



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fire Management Handbook

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1.6 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

1.6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes in detail the various Fish and Wildlife Service fire management accounts. Station managers, Regional Fire Management Coordinators (RFMC), and Fire Management Officers (FMO) must be aware of the responsibilities and limitations on the use of the Wildland Fire Management Appropriation.

Funding for fire management activities is provided through the combined Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Management Appropriation which is actually granted to the Bureau of Land Management. The appropriation is based on each bureau's input using the Most Efficient Level (MEL) concept of least cost management determined by fire management planning and FIREBASE analysis of the actual workload. Each agency's portion of the appropriation is distributed to them by allotment from BLM through the Treasury Department. Fire management funds are no year funds which are distributed to each Region. No year funds do not expire at the conclusion of a fiscal year. Any unexpended balance is carried over to the next fiscal year.

The appropriation consists of two Activities: *Wildland Fire Preparedness* and *Wildland Fire Operations*. The Wildland Fire Preparedness activity has only one subactivity - *Preparedness*. The Wildland Fire Operations activity has three subactivities - *Emergency Suppression*, *Emergency Rehabilitation*, and *Hazardous Fuel Reduction Operations*.

Particular attention should be paid to the procedures and limitations applicable to the use of funds used in wildland fire operations. When funds from these accounts are being

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utilized, it is imperative that the Program Assistant Regional Director, Regional Fire Management Coordinator, Fire Management Officer and Incident Commander/Prescribed Fire Burn Boss ensure that proper administrative procedures are followed from the beginning of the incident until its conclusion. The IC/RXB is responsible to the Refuge Manager for the efficient and proper expenditure of funds in order to achieve fire management objectives. The Refuge Manager is still the responsible Line Officer for all actions.

The *Preparedness* subactivity consists of all the actions needed to prepare for the response to wildland fire ignitions. This includes staffing, training and equipping forces to be ready and available to respond to wildland fires and take appropriate management action.

The *Emergency Suppression* subactivity includes all the actions and costs required to actively respond to wildland fires and implement an appropriate management response(s). Travel, transportation and subsistence of all forces needed to manage a going wildland fire may be charged to this account. In addition, elevated levels of emergency preparedness necessary to respond to short term increases in fire activity due to weather events, public activities or arson can be funded from this subactivity. Costs associated with severity needs, such as additional staffing due to prolonged drought conditions accrue here also, but severity requires specific authorization from the Director.

The *Emergency Rehabilitation* subactivity provides funds to take necessary actions to prevent erosion or invasion by exotic species following a wildland fire event.

The *Hazardous Fuel Reduction Operations* subactivity provides funding to reduce hazardous fuel loadings, both by use of prescribed fire and through mechanical reductions, and to use prescribed fire to reintroduce fire to the ecosystem.

1.6.2 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Fire Accounts

Fish and Wildlife Service funding for fire management is found in: 9251, 9261, 9262 and 9263 subactivities. Preparedness and program management costs are funded under 9251. Wildland fire operations including emergency suppression and

the full range of appropriate management responses to wildland fire are funded under 9261. Emergency rehabilitation actions are funded by 9262. Hazardous fuel reduction operations, including prescribed fire use and application, and mechanical reduction or chemical application as a necessary precursor to the application of prescribed fire, are charged to 9263.

Base Eight Pay for Fire Management Activities

Wildland Fire Operations: Personnel costs for wildland fire operations are charged to a specific fire number which becomes a fire project code when activated through the Denver Finance Center. Employees regularly paid from any source other than 9251 or 9263 will charge all time on wildland fire operations to the 9261 subactivity and the fire number. This includes base eight hours, overtime and hazard or environmental differential premiums. However, the base eight hours for personnel whose regular salary is paid from 9251 or 9263 will remain charged to their regular funding source with the appropriate fire number assigned as a project code. Only their overtime and hazard or environmental differential will be charged to 9261 and the fire number. The same processes are followed for emergency preparedness and emergency rehabilitation. Severity charges are similar except that the specific severity code included in the Director's authorization is used as the project code.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction Operations: Personnel costs for prescribed fire operations and authorized mechanical fuel reduction operations are charged to a specific fire number which becomes a project code when activated through the Denver Finance Center. Hazardous fuel charges differ from wildland fire operations in that only employees regularly paid from 9263 will charge their base eight hours pay to 9263. All personnel paid from any other account will continue to charge their base eight hours to their regular activity. Only overtime costs maybe charged to 9263 by these personnel. Hazard pay and environmental differential are not authorized for prescribed burning activities.

Why must non-9263 personnel charge their regular accounts for base eight on prescribed fires? To do otherwise would constitute misappropriation of funds. Since these positions are already fully funded they cannot be shifted to another activity without resulting in augmentation of funding to the base

account. Wildland fire operations are deemed to be emergencies which take precedent over all other activities, and shifting base eight salary is allowed to provide a means to detail temporary replacements or pay overtime to accomplish the individual's regular duties while they are in the emergency assignment.

Fire Account Review Procedures

The Fire Management Branch and the Regional Offices will monitor fire accounts to insure that expenditure targets are being met, and that expenditures are for legitimate fire management activities as defined for the various subactivities in this chapter.

Formal fiscal reviews of field stations and Regional Offices will be conducted by the Fire Management Branch in conjunction with the Regional Offices. These reviews will occur on a rotating basis with at least one Region done each year.

Accounting

The Fish and Wildlife Service accounting system runs under the Federal Financial System (FFS). There are a number of funding source codes used for fire management. The codes are listed below with explanations and examples of appropriate and prohibited uses.

Wildland Fire Preparedness

Subactivity: 9251 - Preparedness

Preparedness funds provide for the overall management and planning of the Fish and Wildlife Service's fire management program and to prepare for the ability to respond to wildland fire ignitions. Normal preparedness includes all activities undertaken in advance of fire occurrence to help ensure more effective suppression or other appropriate management actions. This includes the establishment and funding of interagency agreements and interagency fair share contributions.

