

# RIO BLANCO COUNTY WILDLAND FIRE OPERATING PLAN

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## **PREAMBLE**

This operating plan (OP) is prepared pursuant to the Statewide Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement (Statewide Agreement) for the State of Colorado and the Statewide Fire Operating Plan.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this operating plan is to set forth standard operating procedures, agreed upon procedures, and responsibilities to implement cooperative wildland fire protection on all lands within Rio Blanco County.

## **AUTHORITIES**

- Colorado Statewide Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement Between:
  - ○ United States Department of the Interior
    - Bureau of Land Management
    - National Park Service
    - Bureau of Indian Affairs
    - U.S. Fish and Wildlife -COLO\_COOP\_2021-FF06R03000
  - ○ United States Department of Agriculture
    - Forest Service – Rocky Mountain Region Agreement Number 21-FI-11020000-001
    - Forest Service – MBRTB Agreement Number 21-FO-11020600-046
- Rio Blanco County Memorandum of Understanding For Participation in the Colorado Emergency Fire Fund
- Agreement for Cooperative Wildfire Protection in Rio Blanco County

## **RECITALS**

National Response Framework activities will be accomplished utilizing established dispatch coordination concepts. Situation and damage assessments information will be transmitted through established fire suppression intelligence channels.

Jurisdictional Agencies are responsible for all planning documents i.e. land use, resource and fire management plans and decision support documents, for a unit's wildland fire and fuels management program.

Protecting Agencies implements the actions documented and directed by the appropriate planning documents and decision support documents for initial and extended attack on wildfire incidents. They provide the supervision and support including operational oversight, direction and logistical support to Incident Management Teams.

## **INTERAGENCY COOPERATION**

### **Jurisdictional Roles**

Federal jurisdictional agencies have responsibility for wildfire protection on federal lands. Within Fire Protection Districts, the Fire Chief is responsible for fire protection on non-federal lands, until this responsibility is transferred by mutual consent to the County Sheriff (per C.R.S. 30-10-513) (**Attachment A-1**). The County Sheriff is responsible for wildfire protection on all non-federal lands in the County outside of Fire Protection Districts. In Rio Blanco County there are no nonfederal lands outside of a Fire Protection District. The Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC) does not have jurisdiction on any lands, until responsibility is transferred by mutual consent from the County Sheriff to the State under the State's Assumption of Control procedures.

### **Interagency Dispatch Centers**

Rio Blanco County utilizes a communication center, located in Meeker. The communication center shall be used for fire incidents on lands under the County Sheriff's jurisdiction. In this plan, this center shall be referred to as County Communications.

County Communications and the applicable Interagency Dispatch Center (IDC), will meet annually to discuss dispatch coordination procedures. County Communications and IDC will receive reports of wildfires and coordinate the timely notification and/or dispatch of the appropriate jurisdictional agency and County Sheriff for all wildfires, regardless of location.

The closest forces should be dispatched without regard to jurisdiction, per the interagency mutual aid provision of this plan. The jurisdictional agency should assume responsibility for suppression at the earliest possible time, or as otherwise agreed. No Party to this Agreement shall be required to make resources or assistance available to the requesting Party, if by so doing would impair the Party's ability to provide effective emergency services within its own service area.

The Rio Blanco County Community Wildfire Protection Plan identifies all lands under the Sheriff's jurisdiction as full fire suppression. However, it is recognized that federal agencies may apply "Management of Multiple Objectives" tactics on lands within their jurisdiction. Agencies taking independent action within another agency's jurisdiction should notify that agency as soon as possible, in order to avoid conflicting land management objectives.

However, it is agreed that there should be no delay in initial attack pending determination of the precise location of the fire, land ownership, or responsibility.

All requests by Rio Blanco County agencies for additional resources and assistance beyond initial attack shall be through County Communications. Requests for assistance beyond the capabilities of Rio Blanco County shall be made through the appropriate IDC within the Upper Colorado River Dispatch Zone.

It is understood by fire departments in Rio Blanco County, that all requests for initial attack aircraft assistance on wildfires will be made directly to the appropriate IDC.

Requests by federal agencies for assistance from Rio Blanco County agencies shall be made through the appropriate IDC to County Communications.

If the fire is on or threatening state or private land, and is expected to exceed the control capabilities of the County, the DFPC Battalion Chief (BC) will be notified by the Agency Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). Colorado OEM will be notified for consequence management, if needed. The 24hr State Emergency Operations number for notification is: 303-279-8855.

## **Interagency Resources**

### **FIRE PROTECTION RESOURCES**

Cooperator resources available for fire suppression beyond the mutual aid period are covered by a Cooperator Resource Rate Form (CRRF) and are listed in the federal Incident Resource Ordering Capability (IROC) formally known as ROSS.

### **DIRECTORY OF PERSONNEL AND/OR AUTHORIZED AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES**

See **Attachment B-1** for resource and contact information from local agencies, from the Rio Blanco County Fire Mobilization Plan.

## **Standards**

### **PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS**

The Incident Command System (ICS) will be used on all wildfires in Rio Blanco County.

During the mutual period the agency's home unit assumes responsibility for their resources.

Personnel responding to incidents on BLM and USFS Lands must meet the following requirements;

- Be 18 years of age or older;
- Have and use required personal protective equipment (PPE) found in chapter 7 of the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book); and
- Hold the qualification of NWCG Firefighter Type 2.

