



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

OWF POLICY MEMORANDUM 2021-001

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: Jeff Rupert, Director – Office of Wildland Fire **JEFFERY RUPERT** Digitally signed by JEFFERY RUPERT
Date: 2020.10.16 13:11:49 -04'00'

Subject: Preliminary Guidance for Fiscal Year 2021 Funds Execution and Wildland Fire Management Budget Allocations under Continuing Resolution

Purpose: This memorandum provides direction regarding the DOI Wildland Fire Management (WFM) budget allocations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, based on Public Law (P.L.) 116-159: the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021. The Act authorizes continuing appropriations for FY 2021 through December 11, 2020 and provides funding at the daily rate of the FY 2020 funding level.

Scope: This memo outlines budget allocation amounts under the Continuing Resolution (CR) for WFM funded programs and activities in the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Park Service (NPS), the Office of Wildland Fire (OWF), and the Department-wide activities. Final guidance will be issued when a full year appropriation is enacted.

Time Frame: P.L. 116-159 covers FY 2021 from October 1, 2020 to December 11, 2020. This is a period covering 72 days, which is 19.73 percent of the FY. This Policy Memorandum is effective immediately and remains in effect until rescinded or modified.

Policy: Bureaus must follow the CR terms and provisions outlined in the Departmental memo provided as Attachment 1.

Under the terms of the CR, bureaus must manage funding consistent with FY 2020 enacted appropriations and may not assume enactment of the FY 2021 President's Budget or pending House and Senate FY 2021 marks, including bill or report language. Funds must be managed prudently to maintain ongoing activities in a manner which does not "impinge on final funding prerogatives."

In planning funds execution for the full FY, bureaus should execute the amount provided in the CR but keep in mind the possibility of an additional sequester reduction after January 2021. No funds are being held in the “Parent” account to cover a potential sequester of funds. Bureau allocation amounts for the CR are provided below in Table 1.

Table 1: Wildland Fire Management FY 2021 CR #1 Allocation

Funding shown in thousands (\$000)

	BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	OWF	Parent	Total CR Funding
<i>Preparedness</i>	\$12,988	\$37,323	\$5,439	\$7,733	\$2,049	\$126	\$65,658
<i>Suppression</i>	\$5,129	\$19,826	\$1,429	\$3,894	\$100	\$45,317	\$75,695
<i>Fuels Management</i>	\$8,905	\$18,310	\$4,841	\$5,217	\$890	\$113	\$38,276
<i>Burned Area Rehabilitation</i>	\$936	\$2,258	\$358	\$486	\$1		\$4,039
<i>Joint Fire Science Program</i>		\$592					\$592
<i>Unallocated – Reserved in Parent Account</i>						\$3,636	\$3,636
Total Bureau Allocation	\$27,958	\$78,309	\$12,067	\$17,330	\$3,040	\$49,192	\$187,896

The transfer of funds has been completed, and OWF has notified bureaus of the Treasury transaction numbers.

Under the provisions of P.L. 116-159, funding provided under the CR is only available until December 11, 2020. Accordingly, all bureaus should monitor program expenditures under the CR and return any projected unallocated funds to OWF in a timely manner for re-allocation to other bureaus for the implementation of other priority work.

In addition to funding levels provided in Table 1, the following budget guidance and direction applies:

Suppression Operations: In accordance with policy, approximately 40 percent of the annual Suppression Operations funding are typically allocated to the bureaus, with the remaining 60 percent held in the Parent account to be allocated based on seasonal activity. The basis for this allocation is the percent share that each bureau has of the ten-year rolling average. If high fire activity requires more funding than is available in your bureau’s allocation of Suppression, please contact OWF immediately.

Emergency Stabilization (ES) and Severity: ES and Severity authority levels are capped at ten percent of the ten-year rolling suppression expenditure average for the Department of the Interior (DOI).

The distribution of ES authority is based on the rolling ten-year average percentage of acres burned by bureau nationally, excluding Alaska. The percentages for FY 2021 are: BIA, 19.58%; BLM, 64.08%; FWS, 8.18%; and NPS, 8.16%.

Severity authority is capped at \$32 million with the balance held in reserve. The distribution of Severity authority is based on each bureau's base percentage split of the annual Preparedness Appropriation. The percentages are: BIA, 18.48%; BLM, 57.24%; FWS, 10.78%; and NPS, 13.50%.

FY 2021 Funding Authority levels (\$000) are shown below:

Bureau	BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	Reserve	Total
Emergency Stabilization (ES) (Based on Percentages)	\$8,395	\$27,473	\$3,507	\$3,499		\$42,874
Severity	\$5,913	\$18,317	\$3,450	\$4,320	\$10,874	\$42,874

Obligations, regardless of where the funding comes from, count against the funding authority caps; recoveries do not increase the amount of obligation authority available in a given year. In the event one or more bureau anticipates that it will exceed its ES or Severity authority, OWF, in collaboration with the bureau Fire Directors, will coordinate and approve the redistribution of ES and/or Severity authority between bureaus, as warranted. Any recommended increases to the ES or Severity caps are subject to approval by the Director of OWF in collaboration with the bureau Fire Directors.

Fuels Management: Funding allocations for the Fuels Management (FM) program remain at the FY 2020 levels, as calculated for the period under the CR. Bureaus are expected to fund the highest priority projects identified in their FY 2021 Spend Plans with the bureaus' respective CR allocation amounts. Bureaus are reminded that under the CR FM activities undertaken within the WFM account are ongoing and are not prohibited by the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021, Sec. 104. Bureaus are encouraged to continue implementation of the Southern Border Fuels Management Initiative and other Departmental priorities and initiatives with carryover funds designated for their intended purposes.

Bureaus should ensure adequate funding for staff and necessary program activities and leverage opportunities to utilize their allocations to actively implement fuels treatments. Internal management controls for hiring of personnel should be followed. Bureaus are encouraged to request cross-bureau coordination assistance from OWF as spending approaches the allocation levels provided under the CR.

Burned Area Rehabilitation: Bureaus should fund their highest priority Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) projects as identified in the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) and within their respective CR allocation amounts. Bureaus are requested to

submit full-year BAR spend plans and Bureau BAR prioritization criteria, as required by 620 DM 7, by November 6, 2020, in preparation for enactment of a full year FY 2021 appropriations (see attachment 2). All projects must be entered into NFPORS. Please include only those projects that are approved by leadership.

Joint Fire Science Program: Under the terms of the CR, only the minimum amount of funding that is needed to continue operations should be expended.

Facilities: No funding is allocated for Facilities since Facilities Construction and Maintenance funding was not requested in the FY 2021 President's Budget and no minimum funding is necessary to continue operations. This funding will instead be reserved in the Parent account for priority projects as needed.

Carryover: Bureau carryover spend plans for all carryover balances above 2% are due to OWF on October 23, 2020. Please use the template provided in Attachment 3. Additionally, in anticipation of reporting requirements on the CARES Act, the template also requests information related to carryover of the approved CARES Act funding. Please submit the CARES Act portion of the template by October 16, 2020.

Please contact OWF if bureaus anticipate priority needs above the amount allocated in Table 1.

Contacts: All questions regarding this Policy Memorandum can be directed to Thao Tran, Budget Officer, Office of Wildland Fire at (202) 606-0518, or Craig Leff, Deputy Director, Office of Wildland Fire, at (202) 606-3053.

cc: Interior Fire Executives
Interior Fire Directors

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Departmental 2021 CR Guidance through December 11
- Attachment 2 – BAR Spend Plan Template
- Attachment 3 – Carryover Spend Plan Template