management plans on DOI administered land and on lands that require protection under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), as amended (43 U.S.C.1620(e)), hereinafter referred to as Native lands.

C. The BLM-AFS executes these services within the framework of approved fire management plans or within the mutually agreed upon standards established by the respective land managers or owners.

D. Wildland fire response services and other fire management activities provided on Native lands under the authority of ANCSA will consider Native lands managers on an equal basis with Federal land managers.

E. Each bureau/office will conduct non-response wildland fire management activities such as planning, education and prevention, fuels management, establishing wildfire response strategies, and setting priorities for the wildfire response organization on respective bureau lands.

5.4 Program Coordination. The Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (AWFCG), established and maintained through an interagency Memorandum of Understanding, includes representatives from BLM, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs, as well as other cooperators, as appropriate. The AWFCG is charged with coordinating interagency wildland fire management activities in Alaska. Each bureau representative in the AWFCG is responsible for making wildland fire management decisions and setting priorities in accordance with their respective bureau policies.

5.5 Cooperative Agreements. Specific organizational relationships between BLM, other bureaus/offices, and Native lands managers or owners will be identified in annual interagency operating and financial plans.

A. When economically and operationally beneficial for protection of DOI and Native lands, cooperative agreements may be entered into between BLM and the State of Alaska or other wildland fire response organizations to provide wildfire response services. These agreements shall be coordinated with the appropriate bureaus/offices and Native lands managers or owners. Any party whose lands are covered by a cooperative suppression agreement must remain involved in the compliance and performance of that agreement.

B. The basic responsibility for providing wildland fire response service to DOI and Native lands may not be transferred from BLM. Where BLM cooperative agreements are in effect, the responsibility for compliance with and performance of the agreement remains with BLM.

C. In southeast Alaska (south and east of Yakutat) where the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service is the primary Federal land management agency, each bureau/office is authorized to enter into individual cooperative agreements, as necessary, with the USDA Forest Service to respond to wildland fires on lands under their respective jurisdictions.

5.6 Handbooks. Technical or detailed instructions, or information on specific activities that supplement general policies and procedures in this chapter are set forth in one or more Departmental Handbooks, pursuant to 620 DM 1.1 A (3). The Handbooks are available at <http://elips.doi.gov>.

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

Effective Date:

Series: Public Lands

Part 620: Wildland Fire Management

Chapter 6: Fuels Management

Originating Office: Office of Wildland Fire

620 DM 6

6.1 **Purpose.** This chapter documents the scope, policy, and objectives for the Department of the Interior (DOI) Fuels Management Program.

A. The purpose of the program is to protect, conserve, and restore healthy landscapes and ecosystems that are resilient to wildfire-related disturbances; to enhance the ability of human populations and infrastructure to withstand a wildfire; and to enhance safe and effective wildfire response.

B. The fuels management program contributes to the DOI's mission by removing or modifying wildland fuels to reduce wildfire risk to life, property and resource values which includes: raising community awareness of wildland fire risk and mitigation measures; providing local and landscape level opportunities for safe and effective wildfire response; reducing the potential for post-fire damage; and limiting the spread or proliferation of invasive species and diseases that can contribute to wildfire spread.

6.2 **Scope.** The policy in this chapter applies to all DOI bureau/office activities involving the management of wildland fuels occurring on, or proximal to lands under the jurisdictional authority of DOI bureaus/offices.

6.3 **Policy.** The policy of DOI is to reduce wildfire risk, restore, and maintain landscapes that can absorb the effects of wildfire by regaining, maintaining, or attaining desired structural, compositional, and functional attributes; promote fire-adapted communities, and; enhance wildfire response capability over the long term through fuels management. Fuels Management activities will:

A. Protect, conserve, and restore landscapes consistent with the DOI's strategic plan and bureau/office resource and land management plans.

B. Be consistent with land management plan objectives.

C. Reduce wildfire risk to life, property, and resource values.

D. Coordinate with other federal and nonfederal partners (e.g., communities and tribal, state and local governments) to achieve the greatest social, economic and ecosystem benefit.

E. Promote the role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process at different spatial scales across the landscape.

F. Adapt to climate change by using science-based tools and information.

G. Undertake and support activities that improve and sustain both community and individual responsibilities to adapt to, prepare for, and respond to wildfire. These activities will assist tribal, state, and local government, and individual landowners with managing wildfire risk and will provide a framework for sharing costs, resources, tools, products, lessons learned, and innovations to achieve the goals of *A National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*, 2014.

