

# Reclamation Manual

## Policy

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- Subject:** Wildland Fire Management (WFM)
- Purpose:** Establishes Policy for implementing and managing the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) WFM Program. This Policy benefits Reclamation by ensuring protection of critical project facilities and land in compliance with existing laws and the Department of the Interior (Department) policy regarding WFM. It also ensures consistency with other Department bureaus that have established WFM programs.
- Authority:** The Reclamation Act (Act of June 17, 1902, ch. 1093, 32 Stat. 388); Protection of Timber Act of September 20, 1922 (ch. 349, 42 Stat. 857; 16 U.S.C. § 594); Economy Act of June 30, 1932 (47 Stat. 417; 31 U.S.C. § 1535); Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1935 (ch. 85, 49 Stat. 163, 16 U.S.C. § 590a, et seq.); Reciprocal Fire Protection Act of 1955 (ch. 105, 69 Stat. 66; 42 U.S.C. §§ 1856-1856d); Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (Pub. L. 93-288, as amended; 88 Stat. 143; 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206.); Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of October 29, 1974 (Pub. L. 93-498; 88 Stat. 1535; 15 U.S.C. § 2201, et seq.); Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977 (Pub. L. 95-224; 92 Stat. 3; 31 U.S.C. §§ 6301-6308); Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1982 (Pub. L. 97-257, Title I, ch. VIII; 96 Stat. 837); Temporary Emergency Wildfire Suppression Act of 1988 (Pub. L. 100-428; 102 Stat. 1615), as amended by the Wildfire Suppression Assistance Act of April 7, 1989 (Pub. L. 101-11; 103 Stat. 15; 42 U.S.C. §§ 1856m-1856p); Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (Pub. L. 108-148; 117 Stat. 1887; 16 U.S.C. § 6501, et seq.); Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-103; 119 Stat. 2247; 33 U.S.C. § 2221); 620 [Departmental Manual \(DM\)](#) 1-7, *Wildland Fire Management*; 604 DM 2, *Landscape Level Management, Conservation and Restoration of Sagebrush Biome*; 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy; and Department of the Interior Service First Authority (43 U.S.C. § 1703), as amended.
- Approving Official:** Commissioner
- Contact:** Director, Dam Safety and Infrastructure (86-67000)
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1. **Introduction.** The authorities listed require and support Reclamation's management of WFM activities on land under Reclamation jurisdiction. Reclamation will, as needed, establish interagency or cooperative agreements and contracts for WFM activities on Reclamation land. Departmental and inter-departmental implementation policies and directives under the listed statutes delineate the specific requirements of bureaus and agencies that have jurisdiction over Federal land.

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2. **Applicability.** This Policy applies to all WFM activities conducted by, or for, Reclamation. Since wildland fires frequently cross jurisdictions, this Policy applies to other agencies that have fire management responsibilities for land contiguous to, or otherwise near, Reclamation land.
3. **Policy.** Reclamation's land and facilities will be managed to reduce the occurrence and severity of wildland fires. WFM includes, but is not limited to, entering into agreements or contracts with other Federal, state, and local agencies for suppression and related activities; reporting wildfires; preparedness such as creating fire management plans (FMPs); wildfire education; training; stabilization and post-fire recovery activities; prescribed fire; and fuels management.
4. **Program Implementation.** The Deputy Commissioner for Operations (DCO) will ensure the requirements and responsibilities delineated in this Policy are met and carried out by regional directors (RD).
  - A. Implementation of this Policy is the responsibility of Reclamation's RDs or their designees. RDs will recruit, train, and retain Regional Wildland Fire Program Coordinators (Regional Coordinator) and operational wildland fire staff. RDs will designate a Regional Coordinator.
  - B. Regional Coordinators will be responsible for technical guidance and oversight of the WFM Program, including but not limited to incident qualification as appropriate. They will implement, facilitate, and engage staff and appropriate stakeholders at field, area, and regional offices in the program as assigned by the RD. The Regional Coordinator and the RD will ensure there is staffing and resources to establish and maintain an optimized WFM Program. The RD may delegate authority to area managers consistent with Reclamation Manual (RM), [Delegations of Authority](#), Paragraph 4.K.(6).
  - C. Reclamation's National Wildland Fire Program Coordinator (National Coordinator), Dam Safety and Infrastructure, Asset Management Division, will file required annual reports concerning wildland fire activities, ensure continued programmatic development of WFM activities, and represent Reclamation on national interagency coordination teams. The Land Resources Branch will review and revise WFM Program RM Directives and Standards (D&S).
5. **Training and Qualifications.** Training and incident qualifications will be provided on a limited basis for employees to support the WFM programs or fire response strategy efforts on land in Reclamation's jurisdiction. The National Coordinator oversees personnel qualification opportunities based on Reclamation WFM Program administrative support, Reclamation need, and RD and area office recommendations. WFM incident qualification will comply with *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, or the *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement*, which includes Federal agency-sponsored positions that are not included in 310-1 and reflected in the Incident Qualification