Appropriate Uses

- Program oversight and management at the field station,

wildland fire season workloads.

Staffing.

- Interagency cooperative fire planning and management.

- Prevention and preparedness.

Appropriate Expenditures

- National and regional Activities

- National and regional fire prevention activities.

- Support for national and regional task groups.

- Support for interagency coordinating groups, such as

- the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, Alaska Interagency Fire Management Council and Geographic Coordination Groups.

- Travel for program oversight and review by national

- and Regional staff.

- Printing.

- Purchase of equipment and supplies.

- Supplies and equipment, including personnel protective equipment.
- Rent and lease of equipment and vehicles.
- Vehicle maintenance.
- Equipment maintenance.
- Operational support, including:
 - Arduous duty physical examinations.
 - Warehousing and fire cache operations.
 - Dispatching/logistical center operations.
 - Rent and utilities for fire offices.
 - Purchase and maintenance of weather station equipment.
 - Remote sensing when used for fire or lightning detection.
 - Travel associated with management of preparedness program or cooperative fire management activities.
- Fire aviation operations, including:
 - Aircraft availability contracts.
 - Aircraft inspections.
- Communications, including:
 - Maintenance of radio, telephone, data communications, and recording equipment.
 - Rental, purchase and lease of such equipment.
- Clerical support, including:
 - Salaries and premium pay for temporary clerical personnel authorized by FIREBASE analysis.
 - Office supplies.
 - Rental, purchase or lease of accountable office equipment.
- Training
 - Training at the national level (i.e., 400, 500, 600 series courses) teaching incident management and
 - ~~Local and Regional courses~~ ~~Development of training courses~~ ~~Travel associated with any of the above training as~~ ~~students or instructors.~~
 - ~~Development of training courses~~
 - ~~Travel associated with any of the above training as~~
 - ~~students or instructors.~~

- Travel associated with any of the above training as students or instructors.

- Purchase of training materials.

- Development of training courses.

Capital Equipment

- Purchase of capital equipment used for wildland fire preparedness and suppression. Includes such items as fire engines, tractor plow units, remote automated weather stations, pumps, radios, and computers. Purchases must be approved by Regional Fire Management Coordinators and must be supported by fire management plans.

Interagency Fair Share

- Fair share contributions for interagency shared resources such as dispatch centers and tanker bases. Operation of the wildland fire computer system and national communication systems such as GEONET and WIMS.

National Computer System Operations (FMIS)

- Operation of the Fire Management Information System. Contract software development and systems management at the Fire Management Branch.

Staffing

- Salaries for permanent or temporary staffing that provide planning and oversight functions for fire management programs at field stations, Regional Offices and the Fire Management Branch. Positions must be justified by the FIREBASE analysis and approved by Regional Fire Management Coordinators or the Service Fire Management Coordinator. Budgeted overtime and premium pay for preparedness fire management personnel not actually involved in wildland fire suppression operations.

Prohibited Uses

- Funding non-fire positions or work. Purchasing non-fire related supplies or equipment.

Subactivity: 9261 - Suppression Operations

All costs associated with Suppression Operations will be charged to 9261. This includes suppression, emergency

preparedness, and severity funding.

These funds provide for all aspects of appropriate management of wildland fires, emergency preparedness and escalated preparedness funding based on abnormally extreme fire potential (severity). Includes costs of firefighters and support personnel, supplies, equipment rental, replacement of lost or damaged capitalized equipment, contracts for goods and services, dispatch and logistical support, immediate measures taken to correct damages resulting from the fire suppression effort, and any suppression cost recovery efforts. Severity funding includes any costs detailed in any severity funding request initiated by a Regional Director and authorized by the Director, Fish and Wildlife Service. All severity charges require use of a project number assigned by the National Wildlife Refuge System, Fire Management Branch.

Wildland Fire Suppression and Management (9261)

All wildland fires on Fish and Wildlife Service lands will receive an Incident Number that is assigned through the Fire Management System (FMIS), Fire Occurrence Subsystem. These numbers will be Region specific and tracked within FFS as a project code.

Region	Incident Number
1	1010-1999
2	2010-2999
3	3010-3999
4	4010-4999
5	5010-5200, 5210-5300, 5310-5999
6	6010-6500, 6510-6999
7	7010-7999
9	9010-9999

When a Region reaches the end of its assigned numbers, the system is reset and incident numbers repeat themselves.

No differentiation is made by the financial system between on-refuge fires or interagency assistance off-refuge. Statistical tracking of these activities is maintained by the DI-1202 Fire Occurrence Report. All interagency wildland fire assistance actions will be charged to this subactivity with an Incident Number assigned through the Fire Management Information System.

Emergency Preparedness (9261)

During the wildland fire season there may be short-term weather events and increased human activity that increase the fire danger beyond what is normal. These types of occurrences cannot be planned or budgeted for as part of the normal fire season. Emergency preparedness planning may call for movement of additional firefighting resources into the area or lengthening the duty day to provide extended initial attack coverage. The duration of this type of event may be from one to a few days and can occur several times during the fire season. The triggering of emergency preparedness funding is documented in the refuge Step-Up Plan. It should not be confused with severity funding which is justified by prolonged environmental problems. Emergency preparedness is a short term event.

