

Northern Rockies Southwest Zone

Preparedness Plan

2021-2023



Northern Rockies Southwest Zone

Preparedness Plan

Approved By: Agency Administrators



CAROLYN
UPTON

Digitally signed by
CAROLYN UPTON
Date: 2020.11.30
09:56:44 -07'00'

Carolyn Upton – Lolo NF Forest Supervisor
USFS, Lolo National Forest



Matt Anderson – Bitterroot Forest Supervisor
USFS, Bitterroot National Forest

1-6-2021



Mike O'Herron - Area Manager
MT Department of Natural Resources, Southwestern Land Office

MT Department of Natural Resources, Southwestern Land Office

1-6-21



Shana M. Radford- Superintendent
BIA, Flathead Agency



Shelly R. Fyant- CSKT Tribal Council Chairwoman
BIA, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes



BENJAMIN GILLES

Digitally signed by BENJAMIN GILLES
Date: 2020.12.10 13:40:12 -07'00'

Ben Gilles- Project Leader NW MT Complex
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Erin Carey – Missoula Office Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management

12/9/20

Northern Rockies Southwest Zone

Preparedness Plan

Approved By: Fire Program Managers



William Mortenson

William Mortenson – Forest Fire Management Officer
USFS, Lolo National Forest

11/10/21



Mark Wilson

Mark Wilson – Forest Fire Management Officer
USFS, Bitterroot National Forest

1/15/21



Karl Nikoleyczik

Karl Nikoleyczik- Fire Management Officer
MT Department of Natural Resources, Southwestern Land Office

12/14/20



Adriane Beck

Adriane Beck-Director, DES Coordinator
Missoula County Office of Emergency Management

12-10-20



Ron Swaney- Fire Management Officer
BiA, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes



MIKE GRANGER

Digitally signed by MIKE GRANGER
Date: 2020.12.01 13:07:37 -07'00'

Michael Granger-State Fire Management Officer
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



JOHN THOMPSON

Digitally signed by JOHN THOMPSON
Date: 2020.12.10 11:19:08 -07'00'

John Thompson- Fire Management Officer
Bureau of Land Management, Western Montana District

Northern Rockies Southwest Zone

Preparedness Plan

Prepared By: Technical Group



Matt Jolly

Matt Jolly-Research Ecologist
Rocky Mountain Research Station-Fire Sciences Laboratory

17-Dec-2020



Patrick Freeborn

Patrick Freeborn-Research Physical Scientist
Rocky Mountain Research Station-Fire Sciences Laboratory

16-Dec-2020



MAEGAN MAUGHAN Digitally signed by MAEGAN MAUGHAN
Date: 2020.11.30 12:13:06 -07'00'

Maegan Maughan – Missoula Dispatch Detailed Center
Manager
USFS, Missoula Interagency Dispatch Center



KELLY MCKEE Digitally signed by KELLY MCKEE
Date: 2020.11.23 14:20:06 -07'00'

Kelly McKee – Bitterroot Dispatch Center Manager
USFS, Bitterroot Dispatch Center



Jeffrey Hayes

Jeffrey Hayes– Fire Planner
USFS, Lolo & Bitterroot National Forests

1-7-2021

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Preparedness Plan

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

Preparedness plans provide management direction given identified levels of burning conditions, fire activity, and resource commitment. Preparedness Levels (1-5) are determined by incremental measures of burning conditions, fire activity, and resource commitment. Fire danger rating is a critical measure of burning conditions. The Preparedness Levels are identified and documented in the Northern Rockies Southwest Zone Fire Danger Operating Plan and the complete Preparedness Plan is in Appendix A.

B. Preparedness and Staffing Levels

1. Preparedness and Staffing Levels

Preparedness Levels incorporate local fire occurrence, suppression resources committed, and stable variables (e.g. ERC, Live Fuel Moisture, 100-hr Fuel Moisture, etc.) to help with long-term decisions, such as the need to request severity funding or activation of public-use restrictions. Staffing Levels only consider fire danger and are intended to help with short-term decisions. Both can be set to the same levels (1-5) with the recognition they have different functions.

C. Policy and Guidance

Policy and guidance regarding the development of Preparedness Level Plans can be found in Chapter 10 of the Interagency Standards for Fire & Aviation Operations (Red Book).

Preparedness Level Plans are required at the national, state/regional, and local levels. These plans address the five Preparedness Levels (1-5) and provide management direction based on identified levels of burning conditions (fire danger), fire activity, resource commitment/availability, such as incident management teams assigned, and other considerations (in contrast to Staffing Levels, which typically only consider fire danger). Preparedness Level Plans may be developed by a state/regional office for agency-specific use.

