

APPENDIX A – OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTING APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT RESPONSE WITHIN THE CRAIG/ROUTT FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

These Operational Procedures for Implementing Appropriate Management Response (AMR) were adapted from **Appendix C** of the Fire Management Plan for the Craig-Routt Fire Management Program (BLM et al. 2002). They have been slightly modified to fit the needs of Phase III of the Moffat County Fire and Fuel Management Plan (Fire Plan).

In order to facilitate implementation of these operational procedures and Phases I, II, and III of the Fire Plan, a position has been identified by the sheriff that will provide a liaison fire staff specialist between the BLM and Moffat County Sheriff. This position is referred to as the County Fire Management Officer (FMO). Funds for this position may be provided by multiple federal, state, and local governments. Another option that would provide expertise and support the Fire Plan may include the exchange of fire jurisdictions and responsibilities between agencies within Moffat County through a Memorandum of Understanding.

I. PURPOSE

This chapter outlines roles, responsibilities, strategies, and procedures for the implementation of AMR to wildland fire ignitions within the Phase III planning area, including lands under private and state jurisdiction. Specifically, AMR refers to the full range of actions taken and strategies applied to wildland fire from full suppression to wildland fire use.

The procedures identified in this document will be utilized by the Moffat County Sheriff to support and implement the objectives outlined in the Fire Plan. Wildland fires involving private lands or a combination of private and public lands will be cooperatively managed based on these implementation guidelines. Cooperation between all agencies should be maximized in order to accomplish fire management objectives. Federal agencies implementing fire plans in Moffat County include the BLM Little Snake Field Office, the U.S. Forest Service Blanco Ranger District and U.S. Forest Service, Hahn's Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District.

II. DEFINITIONS

Appropriate Management Response (AMR) – Specific actions taken in response to a wildland fire to implement protection and fire use objectives. AMR allows for a full range of strategies to be applied, from an intense full suppression response to wildland fire use (wildland fire to meet landowner objectives). The first response decision to be made is whether to have a suppression-oriented response or to allow the fire to burn to meet landowner objectives (fire use).

Suppression Oriented Response – A range of responses to a wildland fire, which range from full response to confinement of the fire. It may also include periodically checking fire status and fire behavior.

Full Response – A suppression-oriented response action that can include: control lines surrounding the entire perimeter (hot spot and cold trail may be considered completed line) including any spot fires, protection of interior islands, burn-out of fuels adjacent to control lines, and mop-up to a standard adequate to hold under high fire intensity conditions. Full response objectives are based on safe yet aggressive approach to achieve containment of the fire at the most practical size by the beginning of the

next burn period. Fire behavior may dictate, at least temporarily, the utilization of natural barriers or indirect strategies. These strategies and tactics would include direct control.

Confinement Response – The suppression-orientated strategy employed in AMR where a fire’s perimeter is managed by a combination of direct and indirect actions and use of natural topographic features, fuels, and weather factors. These strategies and tactics could include perimeter control.

Wildland Fire Use (WFU) – The management of naturally ignited wildland fires, in pre-defined geographic areas, to accomplish specific pre-stated landowner objectives, as outlined in the Fire Plan. Strategies and tactics employed in a fire use action may reflect perimeter control and will include prescription control.

Maximum Management Area (MMA) – The firm limits of management capability to accommodate the social, political, and resource impacts of a wildland fire. Once an approved Wildland Fire Use plan is established, during the Stage III process the MMA is fixed and not subject to change. If MMA determination is exceeded, the fire will follow the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSAs) process.

Initial Management Area (IMA) – The interim limits of management of wildland fires placed under a Stage I or II implementation plan and before completion of best science fire behavior predictions for Stage III implementation. The size of an IMA may be adjusted based on fire behavior predictions, weather forecasts, site analysis, and risk assessment. The IMA becomes fixed as an MMA once a wildland fire is placed under a stage III implementation plan.

Polygon – A planning sub-unit within a fire planning area that represents similar resource values and landowners objectives, fuel conditions with associated fire behavior, social/political concerns and economic considerations. Polygons are categorized as A, B, C, and D areas, representing a continuum of AMRs from full suppression in A polygons through Wildland Fire Use in D polygons.

Minimum Impact Management Actions (MIMA) – For the purpose of this plan, MIMA is not intended to represent a separate or distinct type of firefighting tactic but rather a mindset of how to suppress or manage a wildland fire while minimizing short- and long-term effects from those actions. The concept of MIMA is to minimize the suppression or management impacts on the landscape in a safe, timely, and effective manner consistent with ecosystem and fire management objectives. While MIMA implies a greater sensitivity to the impacts of suppression and management actions, the tactics selected remain appropriate for the observed or predicted fire behavior, the values at risk, and firefighter safety. While this mindset needs to prevail among firefighting resources no matter what the AMR, individual determinations of tactics will be dependent on the specific situation and circumstances of each fire and inputs from resource advisors.