The decision to use emergency preparedness funds is made at the refuge level with approval of the Regional Fire Management Coordinator. Authorization for use of emergency preparedness funding will be found in an approved refuge Step-Up Plan when staffing classes reach level 4 or 5. If a refuge Step-Up Plan is not complete, the RFMC will establish interim guidance for initiating emergency preparedness. Funding to cover these costs will come from the 9261 subactivity since the reason for incurring increased costs over what is normal is due to potential, unplanned risk. The frequency and use of emergency preparedness funding will be documented through the use of the following Region specific project numbers:

Region	Project Number
1	PE01
2	PE02
3	PE03
4	PE04
5	PE05
6	PE06
7	PE07

Organization code - 9261-PE0(X)

Appropriate Uses

- Appropriate management action taken on wildland fires and on prescribed fires that have exceeded prescription and have been declared a wildland fire.
- Emergency preparedness actions carried out in response to an approved Step-Up Plan.

Appropriate Expenditures

- Regular time for other than 9251 or 9263 personnel, overtime and hazard or environmental premium pay for replacement of equipment costs associated with a wildland fire. Accountable equipment lost, damaged or destroyed on a wildland fire may be replaced only if it has been approved under Board of Survey procedures. When the Board of Survey has completed the investigation and made the required findings and determinations, the Report of Survey will be forwarded to the Fire Management Branch for review and subsequent approval by the Washington Office Reviewing Authority.
- Meals and lodging directly related to wildland fire actions.
- Repair and maintenance of equipment used on a fire.
- Travel and other costs associated with fire reviews.
- Documentation of fire extent and effects directly related to a specific wildland fire and carried out within one year of the date the fire is declared out.
- Emergency evacuations of visitors, residents, or other personnel at risk from a wildland fire.
- Payments to suppression cooperators under interagency agreements.
- Wildland fire cause determination and arson investigation.
- Damages to resources caused by suppression actions.

- Repair and maintenance of equipment used on a fire.
- Replacement of equipment destroyed or consumed on a wildland fire. Accountable equipment lost, damaged or destroyed on a wildland fire may be replaced only if it has been approved under Board of Survey procedures. When the Board of Survey has completed the investigation and made their final findings and determinations, the Report of Survey will be forwarded to the Fire Management Branch for review and subsequent approval by the Washington Office Reviewing Authority.
- Meals and lodging directly related to wildland fire actions.
- Travel and other costs associated with fire reviews.
- Documentation of fire extent and effects directly related to a specific wildland fire and carried out within one year of the date the fire is declared out.
- Emergency evacuations of visitors, residents, or other personnel at risk from a wildland fire.
- Payments to suppression cooperators under interagency agreements.
- Wildland fire cause determination and arson investigation.
- Damages to resources caused by suppression actions will be mitigated or repaired prior to complete fire demobilization when possible. Such actions are considered part of the suppression cost and are chargeable to the specific fire through the use of 9261 subactivity only.
- Damage or destruction to physical or capital improvements resulting from suppression actions should be charged against the specific fire through the 9261 subactivity. A rehabilitation plan is not required for damage resulting from suppression actions, but certain approvals and concurrences are required before repair. Documentation of the extent of damages and the circumstances are required.
- Costs associated with immediate actions taken to repair damages caused by direct suppression activities are included as direct charges to the fire. These include, but are not limited to, repair of firelines and fuel breaks; **authorized** replacement of improvements, facilities or structures that were damaged as a result of a suppression action. **Authorization** for replacement of improvements, facilities or structures damaged due to

suppression actions are to be obtained by the Refuge Manager submitting a written request through the Regional Fire Management Coordinator to the Regional Director for approval. Depending upon the situation, a Board of Survey report may be required. The Service Fire Management Coordinator must concur with the request. The request should include a summary of circumstances leading to the loss or damage, proposed plan to replace or repair the damage and the actual cost or a valid cost estimate. A copy of the request will be forwarded to the Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System.

A Claim for Damages Against the Government cannot be filed in any case.

Prohibited Uses.

- Accountable equipment, except as authorized by the Fire Management Branch. Accountable equipment lost, damaged, or destroyed on a wildland fire may be replaced only if there is an approved Report of Survey. Base eight salaries, benefits and support for 9251 and 9263 funded personnel.
- Costs associated with management actions not in the approved Wildland Fire Situation Analysis.

Severity Funding (9261)

Severity funding is escalated preparedness funding based on abnormally extreme fire potential. It includes any costs authorized in a severity funding request that is initiated by the Regional Director and approved by the Director, Fish and Wildlife Service. All charges in this category require use of an incident number assigned by the Fire Management Branch. See below for guidance on how to request severity funding.

Region	Incident Number
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Region 9 9100-9999

Appropriate Uses.

- Funding is used to improve wildland fire initial attack response capability during potentially dangerous situations caused by infrequent climate or weather events such as extended drought or strong windstorms.

Appropriate Expenditures.

- Rental or lease of initial attack equipment.
- Augmentation of existing fire suppression personnel.
- Augmentation of normal initial attack capability that is included in the Fire Management Plan.

Prohibited Uses.

- Funding cannot be used to restore lost funding resulting
 - from budget cuts or other reductions.
- Funding cannot be used to meet needs identified in fire management plans which are not covered by normal funding.
- Procurement of accountable equipment without Fire Management Branch approval.

Severity Funding Guidelines

Severity funding is escalated preparedness authorization when justified and approved based on an extended period of abnormal fire potential, and is used to meet increased preparedness demands. Emergency Preparedness funding is used to address short-term periods of abnormal fire potential and justified through a Step-Up Plan. The authorization for severity funding is provided to improve wildland fire initial attack response capability to potentially dangerous situations caused by infrequent climate or weather events such as extended drought or the accumulation of large amounts of dead and down fuels following wind or ice storms. The authorization is not provided to restore lost funding or to raise funding levels to meet needs identified in fire management plans not funded under regular preparedness funds. Funds are not transferred to the requesting unit, but an authorization to expend against a designated limit is given. Severity funding needs should be anticipated as early as possible to allow adequate time for request development and approval. All charges under this account require a project number assigned by the Service Fire Management Coordinator.

