

WYOMING HIGH DESERT DISTRICT WILDFIRE PREVENTION PLAN

2017



APPROVAL SIGNATURES:

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INTRODUCTION

The High Desert District encompasses approximately 25.3 million acres in southern Wyoming. The District’s border extends along the Wyoming - Colorado/Utah in the south, Utah/Idaho in the west, and to Nebraska to the east. The District is bordered to the northwest by the Wind River/Big Horn Basin BLM District and the High Plains BLM District to the northeast.

The High Desert District is comprised of four field offices, Kemmerer Field Office, Pinedale Field Office, Rock Springs Field Office, and the Rawlins Field Office. The district office is collocated with the Rock Springs Field Office.

The table below breaks the district down per field office and land ownership in each field office.

High Desert District Ownership Table:

Federal Agencies	Rawlins Field Office	Rock Springs Field Office	Pinedale Field Office	Kemmerer Field Office	Total: Surface Acres by Owner
Bureau of Land Management	3,537,956	3,607,304	925,117	1,421,507	9,491,883
US Forest Service	1,004,113	54,968	2,761,122	812,323	4,632,526
Bureau of Reclamation	41,653	188,761	1,483	20,232	252,129
National Park Service	0	0	262,252	8,300	270,553
Department of Defense	5919	0	0	0	5919
US Fish and Wildlife	6640	21,191	5,556	8,199	41,587
Subtotal Surface Acres	4,596,281	3,872,224	3,955,547	2,270,561	14,694,614
Other Land Ownership					
State	714,892	185,225	92,219	152,947	1,145,283
Private	5,874,798	1,268,178	745,992	1,500,080	9,389,048
Water	60,381	32,915	42,396	8,174	143,866
Total Surface Acres	11,246,352	5,358,542	4,836,154	3,931,762	25,372,811

(See Appendix 1 for High Desert District Map)

This plan identifies fire prevention priority areas, actions and responsibilities consistent with the High Desert District’s land management planning goals.

In order to implement this plan, the following considerations must be made:

- 1) The use of appropriate fire personnel and resources;
- 2) The education and application of district personnel and resources; and
- 3) The documentation for additional resources through the Fire Management Planning process.

PREVENTION PROGRAM

This Wyoming High Desert District Office (WY-HDD) Wildfire Prevention Plan (WPP) is an appendix to the Wyoming High Desert District Fire Management Plan. It is developed and approved by the District Fire Management Officer and the District Manager. It is the basis for the implementation of the HDD Wildfire Prevention Program.

Currently there is not sole funding for Prevention and Education programs. Funding can come from several sources at the discretion of the District FMO or State FMO. Prevention activities are primarily funded from the HDD Preparedness Account. Supplemental funding can come from Trespass Case Collections, Ready Reserve, and State Assist funding.

To properly direct wildfire prevention efforts, it is important to accurately define problems or potential problems. To identify priority wildfire prevention areas, the following components must be assessed:

- 1) Risk – Risks are defined as those uses or human activities which have the potential to result in a wildfire ignition. Wherever there are concentrations of people or activity, the potential for a human caused ignition exists. After assessing the risks within an area, it is helpful to look at historical fires to validate the risk assessment. Historical fires alone, however, are not an accurate reflection of the risks within a given area. The objective of this effort is to determine where the highest degree of risk is within WY-HDD.
- 2) Hazards- Hazards are defined as the fuels and topography of an area. The objective of examining hazards is to determine the potential for a “large/severe” fire to result from a human caused ignition. This can be simply put as determining the degree of difficulty in suppressing a fire once it is ignited.
- 3) Values- Values are defined as natural or developed areas where loss or destruction by wildfire would be a detriment to society.

The Fire Management Plan (FMP) in coordination with the District/field offices’ Resource Management Plans developed sections of land to help properly guide all land use activities which includes suppression efforts. These areas are called Fire Management Units (FMU’s). The High Desert District (HDD) is comprised of 26 FMU’s. For the HDD’s prevention program, the fire management units (FMU’s) and fire danger rating areas are used as described in the BLM Wyoming High Desert District Fire Danger Operating and Preparedness Plan. These 26 FMU’s were also used in the creation of the Wyoming High Desert District Initial Attack Plan.

