COLVILLE NATIONAL FOREST

2011 FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Interagency Federal fire policy requires that every area with burnable vegetation must have a Fire Management Plan (FMP). This FMP provides information concerning the fire management process for the Colville National Forest and compiles guidance from existing sources such as but not limited to, the Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LMP), national policy, and national and regional directives.

The potential consequences to firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and protection of values assist in determining the management response to wildfire. Firefighter and public safety are the first consideration and are always the priority during every response to wildfire.

The following chapters discuss broad forest and specific Fire Management Unit (FMU) characteristics and guidance.

Chapter 1 introduces the area covered by the FMP, includes a map of the Colville National Forest, addresses the agencies involved, and states why the forest is developing the FMP.

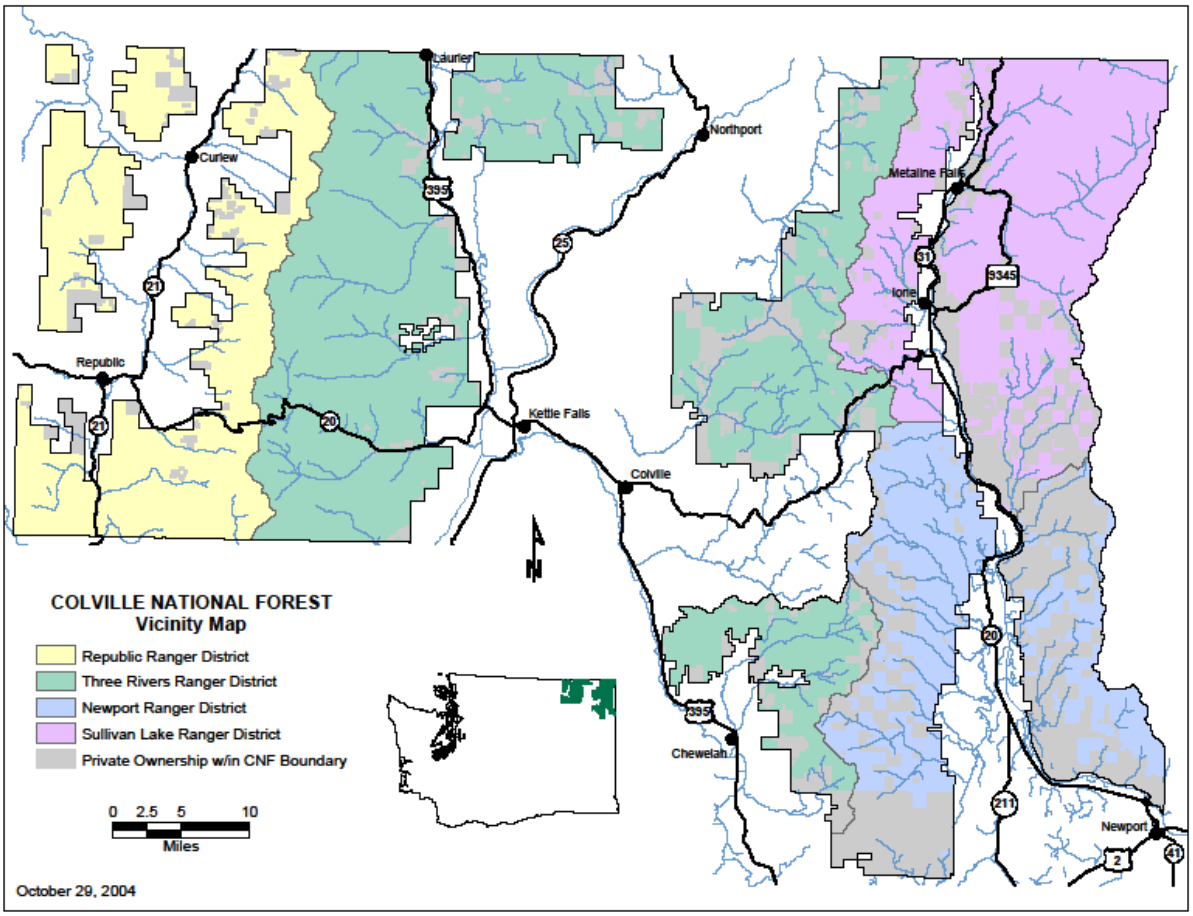
Chapter 2 establishes the link between higher-level planning documents, legislation, and policies and the actions described in FMP.

Chapter 3 articulates specific goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and/or desired future condition(s), as established in the forest's LMP, which apply to all the forest's FMUs and those that are unique to the forest's individual FMUs.

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

The Colville National Forest developed this FMP as a decision support tool to help fire personnel and decision makers determine the management response to an unplanned ignition. FMPs do not make decisions. Instead, they provide information, organized by FMUs, which provides a finer scale summarization of information than is possible at the forest level. These descriptions bring specific detail about the identifiable areas on the ground. FMPs are not static documents. They will evolve and revisions will be completed when conditions change on the ground and as modifications are made to the unit's Land Management Plan.

This Fire Management Plan (FMP) details fire management strategies and operations for the Colville National Forest, located in northeast Washington. Ownership of the land covered by this FMP is shown on the Colville National Forest Vicinity Map 1-1. The 1.1 million acre Colville National Forest includes four ranger districts: Three Rivers, Republic, Newport and Sullivan Lake.



Chapter 2. POLICY, LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING, AND PARTNERSHIPS

The regulations and policy in the following documents guide the fire management actions as outlined in this FMP.

2.1. National and Regional Fire Management Policy

Forest Service policy and direction that are relevant to this plan include:

- 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review (January 2001) 1995
- National Fire Plan
- Forest Service Manual 5100
- Forest Service Handbook 5109
- Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (February 13, 2009)
- Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations (January, 2010)

2.2.1 Guiding Principles of Fire Policy

- Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.
- The role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent will be incorporated into the planning process.
- Fire management plans, programs, and activities support land and resource management plans and their implementation.
- Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities.
- Fire management programs and activities are economically viable, based upon values to be protected, costs, and land and resource management objectives.
- Fire management plans and activities incorporate public health and environmental quality considerations.
- Federal, State, Tribal, and local interagency coordination and cooperation are essential.

2.2.2 Wildland Fire Management Options

Responses to wildland fire management should consider the full range of strategies but will always consider the following factors:

- Risks to Firefighters and public health and safety
- Land and Resource Management Objectives
- Weather
- Fuels conditions
- Threats and values to be protected
- Cost efficiencies
- Topographic features and access
- Ability to accomplish objectives

Multiple suppression strategies may be considered based on the management objectives of each incident. Suppression strategies should be identified in the WFDSS analysis and documented as the chosen course of action. The full range of options should be considered and may be used in combination or as stand-

alone strategies dependent upon the factors listed above or additional considerations as each situation dictates.

- **Monitoring from a distance**: Fire situations that display inactive fire behavior and low threats require only periodic monitoring from a nearby location or aircraft.
- **Monitoring on-site**: Fire situations that have management objectives that require the physical placement of monitors on the fire site to track the fire spread, intensity, and/or characteristics.
- **Confinement**: Actions taken when fires are not likely to have resource benefit and an analysis of strategic alternatives indicates threats from the fire do not require costly deployment of large numbers of suppression resources for mitigation or suppression. Typically, these fires will have little or no on-the-ground activity and fire movement remains confined within a pre-determined area bounded by natural barriers or fuel changes.
- **Monitoring plus contingency actions**: Monitoring is carried out on fires managed for resource benefits but circumstances necessitate preparation of contingency actions to satisfy external influences and ensure adequate preparation for possible undesirable developments.
- **Monitoring plus mitigation actions**: Actions on fires managed for resource objectives that either pose real but not necessarily immediate, threats or do not have a defensible boundary. These fires are monitored but operational actions are developed and implemented to delay, direct, or check fire spread, or to contain the fire to a defined area, and/or to ensure public safety (through signing, information, and trail/area closures).
- **Initial Attack**: Action where an initial response is taken to suppress wildland fires, consistent with firefighter and public safety and values to be protected.
- **Large fire suppression with multiple strategies**: This action categorizes fires where a combination of tactics such as direct attack, indirect attack, and confinement by natural barriers are utilized to accomplish protection objectives as directed in a Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA).
- **Control and extinguishment**: Actions taken on a fire when the selected WFDSS course of action indicates a control strategy using methods that utilize direct or indirect tactics to establish a defined parameter. Sufficient resources are assigned to achieve control of the fire with a minimum of acres burned.

