



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Southwestern  
Region



# Fire Management Plan

## Carson National Forest





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# Fire Management Plan

USDA Forest Service  
Southwestern Region  
Carson National Forest

**2004**

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

**STEVEN MIRANDA, Wildland Fire Specialist**

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

**GEORGE DEVIS, Assistant Fire Management Officer**

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

**MARCUS TRUJILLO, Forest Fire Management Officer**

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

**MARTIN D. CHAVEZ, JR., Forest Supervisor**



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## **Acronyms Used In This Fire Management Plan**

**Table 1 - Acronyms Used in This Fire Management Plan**

|             |                                       |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| FMU         | Fire Management Unit                  |
| FMZ         | Fire Management Zone                  |
| FSH         | Forest Service Handbook               |
| FSM         | Forest Service Manual                 |
| Forest Plan | Carson Forest Plan                    |
| MMA         | Maximum Manageable Area               |
| NAAQS       | National Ambient Air Quality Standard |
| T & E       | Threatened and Endangered Species     |
| WFIP        | Wildland Fire Implementation Plan     |
| WFSA        | Wildland Fire Situation Analysis      |



# Section 1. Introduction

## Purpose of Plan

The Carson National Forest is located in northern New Mexico stretching from the Merino Valley east of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains across to the Four Corners region and north to the southern border of Colorado. Elevations range from around 5,500 feet MSL to mountain peaks greater than 13,000 feet Mean Sea Level (MSL). The Forest encompasses more than 1.5 million acres of Federal jurisdiction. Lower elevation lands are typically in private ownership or are managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Small inholdings of State land are located adjacent to the Forest in several locations. The Carson National Forest includes six Ranger Districts: Canjilon, El Rito, Jicarilla, Camino Real, Tres Piedras, and Questa. The Jicarilla Ranger District is co-managed with the Farmington Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management.

This Fire Management Plan formally documents the fire management program for the approved Carson National Forest Plan, as amended (**DATE**) (Forest Plan). It provides specific details of the fire program that most efficiently meet fire management direction for the planning period, including organization, facilities, equipment, activities, timing, locations, and related costs. Each year adjustments are made in the plan to reflect changes in the annual planning process. This document is meant to be a working reference for fire program information.

This Fire Management Plan was developed for all areas subject to wildland fires on the Carson National Forest in compliance with the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review, the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy and Implementation Procedures Reference Guide (FSM 5101, 5103, 5108) and to meet the requirements of FSM 5121.2 and FSH 5109.19, 50.3.

## Collaboration

The Carson National Forest continues to collaborate on an Interagency level under the guidance of the Taos Zone Charter. A copy of the Zone Agreement can be found in (appendix I).

Collaboration among other agencies is established and agreed upon detailed in the Zone Agreement. This agreement focuses on initial attack and is intended to create efficiency within the Taos Zone. Other collaboration includes the Jicarilla RD and the Farmington BLM. This is a co-managed organization supported by Four Corners Dispatch.

## Link to Policy

This Fire Management Plan for the Carson National Forest is a detailed program of action to carry out fire management policies and will help achieve resource management and fire protection objectives.

## Link to Land and Resource Management Planning

This Fire Management Plan for the Carson National Forest follows the goals and objectives identified in the Carson Forest Plan. The Carson Forest Plan met all National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements as well as other State and Federal regulatory requirements during its development and approval.

## **Authorities**

Implementation of this plan comes under the authority of the Forest Service Manual for fire management (FSM 5100). In particular,

- **FSM 5101** describes the authority for fire management activities on National Forest System Lands.
- **FSM 5108** provides a list of pertinent references for guidance on the minimum standards and procedures for wildland fire management.

# Section 2. Relationship to Land Management Planning and Fire Policy

## Reference to Planning and Documents

The following are documents used to develop or that are referenced in this Fire Management Plan.

- Environmental Impact Statement for the Carson National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986)
- Record of Decision for the Carson National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986)
- Carson National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended (1986)
- Record of Decision for Amendment of Forest Plans – Arizona and New Mexico (1996). Region-wide standards and guidelines for the Mexican spotted owl (MSO) and the northern goshawk
- Carson National Forest, 2003 National Fire Management Analysis (NFMAS), February 2003

## Reference to Policy Documents

### 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review

The events of the 1994 wildland fire season, which resulted in 34 fatalities, created a renewed concern about the impacts of wildland fire among Federal land management agencies and various constituent groups. As a result of these concerns, and in response to the specific recommendation of the South Canyon Fire in Colorado where 14 firefighters perished, the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review was finalized and signed by the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture in December 1995. For the first time, one set of Federal fire policies was established, creating a change in policy for both Departments. The Land Management agencies were directed to reintroduce “natural” fire back into the ecosystem. The 1995 Federal Fire Policy states,

*Every acre with burnable vegetation will have an approved Fire Management Plan. . . . Wildland fire, as a critical natural process, must be reintroduced into the ecosystem. . . . Wildland fire management decisions and resource management decisions go hand in hand . . . Agency administrators must have the ability to choose from a full spectrum of fire management actions – from prompt suppression to allowing fire to function in its natural ecological role.*

### Response to Wildland Fire

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. Response to wildland fire is based on ecological, social, and legal consequences of the fire. The circumstances under which a fire occurs, and the likely consequences on firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and values to be protected, dictate the appropriate management response to the fire.

### **Use of Wildland Fire**

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. Use of fire will be based on approved Fire Management Plans and will follow specific prescriptions contained in operational plans.

This not only mandated development of a Fire Management Plan, it was also very clear that protection of human life must be the first priority in wildland fire management, while property and natural/cultural resources jointly become the second priority. In the past, in terms of developing and implementing firefighting strategy, life and property were equal in priority.

### **2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy**

After a prescribed fire escaped in May 2000 near Los Alamos, New Mexico, resulting in the Cerro Grande Fire, the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture requested a review of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and its implementation. The review team concluded that, given the current conditions of public lands and the exploding population of people living in the wildland-urban interface, the ideology of reintroducing natural fire into the ecosystem was an enormous task requiring an equally enormous risk. Furthermore, the review team identified a lack of coordination, consistency, and agreement between the five federal land management agencies (Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and National Fish and Wildlife Service), which they considered as failing to fully implement the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

The review resulted in a 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, which continued to support the 1995 Policy, but placed a stronger emphasis on the Federal agencies to establish and implement a clear, concise system of accountability and cooperation among themselves. Furthermore, the new policy calls for using “the full range of fire management activities . . . to achieve ecosystem sustainability,” including fire use, and it recognizes the “importance of sound science in fire management activities.” The policy stresses the need to complete or revise fire management plans to make them “more effectively and directly” integrated “with other natural resource goals.” But most importantly, firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.

The 2001 Federal Fire Policy provides the philosophical and policy foundation for federal interagency fire management activities conducted under the National Fire Plan. The National Fire Plan is not a single, cohesive document. Rather, it is composed of various documents, including (1) a September 8, 2000, report *Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment* from the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to the President of the United States in response to the wildland fires in 2000; (2) congressional direction accompanying substantial new appropriations for wildland fire management for fiscal year 2001; (3) in 1999 the Forest Service released *Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems: A Cohesive Strategy* in response to the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) Report, *Western National Forests: A Cohesive Strategy is Needed to Address Catastrophic Wildfire Threats* (GAO/RCED-99-65; (4) several approved and draft strategies to implement all or parts of the plan.

**2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy cont.**

1. **Safety.** Firefighter and public safety is the first priority. All Fire Management Plans and activities must reflect this commitment.
2. **Fire Management and Ecosystem Sustainability.** The full range of fire management activities will be used to help achieve ecosystem sustainability, including its interrelated ecological, economic, and social components.
3. **Response to Wildland Fire.** 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. Response to wildland fire is based on ecological, social, and legal consequences of the fire. The circumstances under which a fire occurs, and the likely consequences on firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and values to be protected dictate the appropriate management response to the fire.
4. **Use of Wildland Fire.** 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. Use of fire will be based on approved Fire Management Plans and will follow specific prescriptions contained in operational plans.
5. **Rehabilitation and Restoration.** Rehabilitation and restoration efforts will be undertaken to protect and sustain ecosystems, public health, and safety, and to help communities protect infrastructure.
6. **Protection Priorities.** The protection of human life is the single, overriding priority. Setting priorities among protecting human communities and community infrastructure, other property and improvements, and natural and cultural resources will be based on the values to be protected, human health and safety, and the costs of protection. Once people have been committed to an incident, these human resources become the highest value to be protected.
7. **Wildland Urban Interface.** The operational roles of federal agencies as partners in the Wildland Urban Interface are wildland firefighting, hazardous fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. Structural fire suppression is the responsibility of tribal, State, or local governments. Federal agencies may assist with exterior structural protection activities under formal Fire Protection Agreements that specify the mutual responsibilities of the partners, including funding. (Some federal agencies have full structural protection authority for their facilities on lands they administer, and may also enter into formal agreements to assist State and local governments with full structural protection.).
8. **Planning.** Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved Fire Management Plan. Fire Management Plans are strategic plans that define a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires based on the area's approved land management plan. Fire Management Plans must provide for firefighter and public safety; include fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives; address values to be protected and public health issues; and be consistent with resource management objective, activities of the area, and environmental laws and regulations.
9. **Science.** Fire Management Plans and programs will be based on a foundation of sound science. Research will support ongoing efforts to increase our scientific knowledge of biological, physical, and sociological factors. Information needed to support fire management will be developed through an integrated interagency fire

science program. Scientific results must be made available to managers in a timely manner and must be used in the development of land management plans, Fire Management Plans, and implementation plans.

10. **Preparedness.** 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.
11. **Suppression.** Fires are suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected, consistent with resource objectives.
12. **Prevention.** Development of a prevention organization that meets the changing needs of the public and their interaction with the National Forest. Agencies will work together with local partners and other affected groups and individuals to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fires.
13. **Standardization.** Agencies will use compatible planning processes, funding mechanisms, training and qualification requirements, operational procedures, value-to-be-protected methodologies, and public education programs for all fire management activities.
14. **Interagency Cooperation and Coordination.** 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. **Communication and Education.** Agencies will enhance knowledge and understanding of wildland fire management policies and practices through internal and external communication and education programs. These programs will be continuously improved through the timely and effective exchange of information among all affected agencies and organizations.
16. **Agency Administrators and Employee Roles.** 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. Employees with operational, administrative, or other skills will support the wildland fire program as necessary. Agency administrators are responsible and will be held accountable for making employees available.
17. **Evaluation.** Agencies will develop and implement a systematic method of evaluation to determine effectiveness of projects through implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. The evaluation will assure accountability, facilitate resolution of areas of conflict, and identify resource shortages and agency priorities.
18. **Standards and Guidelines.** In addition to the Federal Wildland Fire Policy, the following are laws and policies that address or affect fire management direction and program guidance for the Carson National Forest:
  - Endangered Species Act, 1973
  - Clean Water Act, as amended (1972)
  - Clean Air Act, as amended (1977)
  - Wilderness Act (1964)
  - Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1968)

- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918) and Executive Order 13186 (2001)
- Forest Fire Management Zones, 1995
- The National Fire Plan, August 2000
- Southwestern Region (R3) Supplement to FSM 5140 – Fire Uses. Supplement Number 5100-2000-1, effective date December 22, 2000. Revises direction relating to required skill, knowledge, and physical fitness for various positions on fire use projects.
- A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment: 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy, August 2001, and its Implementation Plan, May 2002.
- Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations Handbook, April 1, 2002

## Goals and Desired Condition

### Forest-wide Prescriptions (Standards and Guidelines from the Carson Forest Plan)

#### Air

**Standards and Guidelines:** Management activities will be planned so that air quality will be equal to or better than that required by the applicable Federal, State and/or local standards or regulations (36 CFR 219.27 (a) 12, Clean Air Act as amended 1977 USC 7401-7642, FSM 2120).

#### Cultural Resources

**Laws:** The Forest will comply with the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; Executive Order 11593; the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979; and the settlement to the Save the Jemez, et al., State of New Mexico litigation.

#### Fire

Provide fire management support services necessary to sustain resource goals while protecting improvements, investments, and providing for public safety.

**Jicarilla Ranger District:** On the Jicarilla Ranger District, unplanned natural ignitions will be managed in accordance with personnel constraints, weather and burning conditions, or suppressed when the ignition is within ¼ mile of an active gas well. As a guideline, remove slash to provide future protection from wildfire and for seedbed preparation. Unplanned ignitions will be suppressed in seedling and sapling stands.

