



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

DOI WILDLAND FIRE PROGRAM POLICY MEMORANDUM No. 2023-003

From: Jeffery Rupert, Director - Office of Wildland Fire

Subject: Department of the Interior's (DOI) Fuels Management (FM) Program Planning and Reporting Requirements

Due Dates: See Below

Supersedes: Wildland Fire Management Policy Memorandum 2020-004

Expiration Date: December 31, 2026

Purpose:

Provide consistent departmental direction on FM program priorities, authoritative data sources and due dates for FM-related reporting.

Background:

The 2020-004 policy memorandum replaced numerous directives, orders and policies instituted across DOI mandating the strategic oversight and investment of FM program funds. The recently passed Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) necessitates updating that direction to be consistent with the priorities, timeframes, and funding levels described there. The framework described below documents how bureaus prioritize their annual fuels management workload in support of Interior Fire Executive Committee's vision to reduce wildfire risk and report on resulting annual accomplishments.

Coordination:

This memorandum was coordinated with the DOI Bureau fuels management program leads, budget leads, and fire directors.

Scope:

This Policy Memorandum applies to the DOI Bureaus and offices implementing FM actions.

Existing Policy Affected:

DOI Departmental Manual (DM), Series: Public Lands Part 620: Wildland Fire Management, Chapter 6: Fuels Management, Section 6.5 Handbooks

Authority:

DOI DM, Series: Organization Part 112: Policy, Management, and Budget, Chapter 7: OWF, Section 7.3 Functions - B. Policy

Policy:

Fuels Program Objectives and Priorities

All fuels projects identified in National Fire Plan Operations Reporting System (NFPORS) and included in Spend Plans must support the DOI Strategic Plan, the Secretary's priorities, and meet the following program objectives:

- Integration with Resource Management - proposed projects must demonstrate how they drive key natural resource benefits through an integrated, programmatic approach that incorporates active vegetation management to achieve Wildland Fire Management (WFM) program goals and objectives.
- Stewardship-Based - proposed projects have shared stewardship values demonstrated by joint, mutually agreed upon priorities with partners at all levels that includes the coordination of assets, skills, and resources.
- Geographic Landscape-Based - proposed projects contribute to a landscape-based approach to achieve mutually agreed upon active management goals and objectives that are coordinated locally.
- Outcome Based - proposed projects are strategically placed to achieve the following objectives:
 - 1) Mitigate significant wildfire risk to DOI and Tribal values;
 - 2) Protect, maintain, or improve wildfire resiliency;
 - 3) Avoid costs if tested by wildfire; or
 - 4) Meet bureaus' statutory obligations for WFM.
 - a. Actions implemented using BIL funding must meet the additional requirements of the BIL described further in Attachment A.

Funding for FM projects is contingent on the bureaus' completion of their FM Project Spend Plans. All project treatments and activities must be monitored, mapped, and documented following DOI and bureau business rules.

FM Framework

- Values: Collaborate with stakeholders to identify and prioritize shared values at appropriate geographic scales.
- Risk Assessment: Conduct or utilize a risk assessment identifying wildfire likelihood and potential impacts to values within the appropriate geographic scale.
- Activities to Mitigate Risk: Identify and coordinate with local stakeholders the most effective and appropriate project activities to reduce risk from wildfires, considering different types of treatment methodologies and capacity to accomplish.
- Collaboration and Leveraging: Where mutual interests align, bureaus will collaborate with internal and external partners to leverage capabilities to accomplish projects.
- Progress: Bureaus will evaluate efficiency, effectiveness, and contribution towards attainment of the goals described for the project, bureau mission, the DOI Strategic Plan, and the WFM program.

Accountability

The following criteria may be utilized to inform bureaus' final fiscal year allocation:

- Completion of Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring (FTEM).
- Completion of Accomplished Hazardous Fuels Treatment Polygon reporting.
- Timely completion and submission of prioritized annual preliminary and final programs of work and spend plans.
- Identification of out-year planned projects (3-year POW) in NFPORS/InFORM-Fuels
- Management of FM funds within policy and guidance.

Fuels Management Program of Work Development and Accomplishment Reporting

The NFPORS is the DOI System of Record and Authoritative Data Source for reporting FM accomplishments until InFORM Fuels development is completed. DOI Bureaus will report all Fuels Management program funded accomplishments in the Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFR) Module of the NFPORS. DOI Bureaus may report non-Fuels Management program funded accomplishments that meet fuels management objectives in the HFR Module of NFPORS. All reporting must be consistent with the definitions, templates, and due dates described below.

