

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

Effective Date: 01/18/2017

Series: Public Lands

Part 620: Wildland Fire Management

Chapter 1: Policy and Program Management

Originating Office: Office of Wildland Fire

620 DM 1

1.1 **Purpose.** This chapter documents the authorities and policies for an integrated, coordinated, and comprehensive Department of the Interior (DOI) Wildland Fire Management Program. Policy for specific Wildland Fire Management Program areas is addressed in 620 DM 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6; additional policy pertinent to the Wildland Fire Program can be found in 604 DM 2.

1.2 **Scope.**

A. The policy in this chapter applies to all DOI bureau and office activities involving wildland fire management.

B. The program encompasses all types of wildland fire management activities that impact: (1) DOI's lands, facilities, infrastructure, and resources; (2) Tribal Trust and Restricted Lands and Insular Areas; (3) the ability of the Department to execute essential functions; and (4) assistance to other units of government under Federal laws, Executive Orders, and other agreements.

1.3 **Authorities.** Statutes and references that apply to the Wildland Fire Program are listed in Appendix 1.

1.4 **Definitions.** Definitions for terms used in Part 620 are provided in Appendix 2.

1.5 **Policy.** It is the policy of DOI to provide an integrated, intergovernmental approach to the management of wildland fires for fire managers, subordinate leaders, and fire fighters; and adhere to the *Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, 1995*; the *Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, 2001*; the *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, 2009*; *A National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, 2014*; and the *Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy, 2015*.

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1.6 **Guiding Principles.** The wildland fire management program is founded on the following guiding principles and core values:

- A. Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.
- B. The role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent will be incorporated into the planning process.
- C. Fire Management Plans, programs, and activities support land and resource management plans and their implementation.
- D. Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities.
- E. Fire management programs and activities are economically viable, based upon values to be protected, costs, and land and resource management objectives.
- F. Fire Management Plans and activities are based upon the best available science.
- G. Fire Management Plans and activities incorporate public health and environmental quality considerations.
- H. Federal, State, tribal, local, interagency, and international coordination and cooperation are essential.
- I. Standardization of policies and procedures among federal wildland fire management agencies is an ongoing objective.

1.7 **Program Vision and Objectives.** The vision of DOI's Wildland Fire Management Program is to safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and, as a Nation, live with wildland fire. The following objectives support this vision:

- A. Risk Management and Risk Reduction. Assure management of risk to people, communities, and natural and cultural resources, is the fundamental principle used to make informed decisions in all fire management programs. Minimize the risk to people, communities, and natural and cultural resources, by assessing the potential benefits of actions, severity of concerns, and probabilities of occurrences to reduce risk.
- B. Ecological. Meet DOI bureau/office missions using the wildland fire management program to conserve natural and cultural resources, and maintain and restore ecological health.
- C. Collaboration. Implement the wildland fire management program through internal and external collaboration and partnerships.

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1.8 Risk Based Wildland Fire Management. The DOI uses a risk-based methodology approach to develop policy, manage programs and budgets, and evaluate program outcomes and performance. This approach is comprised of:

- A. Assessment of risk based on wildfire likelihood, intensity, and consequences to values.
- B. Multi-year plans that establish strategies for managing risk to values.
- C. Monitoring tools to measure the effectiveness of managing wildfire risk to values over time.

1.9 Policy Development and Issuance.

A. Office of Wildland Fire. The Office of Wildland Fire, in collaboration with bureaus/offices, develops DOI's Wildland Fire Management policy. Wildland Fire Management Policy must be consistent throughout DOI and must promote and encourage interoperability with other federal and non-federal wildland fire organizations and entities. The Office of Wildland Fire may determine, when necessary for consistency and interoperability within DOI, or with other agencies, that certain policies apply to all bureau/office programs. Policy is issued in the following forms:

- (1) Departmental Manual.
- (2) Policy Memoranda. Memoranda may be used to provide policy with limited duration or serve as interim policy until incorporated into the Departmental Manual and/or appropriate Departmental Handbook.
- (3) Departmental Handbooks. Handbooks supplement Departmental Manual Chapters and provide guidance to implement the operational aspects of the wildland fire management program. Departmental Handbooks include procedures, processes, protocols, or similar provisions that are mandatory for all employees, supervisors, or managers. Departmental Handbooks are issued in accordance with 011 DM 5.

B. Bureaus/Offices. Bureaus/offices may adopt bureau/office-specific policy that is more but not less restrictive than DOI policy. Bureau/office policy must not detract from the intent of DOI's policy. To maintain consistency and coherence, and to maximize the ability to easily interoperate with each other and other federal and non-federal partners, bureaus/offices are encouraged to minimize adopting unique policy. Bureaus/offices may issue supplemental policy in a form that best meets their needs.

1.10 Wildland Fire Budget Formulation and Execution Process. The budget formulation and execution process is a transparent and collaborative process between the Office of Wildland Fire and bureau/office fire executives and Directors. The Office of Wildland Fire is responsible

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for managing DOI's budget and financial activities related to wildland fire management programs, including managing all aspects of the budget process for DOI's Wildland Fire Management Account. Activities include, but are not limited to: budget planning, formulation, and presentation; budget execution and allocation of funds to bureaus/offices; establishment of program performance metrics; tracking and evaluating program activities to ensure proper implementation, consistency, and compliance with national policies, standards, and regulations; and coordinating budget functions and activities with DOI's Office of Budget and bureaus/offices as well as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, and other Federal agencies.