2.2. Colville Land and Resource Management Plan

The Fire Management Plan has been tiered to decisions contained within the Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1988), (LRMP, referred to as Forest Plan) and resource management plans (listed below), and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. Notable amendments to the Forest Plan include the Regional Foresters Eastside Screens, and INFISH. The manual direction to develop a Fire Management Plan is

> ***"Develop a fire management plan based on direction in land and resource management plans and interagency plans and assessments. Amend Forest plans where necessary to meet fire management objectives. Use the best available science to assess and plan on a landscape scale, across agency boundaries… (Forest Service Manual 5103 – POLICY)***

Chapter 3. POLICY, LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The following are existing laws, policy, and regulations that provide the basis for fire management and resource management on the Colville National Forest. These acts authorize and guide fire management activities for the protection of National Forest System lands and resources:

3.1 INTERAGENCY

- Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (16 USC 1131, 1132)
- Clean Air Act, as amended (42 USC 7401 et seq)
- Economy Act of June 30, 1932 (41 USC 686)
- Reciprocal Fire Protection Act of May 27, 1955 (69 Stat. 66; 42 USC 1856, 1856a)
- 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy
- 2001 Updated Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (1995 federal Wildland Fire Management Policy Update)
- Healthy Forests Restoration Act of December 2003 (Public Law 108-148)

3.2 FOREST SERVICE

- Organic Act of June 4, 1897 (16 USC 551)
- Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of July 22, 1937 (7 USC 1010, 1011)
- National Forest Management Act of October 22, 1976 (16 USC 1600 et seq)
- Granger-Thye Act of April 24, 1950 (16 USC 572)
- Wildfire Suppression Assistance Act of April 7, 1989 (42 USC 1856)
- Forest Service Manual 5100 – Fire Management
- Forest Service Handbook 5109

3.3 OTHER AGENCIES

- Environmental Protection Agency Water Quality Standards, May 1991, (EPAQ/910/9-91-001)
- State of Washington Water Quality Standards for Surface Water (Chapter 173-201A WAC)
- State of Washington Smoke Management Plan (Washington State Department of Natural resources (DNR), April 1993

Chapter 4. FIRE MANAGEMENT UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

The primary purpose of developing FMUs in fire management planning is to assist in organizing information in complex landscapes. FMUs divide the landscape into smaller geographic areas to describe specific safety considerations, physical, biological, social characteristics and to frame associated planning guidance based on these characteristics.

The following information, including the summaries of fuels conditions, weather and burning patterns, and other conditions in specific FMUs, helps determine the management response to an unplanned ignition and provides a quick reference to the strategic goals in the forest's LMP.

4.1. Fire Management Considerations Applicable to All Forest Fire Management Units

4.1.1. Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Guidance

Objectives

The fire management goals for the Colville National Forest are:

4.1.1.1 Preparedness

- All wildfires will receive an appropriate suppression response. This response and the associated fire suppression strategies will be the most cost effective commensurate with land management objectives for the area on which wildfire occurs (page 4-58, LRMP).

- Apply aggressive suppression action to wildfires that threaten life, private property, public safety, improvements, or investments (page 4-58, LRMP).

- Objectives for burned acres and constraints are identified for each management area. The fire suppression organization shall strive to keep the resource losses caused by wildfire to a level that will not adversely affect resource outputs.

- Forest wide planning will utilize the National Fire Management Analysis System to determine the most cost-efficient fire protection organization. As conditions change and better information is developed, the fire organization will be reevaluated with this system (page 4-58, LRMP).

- Cost-effective plans for the prevention of human-caused fires will be aimed at specific risks determined by ongoing monitoring of current and recent fire reports (page 4-58, LRMP).

- The mix of aerial and ground detection activities will be reviewed periodically to maintain the most cost-efficient combination (page 4-59, LRMP).

- Provide equipment and training for USDA Forest Service employees outside of the fire management organization to assist in initial attack (page 4-59, LRMP).

4.1.1.2 Fire Suppression

- All wildfires will receive an appropriate suppression response. This response and the associated fire suppression strategies will be the most cost effective commensurate with land management objectives for the area on which wildfire occurs (page 4-58, LRMP).

- Apply aggressive suppression action to wildfires that threaten life, private property, public safety, improvements, or investments (page 4-58, LRMP).

- In most cases, when wildfires do not threaten to exceed acceptable sizes and intensities for the management areas, the lowest cost suppression option is appropriate (page 4-58, LRMP).

- If a wildfire escapes initial action and threatens to exceed established limits, an escaped fire [wildland fire] analysis shall be prepared. This analysis weighs the cost of suppression against the resource potential losses. Suppression actions should be appropriate for the values threatened, even on escaped fires (page 4-58, LRMP).

4.1.2 Forest Plan Management Area Resource Standards and Guidelines

MA 1: Old Growth Dependent Species Habitat

- Take appropriate suppression action on all wildfires. If habitat needs are destroyed, Old Growth Management Area boundaries will be adjusted or the unit moved to the nearest suitable location (page 4-72, LRMP).
- Planned ignition may be used as a means of achieving old-growth habitat objectives (page 4-72, LRMP).

MA 2: Emphasis: Caribou Habitat

- Control all wildfires, which threaten caribou habitat (page 4-76, LRMP).
- Design initial attack and suppression methods to meet caribou habitat needs (page 4-76, LRMP).
- Planned ignitions may be used as a means of achieving caribou habitat objectives (page 4-76, LRMP).

MA 3A: Recreation

- Take appropriate suppression action on all wildfires (page 4-79, LRMP).
- Planned and unplanned ignitions may be used as a means of achieving the roaded natural objectives (page 4-79, LRMP).

MA 3B: Recreation/Wildlife

- Take appropriate suppression action on all wildfires (page 4-83, LRMP).
- Planned and unplanned ignitions may be used as a means of achieving the recreation or wildlife objectives (page 4-83, LRMP).

MA 3C: Downhill Skiing

- Take appropriate suppression action on all wildfires (page 4-87, LRMP).
- Planned and unplanned ignitions may be used as a means of achieving the recreation or wildlife objectives if they achieve the visual quality objective (page 4-87, LRMP).

MA 4: Research Natural Area

- Unless plans approved by the Station Director provide for letting natural fires burn, aggressive containment using low impact methods should be used. High impact methods will be used only to prevent total loss of the Research Natural Area. Mop-up should be minimized with natural burnout being the preferred method (page 4-91, LRMP).
- Initial attack and suppression methods will be designed to maintain RNA characteristics (page 4-91, LRMP).
- Planned ignitions may be used as a means of achieving the RNA objectives (page 4-91, LRMP).

MA 5: Scenic/Timber

- Take appropriate suppression action on all wildfires (page 4-95, LRMP).
- Initial attack and suppression methods will be designed to maintain the scenic values (page 4-95, LRMP).
- Planned and unplanned ignitions may be used as a means of achieving visual objectives (page 4-96, LRMP).