**Smoke Management Plans/Burn Permits:** Prepare smoke management plans to coordinate and manage smoke dispersal with other agencies and with meteorological conditions. Obtain burning permits from New Mexico Environment Department – Air Quality Bureau to ensure conformity with State Implementation Plans for emissions of regulated air pollutants from forest lands or facilities.

**Fuels:** Activity created fuels and natural fuels will be treated to a level that the maximum tolerable loss objective can be met.

**Management Area Prescriptions:** A prescription for each management area will reflect the objectives and range of conditions that these objectives can be accomplished.

**Fire Suppression:** Fire suppression response will be appropriate for each fire ignition considering the fire environment and suppression forces. Appropriate actions to consider are confinement, containment, surveillance, and/or depending upon the specific fire situation, declaring the unplanned natural ignitions a prescribed natural fire and managing it according to the management area prescription. Every consideration will be given to use wildfire as prescribed fires to help meet management area objectives while providing for public safety and property protection.

## **Wildlife**

### **Mexican Spotted Owl<sup>1</sup>**

**Standards.<sup>2</sup>** Provide three levels of habitat management—protected, restricted, and other forest and woodland types to achieve a diversity of habitat conditions across the landscape.

Protected areas include delineated protected activity centers; mixed conifer and pine oak forest with slopes greater than 40 percent where timber harvest has not occurred in the last 20 years; and reserved lands which include wilderness, research natural areas, wild and scenic rivers, and congressionally recognized wilderness study areas.

Restricted areas include all mixed conifer, pine-oak, and riparian forests outside protected areas.

Other forest and woodland types include all ponderosa pine, spruce-fir, woodland, and aspen forest outside protected and restricted areas.

Allow no timber harvest except for fuelwood and fire risk abatement in established protected activity centers.

Allow for no timber harvest except for fire risk abatement in mixed conifer and pine-oak forests on slopes greater than 40 percent where timber harvest has not occurred in the last 20 years.

**General.** Breeding season is March to August 31.

Protected Areas – 600 acres around activity center Protected Activity Centers (found only on the Jicarilla Ranger District): Treat fuel accumulations to abate fire risk:

- Select for treatment 10 percent of the protected activity centers where nest sites are known in each recovery unit having high fire risk conditions. Select another 10 percent of the protected activity centers in which nest sites are known as a paired sample to serve as control areas.

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<sup>1</sup> 1996 Record of Decision for Amendment of Forest Plans

<sup>2</sup> These are excerpts taken from the 1996 Record of Decision Region-wide Amendment of Forest Plans specifically related to fire.

- Designate a 100-acre “no treatment” area around the known nest site of each selected protected activity center. Habitat in the “no treatment” area should be as similar as possible in structure and composition as that found in the activity center.
- Use combinations of thinning trees less than 9 inches in diameter, mechanical fuel treatment, and prescribed fire to abate fire risk in the remainder of the selected protected activity center outside the 100-acre “no treatment” area.
- Retain woody debris larger than 12 inches in diameter, snags, clumps of broad-leafed woody vegetation, and hardwood trees larger than 10 inches in diameter at the root collar.
- Select and treat additional PACs in 10 percent increments if monitoring of the initial sample shows there were no negative impacts or if there were negative impacts, which can be mitigated by modifying treatment methods.
- Use light prescribed burns in non-selected PACs on a case-by-case basis. Burning should avoid a 100-acre “no treatment” area around the activity center. Large woody debris, snags, clumps of broad-leafed woody vegetation should be retained and hardwood trees larger than 10 inches diameter at the root collar.

Pre- and post-treatment monitoring should be conducted in all PACs treated for fire risk abatement (see monitoring guidelines).

See other Standards and Guidelines for Mexican Spotted Owl by Management Area.

**Prescribed Fire.** Improve forage conditions by using prescribed fire where environmental analysis shows beneficial effects and in accordance with approved burning plans.

The management direction and goals in the Carson Forest Plan describe the desired future mosaic of land and resource conditions for the Carson National Forests and the planning, analysis, monitoring, and adjustments that must be done to make these goals a reality. Full attainment of these goals and objectives can be influenced by Congressional budget allocations, changed circumstances, or new information

## **Management Area Prescriptions (Standards and Guidelines)**

Appendix S

### **Mexican Spotted Owl (1996 Record of Decision for Amendment of Forest Plans)**

#### **Guidelines**

**General.** Breeding season is March to August 31.

**Protected Areas.** 600 acres around activity center (Jicarilla Ranger District ONLY, see Map 2)

**Protected Activity Centers** (found only on the Jicarilla Ranger District). Treat fuel accumulations to abate fire risk:

- Select for treatment 10 percent of the protected activity centers where nest sites are known in each recovery unit having high fire risk conditions. Select another 10 percent of the protected activity centers in which nest sites are known as a paired sample to serve as control areas.

## Section 2. Relationship to Land Management Planning and Fire Policy

- Designate a 100-acre “no treatment” area around the known nest site of each selected protected activity center. Habitat in the no treatment area should be as similar as possible in structure and composition as that found in the activity center.
- Use combinations of thinning trees less than 9 inches in diameter, mechanical fuel treatment, and prescribed fire to abate fire risk in the remainder of the selected protected activity center outside the 100-acre “no treatment” area.
- Retain woody debris larger than 12 inches in diameter, snags, clumps of broad-leafed woody vegetation, and hardwood trees larger than 10 inches in diameter at the root collar.
- Select and treat additional PACs in 10 percent increments if monitoring of the initial sample shows there were no negative impacts or if there were negative impacts, which can be mitigated by modifying treatment methods.
- Use light prescribed burns in non-selected PACs on a case-by-case basis. Burning should avoid a 100-acre “no treatment” area around the activity center. Large woody debris, snags, clumps of broad-leafed woody vegetation should be retained and hardwood trees larger than 10 inches diameter at the root collar.
- Pre- and post-treatment monitoring should be conducted in all PACs treated for fire risk abatement (see monitoring guidelines).

**Steep Slopes** (Mixed conifer outside protected activity centers with slopes greater than 40 percent that have not been logged within the past 20 years):

- In PACs with steep slopes, treat fuel accumulations to abate fire risk.
- Use combination of thinning trees less than 9 inches in diameter, mechanical fuel removal, and prescribed fire.
- Retain woody debris larger than 12 inches in diameter, snags, clumps of broad-leafed woody vegetation, and hardwood trees larger than 10 inches in diameter at the root collar.
- Pre- and post-treatment monitoring should be conducted in all PACs treated for fire risk abatement.
- In Reserved Lands (Wilderness, Research Natural Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Congressionally Recognized Wilderness Study Areas), allow prescribed fire where appropriate.

**Restricted Areas** (Mixed conifer & riparian forests outside of protected areas):

- Attempt to mimic natural disturbance patterns by incorporating natural variation, such as irregular tree spacing and various patch sizes, into management prescriptions.
- Encourage prescribed fire and prescribed natural fire to reduce hazardous fuel accumulation. To reduce ladder fuels and the risk of crown fire, thinning from below before burning may be desirable or necessary.

**Other Forest and Woodland Types** (Ponderosa pine, spruce-fir, woodland, and aspen forests outside protected and restricted areas):

Apply ecosystem approaches to manage for landscape diversity mimicking natural disturbance patterns by incorporating natural variation in stand conditions and retaining special features such as snags and large trees, utilizing appropriate fires, and by retention of existing old growth in accordance with forest plan old growth standards and guidelines.

## **Ecosystem Management in Northern Goshawk Habitats (1996 Record of Decision for Amendment of Forest Plans, pp. 91-93)**

### **Applicability**

The northern goshawk standards and guidelines apply to the forest and woodland communities described below that are outside of Mexican spotted owl protected and restricted areas. Within Mexican spotted owl protected and restricted areas, the Mexican spotted owl standards and guidelines take precedence over the northern goshawk standards and guidelines. One or the other set of standards and guidelines apply to all forest and woodland communities but the Mexican spotted owl standards always take precedence in areas of overlap.

### **Standards**

Specific vegetation management for landscapes outside Goshawk post-fledging family areas, within post-fledging family areas, and within nesting areas are addressed in the Forest LRMP.

The order of preferred treatment of woody debris for landscapes outside Goshawk post-fledging family areas is 1) prescribed burning, 2) lopping and scattering, 3) hand piling or machine grapple piling, and 4) dozer piling.

The preferred treatment to maintain the desired structure for landscapes within nesting areas is to thin from below with non-uniform spacing and to use handtools and fire to reduce fuel loads. Lopping and scattering of thinning debris is preferred if prescribed fire cannot be used. Piling of debris should be limited. When necessary, hand piling should be used to minimize compaction within piles and to minimize displacement and destruction of the forest floor and the herbaceous layer. Do not grapple or Dozer pile debris.

Low intensity ground fires are allowed at any time in all forested cover types, but high intensity crown fires are not acceptable in the post-fledging family area or nest areas. Avoid burning the entire home range of a goshawk pair in a single year. For fires planned in the occupied nest area, a fire management plan [prescribed fire plan] should be prepared. The fire management plan [prescribed fire plan] should minimize the risk of goshawk abandonment with low intensity ground fire burns in the nesting area. Prescribed fire within nesting areas should be planned to move with prevailing winds away from the nest tree to minimize smoke and the risk of developing a crown fire, thereby driving the adults off or consuming the nest tree.

### **Forest-wide goals and objectives are identified below:**

- Reduce the amount and intensity of severe wildland fires.
- Where appropriate, reintroduce fire into fire-dependant ecosystems.
- Reduce the threat of wildfire damage to human communities and natural resources.

### **Carson Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines for Wildfire Suppression**

1. **Standard.** Human life (firefighter and public safety) is the highest priority during a fire. Once firefighters have been assigned to a fire, their safety becomes the highest value to be protected. Property and natural and cultural resources are lower priorities.  
**Guideline.** When assigning protection priorities to property and natural and cultural

resources, decisions will be based on relative values to be protected, commensurate with fire management costs.

2. **Standard.** Human-caused fires (either accidental or arson) are unwanted wildland fires, and will be suppressed. Natural ignitions will be suppressed in areas not covered by an approved fire management plan.

**Guidelines:**

- a. Fires are suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits and values to protected, consistent with resource objectives. Implement low impact fire use tactics in the project area and other sensitive locations where possible while maintaining the most cost effective procedures possible.
  - b. Maintain fire support services (dispatch, cache, communications, etc.). Train and maintain forces held in reserve for support to initial attack or as reinforcements on escaped fires (hotshot crews and special equipment).
  - c. Cooperate as a partner in wildland/urban interface wildland firefighting, reduce hazardous fuels, cooperate in prevention and educational opportunities and provide technical assistance.
3. **Standard.** Return fire to its more natural role in the ecosystem consistent with safety of persons, property and other resources.  
**Guideline.** Treat activity-created fuels to meet initial attack objectives. Fuelwood utilization is a major emphasis to reduce forest residues. YUM, RUM, and other yarding techniques are employed to facilitate increased fuelwood utilization in areas easily accessible to the public. Natural fuels will be treated in conjunction with activity-created fuels or by fire management area prescriptions.
  4. **Standard.** Implement Wildland and Prescribed Fire Policy based on the Wildland Prescribed Fire Management Policy Implementation Procedures Reference Guide. A Wildfire Implementation Plan (WFIP) will be initiated for all wildland fires that have an approved WFI Plan. Preparation of the WFIP will follow the direction given in the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy Implementation Procedures Reference Guide.

**Guidelines:**

- a. Fire use will be initiated on vegetation types where the natural role of fire has been identified through a Wildland Fire Implementation Plan. A decision for fire use within the wilderness shall not be based on benefits to wildlife, maintenance of vegetation types, improvements in forage production, or enhancement of other resource values. Fire use will be used to control invasion of woody and tree species into natural openings, grasslands, and meadows. There may be additional benefits, which result from the decision of fire use but are not objectives for managing fire in wilderness. Planning...Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved fire management plan. Fire management plans must be consistent with firefighter and public safety, values to be protected, and land and resource management plans, and must address public health issues. Fire Management Plans must also address all potential wildland fire occurrences and include the full range of fire management actions. All use of fire for resource management requires a formal prescription. Management actions taken on wildland fires will be consistent with approved fire management plans.

