



On February 13, 2009, the FEDERAL Fire Executive Council (FEC) approved Guidance for the Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. This Guidance provides for consistent implementation of the 1995/2001 Federal Fire Policy, as directed by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council.



Purpose & Objectives

- Review fire policy evolution and the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy
- Examine the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy Implementation Strategy



Purpose & Objectives

- Discuss how this policy implementation strategy should change the response to wildland fire
- Review major management implications

Directs the federal fire directors to work collaboratively with state, local and tribal fire managers and public and nongovernment organizations to communicate direction stated in the guidance with internal and external audiences to foster understanding and support for the complexity of wildland fire management.



Wildland Fire Policy

- **Evolving Process**
 - Fire control
 - Fire management
- **Recent Policy Reviews**
 - 1989
 - 1995
 - 2001
 - 2008

The Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (January 2001) remains sound and presents a single cohesive federal fire policy for the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture. However, some issues associated with implementation of this policy need closer attention and clarification to fully achieve the intent of the policy.



Wildland Fire Policy

- **Why are we revising the Implementation Strategy?**
 - **Interagency cooperation and communications**
 - **Escalating fire suppression costs**
 - **Confusion about policy implementation (AMR)**
 - **Issues where policy implementation conflicted with policy**

Fire management activities affecting WUI areas require closer coordination and more engagement between with federal, state, local and tribal land and fire managers to ensure firefighter and public safety and mitigate property loss from wildland fire. A key finding of the 2001 review of the 1995 policy was that “multiple terms for various management options to respond to wildland fire have confused agency managers and employees, operators, partners, and the public, and have perpetuated multiple fire management program elements”.



Wildland Fire Policy

- **What is it all about**
 - **Nine guiding principles important to success**
 - **Seventeen Federal Wildland Fire Management Policies**
 - **Qualifying statements**

The current policy clearly states that wildland fire analysis will carefully consider the long-term benefits in relation to risks both in the short and long term. The intent of this framework is to solidify that the full range of strategic and tactical options are available and considered in the response to every wildland fire. These options are to be used to achieve objectives as described in Land and Resource Management Plans and/or Fire Management Plans, subject to clear processes defined to manage fire that crosses jurisdictional boundaries. Mutually developed objectives with adjoining jurisdictions for managing fires that crosses jurisdictional boundaries will also be recognized.

This guidance also calls for increased dialogue and collaboration between federal agencies and tribal, local, and state agencies as plans are updated and implemented to manage wildfires in order to accomplish resource and protection objectives.



Guiding Principles

1. Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.
2. The role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural agent of change will be incorporated into the planning process.
3. Fire Management Plans, programs, and activities support land and resource management plans and their implementation.

The following guidelines should be used to provide consistent implementation of federal wildland fire policy.

#2: Federal agency land and resource management plans set the objectives for the use and desired future condition of the various public lands.



Guiding Principles (cont.)

4. Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities.
5. Fire management programs and activities are economically viable, based on values to be protected, costs, and land and resource management objectives.

#4: Risks and uncertainties relating to fire management activities must be understood, analyzed, communicated, and managed as they relate to the cost of either doing or not doing an activity. Net gains to the public benefit will be an important component of decisions.

#5: Federal agency administrators are adjusting and reorganizing programs to reduce costs and increase efficiencies. As part of this process, investments in fire management activities must be evaluated against other agency programs in order to effectively accomplish the overall mission, set short- and long-term priorities, and clarify management accountability.




Guiding Principles (cont.)

6. Fire Management Plans¹ are based on the best available science.
7. Fire Management Plans¹ incorporate public health and environmental quality considerations.

¹Fire Management Plans is a generic term referring to unit level strategic plans for wildland fire and known by the names of Land, Resource and Fire Management Plans

#6: Knowledge and experience are developed among all federal wildland fire management agencies. An active fire research program combined with interagency collaboration provides the means to make these tools available to all fire managers.



Guiding Principles (cont.)

- 8. Federal, state, tribal, and local interagency coordination and cooperation are essential.**
- 9. Standardization of policies and procedures among federal agencies is an ongoing objective.**

#8: Increasing costs and smaller work forces require that public agencies pool their human resources to successfully deal with the ever-increasing and more complex fire management tasks.

#9: Consistency of plans and operations provides the fundamental platform upon which federal wildland fire management agencies can cooperate, integrate fire activities across agency boundaries, and provide leadership for cooperation with State, tribal, and local fire management organizations.



Policy Statements

1. Safety
2. Fire Management and Ecosystem Sustainability
3. Response to Wildland Fire
4. Use of Wildland Fire
5. Rehabilitation and Restoration
6. Protection Priorities

#1: No natural or cultural resource, home, or item of property is worth a human life. All strategies and tactics should seek to mitigate the risk to firefighters and the public.

