

## **FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANS**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter contains the standards and procedures for developing and updating Fire Management Plans (FMP) for park units. FMPs are required for all park units with burnable vegetation, with the exception of park units where the vegetation is not contiguous with wildlands, for example, the Washington Monument. FMPs summarize elements of law, policy, and guidance from higher-level park planning documents (such as a general management plan, foundation document or resource stewardship strategy) to develop the fire management strategy for the park.

#### **1.1 Department of Interior Fire Management Policy**

The Interagency Fire Management Plan Template (2009) was superseded by the *Department of Interior Fire Management Plan Framework* (DOI FMP Framework) in 2014.

There were two significant changes in the new DOI FMP Framework that will assist NPS units in developing more efficient and effective planning documents. The changes are:

- More flexibility in the range of documentation for fire management planning based on the complexity of each park unit's fire management program (see the Fire Management Program Complexity Level Table in section 3).
- Greater latitude for a park unit to choose between preparing a primarily text-based FMP or a spatially represented FMP with an associated text document for information that cannot readily be mapped.

[Note: Permission is required from the park unit superintendent on these decisions.]

#### **1.2 National Park Service Fire Management Policy**

To align with the DOI FMP Framework, the NPS developed fire management planning guidance that considers fire program complexity and efficient and effective planning direction.

The NPS FMP Framework is discussed in section 3.

## **2.0 Responsibilities**

### **2.1 National Level**

The national office develops policies, guidance, and standards for FMP content, often in coordination with the National Interagency Fire Planning Committee. The national office leads the development of the NPS FMP Framework content and works closely with the Environmental Quality Division (EQD) on how to meet the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other compliance/policy requirements for fire management.

### **2.2 Regional Level**

The Regional Office (RO) assists parks in evaluating park complexity to determine the appropriate type of fire management plan needed. The RO may review fire management plans and associated environmental compliance documents and track FMP annual updates. The RO assists park units in completing the requirements of NEPA, the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Wilderness Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

### **2.3 Park Level**

The park unit prepares, approves, annually reviews and updates the fire management plan to ensure consistency with NPS policy, federal wildland fire management policy and federal environmental regulations (NEPA, ESA, the Wilderness Act, and NHPA). Ensures fire management plans and associated documents are uploaded to the Integrated Resource Management Applications (IRMA) – Data Store repository.

## **3.0 Selection of Fire Management Plan Level**

The DOI FMP Framework ensures the planning level for park units is commensurate with the complexity of the fire management program. The *Complexity Levels for NPS Wildland Fire Management Planning* table was developed to help determine the park unit complexity based on two factors:

1. whether fuels treatments are implemented in the park unit, and
2. wildfire suppression objectives.

Once these two factors are defined for the fire management program, the *Complexity Levels for NPS Wildland Fire Management Planning* table should be used to determine the minimum FMP and compliance requirements for the park unit. Consult the Regional Fire Planner when determining the complexity level of your unit to ensure the appropriate type of FMP is developed.

### Complexity Levels for NPS Wildland Fire Management Planning

Wildland Fire Management Program	Description	Fuels Treatments	Wildfire Objectives	Examples	Minimum FMP Requirement	Minimum Compliance Requirement	Minimum Review Requirement
None	Maintained/ irrigated landscaping; veg.is “flammable”; but fire has no probability to spread into a wildland environment	None	None	White House, National Mall, Liberty Island, Ellis Island	None	None	Not Applicable
Wildfire Response with None or Limited Fuels Program	Landscape may include a mix of naturally occurring and/or landscaped vegetation	Mechanical and/or prescribed fire projects to decrease risk of wildfire	Protection only	Sitka, Cesar Chavez, City of Rocks	Wildfire Emergency Response Procedure (WERP)	<u>WERP:</u> NPS CE 3.2H <u>Fuels Treatments:</u> Healthy Forest Initiative CE or other appropriate CE	Annual Review with Superintendent signature
Wildland Fire Management Program	Primarily natural areas with recurring wildfire	Recurring fuels mgmt. program in a strategic framework	Protection and/or Resource Objectives	Great Smoky Mountains, Everglades, Isle Royale, Yosemite	FMP (scalable per complexity and scope of program)	CE, EA or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)	Annual Review with Superintendent signature

Professional judgement will be needed to determine actual planning requirements. The park unit Superintendent, Regional Fire Management Officer (RFMO) or Regional Director may recommend or choose to implement a higher level of planning, compliance or review than indicated in the table.