III. PREPLANNED ACTION

- A. Preplanned initial response guides are outlined by polygon and provide general direction to the initial attack dispatcher and Sheriff, County FMO, or acting when responding resources to fires in Moffat County. The initial response guides identify low, medium, and high response levels based on NFDRS indices (particularly energy release component), fire location, and planning levels.
- B. More specific landowner objectives and constraints are contained in the polygon descriptions in the Fire Plan, which will be referenced upon receipt of a fire report. Polygon information may include:

1. Resource objectives, such as desired vegetation condition, burned acreage thresholds, resource constraints, and limitations to fire use.
 2. Suppression constraints, such as off-road vehicle use, limitation of retardant use, prohibition of mechanized line construction, and minimum suppression impact standards.
 3. Fire Management strategies based on fire condition levels or safety concerns.
 4. Prescriptive criteria for less than full response and Wildland Fire Use.
 5. Predetermined MMAs.
- C. A daily briefing summary with preplanned response strategies will be prepared (at preparedness level III or higher) by the FMO or acting, agency administrators, initial response resources, and cooperators. Basic information in the daily briefing is to include:
1. Fire condition class and preparedness level for appropriate initial response selection by dispatch.
 2. General strategy guidelines for each polygon category (A, B, C, D) based on preparedness and staffing levels.
 3. Daily, preplanned go/no-go decisions, for less than full response including fire use, which will be based on forecast weather, prescriptive parameters, and available resources.
 4. Discussion between County Sheriff, FMO, and adjacent agencies (when available) will determine the preplanned decisions.
 5. Fire status summary from previous days activity, including: the number of fires; how many are contained, controlled, and out; and what strategies are being employed.
 6. Fire behavior predictions and potential assessments with discussion of wildland fuel and fire weather conditions.
 7. Assignment of resources, including pre-position/re-position points, fire assignments, patrol routes, Lightning Plan implementation, and needs for aerial detection.
 8. Recognition of hazards due to environmental or atmospheric conditions, a discussion on mitigation and safety measures needed to employ to address the hazards, and review of national safety topics.
 9. In the event a program-wide briefing is not provided, it is the responsibility of the FMO or their designee to provide a complete briefing to resources responding to any fire situation.
 10. When off-unit resources arrive, a qualified member of the receiving unit will provide them a briefing to apprise them of the local fire conditions, situation, and safety precautions. An attempt will be made to offer all a briefing packet with information on local fuels, weather, hazards, and pocket card indicators of local conditions that have lead to significant events in the past.
 11. During periods of high fire activity in planning level (PL) III, and during PL IV and V, an evening planning and strategy meeting for inputs for the next day's resource and logistical needs from IC's, field monitors, and the FMO will be held at the dispatch center office.

IV. INITIAL ACTIONS

A. Dispatch actions upon report of a fire include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Gather information from reporting party, record information for Stage I input, and verify initial response information with first resources on scene.
2. Determine location and appropriate polygon and confirm with field personnel.
3. Respond appropriate type and number of resources based on the initial response guidance and availability.
4. Receive initial size-up from responding resources and confirm polygon designation.
5. Notify and brief County Sheriff, FMO, or County FMO of status if fire use strategies are within prescription.

B. FMO or acting responsibilities and actions include making themselves available to disseminate information and encourage good decision-making from the best position logistically for the units good. This would entail covering bases with field units, resource advisors, agency administrators, and dispatchers, which would be best suited at the dispatch center, during times of higher preparedness levels. This would also entail covering the whole shift or giving an extensive transition to a relief with the authority to make comparable decisions. In order to maintain safety, key positions must be in place in order to facilitate prompt accurate information transmission and decision analysis.

1. Review size-up information, prioritize resources, and confirm or modify initial attack resource response.
2. Where an approved AMR plan is in place, the FMO or acting will:
 - a. Review polygon description for constraints, objectives, and prescriptive parameters and compare it to the current days' preplanned strategies.
 - b. Gather input from IC, field monitors and landowners and current objectives, if different from the Fire Plan, and discuss options based on polygon parameters. FMO or acting will primarily interface with landowners and keep adjacent agencies apprised of current wildland fire situations.
 - c. Ensure Stage I Go/No-Go checklist for all ignitions in polygons included in an AMR Plan, that may be candidates for fire use, are completed and reviewed.
 - d. In consultation with Initial Attack IC or FMO and landowner(s), determine or concur with AMR strategy.
 - e. Brief County Sheriff, and adjacent agencies if Go decision is reached.
3. Coordinate with all Cooperators during times of fire activity that may be multi-jurisdictional. FMO reviews and implements, with concurrence of the County Sheriff, all agreements, MOUs, and annual operating plans with CRFMP Cooperators.

