

Natural and Cultural Resources Management, Part 610 Wilderness Stewardship

Chapter 2 Wilderness Administration and Resource Stewardship, 610 FW 2

2.21 What is the Service's general policy for managing wilderness fires? Three types of wildland fire may occur in our wilderness areas: wildfire, wildland fire use, and prescribed fire. We manage all wildland fires to achieve wilderness objectives in accordance with an approved fire management plan (FMP) that is developed or reviewed and revised in concert with the WSP. In the WSP, we must identify and address wilderness character and the values to be protected, desired fire regime, condition class, ecological conditions, and specific fire management considerations.

A. Firefighter and public safety is always the first priority on all wilderness fire operations.

B. We will conduct fire management planning, preparedness, wildland fire operations, monitoring, and research on an interagency basis with the involvement of all partners.

C. See 621 FW 1-3 for specific guidance on fire management policy, fire management plans, and prescribed burning. See 095 FW 3 for Service policy on wildland fire suppression. The *Fire Management Handbook* contains detailed guidance on FMP development.

2.22 May the Service manage wildland fire in wilderness? Wildland fires and their effects are inherent parts of the ecological processes of wilderness. The principal wildland fire use objective in wilderness is to allow fire to play its natural role in the ecosystem. We will not interfere with the wilderness ecosystem's recovery response to these effects. A wildland fire implementation plan is developed for each wildland fire used to achieve wilderness objectives. If we decide to suppress a wildland fire, we select the appropriate management response that preserves wilderness character and values as well as accomplishes suppression objectives. We will identify the appropriate minimum impact suppression tactics in the FMP and develop them in conjunction with the fire management officer.

2.23 May the Service use prescribed fire in wilderness?

A. We may use prescribed fire within a wilderness area only where fire is a natural part of the ecosystem, and only if prescribed fire is the minimum requirement for administering the area as wilderness and is necessary to accomplish the purposes of the refuge, including Wilderness Act purposes. In addition, such decisions and actions must:

- (1) Maintain or restore the biological integrity, diversity, or environmental health of the wilderness area; or
- (2) Be necessary for the recovery of threatened or endangered species.

B. We must include prescribed fire use within wilderness in an approved FMP and develop a fire plan for any prescribed fire. The FMP must be incorporated through reference in the unit's WSP. We should plan prescribed fire to avoid or minimize adverse effects on:

- (1) Safety of visitors and staff;
- (2) Biological integrity and diversity;
- (3) Health of humans, fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats;
- (4) Visibility; and

(5) Other air-quality-related values.

2.24 How does the Service accomplish emergency stabilization and rehabilitation in wilderness following a wildfire?

Consistent with applicable guidelines, we may prepare a Burned Area Emergency Response (emergency stabilization) or Rehabilitation Plan (see 620 DM 3).

Policy and Responsibilities for Fire Management, 621 FW 1

1.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter describes policies, objectives, definitions, and responsibilities for fire management on our lands.

1.2 What is our goal? The goal of wildland fire management is to plan and make decisions that help accomplish the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. That mission is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

1.3 What is the wildland fire management policy? We base our wildland fire management policy on the Departmental Manual, 620 DM 1-2. It is our policy that:

A. Firefighter and public safety is the first priority of the Fire Management Program. With the possible exception of instances where the life of another is in jeopardy, we will not purposely expose an employee, contractor, or cooperator to life-threatening conditions or situations (see [241 FW 7](#)). All Fire Management Plans and activities must reflect this commitment.

B. Only trained and qualified people will conduct fire management duties. Our fire management personnel will meet training and qualification standards that we establish or adopt for the position they occupy. Agency administrators will meet training standards that we establish or adopt for the position they occupy.

C. Trained and certified employees will participate in the wildland fire management program as the situation demands. Non-certified employees with operational, administrative, or other skills will support the wildland fire management program as necessary. Agency administrators are responsible and accountable, and will make employees available to participate in the wildland fire management program.

D. We will conduct fire management planning, preparedness, wildland and prescribed fire operations, monitoring, and research on an interagency basis with the involvement of all partners when appropriate.

