

COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS GUIDANCE FOR INTEGRATING WILDLAND FIRE CONCERNS

The 1996 and 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Policy and Program Reviews mandated that wildland fire be integrated into the comprehensive management planning process of all Federal agencies. Specifically the following two action items in the 1995 Review and carried forward into the 2001 Review instruct Federal Agencies to:

1. Continue ongoing efforts to jointly develop compatible, ecosystem-based, multiple-scale interagency land management plans that involve all interested parties and facilitate adaptive management. This process will:
 - Fully integrate ecological concepts that consider long-term dynamics and cross agency boundaries.
 - Effectively incorporate current fire-related information, including scientific knowledge, risk assessment, social and economic concerns, and public health considerations.
 - Ensure that existing land management plans are revised or updated to address the above actions.

2. Jointly implement ecosystem-based fire management programs to accomplish resource or landscape management objectives when consistent with land management plans. These programs will:
 - Strive to maintain the long-term integrity of the natural resources and minimize the undesirable effects of fire.
 - Address the highest-priority needs in ecosystem assessment, monitoring, and management and determine the approximate scope of fire use, consistent with historical fire regimes, including extent, timing, and risks and consequences.
 - Use existing tools and develop new ones to address today's more fragmented landscapes and to enhance our ability to manage wildland fires of varying size and intensity.
 - Illustrate the management actions and their results by establishing or expanding fire management demonstration areas.

602 FW 3.4.C(1)(e)(iii) of the Service Manual acknowledges that the CCP include the "Natural and historic role of fire and other natural occurrences affecting ecological processes."

This fire related information combined with all the other information is essential for analyzing resource relationships from which objectives and management strategies can be identified. During plan preparation, scoping, and developing and analyzing alternative the following three questions should be addressed:

1. Is wildland or prescribed need to achieve refuge objectives?
2. What resources objective may be compromised by wildland fire?

3. What are the potential safety and ecological risks from excluding and/or including wildland fire from the refuge?

The wildland fire information needed in the analysis is dependent on the affect wildland fire has on refuge objectives and the amount of information available. At a minimum the following wildland fire information is needed to make an informed decision between management alternatives:

1. The historic and current fire regimes.
 - Fire frequency
 - Fire season
 - Fire severity
2. The effects historic and current fire regimes have had and are having on ecosystem integrity.
 - Wildlife habitat composition and structure
 - Wildlife populations and diversity
 - Ecological integrity
3. An understanding of the human health, social and economic concerns of excluding or including wildland fire whether wildfire or prescribed fire.
 - Ecological integrity
 - Human issues
 - Public and firefighter safety
 - Air quality
 - Human and property risks

The attached *Technical Review of Fire Management Alternatives in the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and Adjacent Wetland Management Areas* (1996) is an approach used to address a complex natural resource/fire management issue.

To help gather this information, the following is a listing of potential information sources.

Contacts:

- Zone and Refuge Fire Management Officers
- Regional Fire Management Coordinators and Fire Ecologists
- National Fire Management Staff – (208) 387-5596
- Local Partners – State Division of Forestry, U.S. Forest Service, BLM, NPS, BIA, etc.

Fire Related Bibliographies:

- The Fire Effects Information System (FEIS) – Presently, the FEIS knowledge base includes fire effects and related information for more than 900 plant species, 90 animal species, and 25 plant communities (<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis>).
- International Association of Wildland Fire 0 Procite searchable bibliography of over 40,000 fire related publications.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Conservation Training Center

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- Fire in North American Wetland Ecosystems and Fire-Wildlife Relations: An Annotated Bibliography – USDI, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biol. Rep. 88(1)
- Effects of Fire of Threatened and Endangered Plants: An Annotated Bibliography – USDI NBS Infor. & Tech. Rep. 2 (<http://news.fws.gov/issues/fire.html>).
- FIRENET – (<http://www.csu.edu.au/firenet>)

Reference Libraries:

- The Department of the Interior Library: (202) 208-5815
- Tall Timbers Research Station: (904) 893-4153

Historical Fire Information:

- Fire occurrence records: DI 1202, annual Refuge Narratives and internal refuge records
- Land survey records
- Inferences derived from adaptive strategies of plant species
- Age class distributions of fire organized stands
- Pyro-dendrochronology – tree ring studies (Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ)

Human Health, Social and Economic Information:

- Public health and air quality agencies
- Public opinion surveys
- Chamber of Commerce

Links to Fire Management Related web sites: <http://fire.r9.fws.gov>