H. Provide informational messages that increase public awareness, knowledge and understanding of wildland fire risk, fire ecology, wildfire prevention, resident safety and how neighborhoods, businesses, and infrastructure can mitigate risk from potential wildfires.

I. Improve the ability of firefighters to respond safely, efficiently, and effectively to wildfires by the nature, design and strategic placement of fuel treatments.

J. Provide for increased likelihood of success in accomplishing initial response objectives, including suppression, point protection, or managing wildfire for multiple objectives.

K. Provide alternatives and opportunities to manage wildfire across the landscape that achieve land management goals and tribal and public benefit.

L. Monitor, document, and record fuels activities information through authorized departmental systems of record.

6.4 **Objectives.** The objectives of DOI's Fuels Management Program are to:

A. Provide for the implementation of a safe, cost-efficient, and effective program that achieves DOI goals and management objectives.

B. Base the national program on the DOI's wildland fire management framework that incorporates risk to inform the National Fuels Program budget for each bureau/office. Use a risk-based approach that includes:

(1) Life, property, and resource values in combination with an evaluation of wildfire risk.

- (2) Strategies to reduce the DOI's wildland fire risk.
- (3) Strategies to achieve ecosystems that are resilient to wildfire.
- (4) Consideration of inter-related social and economic values.

C. Enable bureaus/offices to maintain a qualified workforce to implement risk based fuels management activities.

D. Plan and implement fuels management activities that:

- (1) Comply with DOI policy and guidance.
- (2) Use the best available science.
- (3) Comply with local air quality control district, tribal, state, local and federal government air quality regulations, including the use of basic smoke management practices.

E. Use common Departmental systems of record for financial accountability and performance reporting.

F. Practice adaptive management, including monitoring, assessment, evaluation, and adjustment.

6.5 **Handbooks.** Technical or detailed instructions, or information on specific activities that supplement general policies and procedures in this chapter are set forth in one or more Departmental Handbooks, issued pursuant to 620 DM 1.1 A (3). The Handbooks are available at <http://elips.doi.gov>.

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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Part 620: Wildland Fire Management

Chapter 7: Post-Wildfire Recovery

Originating Office: Office of Wildland Fire

620 DM 7

7.1 **Purpose.** This chapter provides the policy, objectives, and requirements for the Department of the Interior (DOI) Post-Wildfire Recovery program for use of burned area emergency stabilization (ES) and burned area rehabilitation (BAR) on bureau/office managed lands.

A. The purpose of the Post-Wildfire Recovery program (Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation) is to reduce the risk of resource damage and restore landscapes impacted by wildfire and to promote long-term restoration and recovery objectives.

B. The principal purpose of the ES program funding is to prevent further degradation of natural and cultural resources, and protect life, property, and other values.

C. The principal purpose of the BAR program funding is to protect resources by repairing or improving landscapes unlikely to recover naturally to management approved conditions within an acceptable timeframe, and to repair or replace minor assets. The BAR program funding is to initiate longer-term actions to repair damages caused by wildfire in circumstances in which natural recovery is unlikely to occur within an acceptable timeframe considering management objectives and to encourage the protection, conservation, and restoration of fire-impacted lands and resources consistent with land and resource management plan objectives.

7.2 **Scope.** The policy in this chapter applies to all DOI bureau/office activities involving post-wildfire recovery.

7.3 **Policy.**

A. Program Scope. The DOI uses ES and BAR treatments to reduce the risk of resource damage and restore landscapes impacted by wildfire and to promote long-term restoration and recovery objectives. Development of treatments will use the best available science to ensure success and effectiveness. Bureaus must link all ES and BAR project plans to long-term restoration needs and programs; and identify any future activities necessary for successful projects.

B. Funding Allocations.

(1) Emergency Stabilization.

(a) Funding is authorized at the beginning of each fiscal year within the suppression allocation. The level is based on ten percent of the ten-year rolling suppression expenditure average for DOI, which is then allocated to the fire bureaus based on the rolling 10-year average of acres burned by each bureau annually, excluding Alaska.

(b) Emergency Stabilization funding authority may be redistributed among bureaus, or the overall authority increased, if conditions warrant during the fiscal year. The Director, Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) coordinates and approves any redistribution of ES funding authority among bureaus or increase the total allocation. Requests for redistribution or increase of ES funding authority must be made in writing by the Bureau Director to the Office of Wildland Fire. Any such requests will document why the initial ES funding allocation is insufficient to meet the needs for ES projects and activities and describe management actions taken within the bureau to manage ES costs.