High Desert District Fire Management Units	Risks	Hazards	Values	Overall Rating
KFO-1 (Star Valley)				
KFO-2 (Raymond Mtn. WSA)				
KFO-3 (Smiths Fork)				
KFO-4 (Rock Creek/Slate Creek)				
KFO-5 (North Cumberland)				
KFO-6 (Bear River Divide/Carter)				
KFO-7 (Evanston/Bridger Valley)				
KFO-8 (South Bridger)				
KFO-9 (Moxa)				
PFO-1 (Wind River Front)				
PFO-2 (Horse/Cottonwood Creek)				
PFO-3 (Mesa South Desert)				
PFO-4 (LaBarge)				
PFO-5 (Miller Mtn.)				
PFO-6 (Snake River)				
RFO-1 (Laramie Range)				
RFO-2 (Baggs/Platte Valley)				
RFO-4 (Shirley Basin)				
RFO-5 (Seminoe/Pedro/Shirley Mtn.)				
RFO-6 (Ferris Mtn.)				
RFO-7 (Kinney Rim/Adobe Town/Skull Creek)				
RFO-8 (Great Divide Basin)				
RSFO-1 (Big Sandy and Steamboat Mtn.)				
RSFO-2 (Sweetwater)				
RSFO-3 (Red Desert)				
RSFO-4 (Little Mtn.)				

The above ratings are shown merely as an example of an assigned rating to a particular FMU.

**For each component (Risk, Hazard, and Value), a relative rating of HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW is assigned within each fire prevention area. These ratings are subjective and variable from year to year; and are not absolute. **

Individual maps of each FMU can be found in the HDD Fire Management Plan and/or Appendix 1

Value considerations:

HIGH VALUE

- A) Recreation Areas (archeological sites, reservoirs, campgrounds, etc...).
- B) Urban Interface Areas that have adjacent BLM land.
- C) Communication Sites

MEDIUM VALUE

- A) Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC's)

LOW VALUE

- A) Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's)
- B) BLM grazing allotments

Primary sources of human caused fires:

- A) Highway/Railroad/Equipment
- B) Agricultural/debris burning
- C) Urban Interface/human activities in remote areas/recreation areas (ATV, UTV, campfires, etc...)

(See Appendix 2 for High Desert District 10-year fire history)

PREVENTION STRATEGIES:

A) Highway/Railroad/Equipment:

1. Educate about what constitutes a responsible party and the liability that goes along with that responsibility.
2. Inform individuals and companies about the financial costs associated with wildland fire and the potential for personal property destruction (private and commercial) and increased risk of firefighter's safety due to wildfires.
3. Media releases (Radio, Newspaper, etc...).
4. Close coordination with County Fire Wardens and Departments to promote prevention.

B) Agricultural/debris burning:

1. Educate about what constitutes a responsible party and the liability that goes along with that responsibility.
2. Inform individuals about proper procedures and necessary documentation required to be in compliance with burn permit programs in their respective County.
3. Educate homeowners about the importance of defensible space and their responsibilities for completing and maintaining defensible space around their homes.
4. Alert the landowners/lessees about restrictions and closures.

C) Urban Interface/human activities in remote areas/recreation areas (ATV, UTV, campfires, etc...)

1. Educate about fire danger, fuel conditions, safe camping and/or other outdoor recreation activities.
2. Educate about proper camping techniques to reduce the threat of unwanted fires (i.e. proper way to put out campfires, driving off-road vehicles, catalytic converters, etc.)
3. Inform individuals about the financial costs associated with wildland fire and the potential for personal property destruction (homes) and increased risk of firefighter's safety due to wildfires.
4. Alert the public about restrictions and closures (signs, press release).
5. Utilization of Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) in times of fire restrictions.
6. Information booths at expos and other events.
7. Patrol popular recreation areas (law enforcement and/or fire staff).

Fire Prevention Events:

- County Fairs.
- Fourth of July parades.
- Elementary school visits by Smokey Bear.
- FMC visits.
- High school classroom visits.
- High school students visiting fire facilities.

Requests for Education Programs: Most of these tend to be made by school teachers who rarely have much planning time and rely on short-term scheduling. During the early spring and late fall many requests get turned down or postponed due to sparse staffing. Once the temporary workforce begins returning for the fire season, typically April/May thru September/October, requests for school programs are reevaluated and filled as budgets allow and personnel are available.