Criteria for Severity Authorization. Severity authorizations provide for essential preparedness forces and activates when: Unusual weather and fire conditions result in the occurrence, or substantial threat of occurrence, of wildland fires with significant damage potential before or after the normal fire season identified in the refuge Fire Management Plan.

Weather conditions during the fire season result in a period of fire severity which is, or is anticipated to be, substantially higher than that which normally occurred during the base period used in fire program planning.

Authorization process. The Fire Management Officer in concert with the Regional Fire Management Coordinator will develop the severity funding package. Once the Regional Director approves the request, it will be sent to the Service Fire Management Coordinator. The SFMC will review the package and prepare a response within 48 hours for the Director's approval. The package will then be sent to the

Washington Office, National Wildlife Refuge System for a **one-week** approval process. The package will be hand carried to the Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System, The Assistant Director - Policy, Budget and Administration and the Director. It is the responsibility of each Assistant Director to ensure that the appropriate Divisions be included in the review and approval process.

Request content. Requests for changes in hiring dates and/or fire severity authorization shall include the following:

A brief narrative statement giving the purpose for the change, the fire problem that exists compared to the normal fire situation, and a description of resources that will be extended. The fire problem should be quantified using appropriate indices, such as the Burning Index, Energy Release Component or Ketch-Byram Drought Index, and other data as appropriate.

A statement of alternatives or adjustments that have been made within the Regional capability to help meet needs. This may include options such as additional fire personnel, equipment, detection flights, shifting of resources or funding within the Region.

Consequences if the request is not approved. These should include the threat to improvements, non-Service lands, resource damage incurred if additional wildland fires occur, and other impacts as appropriate.

Amount and proposed use of the requested authorization, including estimated costs, a schedule showing when additional preparedness resources would be hired or put into service, including FTE requirements.

Identify the criteria established at the local/Regional level to determine that the need for the additional authorization has ended.

Reporting Requirement. When expenditures are made against the severity authorization, the following information will be supplied on a monthly basis. This information will be transmitted through the Regional Fire Management Coordinator to the Service Fire Management Coordinator.

- Amount expended for the period and the purpose (salary, equipment rental, etc.).

- Balance of severity authorization remaining.

- Given potential changes in conditions, identify anticipated duration for continued use of the authorization.

Subactivity: 9262 - Emergency Rehabilitation

Fire damages as a result of wildland fires take two forms - suppression damages and resource damages. Suppression

damages occur as a result of suppression operations, while resource damages are a result of the fire itself. Fire suppression activity damage rehabilitation is funded through the Suppression Operations Subactivity (9261).

Emergency stabilization and/or rehabilitation actions may be required to address resource damages if natural recovery will not achieve the refuge management objectives found in approved refuge management plans. A Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) Plan is used to justify and implement specific emergency stabilization and rehabilitation treatments. Funding for emergency stabilization treatments is provided for no more than two full growing seasons following control of the fire. Managers can shift base 8 personnel costs or back-fill in accordance with standard procedures for emergency stabilization planning or treatment implementation. Funding for rehabilitation treatments is provided for no more than three years following control of the fire. Managers cannot shift base 8 personnel costs or back-fill for rehabilitation planning or treatments.

All ESR Plans require approval by the Refuge Manager and the Regional Director that the emergency stabilization and rehabilitation treatments are compatible with and justified in refuge management plans. The Regional Fire Management Coordinator must concur that the plan fits the technical definition for use of Emergency Rehabilitation funds. Plans obligating more than \$500,000 of Emergency Rehabilitation funds are approved by the Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System.

The Fire Management Branch will be notified of all ESR Plan approvals in order to establish an implementation account. ESR planning costs will be charged to the organizational code - 9262 - fire number. ESR Plan implementation costs will be charged to the organizational code - 9262 -Rxxx (Rxxx being the individual rehabilitation implementation account established by the Fire Management Branch). Any per-approved emergency implementation costs charged to the organizational code - 9262 - fire number before the ESR Plan is approved and the implementation account established should be redistributed to the implementation account once it is established. An electronic copy of all approved ESR Plans will be forwarded to the Service Fire Management Coordinator within 10 days following approval for budgeting and tracking purposes.

Appropriate Uses. ESR actions to protect public safety, stabilize and prevent further land degradation and resource loss, repair and replace minor facilities damaged by the fire.

and improve the land according to approved refuge management plans for up to 3 years following control of the fire are appropriate. All Emergency Rehabilitation funded treatments must be specified in an approved ESR Plan.

Appropriate Expenditures

Emergency Stabilization

- Immediate post-fire fire damage assessments, planning
- emergency stabilization actions, and ESR Plan development.
- Replacing or repairing facilities essential to public health and safety and replacing or constructing fences or other structures necessary to protect emergency stabilization
- Physical structures and devices to slow the movement of soil and water downslope (e.g., check dams, culverts, silt fences, log erosion barriers and straw wattles, erosion
- Conducting fire damage assessments for threatened, endangered, and other special status species to identify mitigation requirements. Damage assessments and
- Seeding or planting of shrubs, forbs, and grasses to prevent critical habitat for federal listed threatened or endangered species, or other special status species, from
- Seeding or planting of shrubs, forbs, and grasses to facilitate the natural succession of vegetative
- communities that were largely composed of native
- Seeding or planting trees, only if such actions have been demonstrated to be cost-effective in meeting project
- objectives of stabilizing watersheds to prevent
- Use of chemical, biological or mechanical treatments
- necessary to minimize the establishment or re-establishment of non-native invasive species within the

necessary to minimize the establishment or re-establishment of non-native invasive species within the perimeter of the burned area.

- Monitoring and patrolling necessary for public safety and natural and cultural resource protection, if such activities cannot be accomplished within existing capabilities and by shifting priorities.

