

B-D Preparedness Plan

Preparedness Planning Process –Forest Policies and Guidelines

APPENDIX B

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest is a geographically large and diverse administrative unit. Because of the sheer size of the Forest, it is possible to experience widely varying fire danger levels from one end of the forest to the other at any given time. In an attempt to “localize” the appropriate management response, and at the same time maintain an adequate level of fire readiness on the Forest as a whole, preparedness planning is based on the combination of three key components: 1) Forest Preparedness Level, 2) Drawn-Down Levels 3) Specific Staffing and Actions.

a) Forest Preparedness Levels – Description and Step up plan

Forest Preparedness Levels are based on the combination of local burning conditions from across the Forest, fire activity, and resource availability. While the preparedness Level is usually determined by local conditions, this level may be increased to assure that sufficient resources are available to respond to the Central Montana Zone, Northern Rockies Geographic Area, or National situation.

Purpose:

- To identify the overall level of wildland and prescribed fire activity, severity, and resource commitment on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.
- To identify actions to be taken by the Forest to assure an appropriate level of preparedness/readiness for the existing and potential situation.
- To guide and direct the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest fire management activities when essential to assure Forest, Northern Rockies Geographic Area, or National situation.

Determining Forest Preparedness Levels - Using the following criteria, the Forest Fire Staff Officer, Forest FMO, or Forest Assistant FMO with assistance from the Dispatch Center Manager and Forest Fire Duty Officer, will determine appropriate changes in the Forest Preparedness Level. Changes in Forest Preparedness Level will be communicated to the Forest Fire Duty Officer and District/Zone Fire Duty Officers. The Forest Fire Duty Officer will ensure that Forest Line Officers are advised of changes.

Preparedness Level 1

Description:

- No large fires in progress on the Forest.
- Most Districts at NFDRS Staffing Class 2 or lower.
- Little or no commitment of District resources.
- Potential for escape fires is low.

Step Up Plan: Low 0% - 34%

- Fill resource orders and go below Minimum Draw-Down Levels to support other geographic area resource requests.
- Single unplanned ignition: Respond appropriately using initial response Run Cards.

Preparedness Level 2

Description:

- No large fires in progress on the Forest.
- One District at NFDRS Staffing Class 3.

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- Wildland fire activity is occurring and a low to moderate potential exists for escapes to large (project) fires.
- Minimal mobilization of resources is occurring throughout the Northern Rockies Geographic Area.

Step Up Plan: Moderate 35% - 60%

- Fill resource orders and go below Minimum Draw-Down Levels to support other geographic area resource requests.
- Single unplanned ignition: Respond appropriately using initial response Run Card.
- Consider: Transition from 5 to 7 day coverage. Need to resume maintenance of Minimum Draw-Down level.

Preparedness Level 3

Description:

- No large fires in progress on the Forest.
- Two Districts are at NFDRS Staffing Class 4, with no significant break in the weather predicted within 48 hours.
- Two or more Districts are experiencing wildland or prescribed fire activities requiring a significant commitment of the Forest's resources.
- Initial attack is generally successful, but the Forest is experiencing increasing numbers of B and/or C class fires.
- Resources are being ordered and mobilized throughout the Northern Rockies Geographic Area.
- Two or more Incident Management Teams are committed in the Northern Rockies Geographic Area.

Step Up Plan: High 61% - 89%

- Transition from 5 to 7 day coverage.
- Maintain Minimum Draw down Levels.
- Single unplanned ignition: Respond appropriately using initial response Run Cards.
- Anticipate multiple ignitions: Forest and District/Zone Fire Duty Officers and Dillon Interagency Dispatch will consult to set priorities. Shift Forest resources or order appropriate resources to meet the next day forecast staffing levels and operational needs.
- Extended attack: Implement a priority setting process, including scheduled conference calls or appropriate consultation between Fire Duty Officers and Dillon Interagency Dispatch Center. Complete fire complexity analyses, as needed, to assure appropriate levels of ICS qualifications and span-of-control are met.
- Anticipate transition to Preparedness Level 4 and sustained higher Staffing Levels. Ensure that the Forest can meet higher Staffing Levels and Minimum Draw-Down Levels by shifting Forest resources, adjusting schedules, and/or ordering additional resources as appropriate. Consider the need to initiate severity-funding request.
- Fire restrictions: If needed initiate fire restriction discussion within Central and/or Southwest Zones.
- Evaluate trends and consider severity resources to support on-going incidents, and resources needed to meet anticipated staffing levels and minimum draw-down levels.

