




United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

APRIL 25, 2019

OWF POLICY MEMORANDUM 2019-008

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: Jeff Rupert, Director – Office of Wildland Fire 

Subject: Final Guidance for Fiscal Year 2019 Funds Execution and Wildland Fire Management Budget Allocations

Purpose: This memorandum provides direction regarding the DOI Wildland Fire Management (WFM) budget allocations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, based on Public Law (P.L.) 116-6, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019, signed into law on February 15, 2019, authorizing appropriations through September 30, 2019.

Scope: This memorandum outlines budget allocation amounts for WFM funded programs and activities for 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, supplementing previously issued FY 2019 budget guidance provided in OWF Policy Memorandums (OWF-PM) 2019-002; 2019-005; and 2019-007.

Time Frame: P.L. 116-6 covers FY 2019 from October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019. This Policy Memorandum is effective immediately and remains in effect until rescinded or modified.

Policy: Bureau allocation amounts for the FY are provided in Attachment 1. The transfer of funds was completed on April 24, 2019, and bureaus have been notified of the Treasury transaction numbers.

The following budget guidance and direction applies:

Suppression Operations: The Suppression Operations funding allocations represent approximately 40 percent of the enacted level of funding, plus additional transfers necessary for bureaus to meet suppression obligations. The basis for the allocation is the percent share each bureau has of the ten-year rolling average. The remaining 60 percent is held in the Parent

Account. As in previous years, the remaining Suppression funding will be allocated based on seasonal activity. Bureaus should identify and request additional allocations, as the need arises.

OWF will coordinate with the bureaus to monitor Suppression obligations continuously through the end of the FY in order to anticipate and inform contingency plans as needed, under the Emergency Transfer Authority available in Sec. 102 of the Appropriations Act.

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 2019 are: BIA, 20.54%; BLM, 62.82%; FWS, 8.44%; and NPS, 8.20%. On February 4, 2019, the OWF Director and bureau Fire Directors approved a reduction of \$2.64 million to the BIA's ES authority and \$1.085 million to the FWS' ES authority in order to provide NPS with an additional \$3.725 million in ES authority in FY 2019. These adjustments are applicable to FY 2019 levels only.

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 2019 Funding Authority levels (\$000) are shown below:

Bureau	BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	Reserve	Total
Emergency Stabilization (ES) (Based on Percentages)	7,972	24,383	3,276	3,183	0	38,814
Approved Adjustment to ES Authority Cap	-2,640		-1,085	3,725		
Total Adjusted FY 2019 ES Authority Cap	5,332	24,383	2,191	6,908	0	38,814
Severity	5,913	18,317	3,450	4,320	6,814	38,814

In the event one or more bureaus anticipates that it will exceed its adjusted 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: Bureau funding allocations for the Fuels Management (FM) program will remain at the FY 2017 levels. All projects should support Departmental priorities (<https://www.doi.gov/ourpriorities>) and should include descriptions about how the projects support broader wildland fire management goals and fuels management program objectives, as outlined in OWF Policy Memorandum 2019-003. Please include only those projects that are approved by bureau leadership.

Final FY 2019 FM Project Spend Plans are due June 7, 2019. Quarterly updates are due July 12, 2019 and October 25, 2019.

The additional \$9 million provided by the appropriations are reserved to support the Department and Administration's priorities.

Of this amount, \$4 million is reserved for implementation of the Southern Border Fuels Management Initiative (SBI) (see Office of the Secretary Memorandum dated February 14, 2019, "Supplemental Guidance for the Southern Border Fuels Management Initiative," and Secretary Memorandum dated September 14, 2018, "Funding for the Southern Border Fuels Management Initiative."). To manage carryover balances, which continue to be an expressed priority for DOI and Office of Management and Budget leadership, OWF can no longer provide full project funding for multi-year Southern Border Initiative (SBI) projects. However, those projects that were previously approved and funded may keep project carryover balances, and those multi-year SBI projects that are approved by OWF for FY 2019 funding will receive priority consideration for funding in future years, contingent on funds availability.

\$1 million is targeted for Fuels Management program innovation and Executive Order 13855 and Secretary Order 3372 support and implementation.

Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR): All projects should support Departmental priorities (<https://www.doi.gov/ourpriorities>) and should include descriptions about how the projects support broader burned area rehabilitation and wildland fire objectives. Please include only those projects that are approved by bureau leadership.

Final FY 2019 BAR Project Spend Plan are due June 7, 2019. Quarterly updates are due July 12, 2019 and October 25, 2019.

Facilities: Facilities is funded at \$18.4 million. The project level descriptions can be found in the "Wildland Fire Five Year Construction/Deferred Maintenance Plan Summary," as coordinated through the DOI Wildland Fire Facility Group and approved by the bureau Fire Directors on March 4, 2019. The maintenance plan summary for FY 2019 is included in the DOI spreadsheet v12. The \$18.4 million in enacted funding will fully fund 19 projects; in addition, \$428,000 is allocated for Architectural and Engineering Design.

Joint Fire Science: For the Joint Fire Science program, the full-year funding level of \$3 million is allocated.

Department-wide Activities: In accordance with the FY 2019 Budget Justification, the Department-wide strategic enterprise portfolio (WFIT) will plan for budget reductions based on the President's Budget request. The FY 2019 appropriations provided the President's Budget request of \$322,179,000 for Preparedness; therefore, the aggregate budget of all WFIT projects funded by Preparedness is 20% of the FY 2017 level. This budget does not include available carryover funding.

The FY 2019 appropriations provided above the President's Budget request of \$150,603,000 for Fuels Management; therefore, the aggregate budget of all WFIT projects funded by Fuels Management is equal to the FY 2017 level.

Carryover: In accordance with OWF Policy Memorandum 2017-009, all balances above 2% are be subject to reallocation. OWF will evaluate carryover amounts from FY 2019, and allocation adjustments will be made as part of the full year FY 2020 funding allocation transfer. Funds for Suppression, Facilities, and JFSP are exempt from this requirement. (See the Fuels Management section for SBI carryover policy.) OWF understands that operating plans may be impacted due to the budget environment under a CR and strongly encourages bureaus to obligate prior year funding, including carryover and recoveries, with priority focus on funds from FY 2015 and older. Bureaus should prioritize the obligation of prior year funding to take place by the third quarter of FY 2019 and provide comprehensive carryover plans that describe any challenges in achieving the 2% carryover rate by fiscal year-end. Guidance on mid-year review is forthcoming.

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 – FY 2019 WFM Bureau Allocation Amounts