Use of a local Type 3 Team is strongly encouraged on wildfire incidents that are expected to extend beyond the mutual aid period, involve multi-jurisdictional lands, or where use of handcrews and/or aircraft is anticipated in extended attack. A Type 3 Team may be filled from a local cadre of qualified individuals, or one of the Type 3 teams organized within Western Colorado may be utilized. This Type 3 Team may be used as an interagency Incident Management Group (IMG) for Type 3 incidents, or as a transition team on those incidents of Type 1 or 2 complexity. On Type 3 incidents where, federal resources have been ordered, the ICT3 position must be fully qualified, as per NWCG standards. NWCG qualification cards "red cards" are required for all personnel assigned to fires on federal jurisdiction lands, beyond the initial attack period.

If Rio Blanco County emergency management agencies wish to develop the ICS skills of their personnel for use on all-risk incidents within the County, the USFS and BLM will strive to provide on-the-job training opportunities for qualified, targeted local agency personnel. These personnel will provide, to the applicable Interagency Dispatch Center (IDC), 24-hour contact phone numbers and dates of availability for training assignments.

### **EQUIPMENT INSPECTIONS**

Equipment will be inspected based on need as determined by the agency responsible for such equipment. DFPC and cooperator engines subject to interagency fire use will be inspected at least annually to ensure use and road worthiness.

## PREPAREDNESS

### Protection Planning

N/A

#### Protection Areas and Boundaries

Wildfire jurisdiction for the County Sheriff (private and state lands), Fire Protection Districts, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the National Park Service (NPS), are shown on, BLM 1: 100,000 scale color surface management status maps (see **Attachment C-1**, Wildfire Protection Area Map).

The BLM 1:100,000 scale color surface management status map is used to show wildfire control jurisdiction for the purpose of this plan. Refer to the map legend for jurisdictional agency; however generally these map colors correspond to:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Map Color</u>
Fire Districts	blue and white
National Park Service	purple
U.S. Forest Service	green
Bureau of Land Management	yellow

#### Reciprocal (Mutual Aid) Fire Assistance

##### MUTUAL AID PERIOD

The mutual aid period is defined as the time of initial dispatch and ends at either midnight of the first operational period or midnight of the second operational period as determined by the agency(s) with the jurisdictional land(s). All mutual aid periods will preferably end at midnight for ease of financial accounting and the development of cost share agreements. It is understood that no agency will be required or expected to commit its forces through mutual aid to assist another agency to the extent of jeopardizing the security or responsibilities of its own jurisdiction.

##### MUTUAL AID RESOURCES

Mutual aid wildfire protection has been established County-wide between all signatories to this plan. It is agreed that there should be no delay in initial attack pending determination of the precise location of the fire, land ownership, or responsibility. All State, federal and local resources are considered mutual aid. The Jurisdictional Agency will not be required to reimburse the Supporting Agency(s) for costs incurred following the initial dispatch of any ground and aviation resources to the fire for the duration of the mutual aid period. Assistance beyond the Mutual Aid period will be reimbursable assistance, and the Supporting Agency may bill the Jurisdictional Agency for resources assigned to the fire outside the Mutual Aid period. It is understood that no supporting Agency will be required to assist, or expected to commit resources to a Jurisdictional Agency. The non-reimbursable mutual aid period will also apply to any local Incident Management Group (IMG) or local Multi Agency Coordination (MAC) group which may form to provide overhead fire assistance

##### RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

The primary purpose of this operating plan is to ensure prompt suppression of wildland fires. Any interagency dispute arising from these procedures will be resolved on site by the Unified

Command Group. When necessary, following the conclusion of the fire incident, a panel of agency representatives including the participants in the incident will review and resolve the dispute.

## **Acquisition of Services**

N/A

## **Joint Projects and Project Plans**

This OP is the only example of an interagency wildfire plan in use for the County.

## **Fire Prevention**

### **INTERAGENCY COORDINATION**

Cooperating agencies should coordinate prevention efforts to provide uniform and consistent information to the public. News releases should be coordinated to prevent duplication and maintain a consistent message to the public.

### **RED FLAG WARNINGS**

GJC and CRC will provide appropriate fire status/information (updated daily) by maintaining an internet website for the purposes of disseminating the following information: Red Flag notices, fire weather, fire situation, fire resources, national fire danger (NFDRS) observations, and other appropriate wildfire information. This and other fire related sites can be accessed through: [https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch\\_centers/r2gjc/index.html](https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2gjc/index.html)

[https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch\\_centers/r2crc/](https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2crc/)

## **Public Use Restrictions**

Requests for restrictions prohibiting open fires during hazardous periods should be coordinated to include private, state, and federal lands when possible. Requests will be made by the jurisdictional agency with notification given to all other agencies. Requests should be submitted in writing to the respective granting authority. The granting authority and jurisdictional agency shall jointly prepare and promptly distribute media releases concerning the restriction. In the case of any restrictions on burning or public movements because of extreme fire danger, either by Governor's proclamation or by local issue, the County Sheriff will be responsible for enforcement on all non-federal lands, and may assist on other lands at the request of the appropriate agency. The County Fire Restriction Process is located in **Attachment D-1**.

## **Burning Permits**

N/A

## **Prescribed Fire (Planned Ignitions) and Fuels Management**

### **INTERAGENCY COORDINATION**

The agencies agree to cooperate in the development and implementation of prescribed burning programs and projects (prescribed natural as well as planned ignition).