MA 6: Scenic/Winter Range

- Take appropriate suppression action on all wildfires (page 4-100, LRMP).
- Initial attack and suppression methods will be designed to maintain the scenic values (page 4-100, LRMP).
- Planned and unplanned ignitions may be used as a means of achieving the visual and winter range objectives (page 4-100, LRMP).

MA 7: Wood/Forage

- Take appropriate suppression action on all wildfires (page 4-103, LRMP).
- Initial attack and suppression methods will be designed to meet timber production objectives (page 4-103, LRMP).
- Planned and unplanned ignitions may be used as a means of achieving resource management objectives (page 4-103, LRMP).

MA 8: Winter Range

- Take appropriate suppression action on all wildfires (page 4-108, LRMP).
- Planned and unplanned ignitions may be used to improve winter range (page 4-108, LRMP).

MA 9: Wilderness Management:

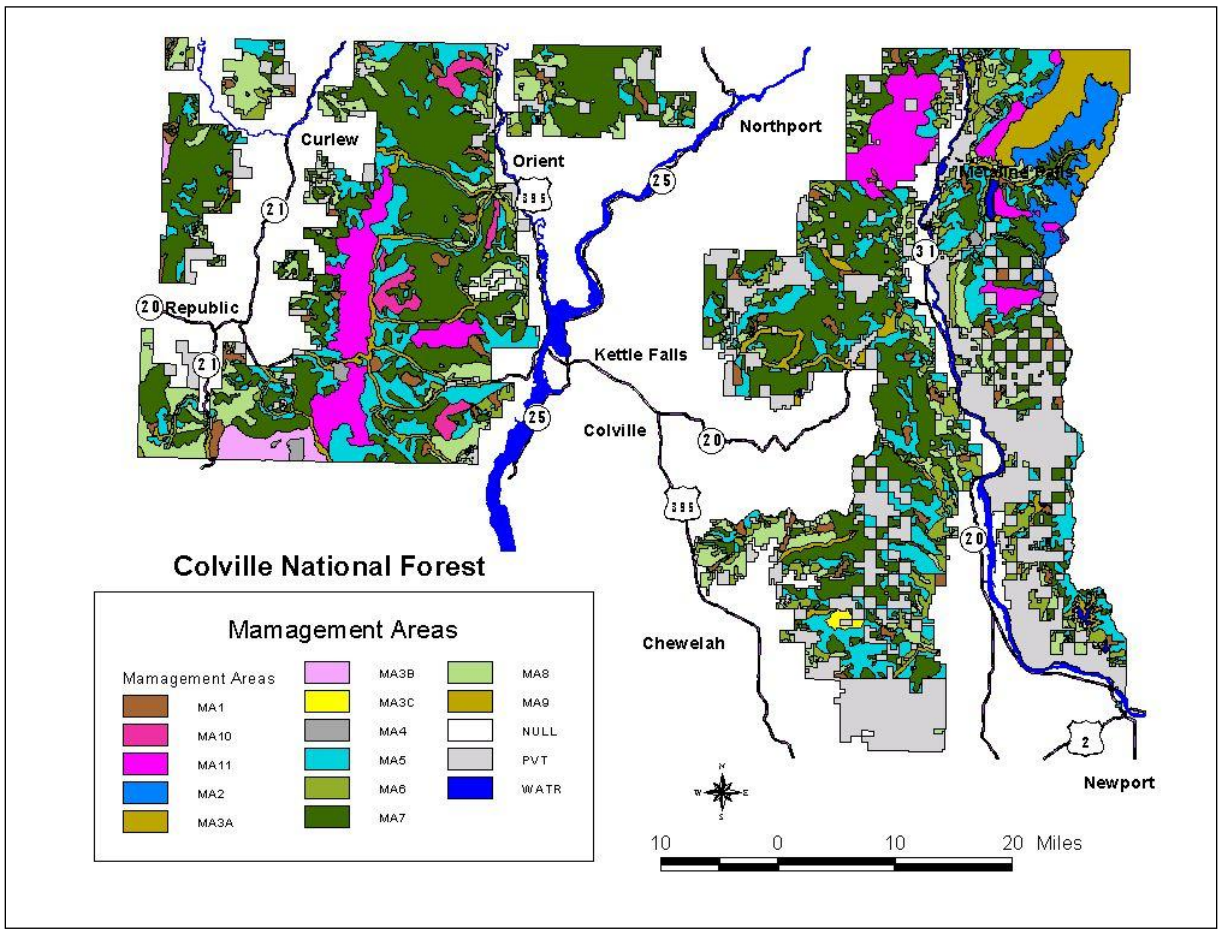
- Take appropriate suppression action on all wildfires. The wildfire suppression objective for early and late winter caribou habitat, within the wilderness, will be protection of those values (page 4-112, LRMP).
- Conduct all fire management activities in a manner compatible with wilderness management objectives (page 4-112, LRMP).
- Planned ignitions will not be permitted at this time. This standard will be re-evaluation in the next generation of forest planning to determine if fire is needed to maintain or achieve wilderness objectives (page 40-113, LRMP).
- Rehabilitate disturbed areas within the wilderness to as natural a condition as possible (page 4-113, LRMP).

MA 10: Semi-Primitive, Motorized Recreation

- Take appropriate suppression action on all wildfires (page 4-117; LRMP).
- Initial attack and suppression methods will be designed to maintain the semi-primitive character (page 4-117, LRMP).
- Planned and unplanned ignitions may be used as a means of achieving semi-primitive objectives (page 4-103, LRMP).

MA 11: Semi-Primitive, Non-Motorized Recreation

- Take appropriate suppression action on all wildfires. Control fires that threaten identified caribou habitat (page 4-121, LRMP).
- Initial attack suppression methods will be designed to maintain the unroaded character and to meet habitat management objectives within identified caribou habitat (page 4-121, LRMP).
- Planned and unplanned ignitions may be used as a means of achieving Semi-Primitive, Non-Motorized objectives and to meet grizzly bear, caribou, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat objectives (page 4-122, LRMP).



4.1.3 Physical Characteristics that Apply to All Fire Management Units

The Forest is broken into five Fire Management Units (FMU), management constraints and objectives, major fire regime groups, and values at risk define these. The FMUs utilized to development management strategies for wildfire and prescribed fire on the Colville National Forest are:

- **FMU 1-WUI West**
- **FMU 2-WUI Central**
- **FMU 3-WUI East**
- **FMU 4-General Forest**
- **FMU 5-Salmo-Priest Wilderness**

Management constraints and objectives discussed in the Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1988) provides guidance for the management of wildfire and prescribed fire on the Forest. The management options for these FMUs described above are consistent with the direction in the Forest Plan.

The Wildland Urban Interface (FMUs 1-3), Fire Management Units were developed based on a boundary that would provide guidance for fire suppression actions to protect private property, structures and infrastructure.

The General Forest FMU (FMU 4) is all of the areas not inclusive of the WUI FMUs and the Salmo-Priest Wilderness.