In all program types, maintenance of defensible space for facilities in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas is an NPS requirement. Per DO-12 routine maintenance for defensible space can be completed under Categorical Exclusion (CE) 3.4 C.3, which requires a documentation record. Superintendents should consult with the Facilities management staff and/or fire staff if questions arise.

## **4.0 Fire Management Plan Development**

Fire Management Plans can be developed in one of two formats. Both of these formats must meet the NPS requirements outlined in the NPS FMP Framework which can be found at <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Collection/Profile/3868>. The two FMP formats are:

### **4.1 FMP with Standard Text and Map Inserts**

Standard text format can be used to complete the NPS FMP Framework requirements (<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Collection/Profile/3868>). This traditional FMP format is largely text and tables supplemented by map inserts as needed to depict your program. Regional fire management planners are available to assist in the development of an FMP in this standard text format.

### **4.2 FMP with Spatial Components**

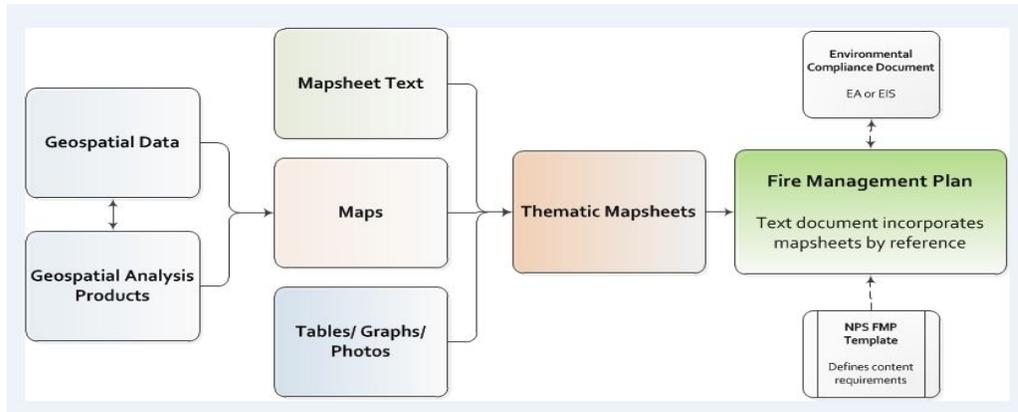
Spatially representing the FMP is a relatively new process, additional information is provided below about the components and the process for development of a spatially represented FMP. For more information about GIS and fire management plans go to: <https://sites.google.com/a/nps.gov/fire-gis/gis-fire-management-planning>. The format for the content of the FMP may be completed with a variety of mediums, including mapsheets, web-based (Arc GIS online) or text.

A spatially represented fire management plan has several components:

#### **Mapsheet(s)**

Mapsheets may contain more than one map and may have textboxes, graphs, and other geospatial representations. FMPs may have several mapsheet themes depending on program complexity (i.e., operations, natural resources). The combination of all the mapsheets is a **Map Set**.

The diagram below represents the spatial and non-spatial planning components of a Fire Management plan and how they fit together.



Examples of information that may be added to a mapsheet as a graphic, table and/or text box include: NFDRS pocket cards, radio frequencies, and fire staff and cooperator contact information. Examples of other valuable information that may be displayed on the mapsheet include: goals and objectives, constraints, critical habitat and wildland urban interface (WUI) with a suppression only demarcation, and other information needed to depict the park unit fire management program.

Note: Supplementing existing valid FMPs with a mapsheet(s) is encouraged.

### **Associated FMP Text Document**

The second component of the spatially represented FMP is the associated FMP text document. It will contain any information (required or supplemental) that is not easily displayed on a mapsheet or that is best discussed in a text format (e.g., Burned Area Emergency Rehab (BAER) information).