- C. In the event that the decision-making process and go/no go checklist leads to the determination to allow a fire or fires to burn for landowners benefits consistent with stated objectives will:
1. Work with the landowner and adjacent agency fire staff in the event the wildland fire may cross the initial AMR strategy boundary.
 2. Review and verify documentation of Stage I analysis and continue documentation, when needed through Stage II and Stage III implementation.
 3. Notify Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment, Air Pollution Control Division of fire and its activity, and possible smoke impacts.
- D. County FMO duties generally entail coordination with dispatch and operations, the ordering and logistical support of resources, tracking and conclusion of each incident, and assists with providing a safe work atmosphere within the county.
1. Notify dispatch and all appropriate parties in instances where fire activity or other duties preclude the FMO from being in a position to account for and communicate with the incidents within the county. In instances such as this, a qualified designee should be identified or ordered to assist with county coordination.
 2. Coordinates with County Sheriff or acting for allocation of resources during times of fire activity or conditions of severity.
 3. Coordinates and makes recommendations to adjacent cooperators within the county for safe, effective operations in inter-mix jurisdictional areas.
- E. Incident Commander: In the interest of timely decision- making in relation to a going fire, the IC must be given latitude at the site to make decisions as to the AMR and the tactical approach to a given fire. Field decisions may preclude any others when public or firefighter safety is a concern.
- a. Where an approved AMR plan is in place, the ICs responsibilities include but are not limited to: accurately locating fire within polygon boundaries. Assessing other issues, on the fire ground, that may affect the determination of the AMR given fire location.
 - b. Timely size-up information and ground conditions reported back to dispatch, FMO, or acting in order to facilitate final decision on AMR.
 - c. **The IC is ultimately responsible for the safety and welfare of all resources assigned to the operation.**
- F. Line Officer responsibilities include reviewing daily fire briefing and being available or assigning an acting designee with authority to implement fire use for resource objectives.
- G. In order to select an appropriate strategy, certain considerations should be examined, including, but not limited to:
1. Threat to firefighter and public safety.
 2. Threat to private property without an approved AMR plan, and valuable resources or improvements.

3. Fire cause. Currently, Moffat County will only recognize natural ignitions as candidates for fire use to achieve resource objectives. This is consistent with BLM policy and their current Fire Management Plan.
4. Land ownership and potential for the fire to escape polygon, IMA, MMA, or jurisdictional boundaries.
5. Rate and direction of spread, flame lengths, and resulting fire intensities.
6. Fuel types, continuity, and defensible natural barriers.
7. Current and forecasted (48 hour) weather.
8. Fuel moisture, drought conditions, ERC, SC, and Haines Index.
9. Smoke impacts and current permits.
10. Local and adjacent wildland fire activity on adjacent agency.
11. Available initial response and fire use contingency resources.

V. SUPPRESSION ORIENTED ACTIONS

Suppression-oriented action should be taken on the following situations:

- A. Fires where hazards associated with indirect attack cannot be mitigated or where the smallest final size poses the least threat to public and firefighter safety will receive a full suppression response.
- B. A full suppression response will be implemented when a wildland fire threatens property, identified resources, and improvements. Individual polygons have guidelines that are more specific as to allowable distance from fire location to private property, jurisdictional, or polygon boundaries.
- C. Fires that could spread to private, or other agency lands, without an agreement or approved AMR plan, will receive a full suppression response.
- D. Fires that could (based on current and expected fire behavior) exceed the fire size limit for the polygon will receive at least a confinement suppression response.
- E. Fires where a defined and defensible MMA cannot be readily determined or safely established will receive at least a confinement suppression response.
- F. All suspected human-caused starts will receive at least a confinement suppression response.
- G. Fires in zones without an AMR plan will receive an appropriate suppression-oriented response.

