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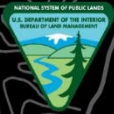
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U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

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Fire Planning Handbook

Bureau of Land Management Fire Planning Handbook H-9211-1



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Introduction

This handbook provides instructions and procedures to carry out the policy and direction described in the *Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Fire Planning Manual (MS-9211)*. This handbook is considered part of the BLM MS-9211 and has the same force of authority.

This handbook contains guidance on how to meet the requirements of *Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (“Federal Fire Policy”)*, as well as BLM regulations and policy. It contains guidance on how to meet planning requirements and how to prepare Fire Management Plans (FMPs).

This handbook along with the *Fuels Management and Community Assistance Handbook (H-9214-1)* may be used to inform fire management practitioners and line officers (those with the responsibility for making fire management decisions). It may be useful, as well, to other BLM field, district, state, and national office staff for reference purposes.

This handbook is organized as follows:

Chapter 1 – Provides an overview and explanation of policies specific to BLM fire planning.

Chapter 2 – Describes how the fire management program fits into the BLM planning process. It includes land use plan provisions related wildland fire management, a discussion on NEPA compliance for fire planning, and summarizes regulations that must be met at all levels of fire planning.

Chapter 3 – Provides an overview of the Fire Management Plan and annual review and update process.

This handbook includes terms used in fire planning. Some of these terms are listed in the Glossary section of this handbook. Terminology must consistently be used throughout all BLM fire management planning documents. The *Fire Management Board (FMB) Memorandum 19-004* provided terminology updates to the *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2009)*. FMB 19-004 updates terminology and also directed the hierarchy of terminology as being:

- 1 - Those defined in law,
- 2 - Those defined in policy, and
- 3 - All other agency and interagency documentation.

The NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire Terminology will be maintained as the source of record. When consensus cannot be achieved between Federal and non-federal NWCG members, Federal policy definitions will be so noted. Not every term used in this directive is included in this glossary. This glossary does provide notation, where applicable, for the source of each glossary term. Terms provided in this glossary shall be used as defined for this directive at the time of publication.

Chapter 1. Fire Planning Policies

This chapter provides an overview and explanation of policies specific to BLM fire management planning. Brief descriptions of the statutes that influence wildland fire management can be found in Manual 9211. Hyperlinks to documents listed below can be found in Appendix A.

1.1 Federal Fire Policy

The following Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy elements have been adopted as BLM policy. These elements support the nine Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy guiding principles, which can be found in Manual 9211.

1. **Safety** – Firefighter and public safety is the first priority. All fire management plans and activities must reflect this commitment.
2. **Fire Management and Ecosystem Sustainability** – The full range of fire management activities will be used to help achieve ecosystem sustainability, including its interrelated ecological, economic, and social components.
3. **Response to Wildland Fire** – Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale, and across agency boundaries. Response to wildland fire is based on ecological, social, and legal consequences of the fire. The circumstances under which a fire occurs and the likely consequences on firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and values to be protected, dictate the proper response to the fire.
4. **Use of Wildland Fire** – Wildland fire will be used to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and, as nearly as possible, be allowed to function in its natural ecological role. Use of fire will be based on approved fire management plans and will follow specific prescriptions contained in operational plans.
5. **Rehabilitation and Restoration** – Rehabilitation and restoration efforts will be undertaken to protect and sustain ecosystems, public health, and safety, and to help communities protect infrastructure.
6. **Protection Priorities** – 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 resources will be based on the values to be protected, human health and safety, and the costs of protection. Once people have been committed to an incident, these human resources become the highest value to be protected.
7. **Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)** – The operational roles of Federal agencies as partners in the wildland urban interface are wildland firefighting, hazardous fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. Structural fire suppression is the responsibility of Tribal, state, or local governments. Federal agencies may assist with exterior structural protection activities under formal fire protection agreements that specify the mutual responsibilities of the partners, including funding.
8. **Planning** – Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved fire management plan. Fire management plans are strategic plans that define a program to manage wildland

and prescribed fires based on the area's approved land use plan. Fire management plans must provide for firefighter and public safety; include fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives; address values to be protected and public health issues; and be consistent with resource management objectives, activities of the area, and environmental laws and regulations.

9. **Science** – Fire management plans and programs will be based on a foundation of sound science. Research will support ongoing efforts to increase our scientific knowledge of biological, physical, and sociological factors. Information needed to support fire management will be developed through an integrated interagency fire science program. Scientific results must be made available to managers in a timely manner and must be used in the development of land management plans, fire management plans, and implementation/operational plans.
10. **Preparedness** – Agencies will ensure their capability to provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land and resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, equipment, and management oversight.
11. **Suppression** – Fires will be suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected, consistent with resource objectives.
12. **Prevention** – Agencies will work together and with their partners and other affected groups and individuals to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fires.
13. **Standardization** – Agencies will use compatible planning processes, funding mechanisms, training and qualification requirements, operational procedures, values-to-be-protected methodologies, and public education programs for all fire management activities.
14. **Interagency Cooperation and Coordination** – Fire management planning, preparedness, prevention, incident management, restoration and rehabilitation, monitoring, research, and education will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of cooperators and partners.
15. **Communication and Education** – Agencies will enhance knowledge and understanding of wildland fire management policies and practices through internal and external communication and education programs. These programs will be continuously improved through the timely and effective exchange of information among all affected agencies and organizations.
16. **Agency Administrator and Employee Roles** – Agency administrators will be held accountable for ensuring that their employees are trained, certified, and made available to participate in the wildland fire program locally, regionally, and nationally as the situation demands. Employees with operational, administrative, or other skills will support the wildland fire program as necessary.
17. **Evaluation** – Agencies will develop and implement a systematic method of evaluation to determine effectiveness of projects through implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. The evaluation will assure accountability, facilitate resolution of areas of conflict, and identify resource shortages and agency priorities.

1.2 Department of the Interior (DOI) Policy

The DOI's policy on wildland fire management can be found in the *Departmental Manual Part 620 for Wildland Fire Management*.

- Chapter 1 Policy and Program Management
- Chapter 2 Responsibilities and Governance
- Chapter 3 Preparedness
- Chapter 4 Wildfire Response
- Chapter 5 Wildfire Response Program in Alaska
- Chapter 6 Fuels Management
- Chapter 7 Post-Wildfire Recovery

The following chapter descriptions of the *Departmental Manual 620* include those pertaining to fire planning.