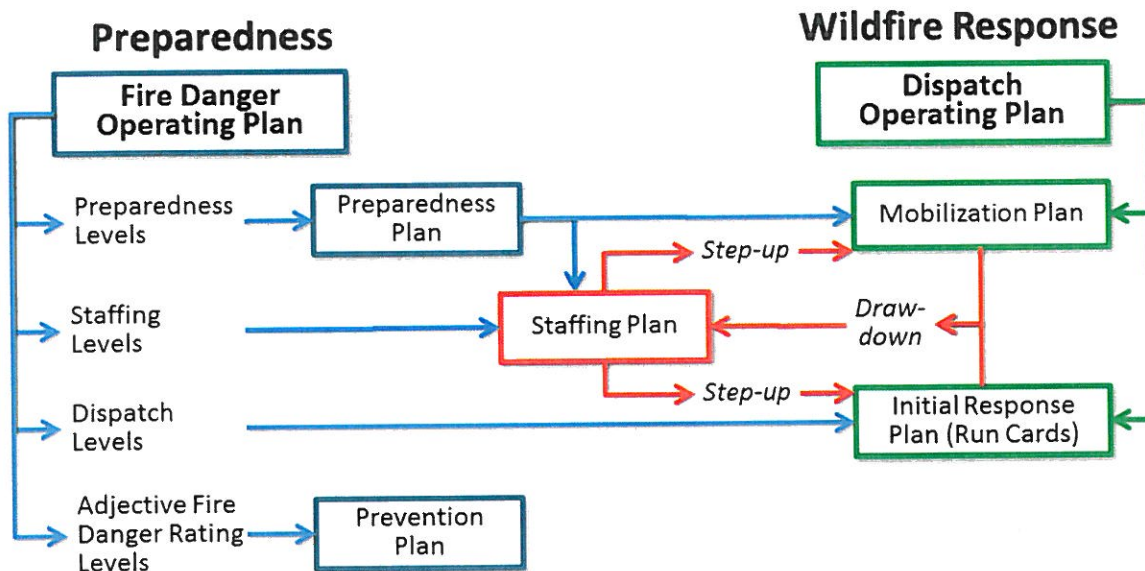
Supplemental preparedness actions to consider include, but are not limited to, the following items:

- Management briefings, direction, and considerations; Support function: consideration given to expanded dispatch activation and other support needs (procurement, supply, ground support, and communication;

- Support staff availability outside of fire organization;
- Fire danger/behavior assessment;
- Fire information – internal and external;
- Multi-agency coordination group/Area command activation; and
- Prescribed fire direction and considerations.

Refer to the National Interagency Mobilization Guide and GACC Mobilization Guides for more information on Preparedness Level Plans.

Specific agency directives and interagency guidance requires numerous unit plans and guides to meet fire preparedness and wildfire response objectives. Some of these plans and guides are inter-related; one or more plans/guides provide the basis for other plans/guides. The Preparedness Plan is an operational plan tiered from the Fire Danger Operating Plan as shown below:



Preparedness Levels are established to assist fire managers with weekly or monthly planning decisions based upon seasonal fire danger elements. FireFamilyPlus is used to establish fire business thresholds. A statistical analysis of fire occurrence and historical weather needs to be completed for each FDRA. The final Preparedness Level determination may incorporate a measure of current and projected levels of resource commitment due to fire activity and a measure of ignition risk. Each agency will consider management actions identified in the FDOP appendix based upon the five local Preparedness Levels.

II. Preparedness Levels: ERC Decision Threshold Ranges

Decision Threshold Ranges	Lolo DNRC East	Lolo DNRC West	CSKT East	CSKT West	Bitterroot Low	Bitterroot High
Low-PL 1 0% - <40%	0-21.9	0-23.9	0-20.9	0-31.9	0-23.9	0-16.9
Moderate-PL 2 >40% - <80%	22-39.9	24-41.9	21-32.9	32-49.9	24-42.9	17-39.9
High-PL 3 >80% - <90%	40-45.9	42-47.9	33-37.9	50-56.9	43-47.9	40-45.9
Very High-PL 4 >90% - <97%	46-51.9	48-54.9	38-43.9	57-64.9	48-52.9	46-50.9
Extreme-PL 5 >97%	52+	55+	44+	65+	53+	51+

III. Preparedness Levels and Recommended Actions Guide

Preparedness Level (PL) Actions are guidelines, and as such are discretionary in nature, for agency personnel to refer to when preparedness level thresholds are reached. If an agency does not have a specific position listed within the Preparedness Level table, that agency will utilize discretion as to what position will assume those roles.