- H. All fires in A and B polygons will continue to receive a full response when Moffat County is managing one Wildland Fire Use or all preset environmental parameters for the polygon have been exceeded. All new fires in C and D polygons will receive a confinement strategy that will utilize natural barriers and a response that will satisfy some of the landowner objectives with concurrence from the FMO.
- I. When FMO or acting is not available, the IC should consider a confinement response at a minimum.
- J. A suppression-oriented action will be selected if the fire goes from Stage I and the FMO and Moffat County Sheriff, or acting, is unavailable to approve Stage II implementation.
- K. A full response or confinement strategy will be considered when contingency suppression or overhead resources are not available, or local resources become overextended.
- L. As a general management approach, the County Sheriff will manage one or more Wildland Fire Use fires or five fires in stage II or III status in conjunction with adjacent agencies at any one time. New starts may be considered for fire use during the Stage I analysis period. Within the first 24 hours of fire advancement, the five most likely fires to achieve resource objectives will be candidates for Stage II implementation. All others will receive suppression- or confinement-oriented action.
- M. A suppression action will be taken if smoke permits are not in place, if smoke prescriptions cannot be met, or if impacts described in the State-issued Smoke Permit cannot be mitigated.
- N. The documentation of decision made for fire use to achieve resource objectives is found in the appendices of this plan. In some cases, the WFSA process may be chosen if it is felt that a more in-depth analysis of the fire situation is required. In either case, an IMA will be determined within 24 hours of size-up of the fire.
- O. The selected management strategy may be changed based on changes in fire behavior, weather, or resource availability.

If there is any uncertainty as to whether a fire meets the above criteria or if consensus cannot be reached on management strategy, the fire shall receive a suppression-oriented response.

VI. PROCEDURES COMMON TO WILDLAND FIRE USE AND LIMITED SUPPRESSION STRATEGIES.

- A. Confinement response fires and use fires should be monitored at least every 2 days in a timber fuel type and daily in a brush/grass fuel type. Any change in the monitoring schedule will be documented on the Periodic Fire Assessment report. The Periodic Fire Assessment Report must be completed each time the fire is monitored. Monitoring of inactive fires may be done by aerial observation, lookout towers, or from a distant vantage point. When safe, active fires should be monitored by on-the-ground personnel. Input to the assessment report should include weather and fire behavior observations. Minimum qualifications for individuals authorized to monitor fires are Firefighter 1, having completed S-290. Prescribed Fire Monitor training is highly recommended.

VII. WILDLAND FIRE USE IMPLEMENTATION

This portion of the implementation chapter deals more specifically with Wildland Fire Use.

A. Stage I Implementation, initial assessment.

1. The standard Area Fire Size Up Card is completed by the first resources on scene and relayed to dispatch. Recommendations on a management strategy are made by the IC/FMO and confirmed by the FMO or acting.
2. The County Sheriff, designated person, or FMO fills out an Initial Go/No-Go Decision form with input from the landowner (if available) and initial response IC.
3. Initial Actions for a Go situation may include:
 - a. Assigning a qualified IC to make a field inspection of the fire to confirm the strategy and develop an initial Incident Action Plan.
 - b. Contacting the landowner. The FMO or designated person will take responsibility for predictions, documentation, and advice on strategy to the Moffat County Sheriff.
 - c. Beginning stage II implementation, if warranted.
 - d. Running fire behavior predictions based on current and expected weather.
 - e. Obtaining spot weather forecast.
4. The time frame for completion of Go/No-Go decision is within the first burn period after on-scene size-up. If the landowner cannot be contacted, but they have waived the initial contact, a decision will be made to manage the wildland fire consistent with the objectives established in the Fire Plan. Landowner input and final decision will need to be completed during the first 24 hours after fire size-up. If owner contact and concurrence cannot be made in that time frame, a confinement suppression-oriented action consistent with the Fire Plan will be taken.
5. Fires will be monitored as Stage I until there is a reason, such as: movement, intensity, or activity, to prompt them to be evaluated as Stage II. Management Action Points will be established for each incident which when violated will trigger the implementation of Stage II or III documentation and action. Management Action Points can be predicted weather, spatial distance, or environmental conditions that would warrant more in-depth analysis than is covered in Stage I. Management Action Points will be discussed and documented by the IC or FMO after a Go decision is made. Historically, many naturally occurring fires spread very little because of fuel arrangement or weather conditions. These fires will remain in Stage I status until they demonstrate, through movement, intensity (severity), or problematic activity (spotting, crowning), that Stage II is warranted. This type of fire activity, or predicted weather that could lead to this type of activity, will be described in a specific Management Action Point for the fire and will determine when further analysis is initiated. Once this observation has been made, Stage II analysis will follow within 24 hours.