- Covering, camouflaging, cleaning, burying, or reinforcing historic properties to prevent erosion, weathering, movement, and looting.

- Fire damage assessments to assess damage to documented historic properties or those discovered in the course of treating known properties.

- Base 8 salary of non-fire funded Service employees engaged in emergency stabilization planning and treatment implementation.

- Overtime for Service employees engaged in emergency stabilization planning and treatment implementation.

Rehabilitation

- Planning post-fire rehabilitation actions and ESR Plan development.

- Repair or improve lands unlikely to recover naturally from wildland fire damage by emulating historical or pre-fire ecosystem structure, function, diversity, and dynamics consistent with approved refuge management plans.

- Restore or establish a healthy, stable ecosystem even if the ecosystem cannot fully emulate historical or pre-fire conditions.

Tree planting is limited to:

- Facilitating the succession and stabilization of forest ecosystems.

- Re-establishing habitat for federally listed threatened or endangered species, or other special status species.

- Reintroducing or reestablishing native tree species and seed sources lost in a stand replacement fire.

- Repair or replace fire damage to minor operating facilities (e.g., campgrounds, interpretive signs and exhibits, shade shelters, grazing fences, wildlife guzzlers, etc).

- Overtime for Service employees engaged in rehabilitation planning and treatment implementation.

Prohibited Uses

- Emergency stabilization or rehabilitation treatments not in an approved ESR Plan.
- Emergency stabilization treatments carried out beyond the second growing season following control of the fire.
- Rehabilitation treatments carried out beyond three years following control of the fire.
- Treatment effectiveness monitoring after two years following control of the fire without submittal of an initial Accomplishment Report.
- Any treatment effectiveness monitoring after three years following control of the fire.
- The planning or replacement of major infrastructure, such as visitor centers, residential structures, administration offices, work centers, lookout towers, etc., without approval from the Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary, Policy, Management and Budget, or include the construction of new facilities that did not exist before the fire.
- Damages caused by prescribed fires or wildland fire used to achieve land management objectives.
- Monitoring to determine the short- or long-term response of a resource to the fire (i.e., fire effects monitoring).
- Purchase of accountable equipment.
- Base 8 salary of fire funded Service employees engaged in emergency stabilization actions.
- Base 8 salary of Service employees engaged in rehabilitation planning and treatment actions.

Subactivity: 9263 - Hazardous Fuel Reduction Operations Fuel Reduction Operations

The Hazardous Fuel Reduction Operations sub activity provides funding for prescribed fire and mechanical fuel reduction activities and includes the costs of ecological burning to reintroduce the role of fire to the landscape. This program includes planning, implementation and support to fuel management activities including inventorying fuel hazards, analysis of treatment alternatives, determining and application of appropriate fuel treatment methods, and monitoring and evaluation of fuel treatment accomplishments. This includes application of wildland fire and mechanical treatments to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and reduce hazardous fuels.

Project ceilings must be identified and approved through the FIREBASE system. This is necessary to maintain fiscal integrity so that funds are only expended on hazardous fuels

and resource enhancement prescribed fire management actions. The project definition portion of FIREBASE will be used to detail estimated costs for projects and to report actual costs incurred.

Personnel can be hired and paid from the 9263 account, subject to an approved Staffing Plan. However, the positions that are appropriate for hiring under this budget authority must be dedicated fuels management positions with at least 80% of their time spent working on planning, preparing and implementing prescribed fires or other hazard reduction projects. Due to the close scrutiny that the 9263 subactivity expenditures will receive, all positions hired under this subactivity must have Regional Fire Management Coordinator concurrence prior to recruiting and filling. Any changes to the approved Staffing Plan must be submitted to and approved by the Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Overtime, premium pay, travel and per diem may be charged to this account. Travel must involve the movement of project and planning personnel directly working on hazardous fuels reduction projects, or for training associated with prescribed fire. Forces can be moved around the Region or between Regions to provide adequate resources to accomplish projects within planned prescription windows. Expendable supplies necessary for the planning and implementation of projects, such as office supplies, vehicle fuel and minor equipment repairs, may be charged to 9263. Fire preparedness and suppression personnel (9251), Wildland Urban Interface Hazardous Fuels Reduction Operations (9264) and regular refuge (1260) personnel may charge overtime during actual project operations, but may not charge regular (base 8) hours against this account. Since these positions are already funded out of other accounts, cross charging for base 8 hours would constitute unauthorized augmentation of funds in their regular accounts.

This funding may be used to purchase capitalized equipment needed for the average annual workload that cannot be economically contracted or rented. Capitalized equipment costing less than \$2,500 may be purchased and charged to 9263-PROG if it can not be specifically charged to a project. The purchase of any capitalized equipment with a value greater than \$2,500 will require National Office approval. Approval will require a complete justification for the equipment, including the utility of the equipment (is it a piece of equipment specific to reducing hazardous fuels, such as a chipper) and a detailed explanation of why the work to be performed can not be contracted to a local business. The costs of replacing

equipment destroyed while working on a project may also be included within the cost of the project 9263-XXXX and will require a board of survey action.

Aircraft costs, such as flight time for aerial ignitions, may be charged to 9263 when they are the result of approved projects. Aircraft availability for preparedness should continue to be charged to 9251.

Hazardous fuels management effectiveness monitoring costs can be charged to 9263. The purpose of fuels management effectiveness monitoring is limited to fuels structure and composition monitoring before and after treatment. Long term ecological or wildlife population monitoring must be charged to regular 1260 accounts. Because fuels management effectiveness monitoring is not an emergency, Base 8 personnel costs or costs associated with back filling personnel cannot be funded. Overtime costs may be authorized in exceptional cases only.