A. Agency Administrators

Responsible Party	Suggested Action	PL 1	PL 2	PL 3	PL 4	PL 5	Affected Entity
Agency Administrator, District Ranger	Ensure Resource Advisors (READ/REAF) are designated and available for fire assignments.			X	X	X	Agency
	Ensure Public Affairs Staff are identified and available as needed for coordination with fire programs and incident information.			X	X	X	Agency
	Consider needs for fire restrictions or area closures.			X	X	X	Public, Industry
	Evaluate work/rest needs of fire staff.				X	X	Agency
	Provide appropriate support to fire staffs regarding the implementation of preparedness level actions (i.e. severity requests, restrictions and closure planning).				X	X	Agency
	Issue guidance to staff indicating severity of the season and increased need and availability for fire support personnel (i.e. availability for large fire support).				X	X	Agency
	If applicable, ensure administrative staff is prepared for fire activity business support.			X	X	X	Agency
	Consider ordering additional Line Officers for support.			X	X	X	Agency
	Approve prescribed burning projects Regional (FS, BIA) or State (DNRC) approval.				X	X	Agency

B. FS, MT DNRC, FWS, BLM, & CSKT Fire Management Officers & Assistant Fire Management Officers

Responsible Party	Suggested Action	PL 1	PL 2	PL 3	PL 4	PL 5	Affected Entity	
FS, CSKT, MT DNRC, FWS, BLM, Fire Staff, FS District, CSKT, FWS, BLM, & MT DNRC Unit FMO's & AFMO's.	Evaluate season severity data (NFDRS indices for the season, fuel loading, fuel moisture, drought indices, and long-term forecasts).	X	X	X	X	X	Agency	
	Brief Agency Administrators and staff personnel on burning conditions and fire activity.		X	X	X	X	Agency	
	Review geographical and national preparedness levels and evaluate need to suspend local Rx fire activities.			X	X	X	Agency	
	Consider consulting with or ordering an FBAN or WFDSS Support.			X	X	X	Agency	
	Consider ordering a SOPL or LTAN to provide expertise and support to fire management strategy decisions regarding long-term fires.			X	X	X	Agency	
	Ensure Prevention Technicians have initiated media contacts and public education contacts.		X	X	X	X	Agency	
	Communicate with Missoula, Bitterroot, and Ronan Dispatch Managers on resource availability.		X	X	X	X	Agency	
	Consider fire severity request and pre-positioning of resources including: suppression resources, aerial support, aerial supervision, command positions, expanded dispatch, logistical support, and prevention technicians.				X	X	X	Agency
	Consider ordering additional Duty Officer support.			X	X	X	Agency	
	If preparedness level is decreasing, consult with Duty Officer, Missoula, Bitterroot, and Ronan Dispatch Managers and consider release of pre-positioned or detailed personnel.			X	X	X	Agency	
	Evaluate crew and staff work/rest requirements.			X	X	X	Agency	
	Evaluate the need for fire restrictions, area closures, and closed open burning.			X	X	X	Public Industry	
	Consider beginning SW Zone MAC calls.			X	X	X	Agency	
	Coordinate with interagency partners on the need for fire restrictions or closures.			X	X	X	Agency	
	Communicate with Missoula, Bitterroot, and Ronan Dispatch			X	X	X	Public Industry	

	Center Managers on geographical conditions and resources availability.						
	Request the agency administrator to issue guidance to agency staff regarding the need for increased availability in support positions.			X	X	X	Agency
	Contact local Fire Chiefs and communicate staffing levels, fire danger, and unified command.			X	X	X	Agency

C. Dispatch Centers

Responsible Party	Suggested Action	PL 1	PL 2	PL 3	PL 4	PL 5	Affected Entity
Missoula, Bitterroot, & Ronan Dispatch Centers	If preparedness level is decreasing, consider release of pre-positioned or detailed dispatchers and logistical support personnel.			X	X	X	Agency
	Begin weekly SW Zone MAC conference calls with FS FMOs/Duty Officers, FWS, BLM, CSKT, & MT DNRC Fire Management.			X	X	X	Agency
	Consider pre-positioning or detail of off-unit IA dispatchers and logistical support personnel.			X	X	X	Agency
	Evaluate work/rest needs of Missoula, Bitterroot, and Ronan Dispatch staff.			X	X	X	Agency
	Consider having expanded dispatch and buying team in place.			X	X	X	Agency