E. An approved Fire Management Plan must be in place for all of our lands with burnable vegetation. Our Fire Management Plans must be consistent with firefighter and public safety, protection values, and land, natural, and cultural resource management plans, and must address public health issues. Our Fire Management Plans must also address all potential wildland fire occurrences and may include the full range of appropriate management responses. The responsible agency administrator must coordinate, review, and approve Fire Management Plans to ensure consistency with approved land management plans.

F. We will integrate fire, as an ecological process, into resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale, across bureau boundaries, based upon the best available science.

G. We will use wildland fire to meet identified resource management objectives when appropriate and the Fire Management Plan contains such direction.

H. We will employ prescribed fire whenever it is an appropriate tool for managing our resources and to protect against unwanted wildland fire whenever it threatens human life, property and natural/cultural resources. Once we commit people to an incident, these human resources become the highest value we protect. If we must prioritize between property and natural/cultural resources, we will base the decision on relative protection values, commensurate with fire management costs.

I. Our Regions will provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land, natural, and cultural resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, and equipment.

J. Management actions we take on wildland fires will consider firefighter and public safety, be cost effective, consider benefits and protection values, and be consistent with natural and cultural resource objectives.

K. Refuge staffs must work with local cooperators and the public to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fires on our lands.

1.4 What are the authorities for wildland fire management? The following statutes authorize us and provide the means for managing wildland fires on our lands or that threaten our lands and on adjacent lands:

A. Protection Act of September 20, 1922 (42 Stat. 857; 16 U.S.C. 594) Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to protect, from fire, lands under his/her jurisdiction and to cooperate with other Federal agencies, States, or owners of timber.

B. Economy Act of June 30, 1932 (47 Stat. 417; 31 U.S.C. 1535). Authorizes Federal agencies to enter into contracts and agreements for services with each other.

C. Reciprocal Fire Protection Act of May 27, 1955 as amended by the Wildfire Suppression Assistance Act of 1989 (69 Stat. 66, 67; 42 U.S.C. 1856a)(102 Stat. 1615). Authorizes reciprocal fire protection agreements with any fire organization for mutual aid with or without reimbursement and allows for emergency assistance in the vicinity of agency facilities in extinguishing fires when no agreement exists.

D. National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 and the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962.(80 Stat. 927)(16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee)(16 U.S.C. 460k-460k4). Governs the administration and use of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

E. Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of December 18, 1971. (88 Stat. 668; 43 U.S.C. 1601). Alaska Natives' lands are to continue to receive forest fire protection from the United States at no cost until they become economically self-sufficient.

F. Disaster Relief Act of May 22, 1974. (88 Stat. 143; 42 U.S.C. 5121). Authorizes Federal agencies to assist State and local governments during emergency or major disaster by direction of the President.

G. Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of October 29, 1974 et seq. (88 Stat. 1535; 15 U.S.C. 2201) as amended. Authorizes reimbursement to State and local fire services for costs incurred in firefighting on Federal property.

H. Federal Grants and Cooperative Act of 1977. (Pub. L. 95-244, as amended by Pub. L. 97-258, September 13, 1982. 96 Stat. 1003; 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308). Eliminates unnecessary administrative requirements on recipients of Government awards by characterizing the relationship between executive agencies and contractors, States and local governments and other recipients in acquiring property and services in providing U.S. Government assistance.

I. Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of December 2, 1980. (94 Stat. 2371, 43 U.S.C. 1602-1784). Designates certain public lands in Alaska as units of the National Park, National Wildlife Refuge, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Wilderness Preservation, and National Forest systems resulting in general expansion of all systems. Any contracts or agreements with the jurisdictions for fire management services listed above that were previously executed will remain valid.

J. Supplemental Appropriation Act of September 10, 1982. (96 Stat. 837). Authorizes Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture to enter into contracts with State and local government entities, including local fire districts, for procurement of services in presuppression, detection, and suppression of fires on any unit within their jurisdiction.

