



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

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## OWF POLICY MEMORANDUM 2019-002

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: Preliminary Guidance for Fiscal Year 2019 Funds Execution and Wildland Fire Budget Allocations under Continuing Resolution

**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.) 115-245: the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019. The Act authorizes continuing appropriations for FY 2019 through December 7, 2018, and provides funding at the daily rate of the FY 2018 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. 115-245 covers FY 2019 from October 1, 2018 to December 7, 2018. This is a period covering 68 days, which is 18.63 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 This Policy Memorandum is effective immediately and remains in effect until rescinded or modified.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.

Bureaus must manage funding consistent with FY 2018 enacted appropriations and may not assume enactment of the FY 2019 President's Budget, or pending House and Senate FY 2019 marks. Funds must be managed prudently to maintain ongoing activities in a manner which does not "impinge on final funding prerogatives." Bureaus are advised to avoid making "one-time" payments in full during the first quarter. If you have a payment which cannot be delayed, please let OWF know as soon as possible.

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. No funds have been held in the "Parent" account to cover potential sequester of funds.

The amount available under the CR may not reflect the annualized amount appropriated for the full year, and annual program planning should anticipate the possible need to ramp down activities after the first quarter. Available budget authority under a CR is limited to carryover funding plus new budget authority for the specified portion of the year. Bureau allocation amounts for the CR are outlined below in Table 1. This includes CR allocation amounts based on the FY 2018 funding levels and taking into account an adjustment to allocate funds available in the Facilities activity to Suppression Operations.

**Table 1: Wildland Fire Management FY 2019 CR Allocation**

*Funding shown in thousands (\$000)*

	<b>BIA</b>	<b>BLM</b>	<b>FWS</b>	<b>NPS</b>	<b>OWF</b>	<b>Parent</b>	<b>Total CR Funding</b>
<i>Preparedness</i>	\$ 12,428	\$ 35,250	\$ 5,277	\$ 7,282	\$ 1513	\$ 247	\$ 61,997
<i>Suppression</i>	\$ 16,402	\$ 42,839	\$ 4,005	\$ 9,300	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 72,546
<i>Suppression - Facilities Allocation</i>	\$ 324	\$ 846	\$ 79	\$ 184	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ 3,433
<i>Fuels Management</i>	\$ 7,773	\$ 16,532	\$ 3,878	\$ 4,488	\$ 763	\$ 845	\$ 34,279
<i>Burned Area Rehabilitation</i>	\$ 824	\$ 2,459	\$ 195	\$ 336			\$ 3,814
<i>Joint Fire Science Program</i>	\$ -	\$ 559	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 559
<b>Total Bureau Allocation</b>	<b>\$ 37,751</b>	<b>\$ 98,485</b>	<b>\$ 13,434</b>	<b>\$ 21,590</b>	<b>\$ 2,276</b>	<b>\$ 3,092</b>	<b>\$ 176,628</b>

Transfer of funds are in progress; OWF will notify bureaus of the Treasury transaction numbers once completed.

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. Because the CR funding level provides amounts below the 40 percent target allocation that bureaus would receive as part of the full-year allocation, all Suppression funding under the CR will be allocated. The basis for allocation is the percent share each bureau has of the ten-year rolling average.

Additionally, funding provided for Facilities purpose is redirected for allocation to Suppression Operations, with a minimal amount reserved in the Parent account for adjustments as needed during the CR period. If high fire activity requires more funding than is available in your bureau's allocation of Suppression, please contact OWF immediately.



***Fuels Management:*** Funding for the Fuels Management (FM) program will remain at the FY 2018 allocation levels, as calculated for the period under the CR. Bureaus are requested to submit a FY 2019 Interim FM Project Spend Plan (Attachment 2) documenting a prioritized list of projects that will be funded and implemented with the bureaus' respective CR allocation amount during the CR period from October 1, 2018 to December 7, 2018. All projects should support the Secretary's priorities (<https://www.doi.gov/ourpriorities>) and should include descriptions about how the projects support broader wildland fire 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. The FY 2019 Interim FM Project Spend Plan is due October 26, 2018.