- b. Reduce to an acceptable level the risks and consequences associated with unwanted wildland fire within the forest and wildland/urban interface. Reduce unnatural fuel loadings, fire proof adjacent private lands, promote wildlife food, cover values, and increase livestock forage productivity.
- c. Smoking, campfire, and powersaw restrictions, hoot owl shifts, and area closures will be implemented according to Forest Fire Restriction and Closure Plan (Tool Box) and Forest Industrial Fire Precaution Plan.
- d. Accomplish fire prevention activities by continued participation in public education, personal contacts, and regulated use.

### **Prescribed Fire**

1. **Standard.** Prescribed fire is authorized forestwide. (Use prescribed fire in wilderness only to meet wilderness fire management objectives.)
2. **Standard.** Wildland fire will be used to protect, maintain and enhance resources and as nearly as possible allow to function its natural ecological role. In areas authorized for wildland fire use, the full range of management responses—from full suppression to monitoring—may be used.

#### **Guidelines:**

- a. When Wildland fire use is authorized there will be exceptions:
  - Administrative sites
  - Developed recreation sites
  - Summer home sites
  - Designated communication sites
  - Oil and gas facilities
  - Mining facilities
  - Above-ground utility corridors
  - High-use travel corridors.
- b. Complete fire management analysis planning and designate fire management areas within the first decade. A wildland fire implementation plan will be initiated for all wildland fire if appropriate.
- c. Continue to collect information on and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented prescribed fire prescriptions during the first decade.
- d. Fuelbreaks are constructed and maintained in the timber type following each silvicultural treatment by mechanical treatment and/or prescribed fire.
- e. Continue fuels management inventory through the preattack planning process.
- f. Activity and natural fuels are treated by lopping and scattering, crushing, removing, chipping, and prescribed broadcast burning.
- g. Achieve better dispersal of smoke through management of fire use by Identifying and avoiding smoke sensitive areas and reducing emission. Complying with the State Air Quality Standards and the NAAQS.
- h. Maintain high quality visual conditions in the Wheeler Peak Wilderness. The form, line, texture, and color of characteristic landscapes will be clearly distinguishable when viewed as middle ground. Cultural resources and ecosystems will remain unmodified by long duration air pollutants. Determine baseline information and the background condition of the above air quality related values and specify limits of acceptable change that will protect values in Class I airsheds.

## Section 2. Relationship to Land Management Planning and Fire Policy

**Standard** - Assist and coordinate with the state in developing and applying air quality and smoke management standards. Maintain agreements with cooperating agency.

**Guideline** - Reduce hazardous fuels. The full range of fuel reduction methods is authorized, consistent with forest and management area emphasis and direction.

# Section 3 – Wildland Fire Management Strategies

## General Management Considerations

Review of the Carson Forest Plan and its amendments, provides priorities to be considered when determining the appropriate response to wildland fires. Strategic priorities for wildland fire on the Forest will be based on:

- Firefighter and public safety.
- Location of the fire – which FMU
- Current and predicted weather and fire behavior.
- National and Regional preparedness levels, local fire activity, and availability of resources.
- Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP), Stage 1 Assessment minimum requirement (Appendix T).

The Wildland Fire Management Policy Flowchart below will be followed to determine how wildland fire will be managed.

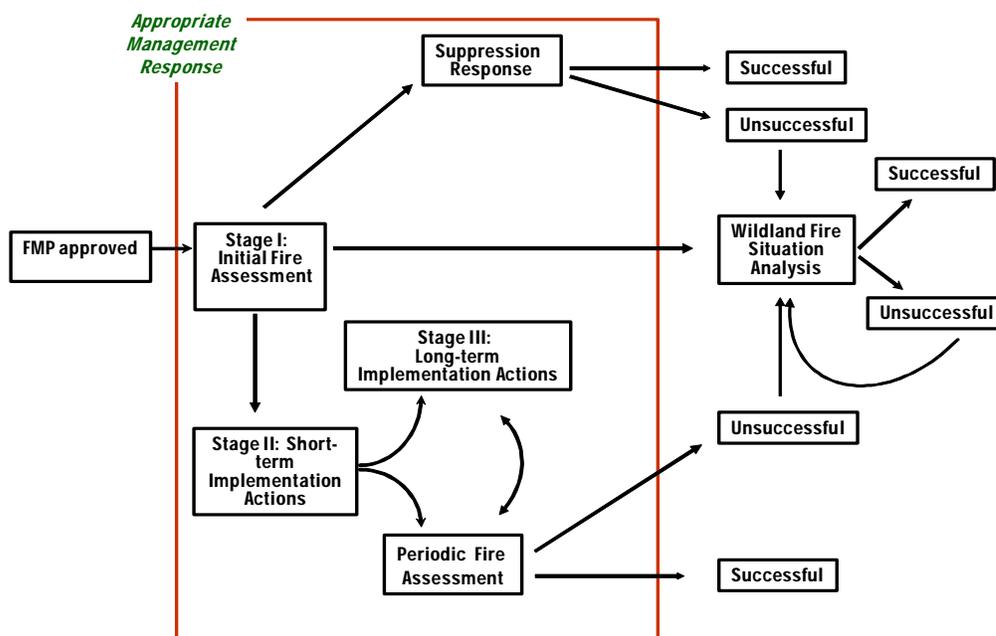


Figure 1. Wildland Fire management policy flowchart

The range of appropriate management responses used on the Carson National Forest will be based on Forest Plan objectives applied to specific FMUs, relative risk (external influences), complexity, and defensibility of management boundaries. To estimate appropriate methods to implement desired/necessary strategies, use the Appropriate Management Response Chart below. Lines must be drawn to connect the top and bottom variables and the left and right variables. The point at which the two lines intersect indicates the appropriate management response.

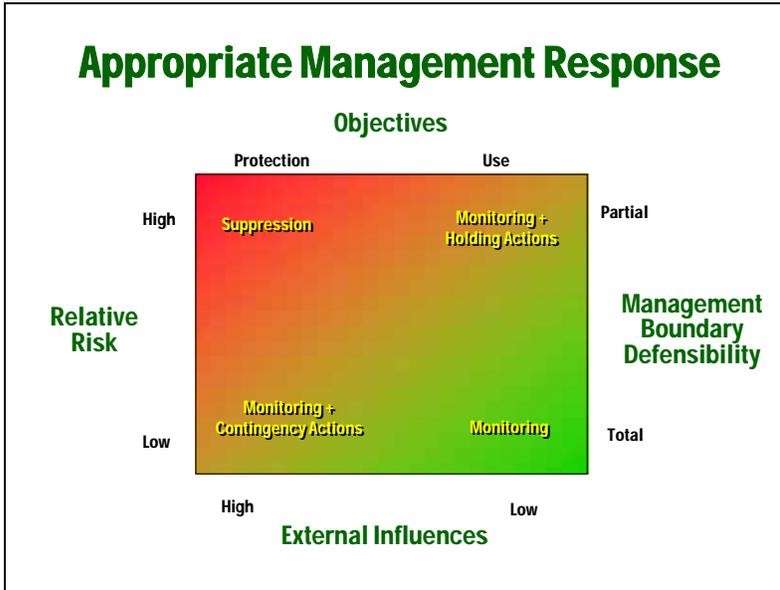


Figure 2. Appropriate management response chart

## Goals

- Achieve a program where firefighter and public safety are the highest priority in every fire management activity.
- Implement management practices, including prescribed fire that will move all affected landscapes toward desired vegetation composition and structure as described in Geographic Area and Management Area direction.
- Maintain an efficient and effective organization for the suppression of wildfires at a minimum cost consistent with the values at risk.
- Efficiently utilize fire suppression resources in an interagency setting with focus on reduced cost of operation for all cooperators.
- Hazardous fuels reduction activities within wildland urban interface areas should have priority when there are differing resource objectives.
- Where opportunities exist, implement cooperative fuels treatment ventures with private, state, and other Federal land management agencies.
- Retain and recruit experienced and knowledgeable staff to accomplish fire management goals.
- Achieve and maintain a quality suppression and fire use workforce to address changing fire management priorities and fire management complexities.
- Revise the Fire Management Plan annually to incorporate proven efficiencies.

## Options

### Management Strategy

- Fire Management Plan – Complete a plan that defines a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires with the appropriate management response or range of response strategies.
- Wildland Fire Management - Special resource concerns will be considered in all fire management activities.
- Provide a cost effective fire management program to protect life, property, and Forest resources from the damaging effects of wildfire.
- Maintain natural and activity-created fuels at levels commensurate with minimizing resource losses from wildfire.
- Provide opportunities for the use of fire in its natural ecological role

### Description by Fire Management Unit

The Carson National Forest is divided into three Fire Management Units (FMU): TB – Timber; WL – Woodland; and WD – Wilderness

#### **TB - Timber**

**Ponderosa Pine** (17% of total):

There are two management areas that address ponderosa pine: Management area 4 is ponderosa pine under 40 percent and Management area 5 is mixed conifer and ponderosa pine over 40 percent.

The ponderosa pine vegetative type is the largest of the Carson's commercial zone. There are two general stand conditions that occur in Management area 4.

Ponderosa pine with gambel oak understory occurs on a wide variety of elevation and climatic ranges, however, it is most commonly found on warm, dry slopes. The oak usually comes in after a site disturbance, such as fire or logging. The understory is characterized by relatively pure stands of ponderosa pine regeneration with inclusions of Douglas fir, white fir, gambol oak, pinon pine and juniper, with ponderosa pine being the dominant species that occupies more than 75 percent of this site. Ponderosa pine can be found in transition zones between pinon-juniper, Douglas-fir and white fir and is most productive in this zone. Natural fuel accumulations range from light to heavy, 5 tons to over 15 tons per acre, and fire occurrence is the highest on the forest. Logging and precommercial thinning can add 10 to 30 tons per acre. These accumulations can produce sufficient heat and flame length to kill residual trees during periods of high or extreme fire danger. Dispersed recreational use is heavy and risk of person-caused fires is high.

Most of the remaining overmature trees and large snags within the pine type are on the steep slopes of Management area 5, and extend to Management area 4. Snags are important to snag dependent species of wildlife as we get into areas where snags are less frequent.

**Mixed Conifer** (13% of total):

The size and distribution of aspen patches provide a living map of fire history or other catastrophes. Wildfires have played an important role in the history of this area. Man has been controlling wildfires for approximately 80 years and natural mortality has resulted in fuel loadings of 10 tons to 100 tons per acre. Grasses and forbs are quick to take over a burned area and vegetative succession begins again. Douglas fir, mistletoe and spruce budworm are prevalent and are responsible for many small concentrations of snags.

The woody vegetative composition of this unit is variable and consists of overstories and understories of ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, white-fir, Engelmann spruce and aspen in a wide variety of mixtures.

The lower elevation range borders the pure ponderosa pine type and the upper range borders the spruce/fir type.

Although large fires have occurred in this area, the frequency is quite low with the exception of extremely dry seasons. During these periods, this area fire can become very active as the fires in the 1994, 1996, 2000, and 2002 fire seasons resulted in active fire behavior in areas of higher elevation.

**Other** (spruce, aspen) (13% of total):

This area has an overstory of aspen with an understory ranging from forbs and grass to sparse conifer reproduction, usually white-fir, corkbark fir or spruce. Acres of aspen stands with stocked conifer understories are included, without treatment those stands with conifer understory or grass will convert to conifer or grass type as the aspen overstories dies, thus losing the aspen component. The existing aspen stands are a direct result of past wildfires. Aspen stands provide natural firebreaks that aid in stopping wildfires that originate in the adjacent vegetative types. The only fire occurrence is from adjacent vegetative types.

**Values:**

- Private lands & homes, archaeological and historical sites, Visual aesthetics, Water quality, special status species.

**Unit Objectives:**

- Carson Forest Plan Management Area objectives.
- Protection of human life, archaeological and historic sites, and private property.

**Wildland Fire Management Direction:**

- Ensure that wildland fire is contained within natural or man-made barriers/firebreaks.
- Utilize wildland fire for resource benefit where appropriate.

**Wildland Fire Suppression Recommendations and Restrictions:**

- Ambient air quality standards (PM-10 & PM-2.5) for adjacent communities will not be violated from WFU fires in this area.
- Unacceptable soil and water quality impacts outside wilderness as defined by standards and guidelines established in the Forest Plan will be avoided.
- If T&E/Special status species plant or animal communities present – adhere to Forest Plan restrictions.
- When preparedness level is 3, 4, or 5, the objective in this vegetative type will be to suppress all fires within two miles of lands of another ownership at 40 acres or less by the most economical means to protect life and property. In other areas or when the preparedness level is 3 or less the objective will be to suppress wildfires at 160 acres or less by the most economical means. The total burned area will not exceed 40 acres per year when the preparedness level is 3, 4, or 5.

