



Arizona State Forestry Division
Bureau of Indian Affairs: Southwest, Navajo, Western Regions
Bureau of Land Management: Arizona, New Mexico
National Park Service, Intermountain Region
New Mexico State Forestry Division
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
U. S. Forest Service



Date: 04/02/2009

To: SWCG Agency Representatives and Chairs of SWA Fire Planning Units

From: Donald Griego, Chair of SWCG

Topic/Issue: Planning guidance to the Geographic Area for 2009:

Please ensure that all agency fire staff and planners involved in 2009 FPA work get the following:

FIRE PLANNING UNIT (FPU) BOUNDARY CHANGES FOR THE 2009-2010 PLANNING CYCLE

We strongly recommend that Southwest Geographic Area Fire Planning Units Do Not change their FPU boundaries in preparation for the 2009-2010 planning cycle. This is based on the following:

1. The due date for FPU boundary changes has been established by the national FPA team as May 1, 2009. This date is necessary to provide time to load and run the large fire module so that the FPA software is ready for the field to use starting October 1, 2009. Any delay in boundary changes will delay the availability of the model next fall, so it is doubtful that we will get any relief in the May 1st deadline.
2. The due date for the third wave of FPUs to complete this year's analysis is May 1, 2009, and some of the Wave 1 and Wave 2 FPUs will probably miss their deadline of April 1st. This means that most FPUs will be overloaded with FPA work in April, and will not have time to devote to considering boundary changes.
3. Because of the coincidence of the deadlines for completion of this year's FPA runs and completion of boundary changes, there is no time in which to analyze the results of this year's work, and use that information to make knowledgeable decisions regarding boundary changes. Simply stated, we have no way of knowing if the existing configuration of FPUs is broken.
4. The collaboration needed to make a FPU boundary change will result in any change being an extremely time consuming process. With the workload facing the FPA community, and the onset of fire season, we cannot afford to spend time making changes, especially given the fact that we do not know that any changes are really necessary.
5. It should be noted that this does not apply to minor changes that need to be made due to mapping errors, or topology. Minor changes to correct these shortcomings should be made prior to the 2009-2010 planning cycle.

Geographic Area Technical Review of the 2009 FPA Product

National guidance indicates that a geographic area technical review is optional for the current FPA planning cycle. The SW Area Fire Planning Committee will implement the following protocol this spring:

1. The SW Area will not implement a technical review of FPA our products prior to final submission. This is primarily due to time constraints associated with the completion deadlines for FPA.
2. Following final submission of a FPU's 2009 FPA product, an informal technical review will be conducted. Each member of the SW Area Fire Planning Committee will perform a cursory review of the FPA submissions for the Fire Planning Units that they are liaison to.
3. The committee member will brief the rest of the committee on the results of this cursory review, and recommend further review or action if significant problems are discovered.
4. The review should consider the following points:
 - The budget amounts in the .current option will be checked to be sure they match the budget figures provided by the national office fire budget leads.
 - Options should be reviewed to determine if any geographic area concerns arise. For example: a reduced funding level may result in no helicopters being available in the geographic area.
 - Reviewers should ensure that adequate line officer briefings have occurred.

Questions should be directed to John Selkirk, Chairman, Southwest Area Fire Planning Committee, at 505-438-7431.

/S/ Donald Griego

Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group