B. Stage II, Short Term Implementation Actions.

1. Stage II actions and documentation must be completed within 24 hours after a wildland fire exceeds the Management Action Points established within a Stage I classification. Initiation of Stage II requires the FMO and the County Sheriff or acting's review and signature of the Decision Criteria Checklist and complexity analysis. Generally no more than one wildland fire, or if additional resources are available, two wildland fires can be managed at the Stage II or III level. Plan development and implementation become the responsibility of the FMO. Additional resources for analytical and documentation purposes are recommended.
2. Short-term fire behavior predictions are completed based on observations from the fire, spot weather and short term (48 hour) fire weather forecast.
3. A risk assessment is completed that may vary in detail from relative risk rating to quantitative analysis.
4. A written Implementation Plan that addresses objectives and desired effects, safety considerations, external concerns, environmental concerns, threats, short term actions (tactical), and estimated costs is completed for the next 48 hour period.
5. Complexity analysis completed.
6. An IMA will be determined within 48 hours after implementation of Stage II.
7. The Periodic Fire Assessment is a process to prevent unchecked escalation of an individual fire or the total fire management situation without adequate evaluation and planning. Part I evaluates the capability to continue implementation of the fire use for a specified period following the assessment. Generally, an assessment will be made at a minimum of every day for fires in the grass/brush fuel type and every other day for fires in the timber fuel type. The Fire Assessment is signed each time it is produced by the Sheriff or the delegated acting. If the fire size exceeds 20 acres in a timber fuel type, or is still active 48 hours after implementation of Stage II in either the timber or brush fuel types, a needs assessment chart will be utilized. If one high or two moderate ratings are demonstrated within the risk, fire behavior, or complexity elements, Stage III implementation should be considered. Fires that remain in the low to moderate range, based on the Needs Assessment chart, may remain under Stage II implementation.

C. Stage III, long-term implementation actions should include:

1. Establishing a clearly defined and defensible MMA boundary. At this point, a predetermined MMA or an initial MMA (from Stage II) may be modified. Once the MMA has been determined or modified, that boundary is then fixed.
2. Completing long-term fire behavior predictions, such as RERAP or FARSITE.
3. Completing long-term Risk Assessment or other programs with similar predictions.
4. Completing Long-Term Implementation Plan.
5. Part I of the Periodic Fire Assessment will continue to be filled out as a validation of whether to continue with Stage III implementation or to declare an escape and prepare a Wildland Fire Situation Analysis.

VIII. FIRES AND THE WILDLAND FIRE SITUATION ANALYSIS

- A. The following procedures will be implemented by the Fire Staff, landowner, Initial Attack ICs, and the Sheriff in the event of an escaped wildland fire. A fire will be declared an escaped fire when any one of the following situations occur:
1. Any fire in A or B polygons, or portions of the Moffat County not covered by an AMR plan, that is not contained by the start of the second burn period or exceeds local management capabilities. An exception to this standard may apply to B polygons that identify allowable acreage to burn under a modified strategy. In such cases, a WFSA need not be completed if the fire stays within the prescribed acreage limitations.
 2. Any fire may be declared an escaped fire as soon as it becomes apparent that containment, or management within an MMA, is not likely. In some situations, this declaration can be made at the time of detection due to extreme fire behavior, hazardous terrain, or lack of firefighting resources.
 3. Any fire placed into wildland fire use, or limited suppression that escapes the MMA, or exceeds the polygon acreage limitations will be declared an escape and a WFSA will be prepared.
 4. An escape will be declared if a WFU exceeds the perimeters of the smoke management plan standards. A WFSA will be prepared and a suppression-oriented action initiated.
- B. A WFSA will be completed once a fire is declared an escape. The format to be used is the standard software package developed for implementation of the new fire policy.

IX. PROJECT PLANS

- A. In order to implement fire use, fuel management projects have been identified to reduce hazardous fuels. The priority areas are the communities identified in Chapter 5 (Wildland-Urban Interface Plan) of the Fire Plan. In these areas, projects have been specifically identified and prioritized. In addition, some individual landowners have identified fuel management projects for their parcels. These landowner-identified projects are generally discussed by area and acres but are not specifically identified as projects within this Fire Plan at the same level as the community projects. No time frame for completion of the identified community or landowner projects has been established. An immediate priority should be placed on the community projects to acquire grant funds to help with project implementation.

X. POLYGON IDENTIFICATION BETWEEN UNITS

- A. In the interest of keeping polygon definition and description consistent between the Fire Plan and agency fire plans, polygons were labeled A, B, C, or D. In the Phase III area, numerical suffixes were not used in conjunction with the A, B, C, or D label to designate a desired fire response because of the large number of individual polygons.