- Mid-year review
 - At mid-year a complete review of bureau final spend plans and performance will be conducted. This review will help inform validation or adjustment of unobligated balances through the end of the fiscal year.
 - *Date: April 30th or within 45 days of an approved final budget if one has not been passed by April 1st.*
- Three-year Program of Work
 - The bureau approved three-year program of work planned direct cost for each year should be equal to at least 130% of each bureau's direct program allocation from the prior year.
 - The Office of Wildland Fire will provide estimated planning levels for BIL implementation by January 1st.
 - *Due Date: May 15th of Each year.*
- Preliminary Annual Program of Work and Spend Plan
 - Identified using regional approval dates from NFPORS, includes "Planned Direct Costs" for regular funding or "Contributed Costs" for BIL Funding, requires inclusion of programmatic costs.
 - *Due Date: Sept 15th of each year.*
- Final Annual Program of Work and Spend Plan
 - Identified using national approval dates from NFPORS, requires inclusion of programmatic costs, acres are equivalent to Target Assigned.
 - *Due Date: Within 14 days of issuance of a full year allocation policy memo.*
- Fuels Program Accomplishment reporting
 - *Due Date for Tabular Data (NFPORS): Within 30 days of treatment/activity completion.*
- Final Annual Fuels Program Accomplishment reporting
 - *Due Date for Tabular Data (NFPORS Lockdown Date): October 15th of each year.*

- *Due Date for Geospatial Data: November 30th of each year.*
- Community Assistance
 - Supplemental summary submitted using the data dictionary described in Attachment B and the template described in Attachment C
 - *Due Date: November 30th of each year.*
- Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL)
 - Supplemental narrative submitted addressing requirements described in Attachment D
 - *Due Date: December 31st of each year.*

Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring

The FTEM tool, hosted as part of the web-based Interagency Fuels Treatment Decision Support System (IFTDSS) (https://iftdss.firenet.gov/landing_page/), is the DOI System of Record and Authoritative Data Source for reporting the outcomes of fuels treatments intersected by wildfires. As soon as practical, DOI Bureaus will complete assessments using the FTEM tool for all wildfires that start in, burn into, or burn through any portion of a fuels treatment area that has been completed and reported in the HFR Module of the NFPORS. Additionally, DOI Bureaus are required to complete a monitoring report when a fuels treatment is used to support wildfire operations - e.g., provide safety zones, aid in burnout operations, provide access to the wildfire, etc. Further guidance and definitions for fields required in FTEM are described in Attachment E.

- *Due Date: Not later than February 15th of the following year for fuels treatment that intersected wildfires declared out by December 31st.*

Fiscal Accountability

The Financial and Business Management System (FBMS) is the system of record for all Fuels Management budget execution, acquisition, grants and cooperative agreements, real and personal property management, fleet management, travel, and fiscal reporting.

Contact:

If you have any questions, please contact Kristy Swartz, Wildland Fire Program Specialist at (208)334-1562 or kristy_swartz@ios.doi.gov, or Stephen Elmore, Budget and Performance Officer at (202)641-7521 or stephen_elmore@ios.doi.gov.

cc:

DOI Fire Executives
DOI Fire Directors

Attachment A: BIL Requirements

Section 40803-Wildfire Risk Reduction of the BIL requires Interior and USDA-Forest Service by September 30, 2027, to complete a minimum of 10 million acres of restoration treatments and improve the Fire Regime Condition Class on Federal lands or Tribal forest or rangelands identified as having very high wildfire hazard potential located in (1) the wildland-urban interface; or (2) a public drinking water source area.

BIL provides \$878 million of funding for expanded fuels management over five years and

Section 40803(c) authorizes that funding for the following types of actions:

- Conducting mechanical thinning and timber harvesting in an ecologically appropriate manner that maximizes the retention of large trees, as appropriate for the forest type, to the extent that the trees promote fire-resilient stands; or (ii) precommercial thinning in young growth stands for wildlife habitat benefits to provide subsistence resources.
- Planning and conducting prescribed fires and related activities.
- Developing or improving potential control locations...including installing fuelbreaks, with a focus on shaded fuelbreaks when ecologically appropriate.
- **Contracting** or employing crews of laborers to modify and remove flammable vegetation on Federal land and for using materials from treatments to the extent practicable, to produce biochar and other innovative wood products, including through the use of existing locally based organizations that engage young adults, Native youth, and veterans in service projects, such as youth and conservation corps.

Section 40803(g) describes the following additional priorities:

- Where the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance was completed as of November 15, 2021.
- In areas strategically important for reducing the risks from wildfires, including uncharacteristically severe effects.
- That maximize the retention of large trees, as appropriate for the forest type, to the extent that the trees promote fire-resilient stands.

Attachment B: Community Assistance Data Dictionary

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. Community Wildfire Protection Plan or Equivalent Plan (CWPP/E)

Actions that included tribal or field unit participation:

- 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
- c. Number of CWPP/E created or updated in which the unit participated

5. 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.

6. 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 HFR Module in NFPORS.