D. FS, MT DNRC, FWS, BLM, & CSKT Duty Officers & Dispatch Centers

Responsible Party	Suggested Action	PL 1	PL 2	PL 3	PL 4	PL 5	Affected Entity
FS, MT DNRC, FWS, BLM, CSKT Duty Officers, Missoula, Bitterroot, & Ronan Dispatch Centers	Coordinate with FS, MT DNRC, CSKT, FWS, BLM, and local RFD's on resource sharing across the Zone.			X	X	X	Agency
	Coordinate amongst agencies, on SW Zone MAC conference calls, to set incident priorities and adjust resources accordingly.			X	X	X	Agency
	Consider extra LEO presence during times of increased human caused fires, closures, and/or suspicious activity.				X	X	Agency
	Coordinate the need for ordering a local or out of area Fire Prevention Team.			X	X	X	Agency
	Communicate when the transition to 7-day			X	X	X	Agency

	coverage across agencies will occur.						
	Coordinate the need for submitting severity requests.			X	X	X	Agency
	If preparedness level is decreasing, consider releasing pre-positioned and detailed resources.			X	X	X	Agency
	Ensure incoming severity, pre-position or detailed personnel receive a thorough in-brief on local conditions and are pre-positioned accordingly.			X	X	X	Agency
	Evaluate work/rest needs of IA crews, dispatchers, severity resources, and aviation bases.			X	X	X	Agency
	Consider patrols and pre-positioning of local IA resources in high risk areas.			X	X	X	Agency
	Consider pre-positioning and/or detailing of additional IA resources from off-unit.			X	X	X	Agency
	Evaluate the need for aerial detection flights.			X	X	X	Agency
	Consider bringing in local resources from scheduled days off.			X	X	X	Agency
	Consider suspending prescribed burning operations.				X	X	Agency

E. Fire Prevention Technicians/Education/Mitigation

Responsible Party	Suggested Action	PL 1	PL 2	PL 3	PL 4	PL 5	Affected Entity
Fire Prevention Technicians	Contact Public Information Officer and local media to inform of the start of fire season and the potential for local fire danger to increase.			X	X	X	Agency Public
	Provide public and industry with access to fire danger information, closures, restrictions, and warnings.			X	X	X	Agency Public Industry
	Post signs and warnings in approved camping, dispersed camping sites, trailheads, and recreation areas.			X	X	X	Public
	Consider need for increased fire prevention patrols.			X	X	X	Agency
	Notify local media if Very High/Extreme fire danger and the need for increased public caution.				X	X	Public
	Contact local fire chiefs and inform of increased fire danger.			X	X	X	Agency
	Consult with FMO, Duty Officer, and/or Agency Administrator			X	X	X	Agency

	regarding need for fire restrictions or closures.						
	Consider ordering additional fire prevention personnel to assist with restrictions or closures.			X	X	X	Agency
	Consider forming a local Fire Prevention Team			X	X	X	Agency

Appendix A: Local Preparedness Level Worksheet – Example to try

The preparedness level is a five-tier fire danger rating system based on ERC's, resource status, and fire activity. Fire business indicators used to help determine the preparedness level may include the current level of fire activity in the zone, or the number of resources committed to suppression activities. ***It is up to each dispatch zone to develop a methodology or tool that works best for them to assist in determining the preparedness levels for their zone.***

The illustration below is an example of a "plinko chart" that uses a combination of ERC values for each FDRA, potential resource shortages in each FDRA, and the level of fire activity.

#1	ERC (Model Y)	0-21.9	22-39.9	40-45.9	46-51.9	52+			
	Lolo DNRC East	0-21.9	22-39.9	40-45.9	46-51.9	52+			
	Lolo DNRC West	0-23.9	24-41.9	42-47.9	48-54.9	55+			
	CSKT East	0-20.9	21-32.9	33-37.9	38-43.9	44+			
	CSKT West	0-31.9	32-49.9	50-56.9	57-64.9	65+			
	Bitterroot Low	0-23.9	24-42.9	43-47.9	48-52.9	53+			
	Bitterroot High	0-16.9	17-39.9	40-45.9	46-50.9	51+			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ⇒	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
#2	Shortage of Resources	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	Lolo DNRC East	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	Lolo DNRC West	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	CSKT East	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	CSKT West	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	Bitterroot Low	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	Bitterroot High	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ⇒	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
#3	Fire Activity	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	2 or more ICS-209's and/or majority of IA resources committed	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ⇒	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparedness Level		1	2	3	4	5			