Under a CR, bureaus are reminded that FM activities undertaken within the Wildland Fire Management account are ongoing and are not prohibited by the Sec. 104 provision language. Bureaus should take full advantage of opportunities to implement fuels treatments during the period of the CR, but should exercise prudence to ensure adequate funding for staff and other program activities throughout the year. Internal management controls for hiring of personnel should be followed. Bureaus are encouraged to continue implementation of the Southern Border Fuels Management Initiative with carryover funds designated for this purpose.

In addition, bureaus should work on developing the full year FY 2019 Annual FM Project Spend Plan in preparation for enactment of the FY 2019 appropriations bill. For planning purposes, the full year FY 2019 funding target level is based on the FY 2018 allocated amounts. Bureaus may also include over-target projects in the spend plan to request additional FM funding above the funding target level. The FY 2019 Annual FM Project Spend Plan is due November 9, 2018.

Full year funding allocation will be contingent on completion and approval of the FY 2019 Annual FM Project Spend Plan. In the event that the enacted FY 2019 appropriation exceeds the FY 2017 enacted level of funding for FM of \$180 million, all additional FM program funds will be reserved in the Parent account for future allocations to support the Southern Border Fuels Management Initiative and to fund other bureau or DOI priority work. Bureaus should be prepared to update Spend Plans on a quarterly basis and upon enactment of a final budget. Due dates for quarterly reports are January 11, 2019, March 15, 2019, July 12, 2019, and October 25, 2019.

***Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR):*** Bureaus are requested to submit a FY 2019 Interim BAR Project Spend Plan (Attachment 3) documenting a prioritized list of projects that will be funded and implemented with the bureau's respective CR allocation amount during the CR period from October 1, 2018 to December 7, 2018. All projects should support the Secretary's 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. The FY 2019 Interim BAR Project Spend Plan is due October 26, 2018.

In addition, bureaus should work on developing the full year FY 2019 Annual BAR Project Spend Plan in preparation for enactment of the FY 2019 appropriations bill. For planning purposes, the full year FY 2019 funding target level is based on the FY 2018 allocated amounts. Bureaus may also include over-target projects in the spend plan to document additional BAR funding needs above the funding target level. The full year FY 2019 Annual BAR Project Spend Plan is due November 9, 2018.

Full year funding allocation will be contingent on completion and approval of the FY 2019 Annual BAR Project Spend Plan.

**Facilities:** No funding is allocated for Facilities under the CR. Funding for Facilities based on the CR level does not provide sufficient flexibility for individual bureaus to initiate or complete any planned work. Additionally, this activity is proposed to be fully eliminated in the FY 2019 President's Budget and in accordance with Departmental guidance, Sec. 109 provides that "Bureaus and offices may not obligate funds under the CR that would impinge on the funding prerogatives of Congress, including funding for specific projects such as land acquisition, construction and grants." Funding from other WFM activities cannot be used to fund WFM Facilities projects.

Funding available for the Facilities activity is redirected for allocation to Suppression Operations. Consistent with the guidance in Attachment 1, funding under the CR is provided at the account level, and bureaus and offices have the flexibility to manage cash flow within the account by prioritizing obligations as appropriate.

**Department-wide Activities:** Carryover funding available from FY 2018 will be reviewed and individual project budgets will be adjusted accordingly prior to the next allocation.

**Carryover:** In accordance with OWF Policy Memorandum 2017-009, starting in FY 2019, all balances above 2% may be subject to reallocation. Funds for Suppression, Facilities, and the Southern Border Fuels Management Initiative are exempt from this requirement. OWF understands that operating plans may be impacted due to the budget environment under a CR and encourages bureaus to provide comprehensive carryover plans that describe any challenges in achieving this carryover rate. OWF will be evaluating carryover amounts from FY 2018, and allocation adjustments will be made as part of the full year FY 2019 funding allocation transfer. Appeals for retaining carryover amounts above 2% should be submitted in writing to OWF by October 19, 2018.

**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.

**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1 – Departmental 2019 CR Guidance through December 7
- Attachment 2 – Fuels Management Spend Plan Template
- Attachment 3 – BAR Spend Plan Template