NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Reference Manual #18: Wildland Fire Management

Chapter 4 – Fire Management Plans

(Update released September 2023)

Prepared by the Branch of Wildland Fire

Reviewed by the Chief, Division of Fire and Aviation Management

_____
Signature / Date

Approved by the Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection

_____
Signature / Date

FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANS

1.0 Introduction

National Park Service (NPS) Fire Management Plans (FMP) establish a park's approach for the preparation, response to, and recovery from wildfire incidents. The FMP describes policy, goals, objectives, principles, organizational relationships, and reporting requirements for wildland fire. The FMP gives authority to manage planned and unplanned fires commensurate with federal wildland fire policy, the National Environmental Policy Act, The National Historic Preservation Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act.

Each park unit, with burnable vegetation, must have an approved FMP as expressed in Director's Order #18, Wildland Fire Management (DO #18 Section 4.1 and Section 5.1 (H)). Burnable vegetation is defined as any area with contiguous wildland fuels that can sustain a wildfire requiring action by local or federal responders and results in standard required wildland fire reporting as identified in Chapter 11. Park units that do not have contiguous wildland fuels or lack NPS jurisdictional authority do not require an FMP. New-park units that do not meet this requirement should contact the park / zone fire management office and have the park Superintendent complete the Wildland Fire Management Plan Declaration Form to document that the park unit does not have contiguous wildland fuels or NPS jurisdictional authority and is exempt from this requirement.

1.1 Fire Management Plan Framework

The Department of the Interior (DOI) Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) Policy Memorandum 2014-005 established the 2014 DOI Interagency Fire Management Plan (FMP) Framework. FMPs must be consistent with this Framework and the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations, Chapter 9, Fire Management Planning. To align with the DOI FMP Framework, NPS developed a Fire Management Planning Framework. FMPs may incorporate spatial information including mapsheets or displayed in Arc GIS Online (AGOL). FMPs using AGOL should follow the NPS AGOL format available through the Regional Fire Planner. The Regional Fire Planner can assist in determining the appropriate fire management plan format for a park's FMP based on the complexity of the parks fire program.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REFERENCE MANUAL 18
WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

Chapter 4
Fire Management Plans
Page 2

2.0 Responsibilities

2.1 National Level

The national office will:

- Develop policy, program direction and provide regional fire planning coordination.
- Coordinate with other NPS Fire and Aviaition Management (FAM) workgroups to reduce duplication and increase efficiencies in wildland fire management planning.
- Provide feedback to regional offices on meeting the NPS policy requirements for fire planning and compliance.
- Maintain the NPS FMP framework.
- Coordinate geospatial planning efforts.
- Maintain the structure of the NPS Wildland Fire Management Planning Sharepoint document repository.

2.2 Regional Level

The regional office will:

- On an annual basis (once every 365 days) review, validate and sign the regions FMPs and appendices ensuring alignment with the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations and Reference Manual 18.
- Confirm NEPA documents support planned actions and fire management activities as described in the units FMP.
- Provide fire planning guidance to Park / Zone Fire Planners and Park / Zone FMOs and fire staff.
- Upload current FMP and supporting documents to the NPS Wildland Fire Management Planning Sharepoint document repository.
- Document validity of the FMP on the sharepoint repository.

2.3 Park / Zone Level

The park / zone FMO will:

- Review, update and/or rewrite the FMP to ensure reflection of the current fire program at the park and alignment with the current Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations and Reference Manual 18.

Release Date: September 2023

- Provide the FMP, required appendices and supporting NEPA documentation to the Regional / Zone Fire Planner by regionally established deadlines.
- Provide guidance and subject matter expertise to the Park Superintendent and park staff on the FMP and fire management policy requirements.
- Sign the FMP cover page along with the Park Superintendent after Regional / Zone Fire Planner review and signature on an annual basis.

3.0 Annual Fire Management Plan Review to maintain FMP validity

FMP's must be be consistent with the DOI Framework and contain all required appendices as described in Chapter 5 and the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Chapter 3 and Chapter 10, and have been regionally reviewed and signed by the Regional / Zone Fire Planner, Park / Zone FMO and Park Superintendent on an annual basis (once every 365 days) to be valid. The NPS Wildland Fire Management Plan SharePoint site and AGOL Fire Management Plan Tracking Dashboard serve as a repository for FMP documents and depict validity.

3.1 Fire Management Plan Review Process

1. Park / Zone FMOs will update information in the FMP and required appendices and verify current signed supporting NEPA documentation.
2. Park / Zone FMO will provide the updated FMP and supporting NEPA documentation to the Regional or Zone Fire Planner for review, following regional established deadlines.
3. Regional / Zone Fire Planner will review the FMP and required appendices to ensure alignment with RM-18 and Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations.
4. Regional / Zone Fire Planner will note and date the FMP has been reviewed on the SharePoint site indicating a review has been completed and the documents are updated and align with current policy.
5. Park / Zone FMO and Park Superintendent will then sign and date the front cover of the FMP. The signature line must include the name, title, and location and must have a hand or electronic pdf signature. Other reviewers (i.e. natural or cultural specialists) may be added at the discretion of the park or region but are not required.
6. Park / Zone FMO will send the signed FMP, required appendices and supporting NEPA documents to Regional / Zone Fire Planner for uploading to the NPS Wildland Fire Management Plan SharePoint site.

The Fire Management Plan review will:
- Ensure all NPS FMPs follow the 2014 DOI Framework.

- Ensure the FMP and supporting environmental compliance documents have valid hand or certified electronic signatures.
- Ensure the fire management plan reflects the current Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations and Reference Manual 18, to include current terminology and policy.
- Ensure the FMP reflects the current fire program organization with current zone / park and regional contact information.
- Ensure all required appendices to the FMP as described in Chapter 5, Preparedness, Reference Manual 18 and the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Chapter 3 and Chapter 10 are included, updated and posted to the SharePoint site.

4.0 Relationship of the FMP to Environmental Compliance

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). Regional Environmental Coordinators (REC), subject to the direction of the Regional Director, are responsible for having functional oversight responsibility for all environmental compliance activities within a given region. Park Superintendents are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of NEPA for activities related to parks under their administration including designating a park resource specialist (or other park employees with the appropriate background and training) to serve as coordinator for NEPA and related impact analysis activities. The park NEPA Coordinator / park resource specialist works with the park superintendent and other park staff to ensure consideration of potential resource impacts in park proposals (2015 NEPA Handbook (nps.gov)).

4.1 Other Environmental Review and Consultation Requirements

Fire Management Plan compliance documents including, Environmental Assessments (EA), Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), and Categorical Exclusions (CE) are typically programmatic and may not contain a site-specific analysis required before fuels project implementation. Consult the park and/or Regional NEPA coordinator to determine if supplemental NEPA review (Section 6, Section 7, NHPA, Tribal consultation, floodplain/wetland SOF, etc.) is required prior to implementing fuels treatment projects. Additional information can be found in the 2015 NEPA Handbook, section 4.14 Integrating NEPA with Other Environmental Review and Consultation Requirements.