Chapter 1 (620 DM 1) includes the authorities and policies related to the DOI Wildland Fire Management Program and documents the guiding principles and program vision.

Chapter 2 (620 DM 2) describes the governance structure and responsibilities for implementing the Department's Wildland Fire Management program.

Chapter 3 (620 DM 3) provides Departmental policy, objectives, and requirements for the Wildland Fire Preparedness program; ensuring safe, cost-effective wildland fire management in collaboration with Federal, State, Tribal and local cooperators. Program requirements specific to fire management planning includes:

- Base the Wildland Fire Management Program on bureau/office strategic plans, land and resource management plans, fire management plans, and agreements.
- Proactively engage cooperators, partners, and the public to conduct wildland fire preparedness activities collaboratively.
- 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 areas, 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.
- 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.
- 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 fire fighter and public safety; include acceptable 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.

Chapter 4 (620 DM 4) provides the following Departmental policy, objectives, and requirements for the Wildfire Response program:

- Fire management planning must be intergovernmental in scope and developed on a landscape-scale.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 documents decisions and rationale for those decisions.

Chapter 5 (620 DM 5) provides Departmental policy and guidance regarding wildland fire response in Alaska. It states that “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.” It also states that “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).” Additionally, “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” (620 DM 5.3).

Chapter 6 (620 DM 6) provides Departmental policy and objectives for the Fuels Management Program. The policy of the 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.

Chapter 7 (620 DM 7) provides Departmental policy on the Post-Wildfire Recovery program for use of burned area emergency stabilization (ES) and burned area rehabilitation (BAR). It provides definitions and objectives for emergency stabilization and rehabilitation. It establishes responsibilities for the National Burned Area Emergency Response (NBAER) coordinators designated by the BLM, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Park Service (NPS), and the Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) to function as an interagency group to coordinate program issues; establish funding priorities; plan development, implementation, and evaluation guidance; and provide training, oversight, and information.

1.3 Interagency Guidance

The *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (commonly referred to as the Red Book) states, references, and supplements agency policy and is updated annually. It must be used in conjunction with BLM directives.

To promote BIA, BLM, NPS, FWS and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (FS) coordination of emergency stabilization (ES) and burned area rehabilitation (BAR) efforts, NWCG has established a website with *Post Wildfire Recovery Programs (PWRP)*.

The *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation* is the primary guidance document for prescribed fire projects.

The *National Interagency Mobilization Guide* identifies standard procedures for mobilization and demobilization of interagency resources in response to wildland fires and all-hazard events.

The *NWCG Executive Board* will periodically issue guidance through a NWCG Memorandum. The most current interagency standards will be communicated through an NWCG Memo.

1.4 BLM Fire Policy

All BLM wildland fire management planning and vegetation management policies are consistent with Federal fire policies and include:

1. *BLM Manual 1737 Rel. 1-1611 (Riparian-Wetland Area Management)* provides direction for fire management, including retardant application distances, fireline construction and rehabilitation to prevent erosion, and emergency rehabilitation around riparian areas and wetlands.
2. *BLM Handbook H-1740-2 Rel. 1-1714 (Integrated Vegetation Management Handbook)* describes and clarifies agency expectations for a more consistent and unified approach to managing vegetation on public land. It further clarifies multi-program goals, objectives, and priorities relative to maintaining and restoring ecologically diverse, resilient, and productive native plant communities.
3. *BLM Handbook H-1742-1 Rel. 1-1702 (Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation-Handbook)* provides direction for policies, standards, and procedures used in the Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R) programs. Includes BLM-specific guidance on plan development and direction on allowable actions, timeframes, and responsibilities for both ES and BAR. As well as the relationship between the ES and BAR program to FMPs.
4. *BLM Manual 6330 Rel. 6-134 (Management of Wilderness Study Areas)* provides policy on the non-impairment standard to BLM personnel for use when managing Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), which are part of the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System.
5. *BLM Manual 6340 Rel. 6-135 (Management of Designated Wilderness Areas)* provides BLM direction to congressionally designated wilderness areas. Includes the goal of managing fire in the wilderness, management response to wildfires, actions that may be taken to control wildfires, stabilization, and rehabilitation, and prohibited uses.
6. *BLM Manual 7300 Rel. 7-109 (Air Resources Management)* provides direction on smoke management and planning activities. Smoke management planning and activities will

comply with applicable Federal, state, and local smoke management programs, regulations, and standards. Coordination with regulatory and Federal agencies to reduce the impact of smoke on the public is required. Also includes direction on managing wildfires for resource benefit.

7. *BLM Manual 9200 Rel. 9-410 (Fire Program Management)* provides consistent fire program management direction and guidance.
8. *BLM Manual 9211 (Fire Planning)* is the main source of policy for fire planning and must be used in conjunction with this handbook. The Fire Planning Manual 9211 provides information on authorities affecting fire policy, provides an overview of related laws, regulations, Federal policies, and BLM policies, and lists BLM policies that are expanded in this handbook. Federal wildland fire management policy and guidance documents are summarized in Manual 9211.
9. *BLM Manual 9212 Rel. 9-319 (Fire Prevention)* provides BLM policy that the Wildland Fire Prevention program: (1) is a high priority, and that commitment to an effective wildland fire prevention program is expected at all levels within BLM; (2) shall be designed to minimize losses from wildland fire consistent with resource objectives identified in resource management plans; (3) will stress the analysis of risks, hazards, and values, and the development of specific educational, mitigation, enforcement, and administrative actions; (4) will be coordinated with Federal, state, county, and municipal agencies as appropriate; (5) at each state, district, and field office, coordination, guidance, and assistance will be provided to achieve an effective program, and that the prevention plan is integrated with the fire management and resource management process; and, (6) funding shall be consistent with the identified need as determined through a risk/hazard analysis that is approved as part of the FMP.
10. *BLM Handbook H-9214-1 Rel. 9-429 (Fuels Management and Community Assistance Handbook)* provides overall directions, objectives, authorities, responsibilities and policies for fuels management and community assistance activities and treatments within the BLM. This handbook informs fire management practitioners, Line Managers and Agency Administrators on how to plan for, implement and monitor fuels management treatments and provide community assistance. It provides specific direction in the areas of prescribed fire plan content, complexity rating, qualifications, use of funds, and escaped prescribed fires.
11. *BLM Manual MS-9218 Rel. 9-414 (Reports and Statistics)* provides direction on fire management information reporting and statistical analysis in the BLM. This includes the current status of ongoing incidents and information on critical fire situations through the use of the Interagency Situation (SIT) Report, Incident Status Summary (ICS-209), Incident Management Situation Report (IMSR), Individual Fire Report, National and State Fire Preparedness Program Summaries and the National Implemented Resources Table.
12. *BLM Handbook H-9238-1 Rel. 9-409 (Fire Trespass Handbook)* states that fire trespass refers to the occurrence of unauthorized fire on BLM lands where the source of ignition is a result of human activity and there is evidence of negligence or intent. For human-caused fires where negligence or intent can be established, actions must be taken to recover the cost of suppression activities, emergency stabilization and rehabilitation treatments, and damages to the resources and improvements. Trespass action is both cost recovery and an effective deterrent to prevent future damage to public lands.