**General Guidance for Prescribed Vegetation Treatments (site-specific EA required):**

- Reduce hazardous fuel loading and the risks of wildland fire escaping public lands.
- To maintain or create diverse seral stages and improve herbaceous understory in aspen and mixed mountain shrubland vegetation types.
- Increase the quantity of sagebrush shrublands by reducing the encroachment of pinon-juniper and oak woodlands on sagebrush communities.
- Reduce the risks of large-scale fires in critical watershed areas.
- Reduce fuels around significant cultural sites and adjacent private values.

**WL - Woodland**

**Woodland** (43% of total):

There are two conditions that exist in this area; Pinon pine, Rocky Mountain juniper and Cedar comprising the tree canopy with a wide variety of grass, forbs and shrubs in the understory. The transition zone where the pinon-juniper woodland type joins the ponderosa pine, is characterized by dry, warm climatic conditions and poor ponderosa site productivity classes.

There are numerous two-track nonsystem roads that provide access into the area.

**Unit Description** Elevations range from about 6,000 feet to just over 7,500 feet above sea level. The lower to mid elevation vegetation is mountain shrublands dominated by Gambel’s oak with associated shrubs that include mountain mahogany, chokecherry and snowberry. Typical species in the drier sites include mountain sagebrush, rabbitbrush, and grasses. The drier, low elevation sites are made up of open pinon-juniper woodlands that can include; sagebrush, oak, serviceberry, and mountain mahogany, mixed with grasses and forbs.

**Values:**

- Private lands & homes, archaeological and historical sites, visual aesthetics, water quality, special status species.

**Unit Objectives:**

- Carson Forest Plan Management Area objectives.
- Protection of archaeological and historic sites.

**Wildland Fire Management Direction:**

- Lower priority for suppression and managed using the appropriate management response commensurate with pre-determined constraints (possible negative affects to values and unit objectives).
- Ensure that wildland fire is contained within natural or man-made barriers/firebreaks.
- Utilize wildland fire for resource benefit where appropriate.

**Wildland Fire Suppression Recommendations and Restrictions:**

- Ambient air quality standards (PM-10 & PM-2.5) for adjacent communities will not be violated from WFU fires in this area.
- Unacceptable soil and water quality impacts outside wilderness as defined by standards and guidelines established in the Forest Plan will be avoided.
- If T&E/Special status species plant or animal communities present – adhere to Forest Plan restrictions.
- The suppression objective is to suppress all fires at less than one acre during all periods when the managed age class consists of seedlings, saplings and poles. The objective will be to manage fires in these age classes in accordance with the management area prescription.

**General Guidance for Prescribed Vegetation Treatments (site-specific EA required):**

- Reduce hazardous fuel loading and the risks of wildland fire escaping public lands.
- To maintain or create diverse seral stages and improve herbaceous understory in aspen and mixed mountain shrubland vegetation types.
- Increase the quantity of sagebrush shrublands by reducing the encroachment of pinon-juniper and oak woodlands on sagebrush communities.
- Reduce the risks of large-scale fires in critical watershed areas.
- Reduce fuels around significant cultural sites.

## **WL – Wilderness**

**Wilderness.** (14% of total)

The landscape is characterized by steep, high-elevation, mountainous terrain dissected by several deep drainages. Deep canyons and valleys are abundant which contain lakes, streams. Elevations range from 8,000 feet to just over 13,000 feet above sea level. These areas are moderate recreation use areas and include recreational rivers, and other developed recreation complexes. The higher elevations or north-facing slopes are a combination of aspen and mixed conifer, primarily Douglas fir, Englemann spruce, and sub-alpine fir. Lower elevations are primarily mountain shrublands dominated by Gambel’s oak with associated shrubs that include mountain mahogany, serviceberry, chokecherry and snowberry. Many areas above 12,000 feet elevation feature large expanses of alpine tundra and alpine willow along with large rock escarpments.

### **Values:**

- Developed recreation facilities, ski areas, visitor safety, private lands, cabins & ski huts, historical sites, visual aesthetics, scenic values, Wilderness characteristics, special status wildlife species.

### **Unit Objectives:**

- Carson Forest Plan Management Area objectives.
- Permit lightning caused fires to play, as much as possible, their natural ecological role.
- Prevent irreversible and irretrievable impacts to naturalness & roadlessness.
- Protect visual aesthetics and scenic values.
- Conservation of special status species plant and animal communities.
- Reduce to an acceptable level, the risks and consequences of wildland fire within or escaping from the area.
- Protection of known significant archaeological and historic sites.

### **Wildland Fire Management Direction:**

- Lower priority for suppression.
- If pre-determined criteria have been specified and are met, naturally occurring fires may be managed under a Wildland Fire Use strategy.
- Wildfires under a suppression strategy will be managed using the appropriate management response commensurate with pre-determined constraints (possible negative affects to values and unit objectives).

- Ensure that wildland fires under a suppression strategy are contained within natural or man-made barriers/firebreaks.

**Wildland Fire Suppression Recommendations and Restrictions:**

Should a wildfire require suppression action, the appropriate suppression response will include considerations to protect the wilderness or natural, undeveloped integrity of the area, and not cause undue damage. This will include use of Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics wherever possible.

Ambient air quality standards (PM-10 & PM-2.5) for adjacent communities will not be violated from WFU fires in this area.

- Unacceptable soil and water quality impacts outside wilderness as defined by standards and guidelines established in the Forest Plan will be avoided.
- T&E/Special status species plant or animal communities present - minimize surface disturbance (by using retardant, water, engines/wet lines, backfires, etc.) and limit motor vehicle use to existing roads and trails.

**Historical fire occurrence and fire situation:**

- Fire occurrence is low within these areas, typically less than five ignitions per year.
- Lightning is the primary ignition source but some human caused fire also occurs.
- Area is characterized by a cool, moist climate; average high temperatures during the summer run between 55-75 degrees and low relative humidity's run between 20-25%
- Area experiences a split fire season, with the first drying trend running late May to early July. This drying period is halted by monsoon moisture, which arrives in early July. Due to the heavy snow accumulations over much of the area, fire occurrence during this first drying period is rare except for very poor snow years. The monsoon breaks down in August thus starting the second drying period, which continues into October. This drying period is most likely to experience conditions favorable for fires.
- The predominant fire regime is a low frequency/high intensity regime. Fire behavior is often minimal due to the cool, moist climate, and most ignitions are single tree type fires that affect less than 1 acre. Over time however, persistent drought conditions can create situations where conifers can easily torch once ignited and ground fuels will also support fire spread. Combined with a strong wind event, active crown runs can occur during extended dry periods that can create stand replacing fires of medium to large size (100+ acres).
- Rock escarpments, wet meadows, and avalanche chutes are found throughout the area which provides numerous breaks in fuel continuity.

**General Guidance for Prescribed Vegetation Treatments (site-specific EA required):**

- Reduce to an acceptable level, the risks and consequences of unwanted wildland fires within Wildland Fire Use areas or wildland fires escaping from Wildland Fire Use areas.

- To allow for the development of vegetation types that natural events would produce within these areas.
- To maintain or create diverse seral stages and improve herbaceous understory in sagebrush, mixed mountain shrublands/aspen vegetation types.
- Reduce fuels around significant cultural sites, developments, and other public or private improvements.
- Reduce the potential for epidemic levels of insect activity.

This FMU contains designated wilderness areas and land being managed for wilderness values, but is not formally designated wilderness. The majority of fires remains small during all but the most extreme fire seasons, and can be easily suppressed in the initial attack stage. However, fires can get very large due when extreme drought conditions are present. Fire starts within this unit have a low probability of impacting pre-existing human values; and therefore can be managed to restore the natural role of fire, reduce high fuel loads, and enhance long-term resource benefits. Values at risk are generally low within the unit, but fires can have the potential to impact adjoining units with much higher values. Wildland fire use is a primary strategy used in this FMU, although other strategies can be used.



# Section 4. Wildland Fire Management Program Components

## General Implementation Procedures

Wildland fires occurring in appropriate FMU will not be managed for resource benefit and will be suppressed through initial attack unless an approved WFIP is in place. A Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP) shall be initiated for all naturally occurring wildland fires if appropriate. The duty officer will be responsible for completing Stage I: Initial Fire Assessment that provides the decision framework for selecting the appropriate management response. This decision must be made within 2 hours of verification of a natural ignition as described in the Implementation Guide. Stage II (Short-term Implementation Actions) is required within 24 hours after completion of Stage I if managing the fire for resource benefits. Stage III (Long-term Implementation Actions) is required 24 hours after completion of Stage II or when the Periodic Fire Assessment indicates the need.

The Regional Forester has authority and responsibility for approving the WFIP during Preparedness Level IV and V. The Forest Supervisor has authority and responsibility for approving the WFIP at all other Preparedness Levels and this authority may be delegated (FSM 5140.42.2). The appropriate line officer must assign a qualified Fire Use Manger (FUMA) for each wildland fire managed for resource benefits (FSM 5145.3). Refer to (Appendix U) for the FSM 5140-Fire Use Chapter. Refer to (Appendix T) for the WFIP implementation stages, requirement status, and completion timeframes.

Human-caused fires occurring in any FMU will not be managed for resource benefit.

## Wildland Fire Suppression

### Range of Potential Fire Behavior

Potential fire behavior varies greatly across the Forest, ranging from fast-spreading brush fires, to high-severity crown fires, to slow-spreading, low intensity surface fires. Hazard areas (low, moderate, and high) have been defined to coincide with expected fire behavior under typical summer weather conditions (Appendix V).

### Preparedness Actions

#### Fire Prevention Activities

The Forest receives about half a million recreation visitor days per year due to its proximity to major population centers. Visitors enjoy four seasons of recreation. The result of this high use can put visitors at risk during high fire danger levels. Every district will manage visitor use during these high risk periods.

#### Annual Prevention Program

The Forest focuses on public contact, issuing campfire permits, issuing burn permits, and participates in fire prevention education programs and events.

### **Special Orders and Closures**

Fire managers, law enforcement, and public affairs coordinate the implementation of special orders or closures. Cooperators, adjoining forests, and the media will be notified by the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) of the special orders or closures. Refer to (Appendix W) for the Carson National Forest fire restriction implementation criteria toolbox. All New Mexico Public Resources Codes (PRC) applicable to fire management activities and Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) related to fire prevention, detection, and pre-suppression will be enforced.

### **Industrial Operations and Fire Precautions**

The sale administrator and/or fire prevention personnel will inspect the industrial operation for the required fire safety measures included in the contract. Refer to Appendix T for the Industrial Operation Plan.

### **Annual Fire Training Activities**

Forest fire qualifications review committee, the red card system, and mandatory training needed annually.

### **Qualifications and Needs Assessment**

The policy and guidelines in FSH 5109.17 Wildland Fire Qualifications Handbook, 310-1 Wildland Fire Qualifications Subsystem Guide, and the R-3 Fire Training Nomination and Selection Process provide for standardization of Forest training requirements and documentation. Contact the Emergency Command Center for the current red card qualifications list.

### **Annual Fire Training Activities**

Annually, a plan for regional and local multi-agency training is published and posted on the Forest and Regional website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/carson> and <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire> respectively. These are supplement to this Fire Management Plan.

Each Ranger District is responsible for training new employees, and for reinforcing the training of permanent and returning temporary employees.

All training courses sponsored by the Forest or District will be coordinated with other agencies and jurisdictions in the Taos Zone (TAZ) through the TAZ Training Coordinator. The TAZ is responsible for sponsorship and coordination of 200 and 300 level planning function courses along with Status Check-in Recorder, Situation Unit Leader, DEMOB, and Resource and Documentation Unit Leaders. Generally, TAZ offers the planning section material every other year. The 100 to 300 level classes will be offered on an as-needed basis.

### **Fire Safety Refresher Training**

Annually, prior to fire season, a mandatory one-day Fire Safety Refresher Training will be given to all personnel who will be participating in fire suppression and/or prescribed fire activities. Each year before fire season officially starts, approximately April 1, each Unit will host their own refresher courses, in coordination with other agencies in the area. The Refresher Training will consist of Fire Shelter purpose and use, practice shelter deployments, and any pertinent fire safety related topics such as Fire Orders and Watch Out Situations; Look-outs, Communications, Escape Routes, and Safety Zones (LCES); and Look up, Look down, and Look Around, and review of the

30-mile incident, and South Canyon Fire. NWCG has provided material for the wildland fire refresher as well as other related information, which can be found at [http://www.nifc.gov/safety\\_study/index.htm](http://www.nifc.gov/safety_study/index.htm). Interagency Fire Job Qualification Cards will *not* be issued to individuals until their supervisors have certified that they have completed the annual Fire Safety Refresher Training and passed (if required) the Work Capacity Test (WCT) (FSM 5135.5).