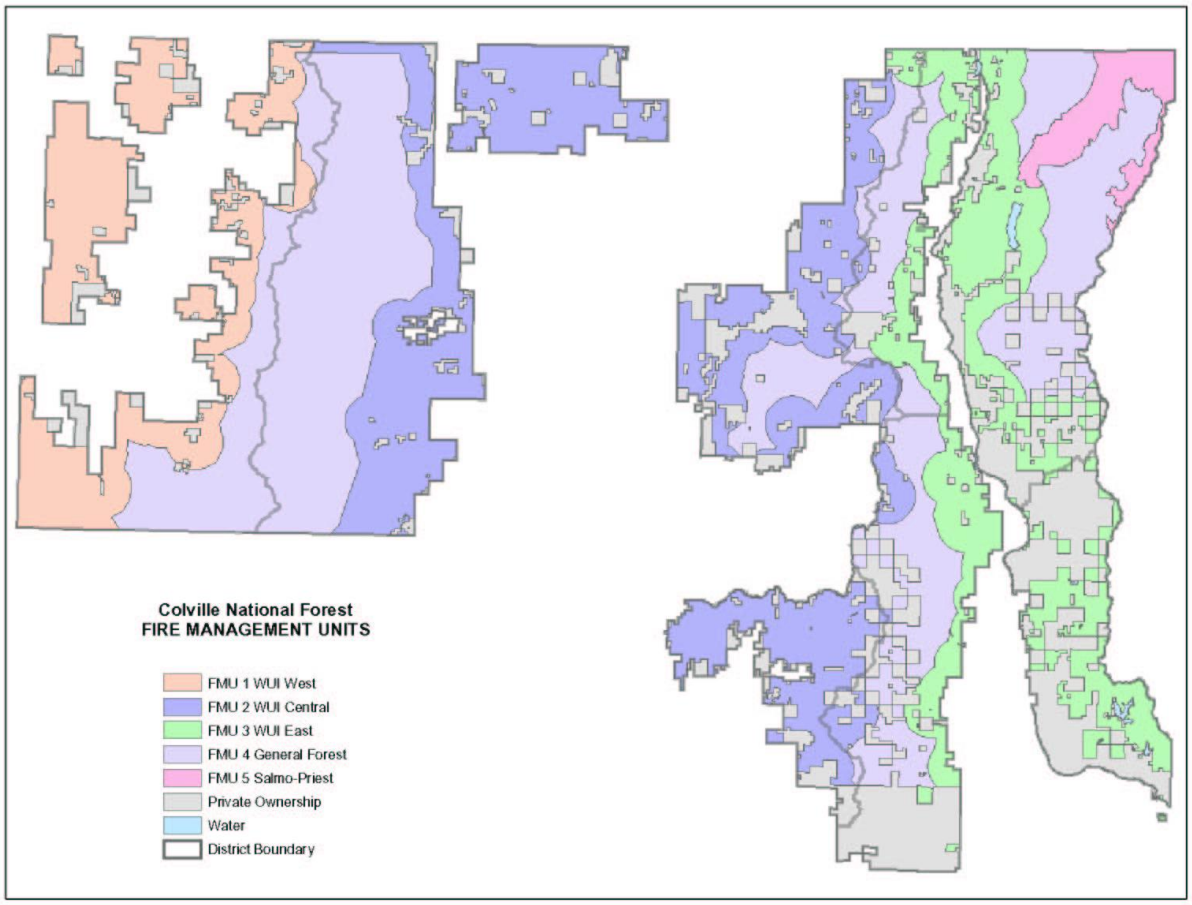
The Salmo-Priest FMU (FMU 5) was based on specific direction for Fire Management in the Salmo-Priest Wilderness described in the Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. This FMU boundary is based on the portion of the Salmo-Priest Wilderness that is within the Colville National Forest.

The forest has a climate with both maritime and continental characteristics because it receives air masses from the continent and Pacific Ocean. The north-south tending mountain ranges and major river valleys also create variations in climate. The western portion of the Forest is under the influence of an intense rain shadow formed by the North Cascades, while the eastern portion has a moist, near-maritime climate created by the westerly airflow forced over the 5,000 to 7,000 foot peaks of the Kettle River and Selkirk mountain ranges. Precipitation levels are enhanced in the northeast portion of the forest by additional moist air masses moving into the region from the north from Canada.

Throughout the year, maritime air from the Pacific exerts a moderating influence on temperatures while more extreme temperatures come with drier air from the interior of the North American continent. The general weather patterns are influenced by several factors including the position and intensity of upper level wind currents, the high and low-pressure systems over the Pacific Ocean, and the variations in the topography. Normally a thermal trough occurs that migrates northward in spring and summer with occasional intrusions of monsoon moisture from the southwest. Intermittent thunderstorms occur throughout the summer, storms are infrequent through June, as summer progresses the storms become more frequent, and may produce little precipitation. In early summer, the drier continental air mass results in a prolonged drying trend.

The general climatic trends in the area are characterized by increasing average annual temperatures and precipitation from west to east across the Forest with precipitation being the greatest in winter and spring. Most valleys receive 15 to 25 inches of precipitation per year. Precipitation increases in the mountains to 30-40 inches along the higher ridges of the Kettle Mountain Crest and 50 inches or more in parts of the Selkirk's. During the warmest summer months, afternoon temperatures in the valleys range from the mid to upper 80's and minimums range from the upper 40's to the mid-50's. In average years, summer temperatures exceed 100^0F for 1 to 5 days.

Greenup typically occurs April 15, at the lower elevations and later at upper elevations and a killing frost occurs September 15.Describe any characteristics (e.g., topography, fuels, wind) that are common to and/or exist in all forest FMUs.



4.2. Fire Management Considerations for Fire Management Unit 1, Wildland-Urban Interface West

4.2.1. FMU Snap Shot

- FMU Number: FMU 1-WUI West
- Radio Frequency: Primary Repeater-Mount Leona West
    - Rx 170.550, Tone 146.2
    - Tx 169.5750, tone 123.0
- Fire Behavior Indicator: Energy Release Component
- NFDRS Weather Station: Iron Mountain, Lane Creek (Westside Pocket Card Station)
- Nearest Weather Station: Iron Mountain
- Acres/Agency: 152,293
- Predominant Vegetation Types: Open Ponderosa Pine and Dry-site Douglas-fir
- Unit: Republic Ranger District
- IA assets assigned to this FMU:

Resource	Position/Leader	Station	Unit Identifier
Division Chief	District FMO	Republic	Division 2
Battalion Chief	Suppression AFMO	Republic	Battalion Chief 21
Battalion Chief	Fuels AFMO	Republic	Battalion Chief 22
Type 6 Engine	Engine Captain	Republic	Engine 21
Type 6 Engine	Engine Captain	Republic	Engine 22
IA Module	Crew Captain	Republic	Crew 201
Fuels Tech	Fuels Tech	Republic	LT 21

- Duty Officer: Division Chief and Battalion Chiefs
- IA Dispatch Office: NEWICC
- Communities adjacent or within FMU: Republic, Curlew
- LMP Options available for response to ignition: Varies by Management Area
- Special safety considerations: Light flashy Fuels, Aviation Training Routes, High Lightning Occurrence

4.2.2. FMU Guidance

FMU 1 WUI-West

Forest plan desired conditions, standards, guidelines, and goals that pertain to wildland fire management are included in physical characteristics common to all FMUs. This is based on the overlap of multiple Forest Plan Management Areas in all of the FMUs with the exception of FMU 5, Salmo-Priest Wilderness. During management of a wildland fire, the specific location should be reviewed as it pertains to Forest Plan direction.

FMU 1 is located entirely on the Republic Ranger District, and encompasses 152,293 acres. Most of this FMU lies within 0.5 and 1.5 miles of the Colville National Forest administrative boundary and includes all but a few acres of the private lands located within the administrative boundaries on the Republic Ranger District. There are some differences in what is included in this FMU and what is included in the Ferry County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). This difference may be resolved as the FMU boundary is considered as a fire suppression operational boundary. The CWPP boundary is based on fuels planning and resource management for community fire protection.