13. *BLM Manual MS-6220 Rel. 6-140 (National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, and Similar Designations)* provides BLM direction to presidentially proclaimed or congressionally designated National Monuments and congressionally designated National Conservation Areas and similar designations such as: Outstanding Natural Areas, Forest Reserves, National Scenic Areas and Cooperative Management and Protection Areas. Includes the goal of managing fire in these units, management response to wildfires and identify any restrictions or constraints for fire management activities.
14. *BLM Manual 6280 Rel. 6-139 (Management of National Scenic and Historic Trails and Trails Under Study or Recommended as Suitable for Congressional Designation)* section 4-18 provides BLM direction regarding wildland fire and fuels management/monitoring for designated National Scenic and Historic Trails and specifies restrictions during suppression activities.
15. *BLM Manual 6400 Rel. 6-136 (Wild and Scenic Rivers – Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, Planning, and Management)* chapter 7.5 G and H provide direction regarding vegetation and fire management for designated wild and scenic rivers.

Chapter 2. Fire Planning Requirements

This chapter describes the fire program planning portion of the BLM planning process. It includes land use plan provisions related wildland fire management, a discussion on NEPA compliance for fire planning, and summarizes regulations that must be met at all levels of fire planning.

2.1 Relationships between Planning and Implementation

The BLM’s land use planning process provides the foundation for all BLM programs, including fire management, and ensures public lands are managed in accordance with *the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA)* and regulations in *43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1600*. The relationships between Land Use Plans (LUP), Implementation Decisions, Fire Management Plans and Operational Plans, as well as wildfire decision documentation, are described below and illustrated in Figure 1.

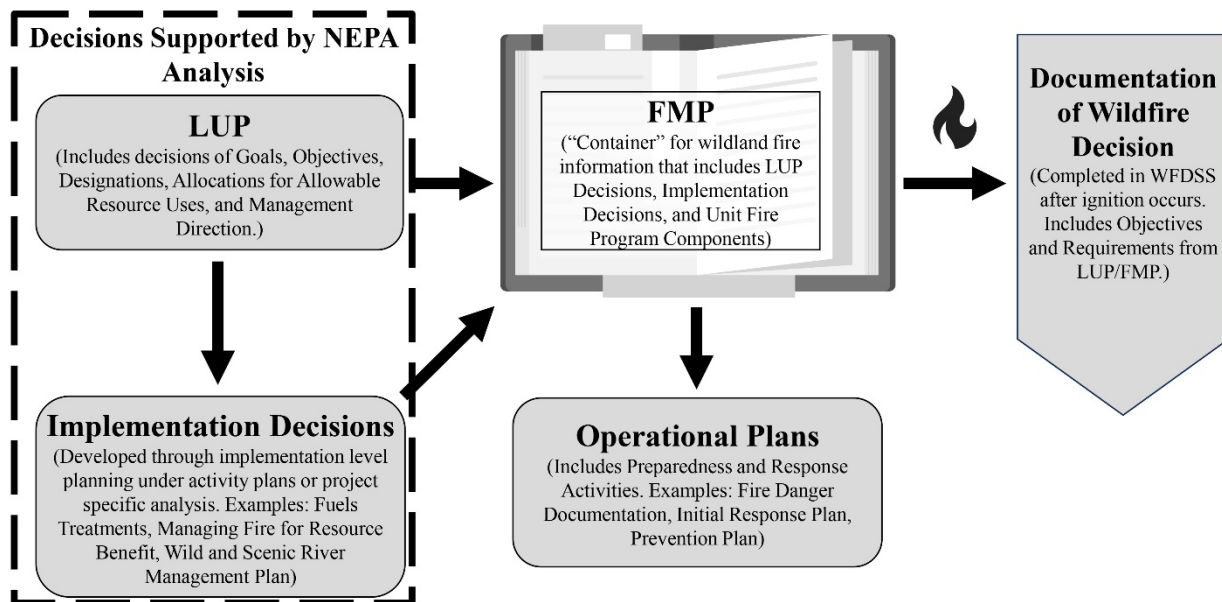


Figure 1. Relationship between planning documents, NEPA and wildfire decision documentation.

1. Land Use Plans (LUP)

Fire management planning begins at the LUP level. LUPs identify measurable objectives and supporting designations, allocations for allowable resource uses, and management direction to achieve the goals for land management (*Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601-1*, for overall policy on land use planning).

The LUP identifies landscape-level fire management goals and objectives achieved through allocations for allowable resource uses and management direction. Wildland fire management goals and objectives must be closely coordinated with other resources (e.g., vegetation, wildlife, air quality, etc.) and support those goals and objectives. The LUP also identifies areas where management of wildfires to meet resource benefit objectives would be allowed or not allowed.

Analysis under an EIS or an EA is required to support the LUP decisions. Depending on the nature of the decision and the level of analysis conducted at the LUP level, additional NEPA analysis at the site or project level is often required.

2. *Implementation Decisions*

Implementation decisions authorize on the ground action, require implementation planning and NEPA analysis, and must conform with approved LUPs. They are typically developed through implementation level planning under activity plans or project-specific analysis. Implementation planning may occur at various scales and may contain multiple site-specific projects that focus on one or multiple objectives such as fuels reduction, habitat restoration and enhancement, ES and BAR or implementing the use of wildfire to achieve resource benefits.