Refresher Training is not a substitute to the required training for Fire Fighter Type 2 (Basic 40 hour: I-100, Introduction to Incident Command System; S-130 Firefighter Training; and S-190, Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior).

### Physical Fitness Standards

In addition to training and experience, physical fitness standards, when applicable, must be met for Incident Command System (ICS) position certification. Annually, prior to fire season, all persons expected to perform fire duties and take a WCT must be informed of the requirement in a timely manner. Those required to pass the WCT should be informed at least four weeks prior to a scheduled WCT to allow time for fitness training. Each person, before taking the WCT, will complete the Health-Screening Questionnaire (HSQ), sign an Informed Consent Form, and take a physical.

An HSQ will be provided to each current employee to perform a personal assessment with instructions for its use. Individuals required to obtain a physical examination will be provided the information needed to obtain one. The HSQ will be reviewed by the local servicing human resources office. The designated human resources specialist will determine whether the person meets the criteria to begin training or is to be referred to a qualified medical physician for further evaluation. Individuals can elect to use their own health care provider or use one of the facilities that the Forest has identified. The Forest will pay for the physical.

The WCT is the only means to qualify for one of three levels of fitness standards required in wildland firefighting:

**Table 2. Physical fitness standards**

| <b>Fitness Requirement</b> | <b>Test</b> | <b>Description</b>                       |
|----------------------------|-------------|--|
| Arduous                    | Pack Test   | 3-mile hike with 45-pound pack in 45 min |
| Moderate                   | Field Test  | 2-mile hike with 25-pound pack in 30 min |
| Light                      | Walk Test   | 1-mile hike in 16 min                    |

Determination of employees' roles in the fire program and their required fitness expectation can be found in FSH 5109.17, WO amendment 5109.17-2002-3, effective May 14, 2002.

All employees involved with or planning to be involved with wildland fire activities must work with their fire program manager(s) to determine their appropriate duties and the level of work capacity testing for which they must qualify. Additionally, all employees required to pass a WCT will only participate in the fitness category as required by their ICS position.

## Section 4. Wildland Fire Management Program Components

Fire funded employees (assigned to fire crews and identified in the Fire Management Plan “tactical resources”) shall be allowed up to 5 hours per week of physical training when not engaged in wildland fire operations. Employees not funded by fire shall be allowed up to 3 hours per week of physical training, consistent with wellness programs, at the employee’s request and with the supervisor’s approval. Training may begin up to 6 months prior to scheduled testing, and continue after passing the test, until the end of the proclaimed fire season. The Carson’s proclaimed fire season is from May 15 thru September 30. Fire program funds may be used for approved physical training time based on guaranteed availability for fire-related assignments.

All Work Capacity Test administrators must be certified and provide the required documentation. Certification requirements are included in the publication “Work Capacity Tests for Wildland Firefighters: Test Administrator’s Guide.” Work Capacity Administrators should review letters dated March 18 and 29, 2002 concerning the latest requirements to administer the tests. More information can be found on the Regional web page at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire>.

The above website also contains the following information:

- “6 Minutes for Safety,” training for safety on the fireline
- Topics that can be used on a weekly basis to keep personnel abreast of new safety items. To view the latest SafeNet information – click Fire Management,
- Information containing safety issues, concerns, and resolutions while on the fireline
- Access to submit a SafeNet
- Review SafeComs, safety issues concerning aircraft – click OAS

See Appendix Y for a hardcopy of the SafeNet and SafeCom forms and additional information.

### **Qualifications and Need Assessment**

The Forest training objective is to have a sufficient number of qualified wildland fire and support personnel available to meet current and anticipated fire management needs safely, efficiently, and effectively. All employees dispatched to wildland fires or participating in fire use activities will meet the standards required by the Wildland Fire Qualification Subsystem Guide, NWCG 310-1, and/or the Wildland Fire Qualifications Handbook, FSH 5109.17.

Annually the Forest Fire Qualifications Review Committee shall review all Forest Service employees’ qualifications on the Carson who are participating in ICS positions and serving as Technical Specialists to verify that they meet the minimum acceptable levels of training, experience, physical fitness, and/or currency requirements. The Forest Fire Qualifications Review Committee consists of the Forest Fire Staff Officer, Forest Assistant Fire Staff and Operations Officer, TAZ Dispatch Center Manager, District Fire Management Officers, representative from the Human Resource Office, and a National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) Representative.

A list of training needs for 2002-2003 Incident Command System positions and priorities for the Carson is located in (Appendix Z). This is updated annually through the Forest Fire Qualifications Review Committee.

### **ThirtyMile Accident Prevention Action Plan Items**

Starting fire season 2002, each Forest will document training-related action items that have been identified in the Chief's letter stated January 11, 2002. There are 19 action items that were identified as violations that occurred during the 30 Mile Incident. For example, Action Item A-29 emphasizes entrapment avoidance. Each unit will document when, who, and how many times they practice shelter deployments each year. The Action Items will be posted on the Supervisor's Office FAM, 5100 file code. Each Unit will then be able to access the file and document completion dates.

Each unit shall keep a written record of who attended, dates, objectives of the training, and if it is a ThirtyMile Action item. Records should be kept for at least 3 years.

## **Fire Season Readiness**

### **Annual Preparedness Check Schedule**

The Forest Fire Management Officer conducts readiness inspections for all suppression and prevention modules. The readiness inspections include training documentation and folders, safety drills, knowledge of standard fire orders and watch out situations, and hoselay and line construction skills. Refer to Appendix A-1 for a readiness inspection checklist.

These resources are primarily available for fire suppression and wildland fire use activities through the 1997 Interagency Agreement for Fire Management for use by the Forest or Zone, as well as regionally and nationally. However, they can be utilized for prescribed fire and other activities as described in local, regional, or national agreements, charters, and Memoranda of Understanding. In addition to the Forest resources, the other agency units within Taos Zone

Resources other than the suppression forces—engines and helicopters on-Forest and interagency resources in northern New Mexico—are Area or National resources. These will be ordered through normal dispatch channels by procedures specified in the *Southwest Area Mobilization Guide* and in the TAZ Charter.

A list of Regional and National resources is contained in the Southwest Area Mobilization Plan catalogues. Because these Area resources and Forest resources are constantly changing and relocating, their status can best be assessed daily by means of Regional and Forest daily situation reports

### **Annual Preparedness Reviews**

Preparedness planning and reviews will assist in recognition of critical wildland fire situations, establish a process for analyzing those situations, setting priorities, and implementing the appropriate management response.

The Forest Fire Staff Officer or the Forest AFMO will schedule preparedness reviews on each District annually by May 1, or as soon as possible after wildland fire training has been completed. The Fire Management Preparedness Checklist for Districts (Appendix A-1) will be used to document the preparedness reviews. The Forest Fire Staff Officer or Forest Operations Specialist will provide a written summary, and recommendation actions will be forwarded and discussed with the Forest Supervisor and respective District Rangers.

### Fire Season Start and Stop Criteria with Typical Dates

The fire season criteria are based on the historical fire season duration. Ninety percent of all fires occur between April 1 and September 30. Refer to Appendix A-2 for the historical fire season graph. Fire season typically starts in early April unless conditions warrant an earlier or later start. Fire season normally ends following a traditional snow fall in late October or early November.

### Administrative Unit or District Level Fire Cache Considerations Including Appropriate Stocking Levels and Management

The following standard caches and equipment are available for any incident in progress. All the caches are stocked to inventoried specifications.

- Regional Cache—located at the Interagency Mob Center in Albuquerque, NM.
- Zone Caches—located at the Camino Real Ranger District, the El Rito Ranger District, and at the Jicarilla Ranger District.
- Engine, Crew, and Prevention Patrol Replacement Caches—Adequate to restock apparatus and crew for immediate initial attack capability and located at individual stations
- Hotshot Cache—Adequate to maintain crew availability and located at the Hotshot Base

### Available Forest Equipment Resources

Table 3. Available Forest equipment resources

| Resource                               | Location                  |
|--|---------------------------|
| Aerial Ignition Device                 | Questa RD                 |
| Fixed wing AA A/C (BPA)                | Supervisor’s Office, Taos |
| Airtanker 5/13-6/21                    | Albuquerque, NM           |
| Airtanker 5/30-7/14                    | Alamogordo, NM            |
| Airtanker 6/10-7/26                    | Durango, Colorado         |
| 1 type 6x engine with foam capability  | Canjilon RD               |
| 1 type 6x engines with foam capability | El Rito, RD               |
| 1 type 6x engines with foam capability | Jicarilla, RD             |
| 1 type 6 engine with foam capability   | Camino Real, RD           |
| 1 type 6 engine with foam capability   | Tres Piedras              |
| Fixed wing Air Recon (BPA)             | Supervisor’s Office, Taos |

All requests for any of the above listed resources will be placed through the TAZ Coordination Center and documented on a Resource Order.

Other equipment available within the Taos Zone from other agencies or from commercial sources will be ordered through the Coordination Center or Expanded Dispatch. A Forest Supply Plan to include Emergency Equipment Rental Agreements (EERAs), Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs), etc., will be developed and maintained by the Forest Purchasing and Procurement

Section annually by April 1. The Forest Supply Plan is a supplement to this FMP and will be used to fill requests for equipment and supplies during fires. Resources other than suppression forces—engines and helicopters on-Forest and interagency resources in northern New Mexico—are Area or National resources. These will be ordered through normal dispatch channels by procedures specified in the *Southwest Area Mobilization Guide* and in the TAZ Charter.

A list of Regional and National resources is contained in the Southwest Area Mobilization Plan catalogue. Because these Area resources and Forest resources are constantly changing and relocating, their status can best be assessed daily by means of the Regional and Forest daily situation reports.

### Equipment and Supply Management

For **Initial Attack**: All supply orders shall be initiated by the incident. All requests shall have an “S” number assigned either by the Coordination Center or from the District assigned block of numbers. Upon receipt of an initial order, the Coordination Center will establish procedures with the District for filling the request(s). The District may then support the incident for local purchases or request that the Coordination Center process all orders. Items not available in the local District community will be ordered through the Coordination Center.

The following block of “S” numbers are assigned to the districts for initial attack support. These numbers should be used sequentially with Resource Order Numbers and P-numbers assigned by Dispatch, and with each new incident the sequence will begin over. Identify procedure for 2003.

**Table 4 - Equipment and Supplies**

|              |                              |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| Canjilon     | NMCAF-001-S 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. |
| El Rito      | NMCAF-002-S 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. |
| Jicarilla    | NMCAF-003-S 1, 2, 3, 4, etc  |
| Camino Real  | NMCAF-004-S 1, 2, 3, 4, etc  |
| Tres Piedras | NMCAF-006-S 1, 2, 3, 4, etc  |
| Questa       | NMCAF-007-S 1, 2, 3, 4, etc  |

When an incident transitions from Initial Attack to a Type I or Type II Incident Management Team, the “S” numbers will continue from the numbers established at the Coordination Center. The Center Manager and the District Purchaser will coordinate the transition. When a Type I or Type II Incident Management Team manages the incident, all orders will be placed through the incident Supply Unit Leader to the TAZ Expanded Dispatch Supply Desk. The Expanded Supply Desk will coordinate with the hosting District when processing orders. The intent is to provide the local community with as much business as possible.

## Detection

### Fixed Detection

The Forest’s objective is to achieve prompt fire detection and reporting to the Coordination Center. This ensures a timely suppression response to all unplanned and unwanted ignitions, and a management response that assesses natural ignitions in the Wildland Fire Use FMU, as potential wildland fire use candidates.

From the late 1950’s until the late 1970’s the Carson staffed two Forest Service lookouts, which were assisted by two Santa Fe lookouts and 1 BIA Lookout. This number has declined gradually, and currently the Forest uses two of its lookouts through the primary fire season, June through July on a case-by-case bases.