### **The Crosswalk**

The third component of the spatially represented FMP is the *Crosswalk* (<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Collection/Profile/3868>) which includes all the FMP sections as described in the DOI FMP Framework and further refined in the NPS FMP Framework. Its purpose is twofold: to ensure compliance with the DOI and NPS FMP Framework, and to assist readers in finding content on the mapsheets and in accompanying documents (including environmental compliance documents).

Some park units may not need to include all of the NPS FMP Framework sections in the *Crosswalk* such as fuels management, if a fuel reduction program is not implemented at the unit.

## **A Spatial Mapsheet Example - Operations Mapsheet**

Information that may be included, but is not limited to:

- Fire Return Interval Departure (FRID)
- Fire history
- Hazards to firefighters
- Aviation related information such as helispots and aviation hazards
- Water sources (dip sites)
- Weather station (RAWS) locations
- Objectives and goals
- Pocket cards
- Hospital locations

### **4.3 Wildfire Emergency Response Procedure**

Park units with limited or no fuels program and generally rare fire events may consider utilizing a Wildfire Emergency Response Procedure (WERP) <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Collection/Profile/3868>. Please refer to the *Complexity Levels for NPS Wildland Fire Management Planning* table for requirements to use the WERP and consult with your regional fire planner to determine if a WERP is the correct format for the park unit.

The WERP can also be spatially represented on a mapsheet. This will assist park unit wildfire responders to get a visual representation of park values when responding to an incident.

## **5.0 Fire Management Plan Currency**

Fire management plans do not expire and remain in effect until superseded by a new or revised plan. However, annual updates are required in order for the plan to be valid for the current year.

Park units are not required to convert current FMPs to the NPS Framework referenced in, section 3.1. New FMPs must use the NPS Framework.

The *Annual Fire Management Plan Update* is intended to:

- Ensure wildland fire policy directives are included and current.
- Ensure the fire management program includes a process of adaptive management to incorporate new knowledge, modernization, and the best available science.
- Ensure the document continues to conform to the FMP NEPA record, federal policy, FMP objectives and strategies, and terminology.
- Maintain current multi-year fuel treatment plan (when fuel treatments are a part of a park units' fire management options).

## 5.1 Annual Update Requirements

The Annual Update Checklist can be found at: <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Collection/Profile/3868>. Regions may add additional requirements to the Annual Update Checklist. The annual fire management plan update should be scheduled and completed prior to the upcoming fire season.

Once the Annual Update Checklist is completed and all suggested changes have been vetted through the appropriate fire management and park staff, the Superintendent must sign the *FMP Annual Update Checklist*. All approved changes must then be incorporated in the FMP and the Annual Update Checklist must be added to the FMP immediately following the cover-page.

The revised FMP, including the signed Annual Update Checklist, must be uploaded to IRMA in a 508 compliant format.

Parks using a Wildland Fire Emergency Response Procedure (WERP) to meet their fire management planning requirements, must review it annually and have it signed by the Superintendent.

Consult your Regional Fire Planner for additional guidance or direction on how to update your FMP.

## 6.0 Relationship of the FMP to Environmental Compliance

Fire management plans are considered implementation plans and therefore must be fully compliant with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements (2015 NPS NEPA Handbook, section 1.3, A.). The National Park Service implements the NEPA process via [Director's Order 12, Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making](#), and the [National Park Service NEPA Handbook \(2015\)](#).

Many of the NPS FMPs are supported by programmatic level Environmental Assessments (EA) and Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSI). If site-specific analysis has not been completed in the programmatic level EA, additional NEPA analysis is required (Memo to File, Categorical Exclusion or EA). The NEPA documents must be completed and a decision document signed before the FMP can be finalized and signed.

Policy, program goals, proposed actions, and/or resource conditions may change over time necessitating a review of existing NEPA documents. Existing NEPA compliance may become out-of-date or irrelevant as the program evolves requiring periodic revisions.

The NEPA analysis and the resulting documents (CE, EA and FONSI, or EIS and ROD) must be reviewed for validity if the following changes occur:

- A new project is proposed that differs from the scope of the NEPA document supporting the FMP,
- There have been changes to the affected environment (e.g., newly listed threatened or endangered species, newly identified Historic Properties, newly acquired lands, etc.) that trigger reassessment of impacts.