Preparedness Level 4

Description:

- Large fire(s) in progress on the Forest.

- Three or more Districts indicating NFDRS Staffing Class 4 or higher.
- Multiple ignitions are occurring, and increasing numbers of fires progress to extended attack.
- One or more District with a Type III incident for 24 to 48 hours.
- Resources shortages are being experienced within the Northern Rockies Geographic Area. Orders are being returned as “unable to fill”.
- More than two Incident Management Teams are committed in the Northern Rockies Geographic Area.

Step Up Plan: Very High 90% - 96%

- Anticipate multiple ignitions: Forest and District/Zone Fire Duty Officers and Dillon Interagency Dispatch will consult to set priorities. Shift Forest resources or order appropriate resources to meet the next day forecast staffing levels and operational needs. One or more District/Zones may need to go to district dispatch to support Dillon Interagency Dispatch.
- Extended attack: Implement priority setting process, including scheduled conference calls or appropriate consultation between Fire Duty Officers and Dillon Interagency Dispatch Center. Complete fire complexity analyses, as needed, to assure appropriate levels of ICS qualifications and span-of-control are met. Order additional resources to support on-going incidents, and those resources needed to meet anticipated staffing levels and Minimum Draw-Down Levels.
- Anticipate large fire(s): Prepare for the need to set up Expanded Dispatch and support organization.
- Anticipate transition to Forest Preparedness Level 5 and sustained higher Staffing Levels. Ensure that the Forest can meet anticipated Staffing Levels and Minimum Draw-Down Levels by shifting Forest resources, adjusting schedules, and/or ordering additional resources as appropriate. Initiate severity-funding request if needed.
- Anticipate: Assess the need for additional fire leadership support. Consider activation of Central Montana Zone MAC group to coordinate Zone resource movement and priorities. Initiate fire restrictions if needed.
- Evaluate trends and order severity resources to support on-going incidents, and resources needed to meet anticipated staffing levels and minimum draw-down levels.

Preparedness Level 5

Description:

- Large fire(s) in progress on the Forest.
- Two Districts are at NFDRS Staffing Class 5, with no significant break in the weather predicted within 48 hours.
- Significant competition for resources is occurring.
- Multiple fires in the Northern Rockies Geographic Area are requiring Type I Incident Management Teams.

Step Up Plan: Extreme 97% +

- Consider ordering additional Fire Leadership assistance to back up Forest fire organization.

- Central Montana Zone MAC Group is active, and assisting with resource/incident priorities.
- Consider pre-positioning resources in high-risk areas.
- Consider the need for fire closure.
- Evaluate trends and order severity resources to support on-going incidents, and resources needed to meet anticipated staffing levels and minimum draw-down levels.

b) **Forest Staffing Levels** - The District/zone Staffing Level, defines the recommended daily staffing at the local, District/Zone fire organization, level based on local fire danger ratings. This is the required daily resource staffing, unless an alternative arrangement is coordinated with the Forest Duty Officer.

Purpose:

- To ensure an appropriate level of local resource availability for expected and potential wildland fire activity.
- Guides and directs resource priority setting across the Forest.
- assists in defining appropriate draw down levels during the fire season.

Determining Forest Staffing Levels-During fire season (June 15-October 15), Staffing Levels will be determined for each District/Zone. A representative weather station and fuel model (see Table 4-1) has been identified for each District/Zone. Using the forecasted NFDRS Staffing Class Index, Dispatch and the Forest Fire Duty Officer will identify the appropriate District/Zone staffing levels for the next day by 1700 hours. The identified Staffing Levels and Forest Preparedness Level will then be distributed to the District/Zone Fire Duty Officers and broadcast over the Forest radio net prior to Districts going out of service. Deviation below a unit's recommended Staffing Level should be coordinated with the Forest Fire Duty Officer. The Forest Fire Leadership staffing level will equal that of the highest District/Zone Staffing Level.

Early and Late Season (before June 15 or after October 15)- The same process will be used to identify Staffing Levels as during the established fire season (June 15-October15). However, outside this time period, the Staffing Level will function as a guide and not represent required staffing. Actual staffing will be dependent on the numbers of funded resources available. District and Forest Fire Duty Officers will coordinate to assure adequate resources availability for District/Zone and Forest conditions. If adequate resources are not available, a Severity Funding Request may be initiated to supplement available resources.