Cost accounting for Hazardous Fuels Reduction Operations will be accomplished by assigning a project code to all projects. Refuge fund ceilings will be identified through FIREBASE and rolled into a Regional ceiling. The DI-1202 reporting system number will be used as the project code for specific fuels treatment costs. Planning and program management costs not directly associated with individual burns will be charged against OVHD (Overhead) and/or PROG (Program).

Interagency assistance across agency boundary lines for wildland urban interface fuels treatments can also be charged to 9263. All direct costs associated with a cooperative effort on another federal agency's property are appropriate, including travel and per diem. Agencies will not cross bill for these expenses. Amounts obligated for these purposes will not be counted against the station's or Region's fund ceiling. The project code to charge these activities is 9263-IARX.

Travel and training costs associated with program administration/implementation will be charged to TNTV. Any travel associated with a specific project will be charged to the assigned project number.

Lumped charging should be kept to a minimum. It is important that our costs under 9263 be tracked in detail, and it is especially important that treated acres are tied to expenditures. One of the figures that is continually sought is the cost per acre.

The Administratively Determined Pay Rate Authority for hiring emergency firefighters has been amended within Interior to include AD (Emergency Fire Fighter) use on prescribed fires.

The term of hire is restricted to no greater than 300 hours per year per person for emergency hazardous fuel reduction work. The authority can only be used for direct treatment activity, and may not be used to augment regular operations and maintenance or other duties.

Appropriate Uses ([Exhibit 1-6-1](#)). Prescribed fire and

- mechanical fuel reduction activities; and includes the costs of ecological burning to reintroduce the role of fire to the landscape.

Contract costs for personnel, equipment, etc can be covered under any funding source including 9263. Typical costs would be the kind associated with a company that has organized to provide this service to wildland agencies. Contract costs for Rx burning should be charged to a specific fire number.

Training costs and travel associated with course development, attending training or completing task books can be charged to 9263. Service or NWCG prescribed fire training courses and appropriate suppression training required for prescribed fire operations is also covered. Base 8 costs will continue to be funded by the employee's normal funding source. Training costs will be coded to TNTV.

Expendable supplies necessary for the planning and implementation of projects, such as office supplies, vehicle fuel and equipment repairs, may be charged to the 9263 account. Those items which are identified in project descriptions and can be attributed to individual projects should be charged to the specific project numbers. Indirect, overhead costs resulting from multiple projects should be charged to TNTV.

The cost of [fuels management effectiveness monitoring](#) can be charged to 9263. The costs of pre and post treatment fuels management monitoring activities are charged to organizational code - 9263 - and to the individual fuels management project number. Costs for fuels monitoring in years 1, 2, 5, 10, and 20 following the treatment are charged to organizational code - 9263 - MONT.

Assistance to other Federal agencies including direct costs, travel, per diem, with the same requirements as for Service prescribed fires. IARX (interagency prescribed fire) alpha project code will be used for cooperative assistance to another Federal wildland agency. Costs accrued under this project code will be tracked separately from the station's prescribed fire fund ceiling and not count as a part of the ceiling. All direct costs associated with a cooperative effort on another federal agency's property are appropriate, including travel and per diem. Agencies will not cross bill for these costs. A DI-1202 will be completed to track these efforts in the occurrence system. IARX should be noted in the comment section and Fire Type 49 should be indicated. Type 49 is the obsolete code for prescribed natural fires which no longer

exist. Using this code allows separate tracking and query of interagency assists. Prescribed burn assistance to non-federal cooperators must be done under some type of a reimbursable agreement and should be assigned a specific reimbursable project number. IARX code does not apply. If you have a Memorandum of Understanding or agreement with a non-federal cooperator which obligates them to assist you on FWS land, and there will be an equitable exchange of resources and benefits, it may be appropriate to charge this action to IARX. There must be an exchange so that our program can be compensated for the expenditure of funds and time on non-federal lands. If hazard fuels are located immediately adjacent to the refuge, with some history of problems, and the adjacent landowner has no resources to reduce the hazard, nor the financial resources to contract mitigation actions it may be appropriate to take action to protect the refuge by reducing the hazard fuels. This should be a last choice option, if the local structural fire department can't do it or won't, and the problem can't be addressed by treating the refuge's side of the line only. There must be a written agreement with the landowner authorizing your actions, and a prescription and burn plan must be written and approved as for any other burn.

- Co-funding full-time fire personnel who have both preparedness and Rx responsibility. In some cases, full-time fire positions may be co-funded from 9251 and 9263 where the position responsibilities involve both preparedness and fuels management activities. Prior authorization must be granted by the appropriate Regional Fire Management Coordinator, and the specific position must be included in the Regional 9263 Staffing Plan. Personnel can be hired and/or paid using the 9263 account. However, the positions must be dedicated fuels management positions with at least 80% of their time spent working on planning, preparing and implementing prescribed fires and other fuels management projects. Due to the anticipated close scrutiny that the 9263 subactivity expenditures will receive, all fuels management positions hired under this subactivity must have Regional Fire Management Coordinator concurrence prior to recruiting and filling of these positions; and again, must appear in the approved Regional Staffing Plan. The fire management positions appropriate for hiring under this new budget authority would include Prescribed Fire Specialist, Fuels

Management Specialist, Prescribed Fire Monitor, Range Technician (firefighter), Forestry Technician (firefighter), and in some cases an administrative support position may be justified by the FIREBASE analysis.

Program oversight costs for 9263 funded personnel not attributable to a specific project, and co-funded 9251/9263 personnel program oversight not attributable to a specific project. Positions hired to perform oversight, support or supervisory duties will charge to a specific project number while directly involved in prescribed fire and fuels management activities otherwise costs will be coded to 9263 OVHD.

Prohibited Uses.