Suppression Strategy-Suppression of fires in the WUI, Fire Management Units (FMU 1, 2, and 3) will receive the highest priority. Fires will be suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected consistent with resource objectives. All fires that do not expose firefighters to unacceptable risk will be initial attacked with the objective of control. During multiple ignition situations fires within FMU-1 will be prioritized based on values at risk and acceptable mitigation of risk to firefighters and the public.

Management Constraints or Criteria Affecting Operational Implementation

- Protect improvements and structures.

- Ensure there are no unacceptable impacts to cultural resources or T&E species.
- Resource advisors will be requested for any fire expected to have extended initial attack.

4.2.3. FMU Characteristics

4.2.3.1. Safety

- Light-flashy fuels, potential for rapid rates of spread
- Wildland-Urban Interface situations with potential for exposure to a wide range of hazards
- Dry cold-frontal passage winds with potential for down power lines, trees and an increase in human caused ignitions
- Military training routes that overlap the area

4.2.3.2. Physical

- FMU 1 is located entirely on the Republic Ranger District, and encompasses 152,293 acres. Most of this FMU lies within 0.5 and 1.5 miles of the Colville National Forest administrative boundary and includes all but a few acres of the private lands located within the administrative boundaries on the Republic Ranger District. There are some differences in what is included in this FMU and what is included in the Ferry County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). This difference may be resolved as the FMU boundary is considered and fire suppression operational boundary. The CWPP boundary is based on fuels planning and resource management for community fire protection.

4.2.3.3. Biological

- The fire regimes associated with the areas inclusive of FMU 1, are predominantly Fire Regime 1, which historically had frequent, low intensity, under-story fires. These sites are the warmest, driest habitat types on the Forest. Open stands of Douglas fir and Ponderosa pine were typical before fire suppression and timber harvest. Reported fire return intervals varied from 7-24 years in these fire regimes across the Colville Forest. During periods of high fire frequency, fuels were primarily herbaceous material and forest floor litter. After fire, suppression became effective, forest floor duff and live fuels such as shrubs and conifer regeneration has accumulated.

4.2.3.4. Weather

Precipitation amounts in FMU 1 are normally 16-20 inches annually. Snowmelt will occur the earliest in the areas covered by this FMU, with some of the lower elevation south slopes being intermittently bare throughout the winter. Human caused fires occur in the spring due to agricultural burning on adjacent private lands, but seldom spread on to Forest administered lands. Much of this FMU is available for prescribed burning by late-March to early-April. Subsequently the lower elevations in this FMU experience relatively early green-up and become less available for prescribed burning late-April to early-May.

Late spring rains coupled with green-up typically reduce fire behavior, occurrence and prescribed burning opportunities from mid-May to mid-June. Weather patterns become more dominated by high pressure and fuel moistures begin dropping at or near the

summer solstice. Throughout the remainder of the summer period, weather conditions and fuel moisture conditions will readily support moderate to extreme fire behavior conditions. Because much of this FMU consists of finer fuels, i.e. grass, long leaf needle cast, fire behavior will be greatly affected by summer thunderstorms and showers.

Prevailing wind direction is predominantly south to southwest during the fire season. However of note is a wind pattern associated with dry cold fronts that result in sustained high winds from the northwest. These winds are typically in 20-25 mile per hour range but can have gusts and periods of 60 mile per hour winds. This dry cold front pattern will also be associated with low relative humidity that increases the incidence of human caused fires.

4.2.4. FMU Fire Environment

Fire Season determination-Fire season typically lasts from the first of June until the middle of October. The general pattern is for fire potential to increase through June, with July, August, and September as the most active months for fire suppression. The arrival of the end of fire season is often initiated by fall rain events that may start around mid-September. During extended dry periods or during years of pronounced drought fire occurrence may begin early or extend later.

Fuel conditions in the FMU likely to influence fire behavior-The NFDRS, fuel model, in this FMU is predominantly C; with some G. Fire Behavior Fuel Models typically are FM 2, open pine with grass and, FM 9, long needle pine litter, and FM 10, heavy dead woody fuels. Generally, the rate of spread is moderate unless erratic winds or extreme fire weather occurs. Since there is a mixture of fuels, there are some varying rates of spread, but many factors also contribute to the expected fire behavior. Varying slope, aspect, continuity of fuels, and topography features affect a fire's rate of spread.

Control problems and dominant topographic features-There are a number of concerns associated with fires that occur in this FMU. Predominant is the adjacency to private land and intermingled industrial land ownerships. In addition, much of the area is covered under the reciprocal agreement, which dictates a high level of coordination with the Washington State DNR. Much of the area is on moderate to steep slopes and has inclusions of rock outcroppings that make access difficult. Prevailing wind patterns from the southwest align well with the major north to south valleys in the area to create conditions conducive to fire spread.

Fire regime alteration-Fire regime composition in the FMU is predominantly Fire Regime 1, which is expressed by fire return intervals of 0-35 years. The Quartzite fire history study depicted fire return intervals of 17 years in areas that are similar to those found in this FMU.

Fire regimes in this FMU are generally the most altered on the Forest. This will be expressed by more intense, sever wildfires than what historically occurred. Fire behavior will be typified by ground fires that cause more mortality both by more intense surface fires, increased torching, and in some cases sustained crown fires.

Other elements of the fire environment affecting management- Increased settlement of adjacent private lands is a concern as more structures are built near the Forest boundary. Smoke intrusions will become more of an issue as prescribed burning projects become focused on treatments in the WUI. These smoke intrusions may be small scale and short term in nature but coupled with the adjacency of the public will be cause for concern. Prescribed fire projects adjacent to WUI will also be cause for increased concern of escapes. Costs for implementing prescribed fire adjacent to private property will be more expensive and require staffing commensurate with the values at risk. This will have the effect of increasing overall program costs.

4.3 Fire Management Considerations for Fire Management Unit 2, Wildland-Urban Interface Central

4.3.1 FMU Snap Shot

- FMU Number: FMU 2-WUI Central
- Radio Frequency: Primary Repeater-Calispell Peak East
    - Rx 171.4750, Tone 146.2
    - Tx 164.6250, tone 110.9
- Fire Behavior Indicator: Energy Release Component
- NFDRS Weather Station: Owl Mountain, Lane Creek (Westside Pocket Card Station)
- Nearest Weather Station: Lane Creek
- Acres/Agency: 301,005
- Predominant Vegetation Types: Mixed Conifer, Ponderosa Pine, Douglas-fir, Lodgepole pine
- Unit: Three Rivers Ranger District
- IA assets assigned to this FMU:

Resource	*Position/Leader*	*Station*	*Unit Identifier*
Division Chief	District FMO	Three Rivers	Division 1
Battalion Chief	Suppression AFMO	Three Rivers	Battalion Chief 11
Battalion Chief	Fuels AFMO	Three Rivers	Battalion Chief 12
Fuels Tech	Fuels Tech	Three Rivers	LT 12
Type 6 Engine	Engine Captain	Three Rivers	Engine 11
Type 4 Engine	Engine Captain	Three Rivers	Engine 12
IA Module	Crew Captain	Three Rivers	Crew 101A
			Crew 101B

- Duty Officer: Division Chief and Battalion Chiefs
- IA Dispatch Office: NEWICC

- Communities adjacent or within FMU: Colville, Kettle Falls, Orient, Northport, Chewelah
- LMP Options available for response to ignition: Varies by Management Area
- Special safety considerations: Light flashy Fuels, Aviation Training Routes, Urban Interface,

4.3.2 FMU Guidance

FMU 2 WUI-Central

Forest plan desired conditions, standards, guidelines, and goals that pertain to wildland fire management are included in physical characteristics common to all FMUs. This is based on the overlap of multiple Forest Plan Management Areas in all of the FMUs with the exception of FMU 5, Salmo-Priest Wilderness. During management of a wildland fire the specific location should be reviewed as it pertains to Forest Plan direction

Suppression Strategy-Suppression of fires in the WUI, Fire Management Units (FMU 1, 2, and 3) will receive the highest priority. Fires will be suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected consistent with resource objectives. All fires that do not expose firefighters to unacceptable risk will be initial attacked with the objective of control. During multiple ignition situations fires within FMU-1 will be prioritized based on values at risk and acceptable mitigation of risk to firefighters and the public.