A. Preparedness Level

The preparedness level is a five-tier (1-5) fire danger rating system that will be based on Energy Release Component and indicators of fire business. The fire business indicators used to calculate the preparedness level are large/multiple fire activity, Red Flag Warnings or Fire Weather Watches, Haines Index, and a measure of Ignition Risk. A flow chart guides personnel through the process. Several procedures and guidelines are to be followed once the preparedness level has been determined. The break points for the planning level are set using an historical analysis (Fire Family Plus) of fire business and its relationship to 1300 RAWs observations entered into the NIFMID database and processed by WIMS, which calculates the staffing index values (BI, ERC, etc).

Worksheet Instructions:

- 1. Staffing Index Value:** Place a checkmark indicating the forecasted staffing index/component range in row one. These indices (forecasted by the Missoula Weather Office) are based on the 1300 RAWs observations which are input to the WIMS processor by DDC personnel.
- 2. Fire Activity:** fire activity can be defined as any fire that requires the commitment of one or more Federal suppression resource within the Fire Danger Rating Area. Place a checkmark in the appropriate box in row two.
- 3. Red Flag Warning or Fire Weather Watch:** Place a checkmark in row three based on the presence of these advisories issued by the National Weather Service.
- 4. Haines Index:** Place a checkmark in row four indicating the forecasted Haines Index Range.
- 5. Ignition Risk:** Place a checkmark in row five to indicate the relative risk of human and/or naturally caused ignitions. Human-caused risk is based upon activities such as holidays or special events occurring within the FDRA. During holiday weekends (July 4th, Labor Day and hunting season) or special events, the ignition risk is “High;” otherwise, it is “Low.” Lightning Activity Level (LAL) would be the basis for relative risk for natural ignitions; a forecasted LAL of 1 is “Low” ignition risk; 2 through 6 is “High”.

**Preparedness Level Worksheet
Dillon Interagency Fire Center**

| | | Low | | Moderate | | High | | Very High | | Extreme | |
|-------------------------------------------|-----|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| ERC (Zone 110) Fuel Model G | | 0 - 20 | | 21- 30 | | 31 - 49 | | 50 - 55 | | 56 Plus | |
| ERC (Zone 111) Fuel Model G | | 0 - 30 | | 31 - 40 | | 41 - 56 | | 57 -66 | | 67 Plus | |
| 1 | ✓ ⇒ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fire Activity | | No ↓ | Yes ↓ | No ↓ | Yes ↓ | No ↓ | Yes ↓ | No ↓ | Yes ↓ | No ↓ | Yes ↓ |
| 2 | ✓ ⇒ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Red Flag Warning Fire Wx Watch | | No ↓ | Yes ↓ | No ↓ | Yes ↓ | No ↓ | Yes ↓ | No ↓ | Yes ↓ | No ↓ | Yes ↓ |
| 3 | ✓ ⇒ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Haines Index | | 2-6 ↓ | 2-4 ↓ | 5-6 ↓ | 2-4 ↓ | 5-6 ↓ | 2-4 ↓ | 5-6 ↓ | 2-4 ↓ | 5-6 ↓ | 2-4 ↓ |
| 4 | ✓ ⇒ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ignition Risk | | Low ↓ | High ↓ | Low ↓ | High ↓ | Low ↓ | High ↓ | Low ↓ | High ↓ | Low ↓ | High ↓ |
| 5 | ✓ ⇒ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Preparedness Level | | I | | II | | III | | IV | | V | |

see Appendix B for Preparedness Planning Process, pages 6-9.

c) Draw down Guidelines

Beaverhead-Deerlodge Line Officers, Forest, Zone, and District Fire Management Officers/Duty Officers, Forest Aviation Officer and Dillon Dispatch Center will consider utilizing the following suggested guidelines to determine appropriate staffing levels on the B-D during periods of high fire danger and activity.