**Table 5. Lookout Towers**

| District      | Name       | Elevation | Access |
|---------------|------------|-----------|--------|
| Camino Real   | Picuris    | 10,500    | Road   |
| El Rito       | Kiowa      | 10,500    | Road   |
| BIA Jicarilla | Carracas   | 9,000     | Road   |
| Jemez (SAF)   | Deadman    | 10,500    | Road   |
| Jemez (SAF)   | Clara Peak | 10,500    | Road   |

Lookouts are expected to respond to smoke within 10 minutes and to plot the base of the smoke to within plus or minus 2 degrees azimuth, and plus or minus ½ mile distance, to relate the smoke to the nearest landmarks, and to provide an accurate legal description. This information will be relayed to the Coordination Center using the radio. It is important to avoid the use cellular phones to communicate any initial wildland fire starts. Additionally, lookouts will provide Coordination Center dispatchers with as much of the following “size-up” information as possible:

- Color of Smoke
- Fire behavior
- Structures threatened
- Estimated size
- Wind direction and estimated wind speed
- Fuel type
- Exposure and percentage of slope
- Position on slope
- Access

Furthermore, they are also required to report to the Coordination Center any abrupt changes in weather conditions, especially wind direction and speed, cumulus buildup and/or observed lightning, and precipitation.

On an as-needed or when-requested basis, lookouts may act as a communications relay. When relaying information using radio transmissions, lookouts must convey the information without any material change to the content or meaning.

Lookouts will notify dispatch when going out-of-service or into service any time during the day or when lookouts are out of service for the evening.

### Aerial Detection

The Forest uses fixed-wing aircraft and occasionally helicopters for aerial detection of wildfires. The general guidelines for aerial detection use are as follows:

- As determined by fire danger levels
- As weather conditions warrant
- As assistance in the location of wildland fires
- To recon potential wildland fire use candidates in the Wildland Fire Use FMU

Requests for aerial detection aircraft must go through the Coordination Center.

The Carson NF contracts for a fixed wing aircraft during fire season to support the suppression effort by providing air attack as well as aerial observation and reconnaissance. The policy on aircraft use is found in the aviation management plan (Appendix A-3). In addition, a Call When Needed (CWN) helicopter can be used to supplement the aerial detection program. An important part of detection mobilization is ground detection. Each ranger district annually updates a Lightning Detection Plan.

### Fire Weather and Fire Danger

Fire weather predictions are made based on fire weather information obtained from stations that coincide with National Weather Service forecast zones. Throughout all elevations on the Forest the NFDRS fuel model G, K and C best represent the area.

**Table 6. Weather Stations**

| Station Name | Fuel Model | Elev. | Aspect | Slope Class | Climate Class | ERC* |    | ID #   |
|--------------|------------|-------|--------|-------------|---------------|------|----|--------|
|              |            |       |        |             |               | 90   | 97 |        |
| Truchas      | G,K,C      |       | NW     | 3           | 3             |      | 82 | 290701 |
| Jemez        | G,K,C      |       | S      | 3           | 3             |      | 82 | 290702 |
| Jarita Mesa  | G,K,C      |       | Flat   | 3           | 3             |      | ** |        |

\*Based on station location and quality of historical weather data, Truchas is the representative station for determining forest-wide weather indices used for dispatch levels, activity levels, and other decision criteria (See Appendix V). \*\*ERC calculations are not available for Jarita Mesa due to insufficient data.

### National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS)

NFDRS Fire Danger indicators are used in determining dispatch levels, activity levels, fire restrictions, and as aids in decision-making for appropriate fire management response. Energy Release Components (ERC), live fuel moisture, and 1000-hour fuel moisture are used as a criteria for decisions based on weather trends because they are not subject to large daily fluctuations. Ignition Component (IC), Burning Index (BI), 10-hour fuel moisture, and windspeed are more

likely to fluctuate daily and, therefore, are more useful in decisions involving short-term weather factors. The charts in Appendix V illustrate how NFDRS indicators are used on the Forest. The criteria levels were determined through analysis of historical weather data from Penasco weather station (1970-1999) using the FireFamily Plus software program.

### **Policy and Manual Direction**

- Module Leader Supervisor – Engine, Hotshot, Helitack, and other regular crews used for fire suppression must be trained to standards and accompanied by properly qualified supervisors. On the regular supervisor’s day off, a qualified employee will serve as the alternate supervisor. If no qualified supervisor is present, the module is not available for fire dispatch.
- Module strength:
  - Engine module - Qualified supervisor, engine operator, trained crew. The recommended staffing for a Type III engine crew is four-person effective. A minimum of three persons, including a qualified engine boss/driver-operator is allowed for reasons such as limited funding, extended staffing, or drawdown.
  - Hotshot crew and Type I handcrew - Minimum of 18 and maximum of 20 persons, including the superintendent, foreman, and trained crew.
  - Helitack module - Qualified supervisor, assistant supervisor, trained crew. The helitack crew will be at a minimum three-person effective.
  - Helishot module - Qualified supervisor, assistant supervisor, trained crew.
  - Handcrew – Qualified Agency Rep., crewboss, trained crew, with a maximum of twenty people including a trainee.
  - Fire use module - Qualified supervisor, assistant supervisor, trained crew.
- Minimum draw down of fire suppression resources for the Forest will consist of:
  - 2 duty officers - minimum Division Supervisor qualified
  - 3 engines - Type III, minimum three-person effective
  - 1 handcrew - 20-person

### **Policy and Forest Service Manual and Handbook Direction**

#### **Wildland Fire Safety**

All strategic and tactical fire management decisions will give firefighter and public safety the highest priority. All fire suppression actions will be anchored to the time-tested Rules of Engagement, including the 10 Standard Fire Orders, 18 Watch Out Situations, the principles of LCES, Common Denominators of Fire Behavior on Tragedy Fires, and Downhill Line Construction Guidelines. The 10 Standard Fire Orders will not be compromised. **Don’t Bend Them, and Don’t Break Them!** On every fire, look up, look down, look around, and assess the fire environment against the 18 Watch Out Situations, and mitigate those situations as needed.

#### **Code of Conduct 2002, Thirtymile Hazard Abatement Plan**

- Firefighter safety comes first on every fire every time.
- The 10 Standard Firefighting Orders are firm: we don’t break them; we don’t bend them.

- All 18 Watch Out Situations must be mitigated before engagement or re-engagement of suppression activities.
- Every firefighter has the right to know that their assignments are safe.
- Every fireline supervisor, every fire manager, and every administrator has the responsibility to confirm that safe practices are known and observed (Executive Summary, Responsibilities).

All employees are responsible for protecting themselves and other fire fighters from injury or accidents. It is understood through the annual fire safety refreshers presented by Forest and District fire managers that individual fireline personnel have the responsibility and the right to question the actions of the IC to gain a better understanding of the tactics and safety mitigation measures incorporated into executing a particular suppression strategy.

The use of wireless phones is authorized and will actually reduce radio traffic during critical times. Cellular phones should only be used to communicate logistical requests, resource orders, and other non-tactical information.

Wireless phones will not be used to communicate tactical information, fire reports, or weather updates. These items must be transmitted over the radio to ensure everyone is informed in a timely manner and made aware of the situation(s).

All individuals will wear personal protective clothing and equipment as outlined in the Health and Safety Code Handbook, FSH 6709.11 and the Fireline Handbook, FSH 5109.32a, page 42).

### **Fire Shelters**

All fireline personnel will be issued fire shelters and will be expected to carry them, ready for immediate use, during wildland fire management activities—suppression, prescribed fire and fire use operations. On an annual basis prior to fire season, all fire shelters will be checked to ensure that unacceptable wear has not compromised the designed effectiveness of the shelter. After each fire assignment, individual firefighters are responsible for checking the condition of their fire shelter.

All fireline personnel will attend the annual Fire Safety Refresher training, which includes fire shelter training. Additionally, they are required to successfully complete S-130 and S-190

### **Forest Pocket Card, Incident Response Pocket Guide, Fireline Handbook, Standard for Fire and Aviation Operations 2002 “Red Book”**

Pocket Card. All firefighting supervisors are issued a “Pocket Card” and Incident Response Pocket Guide (NFES 1077/PMS 461). They are required to carry and use them on each incident. The Pocket Card lists the Fire Danger Area, Fire Danger Interpretation, Local Thresholds, describes the Fire Danger Component used, and Past Experiences. (See Appendix A-2)

The Incident Response Pocket Guide includes the following: operational procedures, all risk checklists, personnel safety, aviation, and other references.

Fireline Handbook. All first line supervisors will be issued a Fireline Handbook and are required to carry them into the field. The Fireline Handbook provides ready access to the 10 Standard Fire Orders, 18 Watch Out Situations, the principles of LCES, Common Denominators of Fire Behavior on Tragedy Fires, and Downhill Line Construction Guidelines. Fire suppression actions

shall comply with the Fire Orders and incorporate appropriate mitigation measures based upon the Watch Out Situations.

The Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations Handbook (referred as the “Redbook”) was developed to provide clear policy and guidance for fire suppression and aviation operations. Additionally, the Handbook provides a reference for current operational policies, procedures, and guidelines for managing wildland fire and aviation operations. All first line supervisors will be issued a “Red Book” and are required to carry them into the field.

### **Engines**

Each engine will maintain the minimum standard components for pump capacity, tank capacity, hose quantity, and number of personnel for the engine typing identified in the Fireline Handbook, 1998, PMS 410-1. Additionally, the engines will maintain the minimum stocking levels required in the Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations, 2002, (Appendix A-4), without exceeding the vehicle weight limitations.

### **Aviation Management**

The Forest uses fixed and rotor wing aircraft for a variety of tasks including: fire suppression, personnel transport, recon/detection, project work, search and rescue, prescribed burning, photographic work and administrative use. Refer to Appendix E for the Forest Aviation Management Plan that establishes policy and guidelines. Aircraft responding to and from a fire will flight follow with Dispatch on National Flight Following. Once on scene, the aircraft should establish contact with ground crews on Air To Ground Frequency, 168.625. For local initial attack fires, all aircraft will still flight-follow with Dispatch.

### **Initial Attack**

Suppression actions range from aggressive initial attack to a combination of strategies to achieve confinement. All suppression actions will be consistent with firefighter, public safety, and values to be protected. The intensity of suppression action will be based on local and predicted conditions at the time of the fire. The Duty Officer will determine the appropriate initial suppression action.

The range of the appropriate management responses used on the Carson National Forest will be based on Forest Plan, FMU objectives, relative risk, external influences, complexity, and defensibility of management boundaries. To estimate appropriate methods to implement desired/necessary strategies, use the Appropriate Management Response Chart on the next page. Lines must be drawn to connect the top and bottom variables and the left and right variable. The point at which the two lines intersect indicates the appropriate management response.

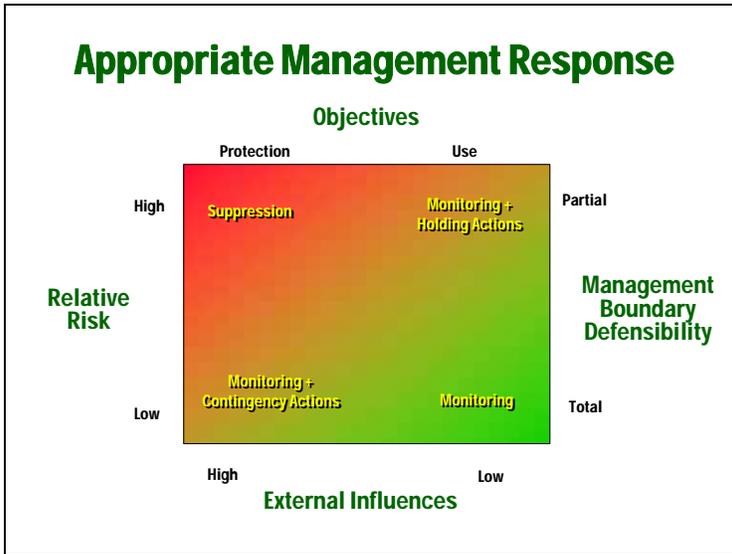


Figure 3. Appropriate Management Response Chart

**Information Used To Set Initial Attack Priorities**

New suppression incidents on the Forest will be given top priority for resources to stop the spread at initial attack. A Computer Aided Dispatch system determines the type and number of resources necessary based on the dispatch level and location of the fire. Once on scene, the Incident Commander will adjust the resources as necessary.

**Criteria For The Appropriate Initial Attack Response Consistent With LRMP Objectives**

The Forest is organized into initial attack response areas. Each area has been analyzed for the appropriate number and type of resources to be dispatched by the dispatch level rating. Refer to Appendix A-5 for the response area map for each level. Map will be updated annually.

