

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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Series: Public Lands

Part 620: Wildland Fire Management

Chapter 6: Fuels Management

Originating Office: Office of Wildland Fire

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6.1 **Purpose.** This chapter documents the scope, policy, and objectives for the Department of the Interior (DOI) Fuels Management Program.

A. The purpose of the program is to protect, conserve, and restore healthy landscapes and ecosystems that are resilient to wildfire-related disturbances; to enhance the ability of human populations and infrastructure to withstand a wildfire; and to enhance safe and effective wildfire response.

B. The fuels management program contributes to the DOI's mission by removing or modifying wildland fuels to reduce wildfire risk to life, property and resource values which includes: raising community awareness of wildland fire risk and mitigation measures; providing local and landscape level opportunities for safe and effective wildfire response; reducing the potential for post-fire damage; and limiting the spread or proliferation of invasive species and diseases that can contribute to wildfire spread.

6.2 **Scope.** The policy in this chapter applies to all DOI bureau/office activities involving the management of wildland fuels occurring on, or proximal to lands under the jurisdictional authority of DOI bureaus/offices.

6.3 **Policy.** The policy of DOI is to reduce wildfire risk, restore, and maintain landscapes that can absorb the effects of wildfire by regaining, maintaining, or attaining desired structural, compositional, and functional attributes; promote fire-adapted communities, and; enhance wildfire response capability over the long term through fuels management. Fuels Management activities will:

A. Protect, conserve, and restore landscapes consistent with the DOI's strategic plan and bureau/office resource and land management plans.

B. Be consistent with land management plan objectives.

C. Reduce wildfire risk to life, property, and resource values.

D. Coordinate with other federal and nonfederal partners (e.g., communities and tribal, state and local governments) to achieve the greatest social, economic and ecosystem benefit.

E. Promote the role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process at different spatial scales across the landscape.

F. Adapt to climate change by using science-based tools and information.

G. Undertake and support activities that improve and sustain both community and individual responsibilities to adapt to, prepare for, and respond to wildfire. These activities will assist tribal, state, and local government, and individual landowners with managing wildfire risk and will provide a framework for sharing costs, resources, tools, products, lessons learned, and innovations to achieve the goals of *A National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*, 2014.

H. Provide informational messages that increase public awareness, knowledge and understanding of wildland fire risk, fire ecology, wildfire prevention, resident safety and how neighborhoods, businesses, and infrastructure can mitigate risk from potential wildfires.

I. Improve the ability of firefighters to respond safely, efficiently, and effectively to wildfires by the nature, design and strategic placement of fuel treatments.

J. Provide for increased likelihood of success in accomplishing initial response objectives, including suppression, point protection, or managing wildfire for multiple objectives.

K. Provide alternatives and opportunities to manage wildfire across the landscape that achieve land management goals and tribal and public benefit.

L. Monitor, document, and record fuels activities information through authorized departmental systems of record.

6.4 **Objectives.** The objectives of DOI's Fuels Management Program are to:

A. Provide for the implementation of a safe, cost-efficient, and effective program that achieves DOI goals and management objectives.

B. Base the national program on the DOI's wildland fire management framework that incorporates risk to inform the National Fuels Program budget for each bureau/office. Use a risk-based approach that includes:

(1) Life, property, and resource values in combination with an evaluation of wildfire risk.

- (2) Strategies to reduce the DOI's wildland fire risk.
- (3) Strategies to achieve ecosystems that are resilient to wildfire.
- (4) Consideration of inter-related social and economic values.

C. Enable bureaus/offices to maintain a qualified workforce to implement risk based fuels management activities.

D. Plan and implement fuels management activities that:

- (1) Comply with DOI policy and guidance.
- (2) Use the best available science.
- (3) Comply with local air quality control district, tribal, state, local and federal government air quality regulations, including the use of basic smoke management practices.

E. Use common Departmental systems of record for financial accountability and performance reporting.

F. Practice adaptive management, including monitoring, assessment, evaluation, and adjustment.

6.5 **Handbooks.** Technical or detailed instructions, or information on specific activities that supplement general policies and procedures in this chapter are set forth in one or more Departmental Handbooks, issued pursuant to 620 DM 1.1 A (3). The Handbooks are available at <http://elips.doi.gov>.