K. Wildfire Suppression Assistance Act of 1989. (Pub. L. 100-428, as amended by Pub. L. 101-11, April 7, 1989). Authorizes reciprocal fire protection agreements with any fire organization for mutual aid with or

without reimbursement and allows for emergency assistance in the vicinity of agency facilities in extinguishing fires when no agreement exists.

L. Departmental Manual, 620 DM 1-2, Wildland Fire Management, General Policy and Procedures; and Wildland Fire Management, General Policy and Procedures - Alaska.

1.5 Who is responsible for the fire management program? The Secretary of the Interior has given the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the responsibility for the operation of the fire management program on our lands (620 DM 1.2).

A. Director. The Director has overall responsibility for our wildland fire management program and will formally evaluate all Regional fire management activities.

B. Assistant Director - Refuges and Wildlife (ARW). The Assistant Director provides leadership for the wildland fire management program through the Division of Refuges. The Division formally evaluates all Regional wildland fire management activities at least every 5 years. The Assistant Director promulgates and approves the Fire Management Handbook and other fire-related handbooks to provide guidance.

C. Service Fire Management Coordinator (SFMC). The Service Fire Management Coordinator is the Chief of the Fire Management Branch, Division of Refuges, and is our representative at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC). The Fire Management Branch provides technical direction and coordination of fire management planning, policy development, and procedures Servicewide. The SFMC will represent us on the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC Group). The SFMC will implement the decisions of the MAC Group as they affect our areas. The decisions of the MAC Group include the prioritizing of incidents nationally and the allocation or reallocation of firefighting resources to meet national priorities.

D. Regional Director. Regional Directors are responsible for the wildland fire management program in their Region and will designate a qualified Regional Fire Management Coordinator. The Regional Director, through the Regional Fire Management Coordinator, will provide wildland fire management program support to our lands located within their geographic Region. The Regional Director will identify and clarify the roles and responsibilities of other Regional Office staff who might provide oversight to the Fire Management Program.

E. Regional Fire Management Coordinator (RFMC). The RFMC provides coordination, training, planning, evaluation, and technical guidance for the Region and is available to provide assistance for intra-agency and interagency wildland fire management needs. The Regional Fire Management Coordinator will meet qualification requirements we establish for the position. The Regional Director provides written delegated authority to the RFMC to represent the Region on the Geographic Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC Group). The RFMC is responsible for implementing the decisions of the MAC Group as they affect our areas. The decisions of the MAC Group include the prioritizing of incidents and the allocation or reallocation of firefighting resources to meet wildland fire management priorities.

F. Project Leader. Project leaders are responsible for planning and implementing an effective wildland fire management program on lands under their jurisdiction. In conjunction with fire management specialists, they determine the level of fire management effort required to meet wildland fire management objectives of each unit. Project leaders will prepare an approved Fire Management Plan for our lands under their jurisdiction. If the fire management program warrants, they will establish a position to function as the Fire Management Officer for the field office (see G below). Otherwise, they will assign the fire management responsibilities to a staff member as a collateral duty. A staff member, assigned fire management responsibilities as a collateral duty, will meet fire management qualification requirements we establish. All project leaders will make available for dispatch to off-refuge/interagency wildland and prescribed fire management operations all personnel hired in dedicated, fire-funded positions. Project leaders will meet fire management training requirements we establish for their position.

G. Fire Management Officer (FMO). We assign Fire Management Officers where an individual refuge wildland fire management program requires wildland fire management expertise. We may assign an FMO to provide wildland fire management support to a group of refuges (zone or district) when individually, each refuge does not warrant a full time FMO. FMO positions are dedicated, fire-funded positions, and are a Regional and national resource. We may call upon the FMO to assist in both intra-agency and interagency wildland fire management needs. The Fire Management Officer will meet qualification standards we establish or adopt for the position.

1.6 What training and qualification standards exist?

A. General. This chapter establishes training and qualification standards for our firefighter, fire support, and fire management positions in wildland fire management programs. These standards specify experience, training, and physical fitness requirements to assure a uniform level of performance. We establish training standards for project leaders, and Regional and national support staff who administer portions of our wildland fire management program.