3. *Fire Management Plans (FMP)*

The FMP is specific to wildland fire. The FMP itself does not make or include "new" decisions, but rather is the container for wildland fire specific decisions included in the LUP(s) and any implementation decisions supported by NEPA analysis. The FMP contains decisions from the LUP(s) and other implementation decisions needed to guide fire response, preparedness, fuels management, post wildfire recovery, and operational plans.

4. *Operational Plans*

Operational plans include preparedness and response activities and outline the actions needed to carry out the fire management program requirements. These plans support the implementation of the fire management program and incorporate broad management direction found in LUPs and implementation decisions. They provide sufficient guidance necessary to accomplish management objectives. Additional guidance can be found in the Red Book – Chapter 10 and Chapter 19. Examples include fire danger documentation, preparedness level plan, initial response/preplanned dispatch plan, fire prevention plan, staffing/step-up, and mobilization guide/dispatch operating plan.

5. *Documentation of Wildfire Decisions*

BLM utilizes the *Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS)* to document wildfire incident strategic decisions. The BLM Agency Administrator (AA) is the approver of decisions documented in WFDSS and ensures these decisions are in conformance with LUP and other implementation decisions. All known human caused wildfires will only have a suppression strategy in every instance and will not be managed for a resource benefit.

WFDSS uses spatial representation of fire related direction. The level of detail provided spatially will depend on the availability of spatial data for a particular protection objective, resource management objective, and/or requirement outlined in the LUP or implementation decisions. Refer to BLM direction in Chapter 2 and Chapter 11 of the Red Book for more details on the requirements for WFDSS.

Figure 2 traces a fire management response to an unplanned natural ignition, showing connection from the LUP to the wildfire decision documentation in WFDSS if required. This figure provides three pathways: 1) LUP includes allocation/allowable use decisions for areas suitable and unsuitable for managing an unplanned ignition to achieve resource benefit, has an associated activity plan, and conditions are or are not appropriate; 2) LUP includes allocation/allowable use decisions for areas suitable/unsuitable for managing an unplanned ignition to achieve resource benefit but an activity plan has not been completed; 3) LUP does not address suitable/unsuitable areas for managing an unplanned ignition to achieve resource benefit.

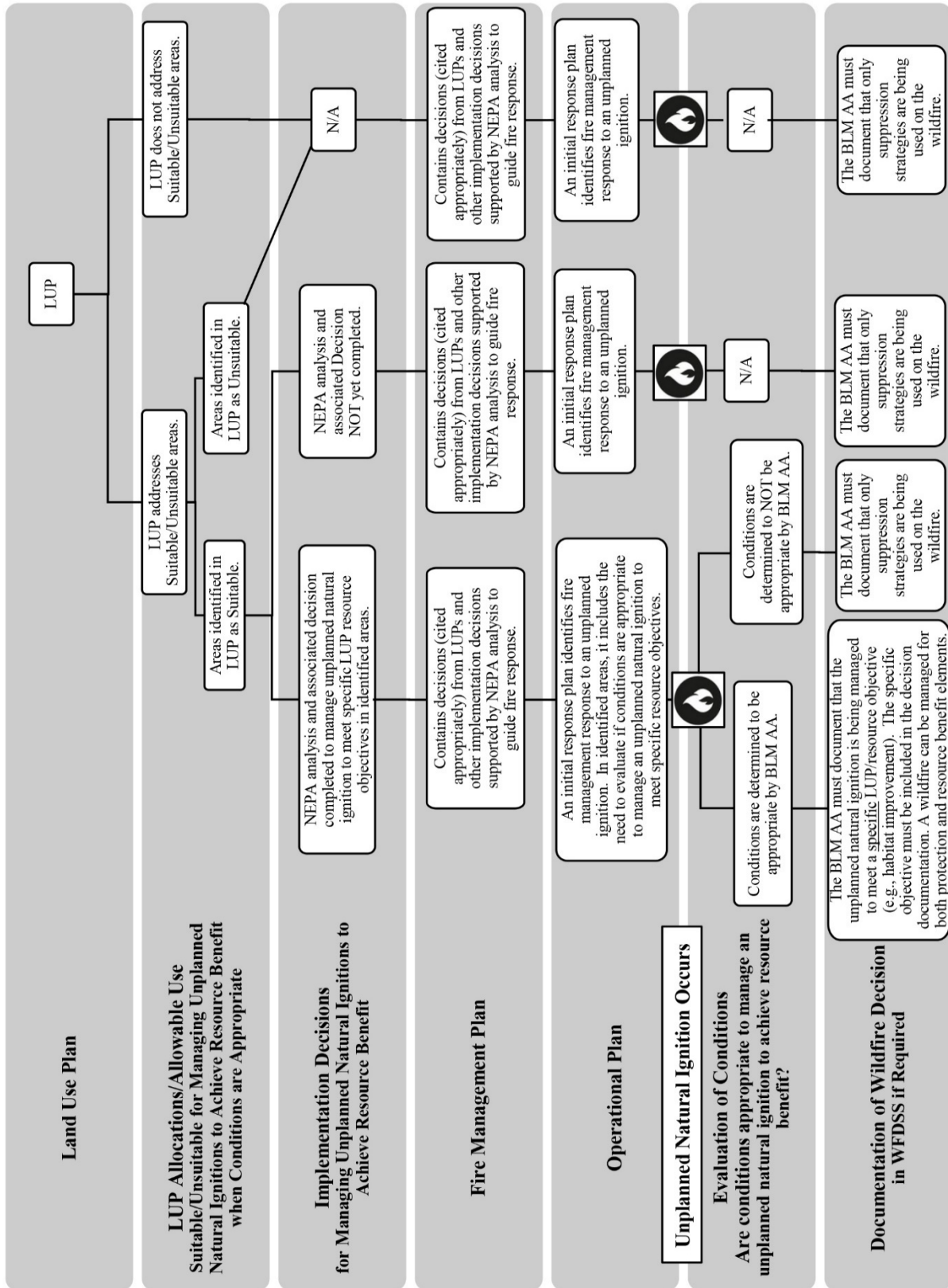


Figure 2. Tracing of Unplanned Natural Ignition Response from the LUP to Wildfire Decision Documentation

2.2 Collaboration

Collaboration among both external and internal partners is critical in fire planning efforts. In 2014, *The National Strategy: The Final Phase of the Development of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (National Strategy)* and *The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy: National Action Plan (National Action Plan)* were released. The National Action Plan is a companion to the National Strategy and supports its implementation. These documents recognize the importance of collaboration as the foundation of all fire management. Regular collaboration must occur with Tribal, Federal, state, county, and local government entities.