There are three levels of dispatch ratings (low, moderate, high) based on daily fire danger indices. Typically, an increase in the numbers of resources is dispatched as dispatch levels change from low to high. The table below illustrates how the dispatch levels are calculated from Ignition Component (IC) and Energy Release Component (ERC).

**Table 7. Calculation of dispatch levels from ignition component (IC) and energy release component (ERC)**

|        |         | 1. IC  |         |         |                |      |
|--------|---------|--------|---------|---------|----------------|------|
|        |         | 0 – 30 | 31 – 45 | 46 – 50 | 51 – 60        | 61 + |
| 2. ERC | 0 – 37  | Low    | Low     | Mod     | Mod            | High |
|        | 38 – 74 | Mod    | Mod     | High    | <b>4. High</b> | High |
|        | 70 +    | High   | High    | High    | High           | High |
|        |         |        |         |         |                |      |

### **Confinement As An Initial Attack Suppression Strategy**

Confinement may be used as a strategy during initial attack actions resulting from the initial fire assessment in Stage I of the WFIP as long as it is not used to meet resource objectives.

Confinement can also be a strategic selection through the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) process when a fire has exceeded or is expected to exceed extended attack capability or planned management capability. Prepare a WFIP or WFSA as the fire or management considerations dictate. Refer to (Appendix T) for the complete Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy Implementation and Procedures Reference Guide.

Initial attack will be each district's responsibility; proper documentation and protocol will be followed. All calls will be documented on the Initial Attack (IA) form and forward to the appropriate district or agency for action. Each district will be responsible for entering its respective fire report into FIRESTAT database by the designated due date.

First responder will become the IA incident commander until such time as higher qualified personnel arrive and take over depending on complexity. This philosophy will continue through extended attack. The most qualified individual will become the incident commander unless otherwise indicated. Notification of all transitions will be broadcast over the radio and check-in required, to make sure all personnel have been advised of transition. A complexity analysis will be performed on every incident and documented on the forest IA booklet. The IA booklet will be used as the first form of documentation for the transition to extended attack. Extended attack will expand as appropriate and position filled as needed. In the event extended attack needs to transition to a team configuration, a WFSA and the team transition checklist and delegation of authority will be complete and ready to hand over to the team.

In the event of a prescribe fire escape, the burn boss will transition to incident commander and all initial attack responsibilities apply.

Depleted resources: In the event the forest has depleted all of its initial attack resources, the forest will commence to using first, any forest resources that are qualified but in other functional areas, and any cooperating resources that are available, then contract and AD resources. Any resource used will still be subject to the NWCG qualification system and the fire business management principles guidelines.

These resources will in effect take the place of the depleted resources and continue to accomplish the work originally designated.

### **Restrictions and Special Concerns**

The table below shows the limitation on equipment use, aircraft use, chemical fire retardant, tracked equipment and other mechanized equipment for wilderness and special management areas on the Carson National Forest.

### **Response Times**

Individuals and modules with initial attack responsibilities shall be able to respond within ten minutes of dispatch during normal duty hours.

**Table 8. Response times**

| <b>Management Areas</b>                     | <b>Fire Management Tactics Needing Approval</b> | <b>Approving Official</b> |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| <b>Wilderness</b>                           |   |                           |
| Recommended Wilderness                      | H, L  | Forest Supervisor         |
| Wilderness                                  | C, E, F, J, K                                   | Forest Supervisor         |
| <b>Wild and Scenic River</b>                |   |                           |
| Scenic River                                | J, L  | Forest Supervisor         |
| Wild River                                  | H, J, L   |                           |
| <b>Special Interest Areas</b>               |   |                           |
| <b>Research Natural Area</b>                | J, L  | Forest Supervisor         |
|   | J, L  | Forest Supervisor         |
| <b>A</b> - Aerial applied retardant colored | <b>G</b> - Snag felling                         |                           |
| <b>B</b> - Aerial applied retardant clear   | <b>H</b> - Use of motorized vehicles            |                           |
| <b>C</b> - Helicopter use                   | <b>I</b> - Hand constructed fireline            |                           |
| <b>D</b> - Smokejumpers or cargo            | <b>J</b> - Helispot construction                |                           |
| <b>E</b> - Use of portable pumps            | <b>K</b> - Back firing                          |                           |
| <b>F</b> - Use of chainsaws                 | <b>L</b> - Dozer constructed fireline or trails |                           |

### **Social and Political Concerns**

Issues and concerns will be addressed by fire managers, line officers, and affected parties.

### **Extended Attack and Large Fire Suppression**

Extended attack occurs on wildland fires that cannot be controlled during the first suppression response action as determined by the Duty Officer or where appropriate suppression management response has not been successful. This may also be applied to prescribed fires where the prescription or actions were unsuccessful.

#### **Determine Extended Attack Needs**

If the fire cannot be controlled with the initial suppression response, the incident should be considered in an extended attack mode. When complexities and span of control exceeds the capabilities of the extended attack, a WFSA will be developed.

#### **Implementation Plan Requirements – WFSA Development**

The WFSA documents the decision making process for determining the appropriate suppression action and estimated cost of an incident, which is expected to, or has exceeded, the planned management action (FSM 5131.1). The WFSA will also aid in the development of strategies and suppression tactics, considering economics, resource loss, complexity, and probability of success.

#### **Complexity Decision Process From Initial Attack To Extended Attack**

When the decision has been made to order a Type I or Type II Incident Management Team to take over management of a wildland fire, the responsible Line Officer or that official with jurisdictional and/or protection authority for the area on which the incident occurs shall ensure

that the designated Incident Commander is briefed regarding wildfire suppression objectives, considerations, and constraints. Refer to Appendix A-7 for an outline.

### **Unit Example Of “Delegation Of Authority” For Incident Commander**

A delegation of authority letter (FSM 1230) outlining authority and responsibility shall be issued by the appropriate line officer to the assigned Incident Commander or Fire Use Manager. Refer to Appendix A-8 for the Delegation of Authority forms.

### **Exceeding the Existing WFIP**

When wildland fires cannot be controlled during the initial suppression action or when the appropriate management response in a fire use area has not been successful, the WFIP is considered to have been exceeded. The WFSA is initiated at this stage. Initiation of the WFSA is also necessary when implementation of a prescribed burn plan is not successful and must be suppressed. Appendices H and I contain information that can be used in WFSA preparation on the Forest.

### **M.I.S.T. Requirements**

Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (M.I.S.T.) will be used for managing fires in all wilderness areas and where possible in all other areas. Refer to Appendix A-9 for the M.I.S.T. guidelines.

## **Wildland Fire Use**

Wildland fire use refers to the management of naturally-ignited wildland fires to accomplish resource management objectives.

### **Objectives**

The objectives are to use fire from natural ignitions in a safe, carefully planned, and cost effective manner to benefit, protect, maintain, and enhance National Forest System resources, to reduce future suppression costs, and, to the extent possible, to restore natural ecological processes and achieve management objectives adopted in approved Forest land and resource management plans (FSM 1920, 5140.2).

### **Factors Affecting Decision Criteria for Wildland Fire Use**

The ability to adequately predict long-range fire behavior is a critical decision factor in assessing fire risk and complexity. Computer programs and tools such as RERAP, BEHAVE, Fire Family Plus, and Farsite can be used to help assess long-range fire behavior. Graphs and charts as outlined in chapter 4 of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Policy Implementation Procedures Reference Guide (Appendix T), the Carson National Forest Wildland Fire Relative Risk Rating (below), Historical ERC Trends, and Historical Fire Season Duration (Appendix A-2) will also aid in assessing fire risk and complexity.

## Wildland Fire Relative Risk Rating

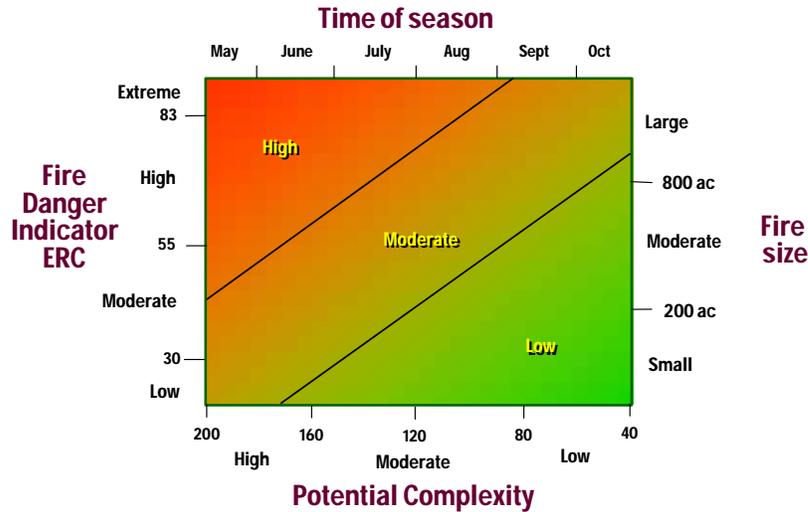


Figure 4. Wildland fire relative risk rating chart

### Pre-Planned Implementation Procedures

Human-caused fires in any FMU will not be managed for resource benefit. Wildfires occurring in appropriate FMU will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine appropriate management response and implementation procedures. Refer to Appendix A-5 for the response area map for each level.

### Impacts of Plan Implementation

Impacts to air quality, wildlife, botany, heritage resources, Forest visitors, and possible economical impacts to resort and campgrounds may occur. The WFIP for each individual fire will address these impacts and necessary mitigation measures.

### Required Personnel

Refer to Appendix M for qualified personnel.

### Public Information

Public information and education will be an important part of the management of wildland fire use incidents. The WFIP for each individual fire will address the potential impacts to the public and communities and provide an information plan.

**Records**

A documentation package will be maintained by the FUMA or assigned individual for each wildland fire use incident. The contents of the package will vary with size and complexity of the incident but will include the WFIP and a map as a minimum.

**Cost Tracking**

A Management code will be assigned by the TAZ for each wildland fire use incident to track costs.

**Prescribed Fire**

**Annual Activities To Prepare For And Implement The Program**

The annual activities are listed below:

- Inventory and identify fuel treatment units
- Participate in interdisciplinary teams (IDT)
- Complete required NEPA documentation
- Prepare project plans and layout
- Prioritize proposed projects based on current year budget allocation
- Prepare and approve burn plans
- Obtain burn permits
- Implement projects
- Award contracts
- Complete monitoring requirements
- Report accomplishments

**Description of the Long-Term Prescribed Fire Program As It Relates To Each FMU**

**Table 9 - Long-Term Prescribed Fire Program**

| FMU    | Long-term Prescribed Fire Program   |
|--------|---|
| TB, WL | Prescribed fire is used on a relatively larger scale to lower or maintain fuel profiles to reduce the damaging effects of fire. The priorities for prescribed fire treatments in this FMU are maintenance of previously treated areas, high hazard areas in condition class 2, and as a follow-up entry to mechanical |

|            |   |
|------------|---|
|            | treatment in condition class 3 areas.   |
| TB, WL,WD  | Prescribed fire is used with wildland fire use primarily to maintain condition class 1 areas and to reduce fuel profiles in areas of condition class 2 or 3.                              |
| WL, TB, WD | Prescribe fire is applied to reduce condition class 2 or 3 and to minimize effects of crown-fire.   |
| TB,WL,     | Combination of mechanical treatment and prescribe fire (pile burning) is used to reduce the fuel loading, canopy height, density and basal area of the WUI profile throughout the forest. |

### Numbers of Qualified Personnel

Training and qualifications procedures are outlined in the NWCG 310-1, FSM 5140, and FSM 5109.17. The Forest training officer maintains the qualification and training database. Burn projects will only occur when there are sufficient and qualified personnel on scene as specified in the burn plan. The list of persons qualified for prescribed fire is in Appendix M.

### Weather, Fire Behavior, and Fire Effects Monitoring

A fire prescription is outlined in the burn plan. The prescription includes parameters for fire behavior and environmental variables. Weather observations are monitored at the project area by manual weather collection of temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and direction, and cloud cover, or by remote automated weather station (RAWS). The RAWS collects the dry bulb, wet bulb, relative humidity, calculated 10-hr. fuel moisture, wind speed and direction, minimum and maximum temperature and humidity (past 24 hours), and rainfall. A post-burn summary and checklist form located in the burn plan is completed to determine if the resource goals and air quality objectives were met. A risk assessment is included in the burn plan to address and mitigate potential hazards. The measurable objectives identified in the FMU are verified and monitored through the burn plan as described above.