Management Constraints or Criteria Affecting Operational Implementation

- Protect improvements and structures.
- Ensure there are no unacceptable impacts to cultural resources or T&E species.
- Resource advisors will be requested for any fire expected to have extended initial attack.

4.3.3 FMU Characteristics

4.3.3.1 Safety

- Wildland-Urban Interface situations with potential of exposure to a wide range of hazards
- Dry cold-frontal passage winds with potential for down power lines, trees and an increase in human caused ignitions
- Military training routes that overlap the area

4.3.3.2 Physical

- This FMU is located on the Three Rivers District, encompasses 301,005 acres. Most of this FMU lies within 0.5 and 1.5 miles of the Colville National Forest administrative boundary. There are some differences in what is included in this FMU and what is included in the Stevens County and Ferry County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). This difference may be resolved as the FMU boundary is considered as a fire suppression operational boundary. The CWPP boundary is based on fuels planning and resource management for community fire protection.

4.3.3.3 Biological

- The fire regimes associated with the areas inclusive of FMU 2, are predominantly Fire Regime 1, which historically had frequent, low intensity, under-story fires. These sites are the warmest, driest habitat types on the Forest. Open stands of Douglas fir and Ponderosa pine were typical before fire suppression and timber harvest. Reported fire return intervals varied from 7-24 years in these fire regimes across the Colville Forest. During periods of high fire frequency, fuels were primarily herbaceous material and forest floor litter. After fire, suppression became effective, forest floor duff and live fuels such as shrubs and conifer regeneration has accumulated.

4.3.3.4 Weather

- Precipitation amounts in FMU 2 are normally 16-20 inches annually. Snowmelt will occur the earliest in the areas covered by this FMU, with some of the lower elevation south slopes being intermittently bare throughout the winter. Human caused fires occur in the spring due to agricultural burning on adjacent private lands, but seldom spread on to Forest administered lands. Much of this FMU is available for prescribed burning by late-March to early-April. Subsequently the lower elevations in this FMU experience relatively early green-up and become less available for prescribed burning late-April to early-May.

  Late spring rains coupled with green-up typically reduce fire behavior, occurrence and prescribed burning opportunities from mid-May to mid-June. Weather patterns become more dominated by high pressure and fuel moistures begin dropping at or near the summer solstice. Throughout the remainder of the summer period, weather conditions and fuel moisture conditions will readily support moderate to extreme fire behavior conditions. Because much of this FMU consists of finer fuels, i.e. grass, long leaf needle cast, fire behavior will be greatly affected by summer thunderstorms and showers.

4.3.4 FMU Fire Environment

Fire Season determination-Fire season usually lasts from the first of June until the middle of October. The general pattern is for fire potential to increase through June, with July, August, and September as the most active months for fire suppression. The arrival of the end of fire season is often initiated by fall rain events that may start around mid-September. There are occasional episodes of fire occurrence before and after the season but these are associated with drought years.

Fuel conditions in the FMU likely to influence fire behavior-The NFDRS, fuel model, in this FMU is predominantly C; with some G. Fire Behavior Fuel Models typically are FM 2, open pine with grass and, FM 9, long needle pine litter, and FM 10, heavy dead woody fuels. Generally, the rate of spread is moderate unless erratic winds or extreme fire weather occurs. Since there is a mixture of fuels, there are some varying rates of spread, but many factors also contribute to the expected fire behavior. Varying slope, aspect, continuity of fuels, and topography features affect a fire's rate of spread.

Control problems and dominant topographic features-There are a number of concerns associated with fires that occur in this FMU. Predominant is the adjacency to private land and intermingled industrial land ownerships. In addition, much of the area is

covered under the Reciprocal Agreement that dictates a high level of coordination with the Washington State DNR. Much of the area is on moderate to steep slopes and has inclusions of rock outcroppings that make access difficult. Prevailing wind patterns from the southwest align well with the major north to south valleys in the area to create conditions conducive to fire spread.

Fire regime alteration-Fire regime composition in the FMU is predominantly Fire Regime 1, which is expressed by fire return intervals of 0-35 years. The Quartzite fire history study depicted fire return intervals of 17 years in areas that are similar to those found in this FMU.

Fire regimes in this FMU are generally the most altered on the Forest. This will be expressed by more intense, sever wildfires than what historically occurred. Fire behavior will be typified by ground fires that cause more mortality both by more intense surface fires, increased torching, and in some cases sustained crown fires.

Other elements of the fire environment affecting management-Increased settlement of adjacent private lands will be an issue as more structures are built near the Forest boundary. Smoke intrusions will become more of an issue as prescribed burning projects become focused on treatments in the WUI. These smoke intrusions may be small scale and short term in nature but coupled with the adjacency of the public will be cause for concern. Prescribed fire projects adjacent to WUI will also be cause for increased concern of escapes. Costs for implementing prescribed fire adjacent to private property will be more expensive and require staffing commensurate with the values at risk. This will have the effect of increasing overall program costs.

4.4 Fire Management Considerations for Fire Management Unit 3, Wildland-Urban Interface East

4.4.1 FMU Snap Shot

- FMU Number: FMU 3-WUI East
- Radio Frequency: Primary Repeater- Calispell Peak East
    - Rx 171.4750, Tone 146.2
    - Tx 164.6250, tone 110.9
- Fire Behavior Indicator: Energy Release Component
- NFDRS Weather Station: Tacoma Creek(Westside Pocket Card Station)
- Nearest Weather Station: Tacoma Creek, Deer Mountain
- Acres/Agency: 179,562
- Predominant Vegetation Types: Mixed conifer, Ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, Cedar-Hemlock
- Unit: Newport-Sullivan Lake Ranger District
- IA assets assigned to this FMU:

Resource	*Position/Leader*	*Station*	*Unit Identifier*
Division Chief	District FMO	Sullivan Lake	Division 3
Battalion Chief	Suppression AFMO	Newport	Battalion Chief 31
Battalion Chief	Fuels AFMO	Newport	Battalion Chief 32

• **Battalion Chief**	• Suppression AFMO	• Sullivan Lake	• Battalion Chief 33
• **Type 6 Engine**	• Engine Captain	• Newport	• Engine 31
• **Type 4 Engine**	• Engine Captain	• Newport	• Engine 32
• **Type 6 Engine**	• Engine Captain	• Sullivan Lake	• Engine 34
• **IA Module**	• Crew Captain	• Newport	• Crew 301
• **IA Module**	• Crew Captain	• Sullivan Lake	• Crew 303
• **Fuels Tech**	• Fuels Tech	• Newport	• LT 32

- Duty Officer: Division Chief and Battalion Chiefs
- IA Dispatch Office: NEWICC
- Communities adjacent or within FMU: Newport, Ione, Metaline Falls
- LMP Options available for response to ignition: Varies by Management Area
- Special safety considerations: Steep terrain, heavy fuels

4.4.2 FMU 3 Guidance

FMU 3 WUI-East

Forest plan desired conditions, standards, guidelines, and goals that pertain to wildland fire management are included in physical characteristics common to all FMUs. This is based on the overlap of multiple Forest Plan Management Areas in all of the FMUs with the exception of FMU 5, Salmo-Priest Wilderness. During management of a wildland fire the specific location should be reviewed as it pertains to Forest Plan direction

Suppression Strategy-Suppression of fires in the WUI, Fire Management Units (FMU 1, 2, and 3) will receive the highest priority. Fires will be suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected consistent with resource objectives. All fires that do not expose firefighters to unacceptable risk will be initial attacked with the objective of control. During multiple ignition situations fires within FMU-1 will be prioritized based on values at risk and acceptable mitigation of risk to firefighters and the public.