(1) It is Departmental and Service policy to utilize only qualified personnel who meet standards we establish or adopt for wildland fire management. Project Leaders must not dispatch unqualified personnel to wildland or prescribed fire duty.

(2) There may be occasions when unqualified personnel discover a wildland fire. When this occurs, the employee should report the fire and request assistance before taking action to suppress or slow the spread of the fire. If the fire poses an imminent threat to human life, the employee may take appropriate action to protect that life before requesting assistance. We will relieve unqualified personnel from direct on-line suppression duty or reassign them to non-fireline duty when qualified initial attack forces arrive.

B. Interagency Standards. Along with other land management agencies, we adopt the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS) Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification Subsystem Guide, PMS 310-1 to identify minimum qualification standards for interagency wildland and prescribed fire operations. Departmental policy requires all our personnel engaged in interagency operations to meet these standards. PMS 310-1 contains specific guidance concerning the implementation and management of wildland and prescribed fire qualifications.

C. Service Standards. PMS 310-1 allows the establishment of standards to meet our specific needs for operations that involve only our personnel or, in some cases, local cooperators. The Fire Management Preparedness and Planning Chapter of the Fire Management Handbook identifies our standards. We establish them to respond to certain suppression and prescribed fire needs.

D. Training Standards. Training requirements to meet firefighting position standards are in [232 FW 6](#).

E. Medical and Physical Fitness Standards. Current requirements with implementation direction are now in the Fire Management Handbook.

1.7 What terms need definitions? We define the terms used in this part below. The Fire Management Handbook contains these and other definitions.

A. Agency Administrator. The appropriate level manager having organizational responsibility for management of an administrative unit. It may include Director, Regional Director, complex manager, or project leader.

B. Appropriate Management Action. Specific actions we take to implement a management strategy.

C. Appropriate Management Response. Specific actions we take to respond to a wildland fire to implement protection and fire use objectives.

D. Appropriate Management Strategy. A plan or direction an agency administrator selects that guides wildland fire management actions intended to meet protection and fire use objectives.

E. Fire Management Plan. A strategic plan that defines a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires and documents the Fire Management Program in the approved land use plan. We supplement the plan with operational plans such as preparedness plans, preplanned dispatch plans, prescribed fire plans, and prevention plans.

F. Geographic Area Coordination Center. An office that coordinates the movement of resources between dispatch centers within a geographic area. Most centers are multi-agency staffed and coordinated on an interagency basis.

G. Monitoring. Periodic evaluation and documentation of a prescribed fire or wildland fire and its environment to ensure that the fire is burning within the scope of an approved Fire Management Plan.

H. Prescribed Fire. Any fire we ignite by management actions to meet specific objectives. Prior to ignition, you must complete a written Prescribed Fire Plan, meet National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) requirements, and have approval by the agency administrator. You may meet NEPA requirements at the land use or fire management planning level. Prepare an Environmental Assessment for all actions, except those covered by a categorical exclusion, or those covered sufficiently in an earlier environmental document, or for those actions for which we will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

I. Prescription. Measurable criteria that guide selection of appropriate management response and action. Prescription criteria may include safety, economic, public health, environmental, geographic, administrative, social or legal considerations.

J. Preparedness. Our activities to provide a safe, efficient, and cost-effective fire management program in support of land and resource management objectives through appropriate planning and coordination.

K. Suppression Actions. A management action we intend to protect identified values from a fire, to extinguish a fire, or to alter a fire's direction of spread.

L. Wildfire. An unwanted wildland fire. We include this term only to give credence to historic fire prevention products. This is not a separate type of fire.

M. Wildland Fire. Any non-structure fire, other than prescribed fire, that occurs in the wildland.

N. Wildland Fire Management Program. The full range of activities and functions necessary for planning, preparedness, emergency suppression operations, emergency rehabilitation, and prescribed fire operations, including non-activity fuel management to reduce risks to public safety and to restore and sustain ecosystem health.

1.8 What is the Fire Management Information System (FMIS)? The Fire Management Information System (FMIS) is a Servicewide fire database that the Fire Management Branch administers. FMIS contains fire information about the following:

A. Fire Occurrence. Contains individual wildland fire and prescribed fire reports (DI-1202). Our Fire Management Handbook and Fire Management Home page contain specific information and completion instructions.