Examples of collaborators include adjacent BLM units, other Federal agencies, tribes, states, counties, municipalities, regulatory agencies, non-governmental organizations, or resource advisory councils.

Examples of the collaborative process include meetings with local communities and partners, pre-fire response planning (e.g., Potential Operational Delineations methodology), workshops, forums, scoping, and efforts resulting from interagency fuels committees, regional landscape planning, steering committees, or weed management groups.

2.3 Land Use Plan Provisions Related to Wildland Fire Management

Making decisions in an LUP for wildland fire management is important because all actions approved or authorized by BLM must conform to the existing LUP (*43 CFR 1610.5-3*).

Wildland fire management decisions in LUPs address how the BLM manages wildland fire on public lands as an essential ecological process and natural change agent. However, wildland fire management decisions must reflect that the protection of human life, including both firefighter and public safety, is the single, overriding priority. As appropriate for the land use planning effort, address the following LUP decisions for wildland fire management:

- i. Goals
 1. Emphasis on human life, firefighter, and public safety as overriding priorities.
 2. Recognition of the role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process.
- ii. Objectives
 1. Coordination and consistency with vegetation management objectives.
 2. Consideration of a landscape-level approach for wildland fire management including geographic areas for wildland fire management priority.
 3. Identification of wildland fire desired conditions based on historic fire regimes and ecological condition.
- iii. Allocations for Allowable Resource Uses
 1. Identification of geographic areas suitable for managing unplanned natural ignitions to achieve resource benefit when conditions are appropriate. All known human caused fires, except prescribed fire that is declared a wildfire, will only have a suppression strategy in every instance and will not be managed for resource benefit.
 2. Identification of geographic areas unsuitable for managing unplanned natural ignitions to achieve resource benefit due to social, economic, political, or resource

constraints (e.g., wildland urban interface areas); and only suppression strategies would be used.

- iv. Management Direction
 1. Circumstances and situations for appropriate uses of different wildland fire management approaches (e.g., suppression, rehabilitation, treatment).
 2. Types of wildland fire fuels management treatments appropriate to implement, including to address vegetation departure, fire regime departure, and invasives species.
 3. Identification of restrictions on wildland fire management practices including practices or timings.

Developing wildland fire-related goals, objectives, allocations for allowable resource uses, and management direction must be done in collaboration with other BLM resource programs, especially those that have vegetation and cultural resources management responsibilities. Fire and resource managers are responsible for integrating their planned actions with other management actions in order to ensure that wildland fire management actions do not contradict the desired conditions of other programs.

If LUPs do not include the information required above, incorporation may take place in the next plan revision if a revision is on-going or imminent; otherwise, an amendment for fire and fuels management should be considered. An FMP shall not be referenced as the primary source of fire management guidance within an LUP. All direction included in an FMP must be in conformance with the LUP. The planning process is described in detail and illustrated in the *LUP Handbook (H-1601-1)*. Guidance for complying with NEPA can be found in the *NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1)*.

1. *Data Sources for Existing and Desired Conditions to Support the Analysis of Wildland Fire Management in Land Use Planning*

When conducting NEPA analysis to support land use planning, field units analyze existing and desired conditions in interdisciplinary team settings. Existing and desired conditions for wildland fire management can be assessed using locally derived data sources (e.g., Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring – AIM) or nationally available data sources, which include *LANDFIRE* data products such as, Vegetation Condition Class (VCC), Vegetation Departure Index (VDI), Fire Regime Group (FRG), Existing Vegetation Type (EVT), and Biophysical Setting (BpS).

2. *Considerations of Large Fire Suppression Costs in Analysis of Wildland Fire Management to Support Land Use Planning*

BLM is required to incorporate large fire cost considerations into both land/resource management and site-specific agency planning (DOI Policy Memorandum – *Large Fire Suppression Costs Strategies and Planning Processes*, September 2005). This consideration is required not only at the LUP level, but at subsequent planning levels when planning efforts identify actions that may affect suppression costs. Wildland fire management strategies must result in minimum suppression costs, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected, consistent with resource objectives.

NEPA analysis to support wildland fire management decisions should analyze issues needed to

inform suppression costs, firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected, as appropriate. As it relates to analysis of suppression costs, analysis does not require calculation of actual monetary figures. Instead, the analysis may describe, in a relative manner, how one alternative compares with another.

Actions that may affect fire suppression costs include:

- a. establishment of vegetation management objectives that leave land and/or resources at greater risk of damage from wildfire, and therefore, increase suppression costs;
- b. restrictions on the application of the use of wildland fire;
- c. restrictions on suppression activities to meet other resource objectives;
- d. actions that promote the expansion of invasive plants that alter fire regimes; or,
- e. actions that may limit suppression access, such as road decommissioning, to meet other resource objectives.

2.4 National Environmental Policy Act Compliance for Wildland Fire Planning

The level and detail of analysis necessary to comply with NEPA depends upon the detail and the scope of wildland fire management decisions being made, as well as the level or type of NEPA analysis completed at the previous level of planning. BLM uses various types of documents to meet NEPA requirements: environmental impact statements, environmental assessments, determinations of NEPA adequacy, and categorical exclusions. The types of NEPA documents and guidance for when it is appropriate to use each kind can be found in the *NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1)*.

1. Full Force and Effect

The Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA) amended its regulations governing hearings and appeals to codify who has a right of appeal, and to expedite review of wildfire management decisions. The BLM added regulations allowing wildfire management decisions to become effective immediately, or on a date established in the decisions (or Full Force and Effect – FFE) when vegetation, soil, or other resources on the public lands are at substantial risk of wildfire due to drought, fuels buildup, or other reasons, or when public lands are at immediate risk of erosion or other damage due to wildfire and to expedite review of those decisions. These regulations are found in *43 CFR 4190.1 (Grazing Administration)* and *43 CFR 5003.1 (Forest Management)*.