The prescribed fire manager and/or burn boss will maintain a burn project folder that will contain the following documentation:

- Approved burn plan, smoke plan, and job hazard analysis
- Go-no-go checklist
- Post burn monitoring and accomplishment forms
- Burn organization chart
- Maps

- Weather files containing: spot request forms, daily spot weather forecasts, RAWS weather data, on site observation forms, smoke monitoring and dispersion observations

### **Reporting and Documentation for Accomplishments**

Prescribed fire accomplished acres are reported to the Taos Zone Coordination Center (TAZ) daily and recorded in a tracking database. All fuel treatment acres accomplished by fund type are summarized in the Management Attainment Report (MAR) each fiscal year. Daily summaries of burned acres (prescribed fire and wildland fire use) are also reported to the state New Mexico Air Quality Bureau (NMED) office each calendar year. Report fuel treatment accomplishments in accordance with MAR procedures (FSH 6509.11k).

### **Historic Fuel Treatment Map**

### **Prescribed Fire Burn Plan**

Burn plans will be completed using the standard R-3 format consistent with the direction found in FSM 5140 and Chapter 4 of the Implementation Guide. Refer to Appendix H for the standard R-3 format.

### **Exceeding Existing Prescribed Fire Plan**

Prescribed burns exceeding the parameters of the plan will be suspended or suppressed. Reporting of the escaped fire will be consistent with the direction provided in FSM 5140. Fire suppression actions will be the same as described in the Fire Suppression section of this FMP (Section IV.C). A WFSA will be initiated as described in Section IV C.4.a & b of this document. Refer to the Contingency Plan section of the Prescribed Burn Plan if further information is needed to complete the WFSA.

### **Air Quality and Smoke Management**

#### **Pertinent Air Quality Issues**

The primary air quality issues relate to local air district coordination and mitigation of negative air quality effects from various smoke sources. Sources of smoke on the forest include agricultural burning in the valley to the west of the Forest, burning of forest debris by various agencies and the public, woodstoves, campfires, and wildland fire. Smoke from some of these activities can also travel to neighboring forests and states under certain atmospheric conditions. Recent efforts have focused on information sharing between burners and air regulators and also between Forest and Zones to prioritize burns in the event of any airshed restriction, consistency between air districts, and stronger coordination with the NMED, Air Quality Bureau.

#### **Program of Action that Complies with Clean Air Act**

The goals of air resource management on the Forest is to minimize air pollutants caused by Forest management activities and cooperate with NMED, Air Quality Division – Smoke Monitoring Department in monitoring and regulating off-forest air pollution sources. Emphasis will be placed on air quality-related values in Class I airsheds and communities. The objective is to maintain or improve air quality to meet requirements under the Clean Air Act. Mitigating the effects of fire

and fuels management on air quality includes “remediating impairment of visibility in mandatory Class I federal areas which impairment results from manmade air pollution” (Clean Air Act Visibility Protection, Subpart II, 42 U.S.C. & 7491 et seq.).

### **Location of Class I Airsheds**

Class I airsheds exist in the Wheeler Peak Wilderness and the Pecos Wilderness.

### **Description of pre-identified smoke sensitive areas**

The communities and recreation areas within and adjacent to the Carson National Forest are the pre-identified smoke sensitive areas and are addressed in each burn plan.

### **Local and Regional Restrictions and Procedures**

An example of a Smoke Management Plan, template, and air quality monitoring restrictions and procedures is located in (Appendix P).

## **Non-Fire Fuel Applications**

### **Non-fire Applications**

The Forest applies a strategic approach for locating both prescribed fire and non-fire fuel treatments across broad landscapes. Urban-wildland interface zones have the highest priority for hazard fuel reduction treatments. Old Forest emphasis areas characterized by high fire hazard and risk have the next highest priority for fuel treatments, followed by General Forest with high hazard and risk. Fuel treatments within sensitive habitats are approached more cautiously, and the intensity is limited within Old Forest emphasis areas, PACs, spotted owl home range core areas (ESA), and stands characterized by large trees and moderate to dense canopy cover.

### **Mechanical Treatment and Other Applications**

The Forest utilizes a variety of equipment for non-fire applications. Some of the methods used are: biomass, thinning, lop and scatter, shredding, mastication, and chipping. These treatments are especially useful in areas where prescribed fire is not feasible or in smoke-sensitive areas.

### **Describe Annual Activities to Prepare for and Implement the Program**

The annual activities are listed below:

- Inventory and identify fuel treatment units
- Participate in interdisciplinary teams (IDT)
- Complete required NEPA documentation
- Prepare project plans and layout
- Prioritize proposed projects based on current year budget allocation
- Implement projects
- Award contracts
- Complete monitoring requirements

## Section 4. Wildland Fire Management Program Components

- Report accomplishments

### **Documentation Requirements for Monitoring**

The fuel project manager will monitor the measurable objectives identified in the FMU's and will maintain a project folder that will contain the following documentation:

- Approved NEPA documentation
- Maps
- Cost accounting
- Completed accomplishment form

### **Describe Reporting and Documentation for Accomplishments**

Non-fire accomplishments are reported to the S.O. fuels staff monthly and recorded in a tracking database. All fuel treatment acres accomplished by fund type are summarized in the Management Attainment Report (MAR) each fiscal year (FSH 6509.11k).

### **Annual 2004 Planned Project List**

Refer to Appendix Z for the planned program of work.

# Section 5. Organizational and Budgetary Parameters

## Current Fiscal Year Budget and The Ability To Support Planned and Unplanned Actions

The Forest uses the National Fire Management Analysis System (NFMAS) for out-year budgetary planning. NFMAS is a formal process that provides a consistent and objective method for estimating both the effectiveness and the economic efficiency of alternative fire management programs. NFMAS analysis requires compiling and summarizing historical weather and fire data to determine the most efficient level (MEL) of fire management organization. Initial training and planning for the new Program Fire Analysis will take place FY 2004. Refer to Appendix D for the FS-5100-2 that documents the planned expenditure of the current year budget allocation.

The Carson National Forest has protection responsibilities on 1.5 million acres of national forest land and shares initial attack responsibilities on 11 million acres within the Taos Zone area. This encompasses four counties and 5 jurisdictional agencies. This area produces a moderate to high workload but in the past 5 years we have experienced an extremely high workload based on weather pattern changes, drought and bug kill conditions and continuing demographic changes resulting in a vast Wildland Urban Interface. The organizational units must have qualified and experienced personnel to meet this need and devise a training program, which ties in with program needs in suppression and prescribed fire. The NFMAS dictates our most efficient operating level and what resources each unit will be comprised of, the duration of our fire season, and how our budget is broken up. Each unit is responsible for tracking cost and reporting to the supervisor's office (fire management) updates on spending and possible short falls.

Each unit receives project work plans composed of every project on the forest, who is funded and what costs are associated with each project by October of each fiscal year.

The Fire Management Organization of the Carson National Forest is funded at 79 percent FFPC.

Currently, funded are 38 of the 43 positions either fully funded or partially funded from suppression funds (additional positions will be filled as approved ).

## Organization Chart Supported by the Current Fiscal Year Budget

The current fire organization consists of:

**Table 10 - Fire Organization**

| District                      | No. |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Camino Real RD</b>         |     |
| FMO                           | 1   |
| AFMO                          | 1   |
| E-4, Type 6x, total 4 persons | 1   |
| Fuels Technician (Non-NFMAS)  | 1   |
| Prevention Patrol 434         | 1   |
| <b>Canjilon RD</b>            |     |

Section 5. Organizational and Budgetary Parameters

| <b>District</b>               | <b>No.</b> |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| FMO                           | 1          |
| AFMO                          | 1          |
| Prevention Patrol 134         | 1          |
| E-1, Type 6x, total 4 persons | 1          |
| <b>El Rito RD</b>             |            |
| FMO                           | 1          |
| AFMO                          | 1          |
| E-2 Type 6x, total 4 persons  | 1          |
| Prevention Patrol 234         | 1          |
| Fuels Technician (Non-NFMAS)  | 1          |
| <b>Jicarilla RD</b>           |            |
| FMO                           | 1          |
| AFMO                          | 1          |
| E-3 Type 6x, 4 persons        | 1          |
| Fuels Technician (Non-NFMAS)  | 1          |
| Prevention Patrol 334         | 1          |
| <b>Tres Piedras</b>           |            |
| FMO                           | 0          |
| AFMO                          | 1          |
| Fuels Technician (Non-NFMAS)  | 1          |
| Prevention Patrol 634         |            |
| E-6, Type 6x, total 4 persons |            |
| E-6, Type 6x, total 4 persons | 1          |
| <b>Questa RD</b>              |            |
| AFMO                          | 1          |
| E-7 Type 6x, 5 persons        | 1          |
| Prevention Patrol 734         | 1          |

All resources must be managed to provide maximum fire protection availability through standard tours of duty (5 8-hour days) with staggered days off. Emphasis should be placed on increased staffing on weekends from May 5 to Sept. 31, with seven-day coverage for all resources.

### **Cooperative Agreements and Interagency Contacts**

The ability to execute the daily emergency management of incidents in a timely and cost efficient manner on the Carson is a direct result on how well we work with our cooperators. The location of the Carson National Forest results in an aggressive program of fire protection and public safety. The Cooperative Fire Protection Operating Plans and contact list binder is located in the Forest Fire Management office.

The scope of the cooperative effort on this Forest is as follows:

- New Mexico Department of Forestry and Fire Protection- Cimarron
- New Mexico Department of Forestry and Fire Protection- Chama
- JPA - EMNRD/USDA/DOI
- Bureau of Land Management
- Santa Fe National Forest
- San Juan/Rio Grand National Forest
- Volunteer Fire Departments
- Local Fire Districts
- National Weather Service
- Local area Law Enforcement agencies
- New Mexico Environmental Department - Air Quality
- Rio Arriba Fire Protection
- Initial Attack Operating Plan
- WRP – Mobilization of Wildland Fire protection Resources
- JPA – Village of Red River /NMSF
- BIA
- Eight Northern Pueblos

### **Equipment Rental Agreements**

The updated list of emergency rental agreements, contracted equipment, and BPA list is located in the Taos Zone Coordination Center office.

### **Contract Suppression and Prescribed Fire Resources**

The updated list of emergency rental agreements, contracted equipment, and BPA list is located in the Taos Zone Coordination Center office.



# Section 6. Monitoring and Evaluation

## Annual Monitoring Requirements

Monitoring and evaluation play a central role in adaptive management and are conducted for three primary purposes:

- Ensure appropriate implementation of standards and guidelines (implementation monitoring)
- To track resource conditions and mark trends toward or away from desired conditions (status and change monitoring)
- To deal with uncertainties regarding the effectiveness and effects of land management activities (cause and effect monitoring)

Information gained through monitoring and evaluation will be used to adjust management direction in the future, where warranted, and inform future LRMP amendments and revisions.

## Reporting Requirements

Annual reporting requirements include:

- Management Attainment Report (MAR)
- Brush Disposal (BD) fund balance
- Individual fire reports (5100-29)
- Annual fire report
- Agricultural burning summary reports to each Air Pollution Control District
- National Fire Plan
- National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS)
- Training accomplishments
- Accident reports
- Aircraft summaries
- Current year budget summary (5100-2)



# **Appendix**

**A. Current Funding Form Fs-5100, Integrated Fire Management Organization And Financial Plan**

**B. Most Efficient Level (Mel) Form Fs-5100, Integrated Fire Management Organization and Financial Plan**

**C. Specific Staffing and Action Guide**

**D. Job Aides: Source List for Where They Can Be Found**

**E. Implementation Plan Formats (Burn Plan, Incident Action Plan, and Sale Area)**

**F. Cooperative Agreements**

**G. Fuels Allocation Process To Determine Priority Projects Identified In The Implementation Of The Fuel Management Element Within The Most Efficient Fire Program**

**H. Wildland Fire Situation Analysis Format**

**I. Form FS-5100-29, National Fire Management Event Report**

**J. List Of Qualified Personnel For Prescribed Fire And Wildland Fire As Described In (NWCG Qualification Standards) And FSH 5109.19, Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications Handbook**

**K. Rental Equipment Agreements**

**L. Contracts for Suppression and Prescribed Fire Resources**

**M. Contract Operator Fire Plans**

**N. Any Other Fire Management Related Plans That The Unit Develops Annually**

**O. Relevant National and Regional Memoranda and Direction**