B. FIREBASE. Contains fire management budget planning and programming.

C. Incident Qualifications. Contains fire training and experience information and red card qualifications for individuals.

D. Multi-Agency Training Schedule (MATS). Contains all agencies' training scheduled for each month.

1.9 What does our Fire Management Handbook contain? Our Fire Management Handbook provides detailed guidance on implementing Departmental and Service policy regarding the fire management program. The Handbook reflects changes in wildland fire management terminology, and implementation procedures for agency and interagency operations. It incorporates planning and program management, preparedness and planning; operational aspects of prescribed fire, prescribed fire management; operational aspects of wildland fires, wildland fire management; and fire investigation procedures and cost determination, fire trespass, into a single document.

Fire Management Preparedness and Planning, 621 FW 2

2.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter describes the fire planning we require in the fire management program. The Fire Management Preparedness and Planning Chapter of our Fire Management Handbook contains detailed guidance.

2.2 What planning must be done?

A. We currently have two levels of planning: Regional and Refuge. Regional planning includes preparedness planning, which describes activities that lead to a safe, efficient and cost-effective fire management program in support of land and resource management objectives at our refuges. Complete this level of planning prior to the Region's normal fire season. The refuge level planning activity focuses on the Fire Management Plan (FMP) and its activity and support documents.

B. We will conduct fire management planning on an interagency basis with the involvement of all our partners where we share adjoining boundaries.

2.3 What is a Fire Management Plan? We will have an approved FMP for every area with burnable vegetation. Our FMPs must be consistent with firefighter and public safety, protection values, and land, natural, and cultural resource management plans, and must address public health issues. Our FMPs must address all potential wildland fire occurrences and may include the full range of wildland fire management actions. We will coordinate these plans with appropriate specialists at the Regional level and obtain the approval of the responsible agency administrators to ensure consistency with approved land management plans.

A. The FMP is a strategic plan that defines a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires and documents the fire management program in the approved land use plan. Operational plans such as preparedness plans, pre-planned dispatch plans, prescribed fire plans and prevention plans supplement the plan.

B. Fire management options are severely limited on any refuge without an approved FMP. In these situations, refuges may only implement suppression strategies to manage wildland fires. Refuges cannot conduct prescribed fire operations without an approved fire management plan.

C. Project leaders will prepare the FMP with assistance from the Fire Management Officer, field office staff, and other specialists such as the Regional Historic Preservation Officer or the endangered species biologist and the public, as appropriate. Obtain concurrence from the Regional Fire Management Coordinator, and approval from the Regional Director. Project leaders will review annually and update as necessary all operational support plans, e.g., Dispatch, Prevention, Step-up, Pre-attack, etc. Submit significant updates to existing plans to the Regional Office.

(1) The FMP may consist of several parts. As appropriate, the FMP will include sections on preparedness, prescribed and wildland fire operations, prevention, and detection. Where complexity warrants, we may require operational support plans covering these areas to provide day-to-day operational guidance.

(2) Each Refuge and Wetland Management District will complete the wildland fire section of the FMP to assure that we adequately protect field office resources including staff, the general public, and private property from wildland fires.

(3) The approved FMP is the authority for expenditure of fire management and resource management funds for prescribed fire.

(4) Refuges will review and/or revise plans at a minimum of 5-year intervals or when we propose significant changes. When land use changes occur adjacent to our lands, we will review the plan to determine the need for revisions in fuel management or hazard reduction procedures.

B. A simple FMP describing wildland fire operations will be sufficient for small refuges, hatcheries, wildlife management areas, and waterfowl production areas scattered among private lands, where local fire departments will suppress wildland fires.