(c) Unused ES funding authority will not remain with a Bureau for its use in future fiscal years, except as provided by Section E(1)(b).

(2) Burned Area Rehabilitation. The BAR funding is allocated to each bureau at the beginning of the fiscal year or following Congressional appropriations. Allocations among bureaus are based on the rolling five year average of non-Alaska acres burned by each bureau, using data from the Wildland Fire Management Information System and the Fire Management Information System, after accounting for any funds to be used for administrative or program-wide costs. The BAR funding that has not been expended or obligated by the end of the fiscal year will be retained by the bureau and will not be considered in the distribution of the next year funds. The BAR funding that a Bureau Director determines is no longer required will be returned to the parent account and included in the total amount for allocation. The OWF periodically reviews bureau obligations and expenditures and makes recommendations to the AS-PMB if a bureau or bureaus have large unobligated balances. If there are large unobligated balances then the AS-PMB will work with the bureau to obligate or reallocate as needed. In accordance with normal budget procedures, bureaus should expend prior year funding (carryover) first.

C. Emergency Stabilization Project Approvals.

(1) Each bureau must establish written protocols for review and approval of Emergency Stabilization projects.

(2) Project plans for Emergency Stabilization projects must demonstrate linkage to BAR projects and long-term recovery and restoration activities.

D. Burned Area Rehabilitation Project Approvals.

(1) Each bureau must develop written protocols, to include rating criteria,

review and approval procedures, and internal bureau program and project oversight and monitoring, for projects using BAR funding based on Departmental guidance and criteria. The protocols will be provided to the Director, OWF.

(2) All projects must adhere to minimum standards to protect resources by repairing or improving landscapes unlikely to recover naturally to approved management conditions and to repair or replace minor assets. All projects must demonstrate linkage to long-term recovery and restoration and must be based on best available science to maximize success.

E. Time Frame for Use of Funds.

(1) Emergency Stabilization Funds.

(a) Emergency stabilization funding is provided for no more than one year plus 21 days after the ignition date of a wildfire, except as provided in Section E(1)(b).

(b) If ES treatments cannot be completed within one year, a local unit may request from the Bureau Director an extension based on factors such as climatic conditions or similar significant circumstances. The Bureau Director will adjudicate requests for an extension to complete the precluded treatments no later than December 31st of the second year following the ignition date, with notification to the OWF Director. Any funding used for extensions will be counted within the administrative authority for the affected bureau in the year the obligations take place.

(2) Burned Area Rehabilitation Funds. Funding for burned area rehabilitation treatments is available for no more than five years following 21 days after the ignition date of a wildfire.

F. Project Tracking, Monitoring, and Evaluation.

(1) All proposed and funded ES and BAR projects must be entered into an authoritative database of record.

(2) All funded ES and BAR projects must be monitored for consistency with project objectives.

(3) Project results and monitoring must be entered into the database of record as those data become available. Monitoring data will be collected, analyzed and stored using protocols designed to help managers fulfill monitoring requirements that encourage cooperative, interagency data management and information sharing. As necessary, the database of record will be modified to accommodate reporting of results and monitoring.

(4) The OWF, in collaboration with the bureaus will develop standard measures and tools for monitoring ES and BAR projects and evaluating the effectiveness of treatments. Funding for development of measures or tools must be treated as a program-wide BAR expense.

G. Program Governance.

(1) Fire/Resources Executive Committee (F/REC).

(a) The F/REC will provide cohesion and consistency among bureaus and ensure effective implementation and oversight of the ES and BAR programs in the Department.

(b) The F/REC will review and provide recommendations to the Director, OWF on requests for redistribution of ES funding authority.

(c) The F/REC will be comprised of executive leadership from bureau wildland fire and resource management programs along with the Director, OWF.

(2) Interior Burned Area Emergency Response Coordinators (IBAER).

(a) The IBAER will be chartered under the F/REC to provide integrated and consistent program coordination and implementation for ES and BAR programs and coordination with long term recovery and restoration activities of the bureaus.

(b) The IBAER will provide program and policy advice and recommendations to the F/REC.

(c) The IBAER will provide advice and recommendations on ES or BAR redistribution requests and program-wide BAR expenses to the F/REC.

7.4 **Handbooks.** Technical or detailed instructions, or information on specific activities that supplement general policies and procedures in this chapter are set forth in one or more approved Departmental Handbooks, issued pursuant to 620 DM 1.1 A (3). These Handbooks are available at <http://elips.doi.gov>.