Attachment C: Community Assistance Accomplishment Reporting Template(DD: November 30th)

Bureau	Wildland Fire Education	Wildfire Prevention Education	Assistance Actions	Number of CWPP/Es created or updated in which the unit participated	Number of Activities or Treatments completed and associated with a CWPP/E (derived from NFPORS Data)
BIA					
BLM					
FWS					
NPS					
Fiscal Year Total					

Attachment D: Reserved Tribal Rights Lands (RTRL) Annual Report Requirements

(DD: December 31st)

- List of projects, collaborators, fund sources, and actual accomplishments as reported in NFPORS
- A narrative that describes progress towards achieving the tribal priorities for each project.
- Before/after sets of photographs from the same vantage points that help to demonstrate successes toward accomplishing Tribal priorities.
- If applicable, information regarding the use of any Tribal crews.

Attachment E: Reporting Fuel Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring (FTEM)

The FTEM Module provides geospatial data from wildfires and completed treatments and identifies potential interactions of these locations on a map. On the FTEM map, a red icon indicates a possible interaction between a wildfire and a completed fuels treatment and the need to “check for interaction”.

A. Validation of Wildfire and Fuel Treatment Interaction

If a red icon is present, users must take one of the following actions:

- Interaction
 - When a wildfire did interact with a completed treatment area, users must validate the interaction and complete interaction monitoring (see Bullet C. below).
 - Upon completion of interaction monitoring, the displayed red icon will change to “Monitoring Completed” and a green icon.
- No Interaction
 - When a potential interaction is identified by the system, but a wildfire did not interact with a completed treatment area, users must invalidate the interaction by removing the treatment associated with the incident.
 - By invalidating the interaction, the red icon will be changed to a “No Interaction” and a grey icon.

B. Identification of Missing Interactions

If a completed treatment area did interact with a wildfire but no system generated interactions are shown, users should identify the interaction, upload missing¹ shapefile(s) to NFPORS, and complete the reporting process noted above (changing a grey icon to a green icon).

C. Required Fields to Complete Interaction Monitoring

1. Treatment and wildfire intersection details

Users select from one of the options provided in the system drop-down (below).

a. Wildfire started in the treatment

Select this option when applicable and the proportion of the treatment polygon burned is very small (e.g., a wildfire was contained to less than approximately ½ acre within a treatment)

b. Wildfire spotted into treatment

Select this option when applicable and the proportion of the treatment polygon burned is very small (e.g., a spot fire was contained to less than approximately ½ acre within a treatment)

c. Wildfire burned through all acres treated

Select this option when the entire treatment polygon is burned by the wildfire (regardless of how fire entered the treated area).

¹ Treatment record must already be identified and completed within NFPORS but missing a treatment polygon, users may not create a new treatment record in a prior fiscal year. See Bureau guidance for specific instructions regarding the process to upload polygons to NFPORS.

d. Wildfire burned through some acres treated

Select this option when wildfire has burned treated polygon acres, but a., b., or c. above do not apply.

e. Treatment was used primarily for suppression actions

Select this option if “c. Wildfire burned through all acres” does not apply, *and* for example – a treatment was used in a burnout, a treatment was used to anchor a containment line, a treatment provided a safety zone for responders, or a roadside treatment facilitated safe evacuation for residents.

f. Other

To enable separation of treatments represented by only a point and not blend those with treatments represented by polygons during analysis, select this choice ONLY for treatments represented by points instead of polygons, and ONLY if “e. Treatment was used primarily for suppression actions” does not apply.

2. Treatment acres burned by wildfire

If both the wildfire and the treatment are represented by polygons, this field will be populated automatically, and users need only confirm acreage or adjust as necessary. For interactions not represented by polygons, users should enter the treatment acres burned by wildfire.

3. Date and time

Users must enter the date and time (as best known) the wildfire entered the treatment.

4. Did the fire behavior change as a result of the treatment?

“Fire behavior change” here means that it was in accordance with the purpose/expectations of treatment (not just that fire behavior differed from untreated condition). Select from one of the options provided in the system drop-down (below).

a. Yes

Indicates that changes in fire behavior met the treatment objective.

b. No

Indicates that changes in fire behavior did not meet the treatment objectives. Please explain in the Comments field. Useful comments might include:

- treatment series was incomplete (e.g. cutting treatment finished, but prescribed fire not yet implemented),
- treatment was too old to be effective,
- treatment was designed to be effective at 80th percentile weather conditions, but actual weather conditions were 97th percentile

c. The fire did not enter the treatment

Users should select this option when no intersection occurred but there was an interaction such as for suppression actions described by 1.e above.

5. Did the treatment contribute to control and/or management of the fire?

a. Yes

Select this option when the treatment was used during the wildfire (e.g., a roadside fuel break was used in a burnout, a treatment was used to anchor a containment line, a treatment provided a safety zone for responders, a roadside treatment facilitated safe evacuation for residents)

b. No

Select this option when the treatment was not used during the wildfire.

6. Was the treatment strategically located in order to facilitate control of the fire?

Answer "Yes" or "No" based on your knowledge of the purpose of the project and layout of this treatment and other treatments designed as a part of this project.

a. Yes

b. No

Additional guidance and instructions for using the FTEM database and system are available on the IFTDSS webpage here: <https://iftdss.firenet.gov/firenetHelp/help/pageHelp/content/10-ftem/guidance/monitoringguidance.htm>