Minimum Forest Draw-Down Levels

| Forest Resources | Local Preparedness Level III | Local Preparedness Level IV | Local Preparedness Level V |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Forest Supervisor | Forest Sup. or Acting on 8 hr. call | Forest Sup. or Acting on 2 hr. call | Forest Sup. or Acting on 2 hr. call |
| Forest Leadership | FFMO or AFFMO or Acting Forest 2 hour call | FFMO or AFFMO or Acting Forest 2 hour call | FFMO and AFFMO or Acting on Forest |
| District or Zone Leadership | FMO or AFMO or Acting | FMO or AFMO or Acting | FMO or AFMO or Acting |
| Forest Aviation Officer | FFMO or Aviation Mgr. | FFMO or consider ordering Stand alone FAO | Order stand alone FAO |
| DDC | Center Manager and Min. one Assistant | Center Manager and Assts. At DDC | Center Manager and Assts. At DDC |
| Specialist Support to DDC | As Needed | Information Officer | FBAN, SOF2, Resource Unit Leader, Information Officer |
| District Rangers | DR, or acting on 2 hr call in zone or district | DR, or acting on 1 hr call in zone or district | DR, or acting at District |
| Duty Officers | Assigned Duty Officer available by phone/pager/radio 24 hours per day | Assigned Duty Officer available by phone/pager/radio 24 hours per day | Consider 2 Duty Officers providing 24 hour coverage night/Day shifts. |
| ICT3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| IA Crews | 4 IA modules, 4 engines | 5 IA modules, 5 Engines | 7 IA modules, 7 Engines(1) |
| Prevention | 2 | 3 | 3 |

Duty Officer Experience and Qualifications- The qualifications listed below are outlines to consider when identifying Duty Officers, but should not be used as the sole criteria. Duty Officers must have the experience and training to recognize hazardous fire situations. Duty Officers must also be able to manage personnel to avoid hazardous situations. Duty Officers must recognize the need to be available during the designated time frames and inform Dillon Dispatch on how to contact that individual.

Forest Fire Duty Officer – Forest Fire Staff Officer, Forest Fire Management Officer, Assistant Forest Fire Management Officer, and Dispatch Center Manager/Assistant, or Forest Aviation Officer.

Responsible for monitoring, analyzing and interpreting Forest and Northern Rockies Geographic Area burning conditions, fire activity, and resource availability to establish Forest Preparedness Levels. Communicating seasonal trends, fire activity, approaching fire danger thresholds, and changes in Forest Preparedness Levels to Forest/District Line Officers and District/Zone Fire Management Officers. Coordinates with Regional fire leadership, NRCG Zone Representatives, and cooperators to assure adequate seasonal preparedness, resource availability to meet developing situations. Monitoring District/Zone staffing and ensuring that the Forest’s Minimum Draw-Down Levels are not being exceeded. Monitoring incidents to ensure Incident Commanders operate within the limits of available resources,

and that the appropriate incident command organization, including span-of-control, is in place to execute planned tactical actions.

Providing oversight and direction in prioritizing the staffing of multiple starts across the Forest, and pre-positioning firefighting resources. Responsible for assessing compliance with work/rest guidelines within fire leadership positions, Dillon Interagency Dispatch Center, the National Helicopter Module, and District FMOs. It is recommended that the Forest Duty Officer has been operationally qualified at the Division Group Supervisor level or above, but currency is not required.

District Duty Officer – District Fire Management Officer or District Assistant Fire Management Officer.

Responsible for monitoring changing burning conditions and fire activity on their unit, and informing the Forest Fire Duty Officer, District/Zone Fire Duty Officer, and firefighting personnel of significant changes. Coordinates with neighboring Districts/Zones and cooperators to assure adequate seasonal preparedness. Coordinates District/Zone fire prevention activities. Monitors District/Zone Staffing Levels and readiness. Ensures Staffing Levels and assigned Draw-Down resources are available. Ensures that assigned Incident Commanders are qualified, thoroughly briefed on the appropriate suppression response and tactics, and that the Incident Commander has been made known to all assigned resources, Dillon Interagency Dispatch Center, and the Forest Fire Duty Officer. Assures that District/Zone fire personnel are following work/rest guidelines. Provides oversight and direction to the District/Zone Fire Duty Officer in prioritizing the staffing of multiple starts on the District/Zone, and provides insight to the Forest Fire Duty Officer and Forest Fire Leadership when prioritizing the staffing of multiple starts across the Forest and pre-positioning firefighting resources.

Responsible for compiling the necessary information for the morning resource line-up, communicating it to Dillon Interagency Dispatch Center, and ensuring those resources are fully qualified for their identified firefighting position. Conducts the daily morning briefing to ensure all firefighters are aware of the fire weather forecast, previous day's wildland fire activity including resistance to control, Forest Preparedness Level, District/Zone Staffing Level, safety items, and the previous day's ERC and its influence on fire behavior. Assures that initial attack resources are fully prepared to respond to an incident whenever assigned to project work. Project assignments and locations should be determined after taking into consideration current Staffing Levels, risk, anticipated fire activity, and fire behavior.