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Certification System used for ensuring responder qualifications on wildland fire incidents. WFM incident qualification will be coordinated with Reclamation's Emergency Management Program and will verify compliance with RM Policy, *Emergency Management (EMG P01)*, as applicable. Reclamation personnel shall not participate in active fireline suppression operations.

6. **Interagency Agreements, Contracts, and Cooperative Agreements.** RDs, or delegates, will use interagency agreements, cooperative agreements, and contracts to provide adequate fire protection for Reclamation land, facilities, and waterbodies; send and receive fire reporting information; and find cost efficiencies when working with third parties providing WFM activities. When the geographic area overlaps regions, the RDs will consult and jointly decide on whether to enter into an agreement. The DCO will be part of national agreements to facilitate accomplishment of WFM objectives. When using cooperative agreements, regions will follow RM D&S, *Requirements for Award and Administration of Financial Assistance Agreements (Grants and Cooperative Agreements)* ([ACM 01-01](#)).
- A. **Program Budget and Reimbursement of WFM-Related Costs.** The DCO will develop and implement program and budget strategies for accomplishing WFM activities and determine reimbursability of WFM costs (RM D&S, *Wildland Fire Management (WFM)* ([LND 14-01](#))).
7. **Fire Management Plans (FMPs).** FMPs are required for all Reclamation land containing burnable vegetation. RDs will ensure FMPs are developed and maintained, at a minimum, every five years.
8. **Fire Reporting and Incident Notification.** The RD and Regional Coordinator will ensure reporting of fuels management, prescribed burns, and post-fire rehabilitation and restoration project accomplishments located on Reclamation land are recorded and archived in the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System. Wildland fires located on Reclamation land, facilities, infrastructure, resources, or degradation in services or visitor impacts, as described in 900 DM 3, Appendix 1(E), are reported by Regional Duty Officers under the Reclamation Duty Officer Program (RM D&S, *Serious Incident Reporting and Duty Officer Program* ([EMG 03-01](#))).
9. **Wildland Fire Caused by Humans.** For each human-caused fire, where an identifiable individual, organization, or agency is determined to be responsible, RDs will determine, approve, or disapprove whether it is in the best interests of the United States to pursue recovery of damages and costs.
10. **Definitions.**
  - A. **Area and Field Office Wildland Fire Program Staff.** Reclamation employee assigned by an area manager to serve as a point of contact for local wildland fire

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activities and projects in the geographical area of their associated area office or field office. Responsible for coordination with Regional Coordinator.