Management Constraints or Criteria Affecting Operational Implementation

- Protect improvements and structures.
- Ensure there are no unacceptable impacts to cultural resources or T&E species.
- Resource advisors will be requested for any fire expected to have extended initial attack.

4.4.3 FMU Characteristics

4.4.3.1 Safety

- Wildland-Urban Interface situations with potential of exposure to a wide range of hazards
- Dry cold-frontal passage winds with potential for down power lines, trees and an increase in human caused ignitions

- Conflicts between Air Force Survival School aircraft, along with ignition sources presented by the associated activities

4.4.3.2 Physical

- This FMU is located on the Newport and Sullivan Lake Ranger Districts, encompasses 179,562 acres. Most of this FMU lies within 0.5 and 1.5 miles of the Colville National Forest administrative boundary. There are some differences in what is included in this FMU and what was originally developed as Wildland Urban Interface. It is anticipated that as Community Fire Protection Plans are developed and the Healthy Forest Restoration Act is implemented that areas that are not categorized as WUI will be included in this FMU. However, conversely it is anticipated that a high percentage of areas considered WUI during site specific planning and connected to HFRA will be overlapped by the FMU with few deviations.

4.4.3.3 Biological

The Fire Regimes in FMU-3 vary by aspect, elevation, and from the south end of the Pend Oreille Valley to the north end. The south end of the FMU is more associated with the Newport Ranger District is predominantly 3b (50-100 years, mixed-severity) on the west side of the district and a mixture of 3a (<50 years, mixed-severity) and 3b (50-100 years, mixed-severity), on the east side of the Pend Oreille River.

The areas that are Fire Regime 3b in this FMU are typified by mixtures of stands of ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, western larch, lodgepole pine and grand fir. Historically these areas burned in various arrangements of fire sizes and severity. However, due to fire suppression these areas are more susceptible to high intensity fires that are prone to stand replacement fire events**.**

The fire regimes in the northern half of FMU 3, areas associated with the Sullivan Lake Ranger District are predominantly in fire regime 4c, (100-200 years, stand replacement). There is also a significant amount of fire regime 3a, (mixed-severity, 50-100 years). The forested plant associations that make up the 4c fire regime are western red cedar and western hemlock series. These two series have similar fire ecology, which can be variable due to weather conditions. During severe droughts, these areas can exhibit stand replacing crown fires, which spreads from drier surrounding areas. During less than severe burning conditions, the cedar-hemlock forest types can act as barriers to fire spread.

4.4.3.4 Weather

Precipitation amounts on the east side of the Forest are significantly greater than on the west side. Precipitation amounts range from 16-40 inches; however, the major portion of the FMU has annual amounts in the 21-30 inch range. Lower elevation sites, with south and west aspects have periods prior to green-up where small human caused fires occur, these fires routinely do not require extended operational periods and resource commitments. Much of the FMU, specifically, north aspects, drainage bottoms and the northern areas do not experience favorable burning conditions until late-July to early-August in most years.

4.4.4 FMU Fire Environment

Fire Season determination-Fire season usually lasts from the first of June until the middle of October. The general pattern is for fire potential to increase through June, with July, August,

and September as the most active months for fire suppression. The arrival of the end of fire season is often initiated by fall rain events that may start around mid-September. There are occasional episodes of fire occurrence before and after the season but these are associated with drought years.

Fuel conditions in the FMU likely to influence fire behavior-The NFDRS, fuel model, in this FMU is predominantly C; with some G. Fire Behavior Fuel Models typically are FM 2, open pine with grass and, FM 9, long needle pine litter, and FM 10, heavy dead woody fuels. Generally, the rate of spread is moderate unless erratic winds or extreme fire weather occurs. Since there is a mixture of fuels, there are some varying rates of spread, but many factors also contribute to the expected fire behavior. Varying slope, aspect, continuity of fuels, and topography features affect a fire's rate of spread.

Control problems and dominant topographic features-There are a number of concerns associated with fires that occur in this FMU. Predominant is the adjacency to private land and intermingled industrial land ownerships. In addition, much of the area is covered under the Reciprocal Agreement that dictates a high level of coordination with the Washington State DNR. Much of the area is on moderate to steep slopes and has inclusions of rock outcroppings that make access difficult. Prevailing wind patterns from the southwest align well with the major north to south valleys in the area to create conditions conducive to fire spread.

Fire regime alteration-Fire regime composition in the FMU is predominantly Fire Regime 1, which is expressed by fire return intervals of 0-35 years. The Quartzite fire history study depicted fire return intervals of 17 years in areas that are similar to those found in this FMU.

Fire regimes in this FMU are generally the most altered on the Forest. This will be expressed by more intense, sever wildfires than what historically occurred. Fire behavior will be typified by ground fires that cause more mortality both by more intense surface fires, increased torching, and in some cases sustained crown fires.

Other elements of the fire environment affecting management-Increased settlement of adjacent private lands will be an issue as more structures are built near the Forest boundary. Smoke intrusions will become more of an issue as prescribed burning projects become focused on treatments in the WUI. These smoke intrusions may be small scale and short term in nature but coupled with the adjacency of the public will be cause for concern. Prescribed fire projects adjacent to WUI will also be cause for increased concern of escapes. Costs for implementing prescribed fire adjacent to private property will be more expensive and require staffing commensurate with the values at risk. This will have the effect of increasing overall program costs.

4.5 Fire Management Considerations for Fire Management Unit 4, General Forest

4.5.1 FMU Guidance

FMU 4 General Forest

Forest plan desired conditions, standards, guidelines, and goals that pertain to wildland fire management are included in physical characteristics common to all FMUs. This is based on the

overlap of multiple Forest Plan Management Areas in all of the FMUs with the exception of FMU 5, Salmo-Priest Wilderness. During management of a wildland fire the specific location should be reviewed as it pertains to Forest Plan direction

Suppression Strategy-Fires will be suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected consistent with resource objectives. All fires that do not expose firefighters to unacceptable risk will be initial attacked with the objective of control. During multiple ignition situations, fires within FMU-4 will receive less priority than ignitions within FMU 1, 2, and 3.

Multiple Objectives for Large Fire – Within FMU 4 there are opportunities for managing large fires for multiple objectives. The Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) should be utilized to evaluate and document those opportunities to manage fires consistent with Forest Plan standards and guides, while minimizing exposure to firefighters and allowing fires to express desirable ecological benefits.

Management Constraints or Criteria Affecting Operational Implementation

- Protect improvements and structures.
- Ensure there are no unacceptable impacts to cultural resources or T&E species.
- Resource advisors will be requested for any fire expected to have extended initial attack.

4.5.2 FMU Characteristics

4.5.2.1 Safety

- Dry cold-frontal passage winds with potential for down power lines, trees and an increase in human caused ignitions
- Military training exercises that include potential aircraft conflicts
- Steep terrain with unbroken vegetation patterns make egress slow along escape routes and make safety zones difficult to establish

4.5.2.2 Physical

- The General Forest, FMU-4 consists of all of the area on the Forest that is not included within FMU-1, 2, 3, 5. This FMU is defined as the non-WUI areas and excludes the Salmo-Priest Wilderness Area. The area covered by FMU 4 consists of 435,157 acres.