1.11 **Wildland Fire Information and Technology.**

A. Management of wildland fire information and technology is accomplished collaboratively and in coordination with other programs and organizations, including bureau/office wildland fire management programs, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, and other federal and non-federal partners. Working with those partners, the DOI uses a risk management and governance approach to standardize wildland fire business processes and provide standardized information and technology services. Services should be provided in a timely, consistent, reliable, innovative, and cohesive manner to meet business requirements and priorities of the wildland fire management program.

B. Management of wildland fire information and technology is based on an integrated and cohesive structure that maintains the integrity of reporting relationships of personnel. Within this framework, standardized project development, life-cycle management and steady-state investment practices are utilized to result in best-value and continuously improving returns. This structure also provides a clear interface between DOI and USDA investment decision making and provides a unified capability to identify information technology requirements and priorities, efficiently make investment decisions, and manage all of the investments as a single portfolio.

C. Management of wildland fire information and technology adheres to four principal goals:

(1) **Systems and Applications.** Standardized, integrated solutions, and services that enable informed, timely, and documented business decisions.

(2) **Data and Information.** Accurate, consistent, reliable, and accessible data and information across landscapes, organizations, applications, programs, and platforms.

(3) **Infrastructure and Connectivity.** A secure, integrated environment that enables efficient, effective, voice and data interconnection, and accessibility regardless of organization affiliation, or user location.

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(4) Technology and Innovation. Technology, research, and innovation to enable and enhance wildland fire business.

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Appendix 1

Wildland Fire Management Authorities

1. Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, December 2, 1980 (Pub. L. 96-487, 94 Stat. 2371).
2. Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, December 18, 1971 (Pub. L. 92-203, 85 Stat. 688; 43 U.S.C. 1601).
3. Clean Air Act, July 1955 (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.).
4. Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1995 (Pub. L. 103- 332).
5. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, May 22, 1974 (Pub. L. 93-288, 88 Stat. 143; 42 U.S.C. 5121).
6. Economy Act June 30, 1932 (41 U.S.C. 686).
7. Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act, October 29, 1974 (Pub. L. 93-498, 88 Stat. 1535, 15 U.S.C. 2201) as amended.
8. Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act, 1977 (Pub. L. 95-224, as amended by Pub. L. 97-258, September 13, 1982; 96 Stat. 1003; 31 U.S.C. 6301 thru 6308).
9. Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 1976 (Pub. L. 94-579, 43 U.S.C. 1701).

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10. Federal Property and Administrative Services Act, 1949 (40 U.S.C. 471; et seq.).
11. Healthy Forests Restoration Act, December 3, 2003 (Pub. L. 108-148, 16 U.S.C. 6501) [As Amended Through Pub. L. 110-246, Enacted May 22, 2008].
12. Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (Pub. L. 93-638, 88 Stat. 2203).
13. National Indian Forest Resources Management Act, November 28, 1990 (Presidential Order 101-630, Pub. L. 101-630).
14. National Park Service Organic Act (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1, 2, 3, and 4).
15. Administration of the National Park Service (67 Stat. 495; 16 U.S.C. 1.b (1)).
16. National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, October 15, 1966 (Pub. L. 89-669, 80 Stat. 927; 16 U.S.C. 668dd through 668ee, as amended).
17. National Environmental Policy Act, January 1, 1970 (Pub. L. 91-190; 83 Stat. 852, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347).
18. Oregon and California Act, August 28, 1937 (50 Stat. 875; 43 U.S.C. 1181e).
19. Protection Act of September 20, 1922 (42 Stat. 857; 16 U.S.C. 594).

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20. Reciprocal Fire Protection Act, May 27, 1955 (69 Stat. 66, 42 U.S.C. 185a).
21. Supplemental Appropriation Act, September 10, 1982 (Pub. L. 100-428, 96 Stat. 837).
22. Taylor Grazing Act, June 28, 1934 (48 Stat. 1269; 43 U.S.C. 315).
23. Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (Pub. L. 108-278, 118 Stat. 868).
24. Tribal Self-Governance Act of 1994 (Pub. L. 103-413).
25. Wildfire Suppression Assistance Act, April 7, 1989 (Pub. L. 100-428, 42 U.S.C. 1856).
26. Wilderness Act, September 3, 1964 (Pub. L. 88-577, 78 Stat. 890, 16 U.S.C. 1131, 1132).
27. Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species, February 3, 1999.
28. Executive Order 13751, Safeguarding the Nation from the Impacts of Invasive Species, December 5, 2016.
29. National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-57).
30. The Reclamation Act of June 17, 1902 (32 Stat. 388; 43 U.S.C. 391).

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31. Soil and Moisture Conservation Act of 1935 (49 Stat 163).

32. Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement (FLAME) Act of 2009 (Pub. L. 114-38).

Wildland Fire Management References

1. Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review, December 2005.
2. Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, January 2001.
3. Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, February 2009.
4. A National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, April 2014.
5. The Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy, May 2015.

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Appendix 2

**Wildland Fire Management Definitions
(For Part 620 DM)**

For the purposes of 620 DM the following definitions are used.

1. **Hazard.** A condition or situation that exists within the working environment capable of causing physical harm, injury, or damage.
2. **Risk.** The likelihood or possibility of hazardous consequences in terms of severity or probability.
3. **Risk Management.** The process whereby management decisions are made and actions taken concerning control of hazards and acceptance of remaining risk.
4. **Safety.** A measure of the degree of freedom from risk or conditions that can cause death, physical harm, or equipment or property damage.

All other terminology related to wildland fire management is found in the National Wildfire Coordinating Group Glossary. <http://www.nwcg.gov/glossary-of-wildland-fire-terminology>

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