#2: The full range of fire management activities will be used to help achieve ecosystem sustainability, including its interrelated ecological, economic, and social components.

#3: Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale, and across agency boundaries.

#4: Wildland fire will be used to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and, as nearly as possible, be allowed to function in its natural ecological role.

#5: Rehabilitation and restoration efforts will be undertaken to protect and sustain ecosystems, public health and safety, and to help communities protect infrastructure.

#6: Protection of human life overrides all other priorities should response capability limits be reached.



#7: The operational roles of federal agencies as partners in the Wildland Urban Interface are wildland firefighting, hazard fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance.

- Prevent the movement of wildfires from the wildlands into the WUI area, out of the WUI area into the wildlands, and improve efficiency of wildfire suppression in WUI situations.
- The primary responsibility for protecting private property and rural communities lies with individual property owners and local governments.
- Recognize that many states have wildland fire responsibility while rural fire districts have structural responsibility.

#8: Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved Fire Management Plan.

- Promote interagency and inter-governmental planning. Encourage landscape scale planning across jurisdictional boundaries.

#10: Agencies will ensure their capability to provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land and resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, equipment, and management oversight. --Preseason agreements are an integral part of preparedness.

#11: Wildland fires are suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected, consistent with resource objectives.

#12: Agencies will work together and with their partners and other affected groups and individuals to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildfires.



#13: Agencies will use compatible planning processes, funding mechanisms, training and qualification requirements, operational procedures, values-to-be-protected methodologies, and public education programs for all fire management activities.

#14: Fire management planning, preparedness, prevention, suppression, fire use, restoration and rehabilitation, monitoring, research, and education will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of cooperators and partners.

#15: Agencies will enhance knowledge and understanding of wildland fire management policies and practices through internal and external communication and education programs.

- Develop and provide consistent communication, education and outreach with shared messages for the public and internal staff.

#16: Agency administrators will ensure that their employees are trained, certified, and made available to participate in the wildland fire program locally, regionally, and nationally as the situation demands.

#17: Agencies will develop and implement a systematic method of evaluation to determine effectiveness of projects through implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy.

- Use adaptive management process to evaluate and improve the fire management program at all levels.



Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy Implementation Strategy

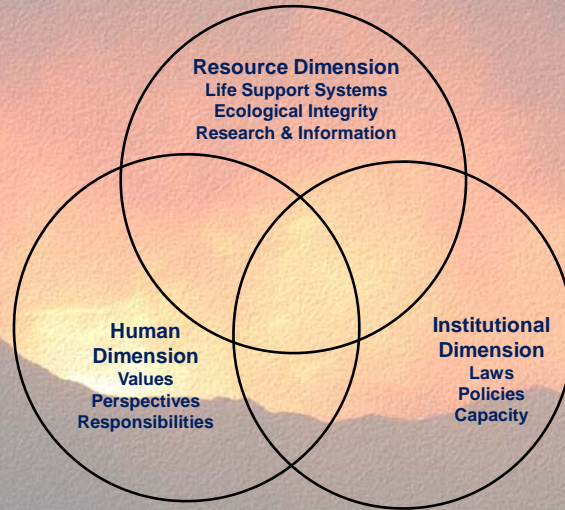
- **Seventeen Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy Statements**
 - Updated to reflect changes in human, resource and institutional dimensions
 - Management Intent (added)
 - Implementation directions (added)



2009 Policy Implementation Strategy

- a program of action that does not automatically place priority on one strategy over another without analysis of specific information
- a common planning process for all agencies, resulting in one plan across agency boundaries

Considers the forces of decisional influence





How this policy implementation strategy should change the response to wildland fire

- **Management for multiple objectives on a fire or combination of fires**
- **Two types of fire**
 - Planned ignitions (Prescribed)
 - Unplanned ignitions (Wildfire)
- **Single decision support process**



How this policy implementation strategy should change the response to wildland fire

- Initial response to human-caused wildfire will continue to be suppress at the lowest cost with the fewest negative consequences with respect to firefighter and public safety



Management Implications

- Language in planning documents
- Cultural shift in initial response thought process
- Flexibility to adjust objectives on the fly as human, resource and institutional dimensions shift



Management Implications

- **Decisions keyed to Land, Resource and Fire Management Plans**
- **Higher levels of coordination with state and local cooperators**

Seeking More Information

- http://www.nifc.gov/fire_policy
- Send questions or comments to:
- e-mail: fire_help@fs.fed.us with "Fire Policy" as the Subject.



LAST SLIDE!