The BLM decision-makers may exercise FFE decision authority on appropriate wildfire management decisions. Managers must make reasonable efforts to discuss their decisions with interested parties, partners, stakeholders, and state, local, and Tribal governments during project planning and NEPA analysis. Placing decisions in FFE allows the authorized officer to make decisions effective immediately, or on a date established in the decision. Efforts must be taken to provide the opportunity for public comment during the planning phase. Use of FFE authority is discretionary.

2.5 Other Regulatory Compliance and Statute Requirements

All BLM planning decisions and actions shall comply with all applicable Tribal, federal, state and local laws, statutes, regulations, and standards. National statutes applicable to wildland fire management are described in the Fire Planning Manual (M-9211). The following sub-sections

detail how some of these statutes influence BLM wildland fire management planning efforts.

1. *Clean Air Act*

The BLM actions (either directly or through use authorizations) must follow state air quality and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations for air quality. Mandatory Class 1 areas, which include national parks and wilderness areas (over 6,000 acres and over 5,000 acres, respectively, (at enactment of Clean Air Act amendments of 1977) are subject to visibility protection regulations. While usually only stationary sources of pollution are restricted, there are some states with specific regulations that address intrusions of smoke from prescribed fires that may adversely affect visibility. Impacts from smoke either resulting from wildfires or prescribed fires should be planned for and coordinated with air resource specialist at the local or state level. For additional information regarding smoke policy, statutory criteria, the Exceptional Events Rule, and conformity provisions refer to the BLM Fuels Management and Community Assistance Handbook (H-9214-1).

2. *Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act*

The BLM must fulfill its obligations under the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act to maintain waters that meet or surpass designated beneficial uses, to restore impaired water resources in support of their designated beneficial uses, and to provide water for public consumption and use.

Non-point source pollution, the largest source of water quality problems on public lands, comes from diffuse or scattered sources rather than from outlet specific points, such as a pipe, that constitutes a point source. Sediment is a non-point source of pollution that results from activities such as grazing, timber harvest, and erosion, associated with wildland fires. Erosion and delivery of eroded soil to streams is the primary non-point source pollution predicament facing the BLM and needs to be of primary concern when planning for fuels treatments, suppression rehabilitation, emergency stabilization, and burned area rehabilitation.

3. *Endangered Species Act (ESA)*

Generally, compliance with the ESA will take place at the LUP and activity plan levels. The *Endangered Species Consultation Handbook for Procedures for Conducting Consultation and Conference Activities under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (1998)* provides guidance on the requirements of Section 7 consultation.

Offices need to consider whether wildland fire management actions may affect listed species. If so, consultation must be initiated. Early consultation is key to ensuring that regulatory agency staff is involved early in the planning process so they can better understand program objectives and provide technical assistance, so the biological assessment/opinion process is efficient. It is important to work with field office biologists to determine if any programmatic consultations cover wildland fire management actions. Conservation measures developed from programmatic consultations must be included in all planning documents.

Programmatic consultations are encouraged and could be developed for: fuels programs, use of wildland fire, ES and BAR, or suppression actions that clearly describe conservation measures that could be used at the project level to ensure “no effect,” and avoiding having to reach

agreement on such measures during emergency consultations.

Emergency Consultations (50 CFR 402.05)

Emergency consultations during wildfire may be required if listed species could be affected by suppression actions. It is important to work with field office biologists if emergency consultation is needed. The ESA consultation regulations recognize that an emergency may require expedited consultation. The process for emergency consultations is outlined in the *ESA Section 7 Consultation Handbook Ch. 8*.

4. *The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)*

Planning documents must provide cultural resource information relevant to all potential wildland fire management actions. Where developed, this information may include the types of sites within specific management areas, their particular cultural resource vulnerabilities to proposed actions, and measures suitable for their cultural resource protection. For wildland fire suppression activities, it is recommended to identify where and/or when to coordinate with a cultural resource specialist.

BLM must consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer/Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO/THPO) to identify historic properties that may be affected by their actions and the potential for adverse effects (*36 CFR 800*). The BLM must consult with the SHPO/THPO, Tribes, other consulting parties, and the public, on ways to avoid, minimize, mitigate, or resolve adverse effects.

Compliance with section 106 of the NHPA is conducted under a national programmatic agreement between the BLM, the ACHP, and National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and implementation of state-specific protocols where applicable. Approaches to section 106 compliance should be discussed with cultural resource specialists to determine the regulatory tools and flexibilities that are available or appropriate for a given situation.

5. *Wilderness Act*

The Wilderness Act generally prohibits commercial activities, motorized access, motorized vehicles, boats and equipment, the landing of aircraft, roads (including temporary roads), structures and facilities in wilderness areas. The management guidelines of the Wilderness Act permit exceptions to these prohibitions in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the wilderness area. The regulations for wilderness management on BLM lands are found in *43 CFR 6300*.

Emergency Functions in Wilderness (43 CFR 6303.1)

To meet the minimum requirements for the administration of wilderness areas, BLM may: (a) use, build, or install temporary roads, motor vehicles, motorized equipment, mechanical transport, structures or installations and land aircraft, in designated wilderness; (b) prescribe conditions under which other Federal, state, or local agencies or their agents may use, build or install such items; (c) authorize officers, employees, agencies, or agents... to occupy and use wilderness areas to carry out the purposes of the Wilderness Act or other federal statutes; and (d) prescribe measures that may be used in

emergencies involving the health and safety of persons in the area, including, but not limited to, the conditions of use of motorized equipment, mechanical transport, aircraft, installations, structures, rock drills, and fixed anchors.

Provisions for Control of Fire, Insects and Disease in Wilderness Areas (43 CFR 6304.22)

The BLM may prescribe measures to control fire, noxious weeds, non-native invasive plants, insects, and diseases. The BLM may require restoration concurrent with, or as soon as practicable, completion of such measures.

Chapter 3. Fire Management Plans

This chapter provides an overview on the processes for preparing, reviewing, and updating FMPs. The FMPs must be developed, reviewed, and approved in conformance with requirements set out in the BLM Fire Management Plan Template released under BLM directives, the *Fire Planning Manual (M-9211)* and this handbook.