Fire Restrictions

Under certain, prolonged, extreme fire weather conditions, normal prevention and detection measures may be insufficient to reasonably reduce the risk of a major wildfire. When such conditions occur, it sometimes becomes necessary to implement fire restrictions. The purpose of this section is to give specific instructions and guidelines for implementing and managing these restrictions.

The criteria contained in the BLM Wyoming High Desert District Fire Danger Operating and Preparedness Plan and the Wyoming Interagency Fire Restrictions Plan will be used to determine when fire restrictions should go into effect.

- 1) The Fire Management Officer will make a recommendation to the appropriate field manager(s) (Rawlins Field Manager, Rock Springs Field Manager, Kemmerer Field Manager, and/or Pinedale Field Manager) to ensure agreement and commitment for their respective field offices.
- 2) WY-HDD will initiate and maintain communication with cooperating agencies (USFS, Wyoming State Forestry, County Fire Wardens, etc.) and every effort will be made to ensure uniform and simultaneous action.
- 3) Fire restriction orders will follow the template found in the Wyoming Interagency Fire Restrictions Plan. It can be found at the following:
<http://web.wy.blm.gov/930/fire/docs/firerestrictplan.htm>.
- 4) WY-HDD will maintain communication with the BLM State Office to ensure they will be kept current as to conditions and possible courses of actions.

- 5) All fire restriction updates will be communicated through the BLMWYSO PAO or acting, who will in-turn post the restrictions on the Wyoming Fire Restrictions Website. This site also clearly states year-round fire restrictions on Public Lands. It can be found at the following: http://www.wy.blm.gov/wy_fire_restrictions/.

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Education, Planning, and Fuels Treatments on Federal Lands

The Wyoming High Desert District Community Assistance (CA) program involves programming through NFPORS funding for Hazardous Fuels Reduction for qualifying projects in the WYHDD. These projects are not captured in the CA module of NFPORS, but are reflected in the HFR module (indicated by a CA preceding a project name in the HFR module). These projects are generally engineered by the local community identifying the need on or near BLM lands. They can be identified through a community risk assessment or through the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Key collaborating partners include the State of Wyoming and various county cooperators.

Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) Programs

The Department of the Interior's Rural Fire Program has not been funded since FY2010. If funding is allocated for future fiscal years, this portion of the plan shall be amended.

Ready Reserve Program

Funds are used internally and all instruction is provided/facilitated by WY-HDD Fire Staff. In addition to local training, Ready Reserve Funds are used for fire staff to travel and support out of zone training events and Fire Academies (i.e. Wyoming Fire Academy). Funds have also been used to provide rural departments with reference materials that promote fireline safety (Fireline Handbook, Incident Response Pocket Guide).

To date, the Ready Reserve Program has not been funded since FY10.