- B. **Contract.** A mutually binding legal relationship obligating a buyer (Reclamation) to pay for supplies, services, or construction furnished by a seller (e.g., a non-Federal agency). The principal purpose of a contract is to acquire property or services for the direct benefit or use of the U.S. Government.
- C. **Cooperative Agreements.** Financial assistance agreements with non-Federal agencies to meet needs for wildfire suppression and/or prescribed fire services. The “principal purpose” of a cooperative agreement must be “to transfer a thing of value” to the non-Federal agency “to carry out a public purpose,” and not to acquire “property or services for the direct benefit or use of the United States Government” (ACM 01-01). Please note that “cooperative agreement” is also informally used to describe any collaborative agreement between wildfire suppression agencies.
- D. **Fire Management Plan (FMP).** A plan that identifies and integrates all WFM and related activities within the context of approved land, resource, and facility operation and management plans. It defines a program to manage and implement WFM decisions, ensuring WFM goals and components are coordinated and approved by Reclamation land managers. The plan is supplemented by operational plans, including but not limited to preparedness plans, preplanned dispatch plans (annual interagency operating plans), burn plans, and fire prevention plans.
- E. **Fuels Management.** Act or practice of controlling flammability and reducing resistance to control of wildland fuels through mechanical, chemical, biological, or manual means, or by fire, in support of land management objectives (NWCG, *Glossary of Wildland Fire*, PMS 205).
- F. **Interagency Agreements.** Agreements with Federal agencies to acquire wildfire suppression and/or prescribed fire services for Reclamation.
- G. **National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System.** An inter-departmental, inter-agency automated data management and reporting system developed, operated, and maintained by the Department collaboratively with the United States Department of Agriculture. It is used for planning, managing, reporting, and tracking fuels reduction (including prescribed burns); post-wildfire recovery, including emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation; and community assistance activities.
- H. **National Wildfire Coordinating Group.** A group formed under the direction of the Secretaries of the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to improve the coordination and effectiveness of wildland fire activities and to coordinate programs of the participating wildfire management agencies to avoid wasteful duplication and

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constructively work together. The group provides a formalized system to agree upon standards of training, equipment, qualifications, and other operational functions.

- I. **National Wildland Fire Program Coordinator.** Reclamation employee assigned by the Dam Safety and Infrastructure Director who provides Reclamation-wide WFM Program support, service, and policy direction.
- J. **Prescribed Fire.** A wildland fire originating from a planned ignition in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and regulations to meet specific objectives (Fire Management Board, *Updated Federal Wildland Fire Policy Terms and Definitions for the NWCG Glossary*, FMB Memorandum No. 19-004a).
- K. **Regional Wildland Fire Program Coordinator (Regional Coordinator).** Reclamation employee assigned by an RD to serve as the region's primary contact for the WFM program. Plans, develops, designs, executes, and administers WFM programs and projects for Reclamation in their associated region.
- L. **Suppression.** All the work to extinguish or limit wildland fire spread (NWCG, *Glossary of Wildland Fire*, PMS 205).
- M. **Wildfire.** A wildland fire originating from an unplanned ignition, such as lightning, volcanos, unauthorized and accidental human-caused fires, and prescribed fires that are declared wildfires (Fire Management Board, *Updated Federal Wildland Fire Policy Terms and Definitions for the NWCG Glossary*, FMB Memorandum No. 19-004a).
- N. **Wildfire Response Strategies.** The range of options available for response to a wildfire. 1) Common strategies include Monitor, Confine, Contain, Point/Zone Protection, Suppression, but hybrid and novel strategies may also be developed as the situation demands. 2) One or more strategies may be employed on any given wildfire. The strategy or strategies being employed may vary temporally or spatially (NWCG, *Glossary of Wildland Fire*, PMS 205).
- O. **Wildland.** An area in which development is essentially non-existent, except for roads, railroads, dams, canals, pipelines, powerlines, and similar facilities. Structures, if any, are widely scattered (NWCG, *Glossary of Wildland Fire*, PMS 205).
- P. **Wildland Fire.** Any non-structure fire that occurs in vegetation or natural fuels. Includes wildfires and prescribed fires (Fire Management Board, *Updated Federal Wildland Fire Policy Terms and Definitions for the NWCG Glossary*, FMB Memorandum No. 19-004a).
- Q. **Wildland Fire Management Activities.** Include, but are not limited to, fire management planning and strategies; wildfire education, preparedness, training,

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prevention, stabilization, and suppression programs; post-fire rehabilitation and restoration activities; prescribed fire activities; and fuels management.

11. **Review Period.** The originating office will review this release every four years.