The purpose of the FMP is to provide fire managers with a tool for applying on-the-ground fire-related direction. The FMP includes decisions from the land use planning process necessary to implement wildland fire management decisions and decisions from implementation plans that address wildland fire management. It is specific to wildland fire. The FMP itself does not make or include "new" decisions, but rather is the container for decisions at the LUP or implementation plan(s) level that have already undergone NEPA analysis. The FMP contains decisions from the LUP(s) and other implementation decisions needed to guide fire response, preparedness, fuels management, post wildfire recovery, and operational plans.

The FMP must:

- Provide for firefighter and public safety
- Formally document a unit's fire program components
- Consolidate decisions from land use plan (LUP) and implementation decisions specific to wildland fire
- Include acceptable fire management strategies and tactics
- Address values to be protected and public health issues
- Be consistent with resource management objectives and activities and comply with environmental laws and regulations

The FMPs must be developed using a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach. All BLM programs that affect or are affected by fire management should participate in the FMP development process. These programs may include range, forestry, wildlife, recreation, soils and hydrology, vegetation, cultural, botany, visual resources, paleontology, and the National Landscape Conservation System program. Managers should ensure that these program staffs participate on fire planning teams to ensure their resources are appropriately addressed throughout the planning process. Managers should ensure that LUP and implementation decisions related to the wildland fire program are included in the FMP. Managers should also ensure that any other resource program implementation plans are identified and, where wildland fire suppression would be inappropriate, the decisions of those other plans are included in the FMP so that wildland fire can be managed to support other resource objectives.

The FMPs must identify and integrate all wildland fire management and related activities within the context of the approved LUP. Wildland fire management goals should be coordinated across administrative boundaries on a landscape basis. Fire management decisions should be consistent or compatible across administrative lines.

The area covered by an FMP should have spatially defined sub-areas to more easily describe LUP and site-specific goals, objectives, desired conditions, and include historical fire occurrence. The FMP must identify fire management activities based on LUPs and

implementation decisions.

3.1 Annual Fire Management Plan Review Process

Review of the FMP will occur annually. The FMP annual review is completed to determine if the FMP needs maintenance or a full revision. FMP maintenance does not require new signatures or a new approval date on the front page. Any substantial update requirements found during the review will require a full revision and transition to the most recent template with new signatures and a new approval date.

1. FMP Annual Review

The BLM's Fire Management Plan Annual Review Checklist (included as part of the BLM Fire Management Plan Template) must be completed and signed by the Fire Management Officer(s) (FMO) and District Manager(s).

2. FMP Maintenance

FMP maintenance includes minor updates not considered substantial. Changes not considered substantial could include such items as editing dialogue (not LUP direction) for clarification or inserting updated maps and/or informational maps that improve the document and provide for better decision making. These changes must be documented on the FMP Annual Review Checklist and kept with the FMP using whatever plan maintenance errata sheets are used in the specific state.

3. FMP Revision

FMP revisions are necessary when changes in circumstances indicate that the entire plan or a major portion of the plan no longer serve as a useful guide for the fire management program. The FMP Annual Checklist lists items that would trigger a full revision. An example would be a revision/amendment to LUPs or new implementation decisions affecting wildland fire management direction. Offices should work with the state office if determination for the need of a full revision is uncertain; the National Fire Planning and Fuels Management Division staff is also available for assistance. When an FMP is revised, it must conform with the requirements set out in the most recent BLM Fire Management Plan Template released under the BLM Fire and Aviation Directives.

4. FMP Approval

District managers are accountable for the review and approval of the FMP. The entire list of responsibilities for coordinating the development, review and approval of FMPs are listed in the *Fire Planning Manual (M-9211)*.

5. FMP and Annual Review Checklist Posting

Annual Review Checklists and the most current FMP (including FMP maintenance changes) must be posted on state SharePoint sites. In addition, BLM approved FMPs must be 508 compliant if they are publicly accessible and meant for public consumption.

Glossary

Terminology must consistently be used throughout all BLM wildland fire management planning documents. The *Fire Management Board (FMB) Memorandum 19-004* provided terminology updates to the *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2009)*. FMB 19-004 updates terminology and also directed the hierarchy of terminology as being:

- 1 - Those defined in law,
- 2 - Those defined in policy, and
- 3 - All other agency and interagency documentation.

The NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire Terminology will be maintained as the source of record. When consensus cannot be achieved between federal and non-federal NWCG members, Federal policy definitions will be so noted. Not every term used in this directive is included in this glossary. This glossary does provide notation, where applicable, for the source of each glossary term. Terms provided in this glossary shall be used as defined for this directive at the time of publication.

Activity Plan – a program or area specific detailed implementation-level plan that usually describes multiple projects and the specific management direction that will be applied to meet specific land use plan objectives. Examples of activity plans include habitat management plans, recreation area management plans, wild and scenic river management plans, monument management plans, area of critical environmental concern management plans, herd management plans, and allotment management plans.

BLM Agency Administrator (AA) - a BLM line manager (e.g., state director, district manager, or field manager) or their designated acting that has met specific training requirements and has wildland fire decision authority for a defined area, as specified by delegation. Refer to the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book)* for further information.

Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) – Refer to Rehabilitation.

Emergency Stabilization – Planned actions to stabilize and prevent unacceptable degradation to natural and cultural resources, to minimize threats to life or property resulting from the effects of a fire, or to repair/replace/construct physical improvements necessary to prevent degradation of land or resources (*NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire, PMS 205*).

Fire Management Plan (FMP) – A compilation of goals, objectives, and requirements from the land/resource management planning process necessary to implement wildland fire management decisions (*FMB Memorandum 19-004, (NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire, PMS 205)*) and formally documents a unit's fire program components.

Fire Regime – Description of the patterns of fire occurrence, frequency, size, and severity and sometimes, vegetation and fire effects as well - in a vegetation type or ecosystem. Fire regimes are most commonly characterized by variables such as frequency, severity, effects, meteorology, patch and pattern, seasonality, and fire behavior characteristics. A fire regime is a generalization based on fire histories at individual sites. Fire regimes can often be described as cycles because

some parts of the histories usually get repeated, and the repetitions can be counted and measured, such as fire return interval.

Implementation Decisions – decisions that authorize on the ground action to implement the RMP. These decisions are generally appealable to Interior Board of Land Appeals under *43 CFR 4.410 (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1)*.