FIRE INVESTIGATION AND TRESPASS

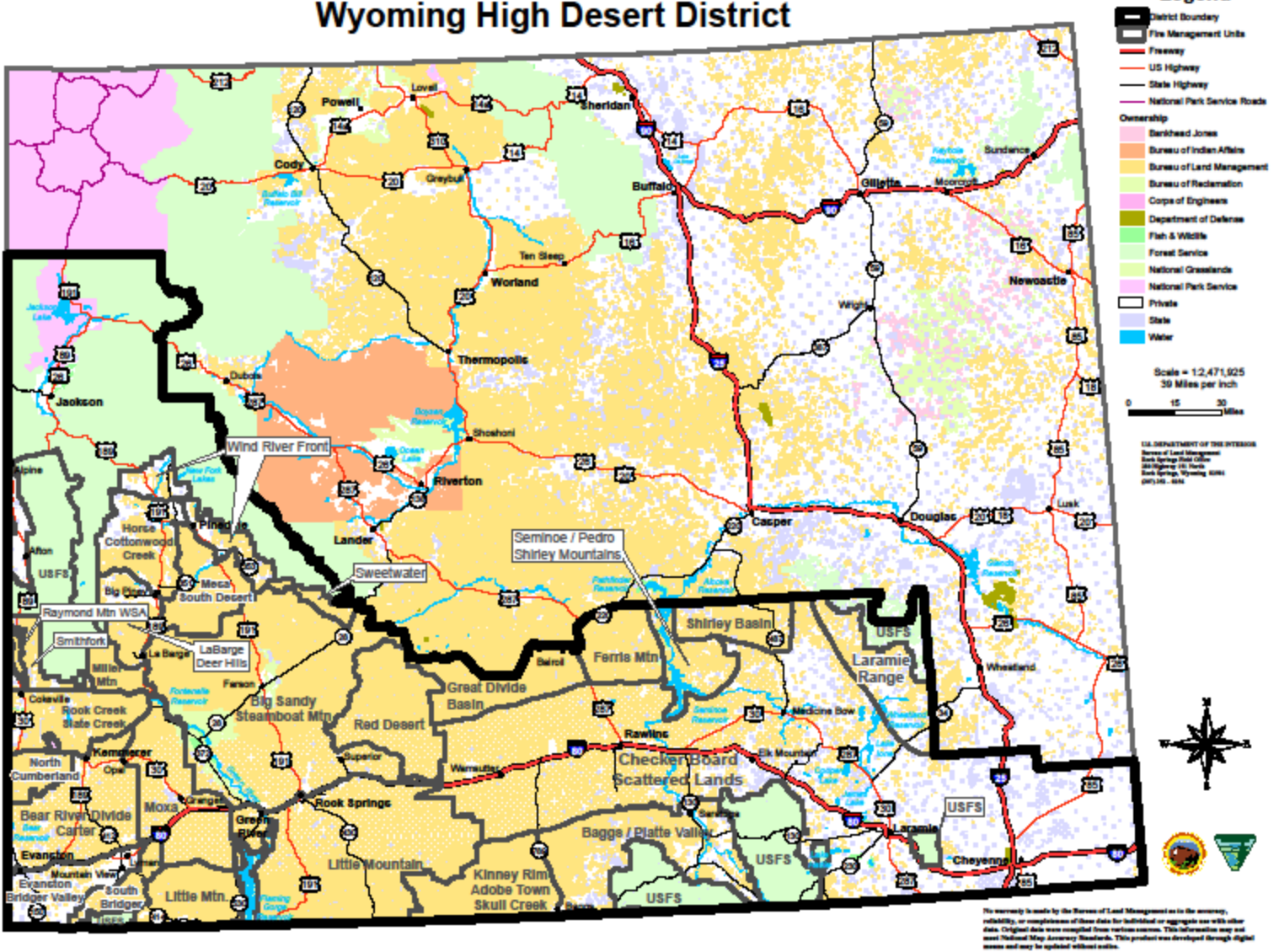
The Fire Trespass Handbook (H-9238-1) published in June of 2000, instructs that all Bureau fire programs will develop a Wildland Fire Cause/Investigation Operating Plan. This handbook was updated and distributed to the field units in DRAFT form in August of 2005 and was directed to be used as interim guidance by field units in the administration of their fire trespass programs. Funds recovered under the fire trespass may only be used for non-recurring contracts, interagency activities, temporary labor, and one time purchases not requiring continued monetary commitment. These are not base funds; they are considered one-time funds and cannot be used to augment the preparedness budget.

Trespass collections can be used for fire activities identified in the wildland fire prevention planning process; examples include fire awareness, educational activities, law enforcement, prevention and trespass training. Funds are held in the Wyoming State Office in the 5320 sub activity and are made available to the districts which collected them minus a modest withholding by the state office to support statewide fire prevention efforts. All funds must be expended in accordance with the guidance identified above, which is identified in The Fire Trespass Handbook.

Historically, BLM Wyoming and the High Desert District have not been very active in pursuing cost-recovery of human caused fires on BLM Lands. It was not until July of 2012 that BLM Wyoming had an approved operating plan for trespass Fires. Currently, WY-HDD has two fully qualified wildland fire investigators (INVF), and three trainees. Human caused fires are primarily a result of interstate vehicles, railroad equipment, and various human recreation activities. Very few fires are investigated and determined to be arson. In addition, the HDD Fire program has developed specific procedures for dealing with trespass fires that are included in the HDD fire SOPs.

APPENDIX 1: High Desert District Map

Wyoming High Desert District



APPENDIX 2: High Desert District 10-Year Fire History