- Regular (base 8) hours for 9251 and regular refuge employees cannot be charged against the 9263 account. These positions are already funded out of other accounts and cross charging for base 8 hours would constitute unauthorized augmentation of funds in their regular accounts.
- Long term ecological or wildlife population monitoring.
- Fire effects studies on wildlife (individuals or populations).

Subactivity 9264 - Wildland Urban Interface

The Wildland Urban Interface Fuel Reduction Operations subactivity provides funding for prescribed fire and mechanical fuel reduction activities in the wildland urban interface. Mechanical or chemical projects which are specifically oriented to removal or reduction of Wildland Urban Interface fuels may also be funded.

The intent of the appropriation is to provide funding for wildland urban interface (WUI) fuel reduction operations on federal lands and adjacent non-federal lands. All Federally funded WUI projects will involve treatments that are at least partially on Federal lands and the portion that is on non-federal lands must be of benefit to the federal resources. The Appropriation Authorization Language specifically emphasizes the use of contracts and grants as the preferred method to conduct activities under this subactivity. Force account may be used when contracts and grants are not feasible to use.

Project ceilings must be identified and approved through the FIREBASE system. This is necessary to maintain fiscal integrity so that funds are only expended on wildland urban interface management actions. The project definition portion of FIREBASE will be used to detail the estimated costs for

projects and to report actual costs incurred.

Cost accounting for Wildland Urban Interface Fuel Reduction Operations will be accomplished by assigning a project code to all projects. Refuge fund ceilings will be identified through FIREBASE and rolled into a Regional ceiling. The DI-1202 reporting system number will be used as the project code for specific fuels treatment costs. Planning and program management costs not directly associated with individual burns will be charged against OVHD (Overhead) and/or PROG (Program).

Interagency assistance across agency boundary lines for wildland urban interface fuels treatments can also be charged to 9264. All direct costs associated with a cooperative effort on another federal agency's property are appropriate, including travel and per diem. Agencies will not cross bill for these expenses. Amounts obligated for these purposes will not be counted against the station's or Region's fund ceiling.

Travel and training costs associated with program administration/implementation will be charged to TNTV. Any travel associated with a specific project will be charged to the assigned project number.

Lumped charging should be kept to a minimum. It is important that our costs under 9264 be tracked in detail, and it is especially important that treated acres are tied to expenditures. One of the figures that is continually sought is the cost per acre.

The Administratively Determined Pay Rate Authority for hiring emergency firefighters has been amended within Interior to include AD (Emergency Fire Fighter) use on prescribed fires. The term of hire is restricted to no greater than 300 hours per year per person for emergency hazardous fuel reduction work. The authority can only be used for direct treatment activity, and may not be used to augment regular operations and maintenance or other duties.

Appropriate Uses ([Exhibit 1-6-2](#)): Prescribed fire and
• mechanical fuel reduction activities in the wildland urban interface.

will receive, all positions hired under this subactivity must have Regional Fire Management Coordinator concurrence prior to recruiting and filling. Any changes to the approved Staffing Plan must be submitted to and approved by the Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

- Overtime, premium pay, travel and per diem may be charged to this account. Travel must involve the movement of project and planning personnel directly working on wildland urban interface fuel reduction projects, or for training associated with prescribed fire. Forces can be moved around the Region or between Regions to provide adequate resources to accomplish projects within planned prescription windows. Expendable supplies necessary for the planning and implementation of projects, such as office supplies, vehicle fuel and minor equipment repairs, may be charged to 9264.

- Fire preparedness and suppression personnel (9251), Hazardous Fuels Reduction Operations (9263) and regular refuge (1260) personnel may charge overtime during actual project operations, but may not charge regular (base 8) hours against this account. Since these positions are already funded out of other accounts, cross charging for base 8 hours would constitute unauthorized augmentation of funds in their regular accounts.

- This funding may be used to purchase capitalized equipment needed for the average annual workload that cannot be economically contracted or rented. Capitalized equipment costing less than \$2,500 may be purchased and charged to 9264-PROG if it can not be specifically charged to a project. The purchase of any capitalized equipment with a value greater than \$2,500 will require National Office approval. Approval will require a complete justification for the equipment, including the utility of the equipment (is it a piece of equipment specific to reducing hazardous fuels, such as a chipper) and a detailed explanation of why the work to be performed can not be contracted to a local business. The costs of replacing equipment destroyed while working on a project may also be included within the cost of the project 9264-XXXX and will require a board of survey action.

- Aircraft costs, such as flight time for aerial ignitions, may be charged to 9264 when they are the result of approved projects. Aircraft availability for preparedness should continue to be charged to 9251.

Wildland urban interface fuels management effectiveness monitoring costs can be charged to 9264. The purpose of fuels management effectiveness monitoring is limited to fuels structure and composition monitoring before and after treatment. Long term ecological or wildlife population monitoring must be charged to regular 1260 accounts. Because fuels management effectiveness monitoring is not an emergency, Base 8 personell costs or costs associated with back filling personnel cannot be funded. Overtime costs may be authorized in exceptional cases only.

Information and Education Workshops, mitigation activities including public distribution of pamphlets/brochures, etc.

Homeowner and Community action projects.

Prohibited Uses

Regular (base 8) hours for 9251 and regular refuge employees cannot be charged against the 9264 account. These positions are already funded out of other accounts and cross charging for base 8 hours would constitute unauthorized augmentation of funds in their regular accounts.

Ecological restoration projects.

Long-term fire effects monitoring.

Projects not benefiting Federal lands.

