



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

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OWF POLICY MEMORANDUM 2015-008

To: Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, National Park Service
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation
Director, U.S. Geological Survey

From: Jim Douglas, Director - Office of Wildland Fire

Subject: Wildland Fire Management (WFM) - Community Assistance

Purpose: This memorandum provides Wildland Fire Management (WFM) program direction by defining the scope and reporting requirements for community assistance activities within the framework of WFM preparedness and fuels management programs, in support of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy). This memorandum supersedes Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) Policy Memorandum 2014-006, dated December 15, 2014.

Background: The nature of community assistance in the Department of the Interior (Department) has evolved considerably from the National Fire Plan of 2001 to the present. Early efforts, funded through the fuels program, focused on residential areas in the wildland-urban interface. More recently, communities and agencies have recognized the value of a more holistic, landscape, risk-based approach that considers infrastructure, socio-economic factors, cultural-historic values, natural resources, and watersheds that are important community values. Community assistance activities help to reduce wildfire risk to a variety of community values and are not limited to preparedness, fuels management, or the wildland-urban interface.

The Cohesive Strategy encompasses three goals:

- *Restore and Maintain Landscapes:* Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with management objectives.
- *Fire-Adapted Communities:* Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.
- *Wildfire Response:* All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, and efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.

Community assistance activities are important components of the Department's strategy for implementing goals of the Cohesive Strategy. Achieving these goals envisions and requires collaboration between Federal, tribal, state, and local governments and communities.

The Cohesive Strategy emphasizes an "all-hands, all-lands" approach that focuses on maintaining, developing, and growing partnerships. Collaboration among partners and

stakeholders is the key to successful implementation of the Cohesive Strategy. This inclusive approach allows the Department and the bureaus to focus on the primacy of bureau missions while supporting tribal, state, and local government and partners in our shared wildland fire management responsibilities.

Scope: This Policy Memorandum provides WFM Program direction for community assistance activities and establishes definitions and criteria for reporting accomplishments.

Time Frame: This Policy Memorandum is effective immediately and remains in effect until either rescinded or superseded.

Policy: WFM community assistance will 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 the Cohesive Strategy.

Community Wildfire Protection Plans or an equivalent plan (CWPP/E) will outline community assistance activities and/or treatments. The Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003 defines a CWPP/E as a plan for an at-risk community that is:

- a) developed within the context of the collaborative agreements and the guidance established by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council; agreed to by the applicable local government, local fire department, and the state agency responsible for forest management, in consultation with interested parties and the Federal land management agencies managing land in the vicinity of the at-risk community;
- b) identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommends the types and methods of treatment on Federal and non-federal land that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure; and
- c) recommends measures to reduce structural ignitability throughout the at-risk community.

The [HFRA of 2003](#) defines an “at-risk community,” broadly, which effectively means that any area meets the definition if it is in the wildland urban interface and is a group of homes and other structures with basic infrastructure and services (such as utilities and collectively maintained transportation routes) within or adjacent to Federal land and is threatened by wildfires. Guidance for preparing a CWPP/E for communities at-risk from wildland fire is found in the [CWPP Handbook](#).

An equivalent plan is defined as a plan designed to assist communities and individuals to adapt to, prepare for, and respond to wildfire that has been developed in coordination with interested parties.

Each bureau will designate a national community assistance coordinator with responsibility for coordinating and documenting their respective community assistance activities. The Department community assistance coordinator is the OWF Fuels Management Program Lead who will coordinate and document WFM community assistance activities throughout the Department. Bureaus are responsible for coordinating with tribal, state, and local governments, communities, and partners to submit fire adapted community assistance materials (e.g., success stories, tools, initiatives, and other materials). Submissions will follow the guidance in the “Community Assistance Materials Submission Guidelines” document (Attachment 1). Bureaus will submit materials as they are completed and/or implemented. The sharing of best practices and

innovations in order to accelerate fire adapted community concepts nationwide is fundamental to achieving the goals of the Cohesive Strategy. The Department will post submissions to the [Forests and Rangelands website](#) in order to make them available to other Federal agencies, tribes, state and local governments, and communities.