Wildfires resulting from escaped prescribed fires ignited by a party to this plan on lands it manages, shall be the responsibility of that party. The party responsible for the prescribed fire will reimburse other parties to this plan consistent with the terms and conditions contained herein for costs incurred in suppression of such fires.



If parties to this plan conduct a cooperative prescribed fire, details covering cost sharing, reimbursement, and responsibility for suppression costs, should it escape, shall be agreed upon and documented in the burn plan.

## **Smoke Management**

N/A

## **OPERATIONS**

### **Fire Notifications**

N/A

### **Boundary Line Fires**

#### **UNIFIED COMMAND**

If a wildfire crosses or threatens jurisdictional boundaries and becomes a multi-agency fire, a Unified Command will be formed and will consist of representatives of all jurisdictional agencies involved. The purpose of Unified Command will be to meet as a group in order to identify policies, objectives, strategy, and tactics resulting in one common set of objectives, which will then be given to a single Incident Commander for tactical implementation.

### **Response to Wildland Fire**

#### **SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

BLM lands operate under the Northwest Colorado Fire Management Plan. USFS lands operate under the Medicine Bow/Routt National Forest Fire Plan, the White River National Forest Fire Plan, the USDA National Aviation Safety and Management Plan and the BLM Colorado State Aviation Plan. These plans outline various management responses to wildland fire. The management response within designated Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, "roadless" areas, and/or other areas may be less than direct full suppression and will be conducted under the direction of the jurisdictional federal official.

All unplanned fires on federal land require a response and a decision. This is best communicated with clear objectives and an "incident strategy". The incident strategy should be based on the following criteria:

- Should lead to meeting the objectives
- Risk to firefighters (Life First Concepts/Risk Management – probability and the consequences of fire impacting values at risk vs. the risk to firefighters put in place to mitigate the risk of fire impacting values.)
- Fuels, Weather and Topography influencing the fire and the anticipated spread of the fire
- Values truly at Risk: Communities, Infrastructure, Watersheds, Social, Ecological, Cultural, etc.
- Partner agencies and their objectives (if the fire is or is expected to be multi-jurisdictional)
- Cost of meeting objectives
- Smoke Management: Coordination with the States and monitoring
- Desired conditions (outlined in a Land Management Plan or other documents)
- Resource Availability
- Fire modelling Tools
- Seasonality – duration of fire/change in conditions

Agency Administrators and Fire Managers should assess the criteria above and then develop a strategy to successfully manage the fire, and meet objectives. The strategy may use natural barriers, changes in weather, fuel changes or rely heavily on the efforts of firefighters and aircraft. It could be a combination of all these elements (and usually is).

#### EQUIPMENT USE

Any other loaning, sharing, exchanging, or maintenance of facilities, equipment, or support services will be considered on a case by case basis and must be mutually agreed upon by the concerned parties.

#### USE OF MECHANIZED EQUIPMENT

Use of mechanized line construction equipment, such as bulldozers and graders on federal lands, requires approval of the agency administrator of the jurisdictional agency.

#### FIRE OPERATIONS IN BEETLE KILL STANDS

Rio Blanco County has a significant amount of beetle killed trees. Due to altered fuel conditions from these trees, personnel operating within the bark beetle environment should be aware of the imminent danger presented by dead and dying trees falling at an increasing rate across a broad forested landscape. The *USFS-R2 Fire Operations Guidance in Bark Beetle Stands* should be utilized when personnel are operating within the bark beetle environment. These guidelines can be found in the Interagency Field Ops Guide or on the Interagency Dispatch website located at: [https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch\\_centers/r2crc/index.htm](https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2crc/index.htm)

#### NON-WILDFIRE EMERGENCIES

The responsibility for incidents, other than wildland fire emergencies, rests with the jurisdictional agency(s). A mutual aid period does not apply to these incidents, unless superseded by other existing agreement(s).

#### USE OF STATE EMERGENCY FIRE FUND (EFF)

The State Emergency Fire Fund (EFF) is strictly a fire suppression fund, and cannot pay for rehabilitation. However, repair of damage directly related to suppression (e.g. water bars on cat lines) may be authorized by the DFPC Agency Administrator if accomplished as a suppression component at the time of the fire suppression effort. The State EFF cannot be used to manage fires solely for resource benefit.

#### AFTER ACTION REVIEWS

Following all wildfires, the jurisdictional agency will conduct a timely incident analysis at a level commensurate with the complexity of the incident. Supporting agencies shall be included in these reviews.

#### Decision Process

For federal and state jurisdiction fires, a Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) or other decision support document (as appropriate) will be prepared on all wildfires that escape initial attack. This important evaluation tool is used to select strategic alternatives, and is especially useful to an incoming Incident Management Team.

#### Cooperation

N/A

**Communication**

Interagency communications on wildland fire incidents will be on VHF narrowband frequencies only. The Fire Emergency Radio Network (VFIRE21) (154.2800 MHz) will be used for interagency communication of ground resources on wildland fires, unless or until alternate frequencies are agreed on. Air to ground communications will use the frequencies listed in either the Interagency Dispatch Centers Field Operations Guide.

For the purposes of conducting business authorized by this cooperative plan, all parties to this operating plan agree that supporting agencies may use the jurisdictional agency's radio frequencies as needed to conduct emergency communications on fires of the jurisdictional agency. No party to this operating plan will use, or authorize others to use, another agency's radio frequencies for routine day to day operations. Fire protection districts on incident management missions, under the auspices of the County, are granted permission to use federal radio frequencies, if needed, to assure safety of the operation.