Subactivity 9265 - Rural Fire Assistance

The Rural Fire Assistance Program is designed to increase firefighter safety and enhance the fire protection capabilities of rural fire departments. These goals will be achieved by assisting those departments in meeting or exceeding accepted standards of wildland fire qualifications, training and performance. Emphasis is placed on departments that protect rural communities, play a substantial cooperative role in the protection of Federal lands, and are associated with Department of the Interior managed lands.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of fire protection on public lands, the Federal Government may provide technical assistance, training, supplies and materials, equipment, and participate in interagency prevention and educational activities and proficiency exercises on a cost-share basis. This includes Federal costs associated with supplies and materials, equipment, travel, overtime and premium pay associated with

project implementation.

Implementation: Regions and field stations will enter into agreements that will pass these monies to rural fire departments. In writing the project management plan section of the agreement, the process of passing the money to rural fire departments could include going through the State Forester. Either way, coordination must occur with the State Foresters. In order for the monies to be passed to a local fire department, an agreement specifically outlining the roles and responsibilities of each agency must be signed and approved. A contracting officer or a person with the equivalent delegated authority must be involved in the process. The National Fire Plan Contracts/Assistance Agreements working group developed a model agreement to provide assistance to rural fire departments. [This agreement will be available on the National Fire Plan web site.](#)

Priorities are established by the local bureau/unit, based on local needs in consultation with rural fire department(s). They are again prioritized at the Regional level, as there may be many more requests than available funding. Should additional funding become available, further projects may be readily approved from the existing priority list.

Contracting for services is an important component to this program. Rural fire departments can utilize this funding to contract out for services which would meet the objectives of this program. An example of services that potentially may be contracted include:

- Wildland fire training.

- Technical wildland fire expertise in planning, prevention,

- Purchase of equipment, supplies, and materials.

Program Administration: The following criteria will be used to determine suitable Rural Fire Assistance projects. They do not represent a long-term or continuing commitment of funding.

The departments targeted in this program may or may not be identified as a "Wildland Urban Interface Community."

Eligibility Criteria -for a department to participate in the program.

prevention activities.

- The rural fire department must have the capability to meet cost share at a minimum of 10 percent (which may include in-kind services).

Evaluation Criteria -for use of designated evaluator to rank eligible rural fire departments for fund allocation.

- Determine each department's frequency of responses to wildland/urban fire incidents in local area. Evaluate these frequencies against other applicants.

- Evaluate the department's wildland prevention and education program needs relative to the other applicants.

- Evaluate the department's training program needs relative to the other applicants.

- Evaluate the communities' and DOI's values to be protected relative to other applicants.

- Evaluate the percentage of wildland/urban lands relative to the other applicants.

- Determine the number of wildland fire engines in the department relative to the percentage of wildland/urban interface acres protected.

Coordination/Consultation: To ensure consistency and compatibility with existing rural fire assistance programs, Interior bureaus will work with State Foresters to coordinate funding of RFDs/VFDs to ensure funding is allocated to appropriate departments.

Coordination and consultation with all partners is an important component of this program. Affected partners, including local and State officials, should be included in the priority setting process and in developing community-wide action plans and objectives. In areas where several Federal partners exist or where multiple projects may be accomplished, a lead Federal agency should be identified as a primary point of contact for each fire department or a group of departments. Monies from more than one source can be utilized to assist a department, but one agency should have the lead in coordinating Interior's assistance. This will help reduce confusion and multiple points of contact for the assisted departments.

Performance Report/Monitoring: It is important to track our accomplishments in assisting local departments; we are required to report back to Congress on these accomplishments on a quarterly basis. Field stations will track their accomplishments and report them to Regional Offices. A form ([last page of Department implementation memo](#)) has been developed for interagency use that will provide the necessary information to track our accomplishments.

The National Fire Plan web site will serve as the clearing house for assistance to Rural Fire Departments. The web site should contain information on what department is being assisted, type of assistance being provided, and which bureau is providing the assistance.

Administrative Conditions: There are some program restrictions on the use of these dollars. They cannot be used to pay salaries for Government employees. The primary use of funds will be those identified in the appropriation language. A maximum allowable Federal contribution of \$20,000 per Rural Fire Department per year has been established. The basis of cost share will not exceed 90/10 percent, with a smaller percentage being cooperator responsibility. Cooperators' contribution may be in the form of in-kind service.

Incident Numbers

Emergency Operations (9261): Wildland fire suppression on or off FWS property and emergency preparedness on FWS property.

Each incident is assigned a four digit sequential fire number for specific tracking. This number is generated by the Fire Management Information System Fire Occurrence subsystem. The complete fire number consists of the organization code, followed by the sequential numbers for that Region. The actual format for an FWS incident number might be:

41570-9261-4087

where 41570 is the organization code for Merritt Island Refuge, 9261 is the cost code identifying wildland fire, 4087 is the sequentially assigned number (with the first digit (4) being the FWS Region).

9262 Emergency Rehabilitation funds must be tied to a specific fire number. Following the example above, if emergency rehabilitation were necessary, the code would look like this:

41570-9262-4087

where the same sequential incident number is used to track rehabilitation costs associated with this fire.

9263 Hazardous Fuel Reduction Operations works just like wildland fire, with a sequential number from FMIS identifying the specific prescribed fire.

Cost Coding and Incident Numbers

Incident numbers are generated by the Fire Management Information System. Within the FWS, this number then

becomes the only incident number used for statistics and finances. The numbers generated by the computer will be sequential by Region. For example, Region 1 will be assigned 1010 - 1999, Region 2, 2010 - 2999, etc. A new series of numbers will not be started over at the beginning of new fiscal year. Instead, each series will continue until the last number in the block is assigned, i.e., 3999. The numbering will then start over again for the Region.

A brief email message should be sent to the Denver Finance Center to the attention of Kim Johnson when an incident number is first opened. The message should request that the number be activated in the financial system. Send the message with a return receipt requested, as this will be the only acknowledgment given.

For accounting purposes the incident number becomes a project code. Any Service employee assigned to work this fire will charge to this number using their home station organization code.

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