Community assistance uses two metrics for reporting accomplishments.

1. The occurrence of tribal or field unit sponsored fire-adapted community activities at the unit level:

Three accomplishment-reporting elements comprise this metric and include: a) wildland fire education; b) wildfire prevention education; c) assistance actions.

2. The number of Community Wildfire Protection Plan or Equivalent Plan (CWPP/E) actions that included tribal or field unit participation:

Two accomplishment-reporting elements comprise this metric and include: a) number of CWPP/E created or updated in which the unit participated; b) number of Activities or Treatments completed and associated with a CWPP/E.

Bureaus will report annual community assistance accomplishments by tribal or field unit using “Community Assistance Metrics for Reporting Accomplishments” (Attachment 2) and “Community Assistance Accomplishment Reporting Template” (Attachment 3). Reports will be submitted on or before October 31 each year.

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Attachment 1 – Community Assistance Materials Submission Guidelines

Attachment 2 – Community Assistance Metrics for Reporting Accomplishments

Attachment 3 – Community Assistance Accomplishment Reporting Template

Attachment 1 – Community Assistance Materials Submission Guidelines

Background:

The development and sharing of best practices and innovations in order to accelerate the adoption of fire-adapted community concepts nationwide is an important component of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy) and includes all facets of wildland fire management. The shared stories are also beneficial for wildland fire management outreach purposes. The Wildland Fire Lessons Learned community, “Together We Can Do More – A Portal for Community Assistance,” has been established to share information that demonstrates local answers to the Nation’s wildland fire management challenges.

To submit materials, you must either be or become a member of the [Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center](#). Community assistance materials will be submitted through the [“Together We Can Do More – A Portal for Community Assistance”](#) web community, hosted by the Center. When submitting community assistance materials, the following template will be used:

Please include all of the following information (Microsoft® Word format):

Heading:

1. Fiscal Year:
2. State(s):
3. Agency(s):
4. Theme(s) (i.e., note the theme(s) that the story addresses):
 - a. Maintain and Restore Resilient Landscapes
 - b. Fire-Adapted Communities
 - c. Response to Wildfire
 - d. Wildland Fire Education
 - e. Wildfire Prevention

Content:

1. Title of the material
2. Text: Provide enough information about the community assistance material to develop a web page for internal and external audiences on the Forest and Rangelands website. Describe who, what, when, where, and why about the project, accomplishment, or event. Generally, the narrative should be between 500-1,000 words, although there is no minimum or maximum word requirement.
 - a. Provide who (entity or entities), including the department, agency, state, institution, organization to specifically identify the party or parties involved.
 - b. Describe completely and concisely what the project, accomplishment, or event is about.
 - c. Include where it took place or is taking place.
 - d. Include when it took place or is taking place. Include start and/or stop dates, by calendar or fiscal year.
 - e. Describe why it took place or is taking place. In order to tell the reader why this activity or material is important.
 - f. Provide photographs to illustrate (see the following Photo guidelines below) with captions and credits.

3. Provide contact Information:
 - a. Contact
 - b. Contact Email and Phone Number
4. Key Words: Optional – including keyword descriptors at the bottom is optional.

Please limit your use of keywords to one or more of the following:

 - a. Changing Climate
 - b. Restore and Enhance Landscapes
 - c. Volunteerism and Employment
 - d. Water Conservation and Restoration
 - e. Alternative Energy
 - f. Native American Nations
 - g. Cost Effectiveness and Efficiencies
 - h. Partnerships
 - i. Woody Biomass Utilization
 - j. Fire Ecology
 - k. Fuel Treatment
 - l. Fuel Treatment Effectiveness
 - m. Wildfire Response
 - n. Wildland Fire Education
 - o. Reduced Wildfire Risk
5. Photos:
 - Provide photo(s) with your submissions.
 - Provide the photo image files separately from the other documents.
 - Provide photos as close to their original state as possible in .jpg, .png, or .tiff format. The web manager will size, crop, and process the images for display.
 - Provide caption and photo credit information for each image in the document. Note the photographer and/or the agency / unit with the photo credit.
 - As a suggestion for the web manager, you may insert a copy of the photos, including the captions and credits, in the document approximately where you would like to see the image placed.
 - Ensure that we are free to use and post the photos on the website. Photos used on the website must be publicly owned and available for other's use per the conditions on the Forests and Rangelands website [Disclaimers and Limitation of Liability](#) web page, "Photographic Images" subheading.

Attachment 2 - Community Assistance Metrics for Reporting Accomplishments

The purpose of the community assistance reporting metrics are to identify education activities and assistance actions occurring at the local unit level that support the implementation of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. The reporting metrics ensure accountability and create a department-wide database of activity accomplishments. The information helps the Department and bureaus tell its story about coordination efforts with communities at the local, state, and national levels. Attachment 2 (this document) serves as the data dictionary when completing Attachment 3 - Community Assistance Accomplishment Reporting Template.

Fiscal Year Metrics for Reporting:

1. The occurrence of tribal or field unit sponsored fire-adapted community activities at the unit level:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Wildland Fire Educationb. Wildfire Prevention Educationc. Assistance Actions |
|--|

1.a. Wildland Fire Education – Structured events designed to educate the public on ways to reduce the threat to and impact of wildfire on the environment or communities and their values including events offered by Bureau employees or by cooperators who receive DOI funding. Examples include but are not limited to: “Firewise” workshops, homeowner’s association meetings, rural or volunteer fire department training, school programs, or any other speaking engagement or event focused on wildland fire education. Units will self-report and an appropriate response is either yes or no.

1.b. Wildfire Prevention Education – Structured events designed to educate the public on ways to prevent unwanted human-caused wildfires. This includes events offered by DOI employees or by cooperators who receive DOI funding. Examples include but not limited to: school programs, booths at public events, presentations to target audiences, etc. Units will self-report and an appropriate response is either yes or no.

1.c. Assistance Actions – Actions done to promote implementation of Cohesive Strategy goals by communities such as assisting with funding, subject-matter expertise, planning, attending planning commission, or zoning meetings, etc. Units will self-report and an appropriate response is either yes or no.

2. The number of Community Wildfire Protection Plan or Equivalent Plan (CWPP/E) actions that included tribal or field unit participation:
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- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Number of CWPP/E created or updated in which the unit participatedb. Number of Activities or Treatments completed and associated with a CWPP/E |
|--|

2.a. Number of CWPP/E created or updated in which the unit participated – Unit involvement in developing or updating a CWPP/E. Units should report more than once if multiple CWPP/E planning activities occur, i.e., creating new CWPP/E’s, updating CWPP/E’s.

Units will self-report and an appropriate response is the number of CWPP/E's created or updated in which the unit participated in a year.

2.b. Number of Activities or Treatments completed and associated with a CWPP/E –

NFPORS reported activities or treatments where the activity category selected is community assistance or the treatment is associated with a CWPP/E. Appropriate response is the number of activities or treatments [completed] from CWPP/E's in a year. This information will be extracted from the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Module in NFPORS.

Attachment 3 - Community Assistance Accomplishment Reporting Template

Bureau	The occurrence of tribal or field unit sponsored fire-adapted community activities at the unit level:			The number of Community Wildfire Protection Plan or Equivalent Plan (CWPP/E) actions that included tribal or field unit participation:	
	Wildland Fire Education	Wildfire Prevention Education	Assistance Actions	Number of CWPP/E created or updated in which the unit participated	Number of Activities or Treatments completed and associated with a CWPP/E (Derived from NFPORS Data) ¹
BIA					
BLM					
FWS					
NPS					
FISCAL YEAR TOTAL					

¹ This information will be extracted from the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Module in NFPORS