2.4 What are activity plans?

A. Prescribed Fire Plan.

(1) To use prescribed fire, the FMP must include it under management options. We require an approved Prescribed Fire Plan for each prescribed fire. You may use a plan again for the same burn plot as long as the prescriptions remain valid or until new mandates dictate plan amendments. All prescribed fire plans must contain current and valid prescriptions. Regional Directors may establish a process to delegate prescribed fire plan approval to the responsible agency administrator. Regional review and concurrence processes for prescribed fire plans must include the responsible Burn Boss and Regionally-designated subject matter experts. We will review all prescribed fires after completion. We discuss our procedures for prescribed fire in [621 FW 3](#).

(2) You must comply with NEPA requirements for all prescribed fires. You must prepare an environmental assessment for each Prescribed Fire Plan unless: (a) the field office's approved FMP or planning documents and the accompanying environmental document adequately discuss the action; or (b) a categorical exclusion covers the activity.

B. Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan. You must prepare a Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan whenever a wildland fire causes sufficient damage to a refuge's natural resources to warrant direct and immediate rehabilitation. Wildland Fire Management, [095 FW 3](#), discusses rehabilitation planning with detailed guidance provided in our Fire Management Handbook.

2.5 What plans are done at the Regional Level?

A. Each Region must prepare a Regional Dispatch Plan prior to the Region's normal fire season. We design this plan to give information needed for large fire support, and it contains current information regarding personnel and equipment availability, duty contacts, and telephone numbers of Regional fire management personnel.

(1) Regional Fire Management Coordinators should work with the appropriate Geographic Area Coordination Center for incident support and service. We may incorporate the Regional Dispatch Plan into the Geographic Area Coordination Center's mobilization plan to provide better local interagency coordination.

(2) The National Interagency Mobilization Guide, NFES 2092, available from the National Interagency Fire Center, is an interagency document that identifies established standard procedures which guide the operations of multi-agency logistical support activity. We will use the Mobilization Guide to facilitate interagency dispatch coordination.

(3) Each Regional Dispatch Plan will include preparedness planning for the Region. These plans help us in timely recognition of approaching critical fire situations. RFMCs will determine whether we will need preparedness plans at the refuge level. In most cases, the preparedness planning done at the Geographic Area Coordination Center level will provide adequate guidance.

B. Step-up plans are operational plans that can be a part of the preparedness planning process at the Regional level. They can provide Regional level guidance on preparedness activities we need to implement based upon worsening burning conditions, and we can use them in conjunction with regional/geographic area preparedness planning. The plan authorizes increased preparedness in order to have appropriate resources available for initial action.

Prescribed Fire Management, 621 FW 3

3.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter describes the basic policy guidance for our prescribed fire program. Further operational guidance is available in our Fire Management Handbook.

3.2 What is a prescribed fire? A prescribed fire is any fire ignited by our management actions to meet specific objectives. You must have an approved Fire Management Plan (FMP) which includes the use of prescribed fire. You must prepare a written Prescribed Fire Plan, meet NEPA requirements prior to ignition ([621FW 2.4A\(2\)](#)) and have the appropriate approvals. You can use prescribed fire in wilderness areas and proposed wilderness areas in accordance with established guidelines.

A. We consider management of naturally-ignited wildland fires to accomplish specific pre-stated resource management objectives in pre-defined geographic areas wildland fire use, and not a type of prescribed fire.

B. You may not allow a prescribed fire to burn without a current and valid prescription approved by the responsible agency administrator (line officer). The Prescribed Fire Plan must address the following elements:

- (1) Prescribed burn objectives and how they support the land use objectives for the area;
- (2) Expected fire behavior;
- (3) Buffer and safety zones;
- (4) Perimeter length and acreage burned limit;
- (5) Analysis of the cumulative effects of weather and drought on fire behavior;
- (6) Potential impacts on visitors, users, and local communities, both on and off site;
- (7) Considerations of environmental, economic, and social effects, both on and off site; and
- (8) Items to include in the burn day assessment during the go-no-go determination:
 - (a) Regional and national fire activity constraints; and

(b) The maximum number of fires that can burn in the planning area at one time.

C. The project leader will certify daily, in writing, that we expect any prescribed fire, including those in wilderness areas, lasting more than one burning period to remain in prescription during the next 24 hours. Adequate resources must be available to manage the fire, taking into consideration the reasonably foreseeable fuel, weather, and fire behavior conditions. Maintain certifications in your field office files, available for review.