**Cost efficiency**

N/A

**Delegation of Authority**

N/A

**Preservation of Evidence****FIRE INVESTIGATIONS**

The jurisdictional agency shall have responsibility for the investigation of all fires. If there are multiple agencies having jurisdiction the investigation shall be conducted jointly. Investigation shall be made on fires to determine cause, responsible party, time of ignition, and all other information relating to fire cause. Fire cause determination is needed for EFF incidents and required for FEMA incidents. Although an assisting agency may have a fire extinguished upon arrival of the jurisdictional agency's forces, the jurisdictional agency should discuss the fire with the assisting agency to aid in the investigation and take steps to preserve the point of origin.

**STATE EMERGENCY FIRE FUND (EFF)**

Rio Blanco County is a participant in the Emergency Fire Fund (EFF) with DFPC. As a participant to this agreement, the State agrees to come to the aid of Rio Blanco County should suppression resource needs exceed the County capability. The roles and responsibilities under EFF are as follows:

DFPC: A DFPC representative must be on site for an EFF evaluation. DFPC will assist the County Sheriff in the analysis of the fire's actual or potential condition to exceed the County's suppression capability. This information will be provided to the DFPC Director or designee who will make the final decision on EFF applicability.

Rio Blanco County Sheriff: as Fire Warden for the County (CRS 30-10-513), the Sheriff will represent the County in the request for EFF declaration to the DFPC, and subsequent assumption of control and delegation of authority (DFPC 4, DFPC 5). The Sheriff will coordinate strategic

planning and logistical support for other County entities in his representation. The County fire departments will be responsible for tactical implementation.

Rio Blanco County Commissioners: are signatories to the DFPC 4 "Assumption of Control" for fires the DFPC Director or designee approves for EFF. The Sheriff will facilitate obtaining a signature from the County Commissioners. Delay in signing the DFPC 4 may result in increased costs for the County.

Federal Agencies: are almost always involved even when the fire is entirely on private or state land. Their policies and concerns must be addressed on all fires.

EFF fires may utilize a Unified Command, if appropriate, and include the County Sheriff and DFPC as Agency Administrators. If land administered by another agency is threatened or involved, that agency will provide a member to the MAC Group.

Implementation of the EFF is at the discretion of the DFPC Director or designee upon the recommendation of the local DFPC Representative, following a request from the County Sheriff. For this reason, it is important that the DFPC BC be notified immediately of major fires on private/state lands within the County. Should the fire surpass, or threaten to surpass, the ability of County resources to contain it, EFF implementation can occur only with a DFPC representative on scene.

All EFF participating Counties must have identified a minimum County commitment to any incident which has EFF potential. This is not a maximum County resource commitment, and is not the only resources the County is required to use on the incident in order to request EFF implementation. It is understood that if tactics of a given incident make some of this equipment inappropriate, alternate resources can be negotiated.

For Rio Blanco County this minimum commitment is:

1 dozer or road grader, 1 water tender, law enforcement support

DFPC will transfer command of an EFF fire back to the County when fire spread has been contained, the Agency Administrator's objectives have been met, and a written plan has been prepared for the next operational period.

## **USE AND REIMBURSEMENT OF INTERAGENCY FIRE RESOURCES**

### **Cost Share Agreement (Cost Share Methodologies)**

A written cost sharing agreement should be considered for any mixed-jurisdiction fire that escapes initial attack, particularly when air resources have been ordered. However, cost sharing agreements should not influence the suppression of the fire. Cost sharing agreements may be negotiated after the fire is out; such agreements between the state and/or counties and federal land fire managers can be updated daily or whenever necessary. Refer to the Cost Share Agreement Template (**Attachment E-1**) for an example of this agreement.

If it is not a State Responsibility (non-EFF incident), it is up to the County (with DFPC assistance, if needed) to negotiate cost sharing on federal/state & private land fires, if any. It is acceptable (and frequent) for each party to agree to pay for their own resources.

All costs, beyond the mutual aid period and documented through the resource order process shall be considered reimbursable. When a wildfire occurs on lands of more than one agency and costs are incurred in addition to the initial attack, one of the following options may be used to determine reimbursable costs to the agencies involved:

- a. Each agency assumes its own costs as expended by it in the fire control effort.
- b. Division of fire costs based upon ownership and/or acreage percentages.
- c. Each agency agrees to a portion of the suppression costs.

## **Training**

Standard approved fire training courses are provided periodically by DFPC, USFS, BLM, NPS, and other agencies. As these courses are scheduled, all cooperators will be informed and invited to participate.

## **Communication Systems**

N/A

## **Fire Weather Systems**

N/A

## **Aviation Operations**

### **ORDERING AIRCRAFT**

All initial attack aircraft ordered by Cooperators in Rio Blanco County will be ordered directly through GJC or IDC. The primary way to order aircraft for initial attack incidents is on the radio through the applicable Interagency Dispatch Center. The order should be made on the federal incident command frequency/channel found in the Interagency Field Operations Guide. This will help confirm that ground resources on the incident have communication with incoming aviation resources.

When aircraft is requested by any agency for suppression efforts, the request should include the following:

- Name and agency of person ordering
- Name and location of fire, geographical or township/range
- Additional information that is helpful:
- Lat/Long in preferred datum WGS 84 degrees/minutes/decimal minutes
- Elevation of the fire
- Name and radio frequency of ground contact at the fire. FM Air to Ground frequencies must be used, No VFIRE or non-federal frequencies.
- Other aircraft in the area, including radio frequencies in use.
- Aircraft hazards in the area.
- Aerial Retardant Use - the use of aerial retardants on federal lands is restricted within 300 feet of lakes, rivers and live streams unless determined otherwise by local land management policy.
- Values at risk and the estimated time of impact.