4.5.2.3 Weather

- Due to the widespread nature of FMU 4, there is great variation in the weather conditions that may occur during a given fire season. Elevation and associated precipitation are the major influences in the variation within the FMU. The discussion earlier in this chapter that describes general climate information should be referenced as it applies to FMU 4.

4.5.3 FMU Fire Environment

Fire Season determination-The general pattern is for fire potential to increase through July, be the highest during early to late August, and diminish after the first of September. The arrival of the end of fire season is often signaled by the first significant rainfall after the first of September

in the northern portions of the FMU and late September to mid October in the southern portions of the FMU.

Higher elevation areas will typically not experience weather conditions and fuel moisture conditions conducive to active burning conditions until late July to early August. When these conditions are present, the potential for large stand replacement fire exists.

Fuel conditions in the FMU likely to influence fire behavior-The fuel type in this FMU is predominantly NFDRS fuel models H and G, which relate to Fire Behavior Fuel Models 8 and 10. FM 8 is typified by short-needle surface litter, which is specifically associated with lodgepole pine stands, and Douglas fir stands with minor amounts or larger dead fuels. Slow-burning ground fires with low flame lengths are generally the case in FM 8. FM 10 is typically associated with mixed confer stands where significant amounts of larger down and dead fuels have accumulated. Crowning, spotting, and torching of individual trees are more frequent in this fuel situation, leading to potential fire control difficulties. Generally, the rate of spread is moderate unless erratic winds or extreme fire weather occurs. Sustained crown fires can occur in the stand conditions throughout this FMU, since most stands are dense, with closed canopies and significant ladder fuels

The major risks to firefighters include heavy fuels, steep slopes and poor access. Long range spotting, torching and crown fires runs are also a concern when fuel moistures are low.

Fire regime alteration-Areas included the mixed severity fire regimes have a higher risk to severe fire effects than historical would have occurred within the natural fire regimes. Areas of fire regime 1 are included in this FMU and in those areas; condition class and uncharacteristic wildfires will occur that will exhibit stand replacement fire behavior, where historically low intensity ground fires occurred.

Control problems and dominant topographic features-There are a number of concerns associated with fires that occur in FMU 4. Predominant is the adjacency to private land and intermingled industrial land ownerships. In addition, much of the area is covered under the Reciprocal Agreement that dictates a high level of coordination with the Washington State DNR. Much of the area is on moderate to steep slope and has inclusions of rock outcroppings that make access difficult. Prevailing wind patterns from the southwest align well with the major north to south valleys in the area to create conditions conducive to fire spread.

Dense stands of overstocked trees that create high crown densities, extensive ladder fuels and a long term build up of surface fuels provide good conditions for crown fire behavior and spread. The conditions for large crown fires occur only under the driest of conditions, yet when they do occur large high intensity crown fires are probable.

Roadless areas included in the FMU pose access problems. These access problems require that aerially delivered fire fighters be used as the most effect means of suppressing fires.

Other elements of the fire environment affecting management-Over 500,000 acres of the Forest burned between 1910 and 1940. The stands that have developed in the period since are generally unbroken homogeneous landscapes that have become predisposed to large-scale wildfires.

4.6 Fire Management Considerations Fire Management Unit 5, Salmo-Priest Wilderness

4.6.1 FMU Snap Shot

- FMU Number: FMU 5 Salmo-Priest Wilderness
- East Radio Frequency: Primary Repeater-
- Fire Behavior Indicator: Energy Release Component
- NFDRS Weather Station: Deer Mountain, Tacoma Creek (Eastside Pocket Card Station)
- Nearest Weather Station: Deer Mountain
- Acres/Agency: 31,459
- Predominant Vegetation Types: Mixed Conifer
- Unit: Sullivan Lake Ranger District
- IA assets assigned to this FMU:

Resource	*Position/Leader*	*Station*	*Unit Identifier*
Division Chief	District FMO	Sullivan Lake	Division 3
Battalion Chief	Suppression AFMO	Newport	Battalion Chief 31
Battalion Chief	Fuels AFMO	Newport	Battalion Chief 32
Battalion Chief	Suppression AFMO	Sullivan Lake	Battalion Chief 33
Type 6 Engine	Engine Captain	Newport	Engine 31
Type 4 Engine	Engine Captain	Newport	Engine 32
Type 6 Engine	Engine Captain	Sullivan Lake	Engine 34
IA Module	Crew Captain	Newport	Crew 301
IA Module	Crew Captain	Sullivan Lake	Crew 303
Fuels Tech	Fuels Tech	Newport	LT 32

- Duty Officer: Division Chief and Battalion Chiefs
- IA Dispatch Office: NEWICC
- Communities adjacent or within FMU: Metaline Falls
- LMP Options available for response to ignition: Suppression
- Special safety considerations: Steep Terrain, Difficult Access

4.6.2 FMU Guidance

FMU 5, Salmo-Priest Wilderness FMU-5 consists of the Salmo-Priest Wilderness Area that is within the Colville National Forest boundary and is entirely on the Sullivan Lake Ranger District it covers 31,459 acres. Most of the area in FMU-5 is within Fire Regime 4b, 100 years+, stand-replacing, patchy arrangement and 4c, 100-200 years, stand replacing.

Suppression Strategy-Fires will be managed with a suppression objective. Minimum impact suppression tactics will be utilized. The use of power saws, pumps, and landing of helicopters will require District Ranger approval.

Management Constraints or Criteria Affecting Operational Implementation

- Protect improvements and structures.
- Ensure there are no unacceptable impacts to cultural resources or T&E species.
- Resource advisors will be requested for any fire expected to have extended initial attack.
- Conduct all fire management activities in a manner compatible with wilderness management objectives.
- Utilize minimum impact suppression tactics.
- Utilize natural barriers when possible to minimize suppression impacts.

4.6.3 FMU Characteristics

4.6.3.1 Safety

- Steep terrain with unbroken vegetation patterns make egress slow along escape routes and make safety zones difficult to establish
- Numerous snags and dead trees that present hazards to firefighters
- Utilization of aircraft and aerial delivered firefighters

4.6.3.2 Physical

- FMU-5 consists of the Salmo-Priest Wilderness Area that is within the Colville National Forest boundary and is entirely on the Sullivan Lake Ranger District it covers 31,459 acres

4.6.3.3 Weather

- FMU 5 is covered by an area that has the highest annual precipitation on the Forest, which ranges from 30-50 inches. As is typical with much of the higher elevation areas of the Forest, fire behavior will typically be low to moderate until late July-early August.

4.6.4 FMU Fire Environment

Fire Season determination

The general pattern is for fire potential to increase through July, be the highest during early to late August, and diminish after early September. The arrival of the end of fire season is often

signaled by the first significant rainfall after the first of September in the northern portions of the FMU and late September to mid October in the southern portions of the FMU.

Higher elevation areas will typically not experience weather conditions and fuel moisture conditions conducive to active burning conditions until late July to early August. When these conditions are present potential for large stand replacement fire exists.

Fire regime alteration
One of the major concerns for long-term ecosystem management of the areas included in FMU 5 is the viability of whitebark pine, both as a species and the habitat that it provides various species of wildlife. Fire exclusion along with, whitepine blister rust and mountain pine beetles makes the long-term prognosis for the species problematic.

Control problems and dominant topographic features
Access concerns, steep inaccessible rocky slopes make much of the area difficult to suppression resources. Aerial delivered resources are the best option for quick response to initial attack fires.

Other elements of the fire environment affecting management
The current requirement in the Forest Plan requires that all ignitions be in the Salmo-Priest Wilderness be managed with a suppression strategy. The overall objective is to minimize impact to Woodland Caribou habitat.