Land Use Plan (LUP) – A set of decisions that establish management direction for land within an administrative area, as prescribed under the planning provisions of *Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA)*; a document containing an assimilation of planning level decisions developed through the planning process outlined in *43 CFR 1600*, regardless of the scale at which the decisions were developed. The term includes both resource management plans (RMP) and management framework plans (MFP) (*BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1*).

Prescribed Fire – A wildland fire originating from a planned ignition in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and regulations to meet specific objectives. Refer to also: Wildland Fire (*FMB Memorandum 19-004, NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire, PMS 205*).

Rehabilitation – Efforts undertaken within 5 years of a wildland fire to repair or improve fire damaged lands unlikely to recover to a management approved condition, or to repair or replace minor facilities damaged by fire.

Restoration – The continuation of rehabilitation beyond the initial 5 years or the repair or replacement of major facilities damaged by the fire.

Use of Wildland Fire – Management of wildfire or prescribed fire to meet resource objectives specified in land/resource management plans (*FMB Memorandum 19-004, NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire, PMS 205*).

Wildland Fire – Any non-structure fire that occurs in vegetation or natural fuels. Includes Wildfires and Prescribed Fires (*FMB Memorandum 19-004, NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire, PMS 205*).

Wildfire – A wildland fire originating from an unplanned ignition, such as lightning, volcanos, unauthorized and accidental human caused fires, and prescribed fires that are declared wildfire (*FMB Memorandum 19-004, NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire, PMS 205*).

Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) – The *Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS)* is a web-based decision support system that provides a single dynamic documentation system for use beginning at the time of discovery and concluding when the fire is declared out. WFDSS is the decision support documentation platform for all federal wildfires. WFDSS allows the agency administrator to describe and assess the fire situation, review completed fire behavior analysis products, develop incident objectives and requirements, develop a course of action, evaluate relative risk, complete an organization assessment, document the rationale, and publish a decision.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) – The line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels (*FMB*

Memorandum 19-004, NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire, PMS 205).

Appendix A - References

Laws and Acts:

[Clean Air Act](#)

[Clean Water Act](#)

[Endangered Species Act \(ESA\)](#)

[Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation Handbook](#)

[Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 \(FLPMA\)](#)

[National Historic Preservation Act \(NHPA\)](#)

[Safe Drinking Water Act](#)

[Wilderness Act](#)

[Wild and Scenic Rivers Act](#)

Regulations:

[Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\)](#)

[36 CFR 800](#)

[40 CFR 1501.11, 1501.12, 1508.1](#)

[43 CFR 4.410](#)

[43 CFR 46, 46.120, 46.210](#)

[43 CFR 1600, 1610.5-3](#)

[43 CFR 4190.1](#)

[43 CFR 5003.1](#)

[43 CFR 6300, 6303.1, 6304.22](#)

[50 CFR 402.05](#)

[Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) – Exceptional Events Rule](#)

Departmental Manuals:

[Departmental Manual Part 516 for National Environmental Policy Act](#)

[Departmental Manual Part 620 for Wildland Fire Management](#)

BLM Manuals:

[BLM Air Resources Management Manual \(MS-7300\)](#)

[BLM Fire Planning Manual \(MS-9211\)](#)

[BLM Fire Prevention Manual \(MS-9212\)](#)

[BLM Fire Program Management Manual \(MS-9200\)](#)

[BLM Management of Designated Wilderness Areas Manual \(MS-6340\)](#)

[BLM Management of Wilderness Study Areas \(MS-6330\)](#)

[BLM National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, and Similar Designations \(MS-6220\)](#)

[BLM Reports and Statistics Manual \(MS-9218\)](#)

[BLM Riparian – Wetland Area Management Manual \(MS-1737\)](#)

[BLM Wild and Scenic Rivers Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, Planning, and Management \(MS-6400\).](#)

BLM Manuals can also be found on the [BLM National Policy Place SharePoint](#) (VPN required).

BLM Handbooks:

[BLM Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Handbook \(H-1742-1\)](#)

[BLM Fire Trespass Handbook \(H-9238-1\)](#)

[BLM Fuels Management and Community Assistance Handbook \(H-9214-1\)](#)

[BLM Integrated Vegetation Management Handbook \(H-1740-2\)](#)

[BLM Land Use Planning Handbook \(H-1601-1\)](#)

[BLM National Environmental Policy Act Handbook \(H-1790-1\)](#)

BLM Handbooks can also be found on the [BLM National Policy Place SharePoint](#).

Other:

[Cohesive Wildfire Management Strategy](#)

[The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy: National Action Plan \(National Action Plan\)](#)

[The National Strategy: The Final Phase of the Development of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy \(National Strategy\)](#)

[Federal Wildland Fire Policy](#)

[Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy \(2009\)](#)

[Fire Management Board \(FMB\) Memorandums](#)

[FMB Memorandum 19-004](#)

[FMB Memorandum 19-004a](#)

[Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations \(Red Book\)](#)

[LANDFIRE](#)

[National Fire Plan](#)

[National Interagency Mobilization Guide](#)

[NWCG Executive Board Memorandums](#)

[NWCG Glossary](#)

[NWCG Post Wildfire Recovery Programs \(PWRP\)](#)

[NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation](#)
[Wildland Fire Decision Support System \(WFDSS\)](#)

Appendix B – Acronyms

ANCSA	Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
BAR	Burned Area Rehabilitation
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BLM-AFS	Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service
BpS	Biophysical Settings
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CX	Categorical Exclusion
DM	Departmental Manual
DNA	Determination of NEPA Adequacy
DOI	Department of the Interior
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ES	Emergency Stabilization
ES&R	Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation
ESA	Endangered Species Act
EVT	Existing Vegetation Type
FFE	Full Force and Effect
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
FMB	Fire Management Board
FMO	Fire Management Officer
FMP	Fire Management Plan
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FRG	Fire Regime Group
FS	Forest Service
FWS	Fish and Wildlife Service
ICS-209	Incident Status Summary
IMSR	Incident Management Situation Report
LUP	Land Use Plan
NBAER	National Burned Area Emergency Response
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPS	National Park Service
NWCG	National Wildfire Coordinating Group
OHA	Office of Hearings and Appeals
OWF	Office of Wildland Fire
PWRP	Post Wildfire Recovery Programs
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SIT	Interagency Situation Report
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VCC	Vegetation Condition Class
VDI	Vegetation Departure Index
WFDSS	Wildland Fire Decision Support System

WUI Wildland Urban Interface