Cooperators ordering aircraft will use **Attachment F-1**, Air Support Request Form, prior to calling GJC or CRC.

### PREPOSITIONING OF DFPC SEATS

When a combination of factors or events, as agreed to by the Sheriff and DFPC, create a situation that warrants pre-positioning of a DFPC contracted single engine air tanker (SEAT) in Rio Blanco County, the Sheriff should request through the DFPC BC. Factors may include, but are not limited to, multiple starts within a 24-hour period, high occurrence of dry lightning, persistent Red Flag Warnings, or the unavailability of other air tankers.

### MULTI-MISSION AIRCRAFT (MMA)

To order the MMA, place the request through the appropriate Interagency Dispatch Center.

### NATIONAL GUARD AIRCRAFT

Colorado Army National Guard helicopters are available for wildfire suppression on state and private lands. Request procedure is through the Sheriff to the IDC or GJC. These aircraft are certified to operate on wildfires and have programmable radio capability. National Guard response time will vary on depending on fire location and their availability. The use of these helicopters must be authorized by the Governor.

### WILDFIRE EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND (WERF)

The Wildfire Emergency Response Fund (WERF) is intended to reimburse the local/County nonfederal agency for the first air resource or the use of handcrews per the WERF guidelines. The WERF only applies to fires on private or state land and only at the request of the Sheriff, fire department, or fire protection district.

### COLORADO FIREFIGHTING AIR CORPS

The Colorado Firefighting Air Corps (CFAC) (Ref: Colorado State Statue C.R.S. §24-33.5-1228) program is intended to assist local jurisdictions beyond WERF with initial attack wildland fire response on state and private lands within the state of Colorado. Any County Sheriff, municipal fire department, or fire protection district within Colorado may request aviation resources as the official Requesting Agency, utilizing ordering procedures defined in this County Operating Plan. DFPC will pay the cost of eligible wildland firefighting aviation resources on behalf of the Requesting Agency, in accordance with the funding guidelines—to the extent that funding is available.

## **Billing Procedures**

All billing between Federal and County agencies will be submitted through DFPC. All local Cooperator resources reimbursed through DFPC shall use a CRRF to document their resource cost. DFPC cannot reimburse Cooperators without an approved CRRF. The Department of Public Safety Cooperative Resource Rate Form (CRRF) is updated every three years. Resources other than Cooperators will be considered as Contractors, and the jurisdictional agency will be billed directly for their costs. Federal Excess Property Program (FEPP) fire engines are considered state resources. Reimbursement for these engines shall be made directly to the state, however local cooperator (fire department) engine operators may be hired by the jurisdictional agency using agreed upon firefighter rates.

All Cooperator requests for fire reimbursement through DFPC will have invoices sent directly to the DFPC Finance Office within 30 days after incident resources are released. The DFPC Finance Office will attempt to make payment as soon as possible after receiving the invoice. Invoices are required to have proper documentation supporting expenses before the process for payment can

be completed. The DFPC BCs are available to assist Cooperators with submission of reimbursement requests.

### **Cost Recovery**

The reimbursement process may not be finalized within the fiscal year in which the incident occurred. Agencies may need to carry over funds to cover costs estimated at the time of the fire.

#### **AUTHORITY TO OBLIGATE MONEY**

Local agencies do not have authority to obligate federal agencies to pay for expenses incurred in fire suppression (even when on federal lands). Similarly, federal agencies do not have authority to obligate state or counties to pay for any federal expense incurred in fire suppression (even when on private and state lands) without an agreement in place. Lacking consultation with the jurisdictional agency, and until a cost-share agreement is in place, the rule “if you order it, you pay for it” generally applies when requesting non-mutual aid resources.

## **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Personnel Policy**

N/A

### **Modification**

Modifications within the scope of this Operating Plan shall be made by mutual consent of the Parties, through the issuance of a written modification signed and dated by all Parties prior to any changes being performed. Any Party shall have the right to terminate their participation under this Operating Plan by providing six months’ written notice to the other Parties.

### **Annual Review**

This Operating Plan should be reviewed annually. Program review will be held at the annual fire operating plan meeting in the spring. This Operating Plan will remain current until a revised Operating Plan is signed by all parties.

### **Duration of Agreement**

This Operating Plan is executed as of the date of last signature and remains in effect until a new Colorado Statewide Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement is signed or until this plan is modified or superseded. until a new COLORADO COOPERATIVE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT AND STAFFORD ACT RESPONSE AGREEMENT (also known as the master agreement) is signed or If the current Colorado Statewide Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement is superseded by a new Agreement, this Operating Plan may remain in effect to the extent that it does not conflict with provisions of the new Agreement, but only until such time that all activities and conditions can be incorporated into a new Operating Plan.

### **Previous Agreements Superseded**

All prior plans are hereby superseded.