D. If you determine a prescribed fire to be out of prescription, you must implement the contingency plan immediately. If the contingency plan is not successful, treat the fire as an unwanted wildland fire. The next actions taken will be to achieve protection objectives, and we will determine this through implementation of a Wildland Fire Situation Analysis.

3.3 What about safety considerations? Only trained and qualified personnel will conduct our prescribed fire operations, ([232 FW 6](#), Firefighter Training). You will issue and require personnel to wear and use protective clothing and equipment as prescribed in [241 FW 3](#), Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and [241 FW 7](#), Firefighting.

3.4 Is smoke management important? Visibility is a major consideration in smoke management. Your planning for prescribed fire must include the potential for hazardous situations, including impaired visibility created by smoke both on and off our lands. You must meet the provisions of the Clean Air Act and the State Implementation Plan (SIP).

3.5 What consultation and coordination do we require? All planning for prescribed fire must include consultation with appropriate State and local agencies. Your prescribed fire operations must comply with all State and local requirements. You must notify your cooperators when you ignite prescribed fires to ensure that you can quickly initiate and reinforce suppression actions if necessary. In addition, 620 DM 1.6 (C) requires you to prepare the appropriate agreements in all cases where fires are planned to cross boundaries between our lands and those controlled by another agency or private owner.

3.6 Can we use contracts and cooperative agreements? Local fire departments, qualified contractors or other cooperators can conduct prescribed fire operations on our lands. You must complete an agreement or contract clearly stating the conditions under which these individuals may conduct prescribed fire operations, liability waivers, qualification and PPE requirements or other items important to the burning operation.

A. Contractors. Private contractors who specialize in providing fire management services must meet our standards for qualifications and PPE. Your contract should specify these requirements as well as other standards or work accomplishments they are to meet.

B. Cooperators. Encourage your cooperators to meet our standards for qualification and PPE. Many local cooperators such as Volunteer Fire Departments cannot afford the PPE or the training to meet our standards, and we cannot force them. We should consider not using them in our prescribed fire program when this is the case. If you must use them, you may need to invite the cooperator to attend one of our training sessions prior to burning season or loan PPE to them during the burning operations. If an individual cooperator will be supervising FWS employees on the burn operation, he/she must meet our qualification and experience standards.

3.7 What should my evaluation contain? You must complete a written evaluation on all prescribed fires. Your evaluation must document the conditions under which you conducted the prescribed fire in order to evaluate how closely the fire conformed to planned behavior, what unanticipated difficulties were encountered during the action, and how well the fire accomplished the desired results.

3.8 What about an escaped prescribed fire? You must consider any prescribed fire that escapes the planned fire area (other than minor slopovers) an unwanted wildland fire. You must consider any burns outside of the written prescription (e.g., environmental conditions, fire behavior not listed in the written prescription, or will not meet objectives) an unwanted wildland fire. Determine further actions for an escaped prescribed fire through an analysis of alternative management strategies using the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis.

3.9 When should I suspend operations? You may conduct prescribed fire operations during National Planning Preparedness Level V if you get concurrence from your Regional and National Fire Management offices. You must consider your geographic area planning levels when conducting prescribed fires. Consult your geographic MAC Group in the decision making process. See the National Interagency Mobilization Guide for detailed steps in the approval process.

3.10 Who needs to know about prescribed fire activities? You must inform the public of prescribed fire activities using news releases, interpretive messages, and educational programs. You must not conduct a prescribed fire without informing those people you will or might impact.

3.11 How do I handle debris disposal? You can use fire to remove wildland fuels (debris) generated in maintenance activities (such as agricultural waste, grass or brush mowing or clipping), in the removal of hazardous trees, or during construction activities. A Fire Management Officer must review the complexity of these debris disposal projects. You may use one Prescribed Fire Burn Plan to address all low complexity debris disposal projects for a unit, as long as the conditions under which you conduct the burning and the prescription is consistent among all the projects. You may use this Prescribed Fire Plan for multiple years if you review it annually.