Responsible for identifying the appropriate management or suppression response for each wildland fire on their District. Coordinates with Dillon Interagency Dispatch to assure that the initial attack dispatch (as defined by run cards) is adequate. On a suppression response, ensures the assigned Incident Commander is qualified, thoroughly briefed on the suppression response and associated tactics, and the Incident Commander is made known to the assigned firefighters. Monitors District/Zone incident(s) to ensure the Incident Commander operates within the limits of available resources and the appropriate ICS organization is in-place to execute the tactical actions. Ensures the assigned Incident Commander completes performance evaluations on all out-of-forest crews and resources on all Type III, IV and V incidents, and that After Action Reports are completed in a timely manner.

Collaborates with the Forest Fire Duty Officer and Dispatch Center Manager to prioritize the staffing of multiple starts across the Forest, preposition firefighting resources.

It is recommended that the District Fire Duty Officer has been operationally qualified at the Strike Team Leader level or above, but currency is not required.

g. Aviation Management

All aviation operations will comply with the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Aviation Management Plan. The purpose of the Aviation Management Plan is to provide a working tool and reference for aviation policies, regulations, procedures and other necessary information for implementing a safe and cost effective aviation program on the Forest. National Resource Helicopter – The National Helitack Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures include the annual operating and aviation safety plan for the Beaverhead-Deerlodge’s National Resource Helicopter program.

h. Dispatching

Provide a system that safely and promptly obtains, transports and returns qualified personnel, equipment and supplies needed to support the appropriate management response to wildland fires or fire use management. Develop and maintain a safe, cost effective dispatch organization which follows National and Regional procedures identified in the mobilization guides.

a) Procedures

The Dillon Interagency Dispatch Center Mobilization Guide displays the specific operational procedures that will be followed to facilitate emergency responses to wildland fires and other incidents.

The initial response to each wildland fire will be based on a combination of the appropriate Fire Management Unit (FMUs are described in Section 3-Fire Management Direction of this plan) and the daily Staffing Level as determined by a representative weather station for the fire’s location. The initial dispatch of resources is preplanned and specifically guided by a series of “Run Cards”, developed at the District/Zone level, for each Fire Management Unit.

Movements of wildland fire resources between units and requests for shared or off-Forest resources will be coordinated through Dillon Interagency Dispatch Center, and discussed with the Forest Fire Duty Officer. Dillon Interagency Dispatch Center will initiate actions to fill-in behind the resources committed to incidents based upon the Forest capabilities and Minimum Draw-Down Levels.

Any wildland fire that escapes initial attack requires the development of a Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA). The responsible Line Officer and District Fire Management Officer will complete this situation analysis. These documents will be reviewed and/or revised each day until the selected suppression strategy is attained.

If a situation occurs where one or more districts or Dillon Interagency Dispatch Center become overloaded due to multiple ignitions or a major wildland fire, an Expanded Dispatch Support Organization will be set up either at the district or at the Supervisor’s Office to organize and implement service and support functions. The organization will be arranged so that expansion is rapid, and will not cause unnecessary delays, confusion, or misunderstanding. Dillon Interagency Dispatch Center’s Manager has the responsibility to coordinate and oversee these Expanded Dispatch Support Operations.

When a Type I or II Incident Management Team, or a Fire Use Management Team is ordered or mobilized for wildland fire(s) on the Forest, an appropriate Expanded Dispatch Support Organization will be activated. The appropriate support organization will remain operational through demobilization of those incident(s).

Dispatch Contingency Plan - When either multiple or large wildland fire support greatly increases beyond the normal fire workload, an appropriate Forest Fire Management organization will be staffed, in a timely manner to meet the anticipated needs. An Expanded Dispatch Support Organization will be implemented.

When the Forest and adjoining units have an unusual number of wildland fires burning at one time or when the large wildland fires have depleted firefighting resources, there is usually a need for a high degree of coordination and establishment of priorities beyond the capabilities of the Forest fire management leadership. A Multi-Agency Coordinating group to manage incident support activities may be activated at the Forest, Zone or Geographic Area level to assist with the overall wildland fire situation. Position descriptions for the Incident Support Organization and MAC Group Coordination can be found in the NICC Mobilization Guide, Chapter 30, and Central Montana Zone Operating Plan.