## SIGNATURES

Authorized Representatives

### RIO BLANCO COUNTY SIGNATURES



BOCC Rio Blanco County, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Rio Blanco County Sheriff, Anthony Mazzola

2-15-22

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### COLORADO DIVISION OF FIRE PREVENTION & CONTROL SIGNATURE

Derrick Charpentier

\_\_\_\_\_  
Battalion Chief

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY SIGNATURES

Rio Blanco Wildland Fire Operating Plan



Scott Fitzwilliams

United States Forest Service, White River National Forest

2/9/2022

Date

Russell M Bacon

United States Forest Service, Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest

Date

Richard Maestas

United States Forest Service Grants and Agreements

Date

Elijah Waters

Bureau of Land Management, NW District Manager

Date

Paul Scolari

National Park Service, Dinosaur National Monument

Date

## ATTACHMENTS

A. Transfer of Control Responsibility	A-1
B. Local Personnel Directory	B-1
C. Protection Area Map	C-1
D. Fire Restriction Process	D-1
E. Cost Share Agreement Template	E-1

## Attachment A-1

**RIO BLANCO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**  
**TRANSFER OF FIRE SUPPRESSION RESPONSIBILITY**

**I. ASSUMPTION OF INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

- A. Management for controlling the \_\_\_\_\_ Fire burning in \_\_\_\_\_ Fire Protection District ("FPD"), is to be assumed by the Rio Blanco County Sheriff for the following reason(s).
- B. Assumption of management will become effective at \_\_\_\_\_ Hours on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, and is acceptable to signatory parties.
- C. The Rio Blanco County Sheriff shall appoint an Incident Management Team to provide the command and control infrastructure required to manage the fire. The Sheriff shall assume financial responsibility for firefighting efforts on behalf of the County and the authority for ordering and monitoring of resources. Expenses incurred prior to this transfer shall remain the responsibility of the FPD.
- D. There is a minimum required commitment of resources from the FPD to the firefighting effort. This commitment will be:
- \_\_\_\_\_ Personnel
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Wildland Fire Engines
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Structural Fire Engines
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Water Tenders
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Dozers
  - \_\_\_\_\_ other(specify) \_\_\_\_\_

The FPD shall not seek reimbursement from the Rio Blanco County Sheriff for expenses incurred by the FPD for their own apparatus, equipment, and personnel used in containing or suppressing a wildfire occurring on private property within the boundaries of the FPD.

- E. The FPD requests that the Sheriff consider the following protection/suppression priorities when conducting firefighting operations:
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.

Chief, \_\_\_\_\_ FPD Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Rio Blanco County Sheriff Date

**II. RELINQUISHMENT OF INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

- A. The FPD will reassume management responsibility for the incident when the fire has been declared "Controlled" by the Incident Commander, or at a different time as agreed upon in advance.
- B. The FPD will be responsible for the management of the fire and the associated financial obligations until the fire is declared "Out" by the Incident Commander.

The management Responsibility for the \_\_\_\_\_ Fire is being returned to the \_\_\_\_\_ Fire Protection District at this time and date.

Chief, \_\_\_\_\_ FPD Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Rio Blanco County Sheriff Date

## Attachment B-1: Directory of Personnel and/or Authorized Agency Representatives

**RIO BLANCO COUNTY  
FIRE MOBILIZATION PLAN**

**PERSONNEL DIRECTORY**

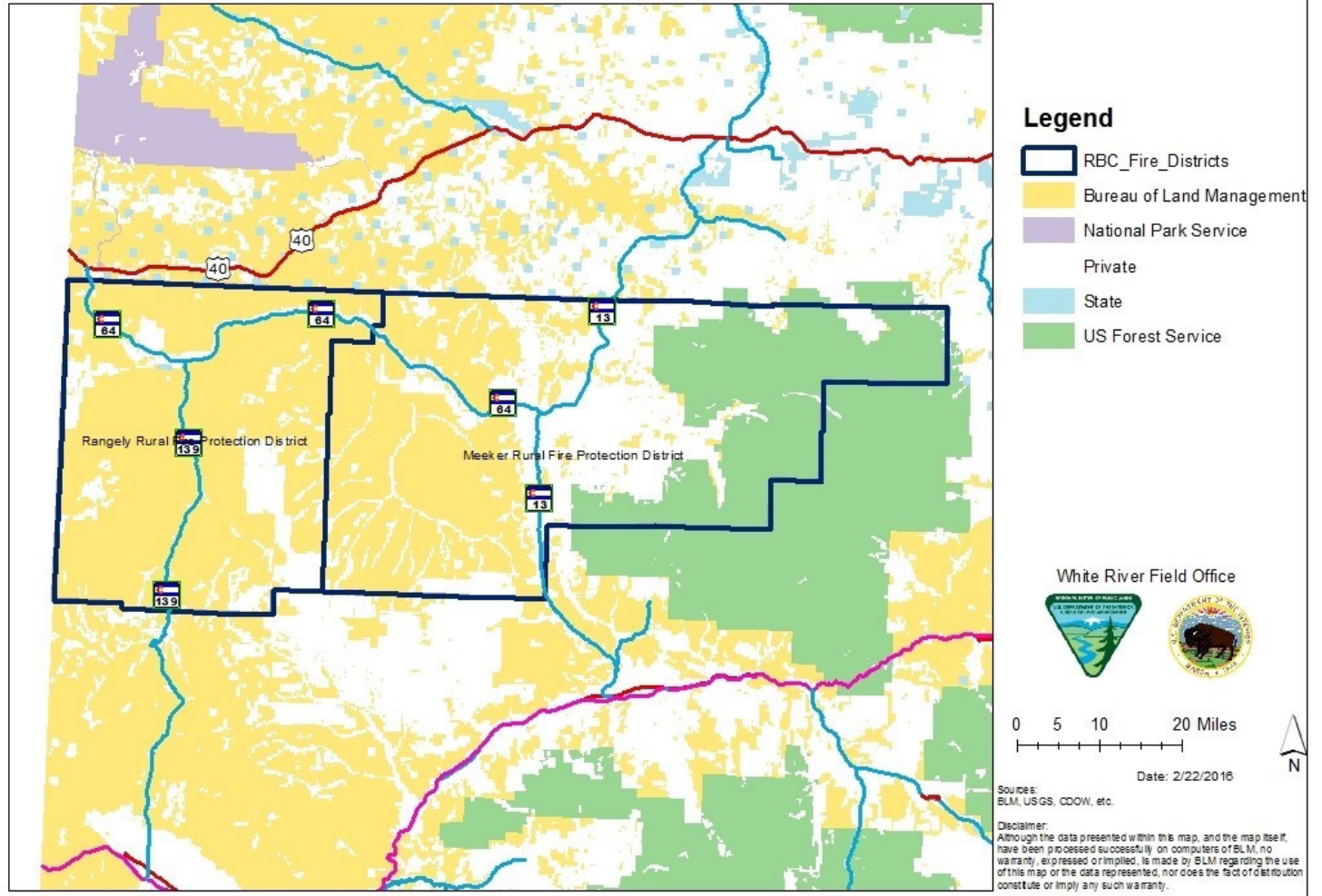
<b><u>Rio Blanco County</u></b>	<b><u>Office/Home</u></b>	<b><u>Cell</u></b>
<b>Anthony Mazzola, Sheriff</b>	878-9620	
<b>Jeremy Muxlow, Undersheriff, Sheriff's designee</b>	878-9620	970-620-2004
<b>Emergency Manager, Edward Smercina</b>	878-9620	
<b>Sheriff's Dispatcher: Available 24/7 +Statewide DTR MAC 17 is monitored</b>		
<b><u>Rio Blanco County Fire Protection Districts</u></b>	878-9620	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeker FPD District Office <i>Report fires to 911</i></li> </ul>	878-3443	
<b>District Chief: Luke Pelloni</b> <b>Chief Email: chief@meekerrescue.com</b>	878-3443	
<b>Asst. Chief: Vaughn Moodie</b> <b>Capt.: Laura Smith</b> <b>Radio Frequencies: 154.355 155.520 (Sheriff)</b>	878-3443	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rangely FPD District Office <i>Report fires to 911</i></li> </ul>	675-5093	
<b>District Chief: Jasper Whiston</b> <b>Asst. Chief: TBD</b> <b>District Secretary: Linda Gordon</b> <b>Rangely Police Dept. Dispatch</b> <b>Radio Frequencies: 154.445 154.325 (use this) 153.770</b>		

## USDA Forest Service, Medicine Bow-Routt NF's Contacts

<b>USDA Forest Service, Medicine Bow-Routt NF</b>		
Forest Supervisor – Russ Bacon	(307) 745-2400 (o)	(970) 596-0886 (c)
Asst. Forest Supervisor - Leslie Crossland	(307) 745-2440 (o)	(307) 286-4415 (c)
Forest FMO – Jay Miller	(307) 745-2365 (o)	(307) 399-1422 (c)
Forest AFMO –Jeremy Dietz	(307) 745-2358 (o)	(307) 760-6165 (c)
Forest PAO – Aaron Voos	(307) 745-2323 (o)	(970) 819-2898 (c)
Forest LEO Patrol Captain – Shawn Graef	(307) 745-2451 (o)	(303) 501-3132 (c)
Forest LEO – Hanah Nadeau		(307) 343-2335 (c)
Yampa District Ranger – Jamie Statezny	(970) 638-4176 (o)	(719) 717-0116 (c)
HPBE District Ranger – Michael Woodbridge	(970) 870-2149 (o)	(970) 819-7046
Parks District Ranger – Chris Olds	(970) 723-2701 (o)	(970) 302-5815
MBRTB South Zone FMO – Kevin Thompson	(970) 638-4170 (o)	(720) 300-9240 (c)
MBRTB South Zone AFMO – Sean Carey	(970) 870-2142 (o)	(970) 819-7680 (c)
MBRTB Fuels AFMO - Lance Broyles	(970) 870-2182 (o)	(970) 629-2524 (c)
MBRTB South Zone LEO – Michael Terrazas	(970) 638-4516 (o)	(720) 660-0693 (c)
MBRTB South Zone LEO – Steve McCone	(970) 870-2277 (o)	(970) 819-1938 (c)

## Attachment C-1

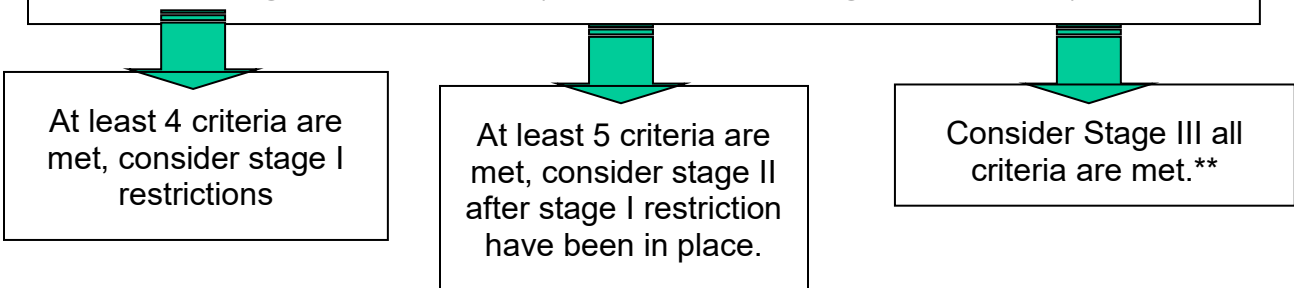
## Rio Blanco County Wildfire Protection Area Map



## Attachment D-1

## PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING COUNTY FIRE RESTRICTIONS

1. 1,000 hour fuel moistures content is 9% or less below 8,000 ft. or 12% or less above 8,000ft.
2. 3 day mean energy release component (ERC) is at 90% or above.
3. Live fuel moisture content is 90% or less in sagebrush.
4. Fires are impacting available resources
5. Area is receiving a higher than normal occurrence of human-caused fires\*
6. Adverse fire weather is predicted
7. Drought Indicators (Palmer or Drought Outlook)



\*High human caused risk may include holidays, such as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July or Labor Day or special events such as country fairs and hunting seasons.

\*\*Stage III-area closures are extremely rare events, and will only be implemented in extraordinary situations, after significant interagency coordination.

### STAGE ONE RESTRICTIONS:

The following acts are prohibited on Federal, State, and private lands including roads, and trails described herein, until further notice:

1. Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire or campfire except within agency-provided fire grates at developed recreation sites. Devices using gas, jellied petroleum, or pressurized liquid fuel are permitted.
2. Smoking, except in an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials.
3. Operating a chainsaw without a USDA or SAE approved spark arrestor properly installed and working, a chemical fire extinguisher of not less than 8 ounces' capacity by weight, and one round point shovel with an overall length of at least 36 inches.
4. Using a welder, either arc or gas, or operating acetylene or other torch with open flame, except in cleared areas of at least 10 feet in diameter with a chemical pressurized fire extinguisher of not less than 8 ounces' capacity.
5. Using exploding targets.

**EXEMPTIONS:**

1. Persons with a written permit that specifically authorizes the otherwise prohibited act.
2. Persons conducting activities in those designated areas where the activity is specifically authorized by written posted notice.
3. Any Federal, State, or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.

**STAGE TWO RESTRICTIONS:**

1. Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire or campfire, charcoal grill, coal, wood burning stove or shepherders' stove, including in developed camping and picnic grounds. Devices using pressurized liquid or gas are exempted.
2. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle, trailer, building or tent.
3. Using an explosive requiring fuse or blasting caps, fireworks, rockets, exploding targets and tracers or incendiary ammunition.
4. Operating a chainsaw without an approved spark arrestor, and without a chemical pressurized fire extinguisher and a round-point shovel with an overall length of at least 35 inches. The extinguisher will be with the equipment operator. The shovel may be kept with fueling supplies but readily available for use.
5. Welding, or operating an acetylene or other torch with open flame (except with a current permit, contract or letter of authorization).



6. Operating or using any internal combustion engine without a spark arresting device properly installed, maintained and in effective working order meeting either:  
Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Standard 5100-1a;  
or Appropriate Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) recommended practice J335 (b) and J350 (a).

**EXEMPTIONS:**

1. Persons with a written permit that specifically authorizes the otherwise prohibited act.
2. Any Federal, State, or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.

**STAGE THREE RESTRICTIONS:**

Stage three restrictions constitute the restriction of access to the full closure of public lands within the declared area.

**GENERAL EXEMPTIONS TO THE ABOVE STAGES:**

- a. Persons with a written permit that specifically authorizes the otherwise prohibited act.
- b. Persons conducting activities in those designated areas where the activity is specifically authorized by written posted notice.
- c. Any Federal, State, or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.

**Attachment E-1****Cost Share Agreement****Fire**

\_\_\_\_\_, County, Colorado

\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

The agencies with protection responsibility for the \_\_\_\_\_ Fire are:

- USDI Bureau of Land Management, \_\_\_\_\_ Field Office (BLM)
- USDA Forest Service, \_\_\_\_\_ National Forest (USFS)
- \_\_\_\_\_ County Sheriff's Office (\_\_\_\_ SO)
- Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC) Fire start date and time:

\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ hrs.

Incident Commander: \_\_\_\_\_ (Type \_\_)

This agreement identifies the costs that will be covered by each of the agencies identified above. This agreement was prepared under the following guidelines:

1. In accordance with the \_\_\_\_\_ County Operating Plan (OP), the mutual aid period for this fire is midnight after the initial report of the fire. Since this fire was reported at \_\_\_\_\_ hrs. on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_, the mutual aid period ended at \_\_\_\_\_ hrs. on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_. During this mutual aid period, each agency will be responsible for its own costs.
2. DFPC assumed fire control from \_\_\_\_\_ County on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ after \_\_\_\_\_ hrs.
3. Responsibility for tort claims or compensation for injury costs will not be a part of this agreement. Responsibility for these costs will be determined outside of this agreement.
4. Non-suppression rehabilitation costs are the responsibility of the jurisdictional agency and will not be shared.
5. Aircraft costs incurred before the EFF assumption will be shared at 50% County, 50% BLM/USFS. Aircraft costs incurred after \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ hrs. will be shared based on percentage of ownership within the final fire perimeter.
6. All other suppression costs incurred after \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ hrs. will be shared based on percentage of ownership within the final fire perimeter.

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Sheriff's Office\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Administrator - USFS\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Administrator - BLM\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Administrator - DFPC\_\_\_\_\_  
Date