

**Central Montana Fire Zone**

**Lewistown Field Office**

**Fire Management Plan**

September 29, 2004

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## **I. Introduction**

Findings from the review of the Interagency Federal Wildland Fire Policy recommended that Federal Fire Management Agencies and programs implement the following: Provide for firefighter and public safety; protect and enhance land management objectives and human welfare; integrate programs and disciplines; require interagency collaboration; emphasize the natural ecological role of fire; and contribute to ecosystem sustainability. This fire management plan will develop the basis to meet the Federal Wildland Fire Policy, the National Fire Plan direction, and comply with all appropriate resource management plans (RMP) and amendments in the Lewistown Field Office. This plan is based on current National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliant planning documents and is not in itself a NEPA document.

### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lewistown Field Office Fire Management Plan (L-FMP) is to identify and integrate all wildland fire management guidance, direction, and activities required to implement national fire policy and fire management direction of the Judith Resource Area, West Hi-Line, and Great Falls Resource Area segment of the Headwaters Resource Management Plans (RMPs). Overall direction from the RMPs and associated implementation plans allow for fire to be restored as an integral part of ecosystems. This will meet resource management objectives and improve protection of human life and property through the reduction of hazardous fuels. FMPs allow management direction to be easily accessible by fire and resource personnel. It highlights management direction to facilitate development and implementation of fire management strategies. A Glossary of Terms is provided at the end of this document to assist in clarifying technical terms.

### **B. Collaborative Process Identification**

The Lewistown FMP is a strategic document identifying approved fire management direction as determined by the RMP and analyzed in the plan's final environmental impact statement. This plan was developed through consultation with representatives from the Fort Belknap, Rocky Boy, and Blackfeet Reservations, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Forest Service (FS), the State of Montana, and interested citizens. The L-FMP meets the national requirement that all BLM administered lands subject to wildland fires

are managed under a current FMP. The L-FMP also complies with the National Environmental Policy Act. This is a strategic document that does not make resource management decisions or project specific implementation decisions and therefore is categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis (Categorical Exclusion 516 DM2, Appendix 1, Chapter 2, 1.10). Prior to implementing fire management projects on-the-ground, additional environmental analysis and compliance with other federal and state regulatory requirements such as the National Historic Preservation Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Clean Air Act will be required.

### **C. Authorities**

Authorities for the development of the L-FMP are listed below:

- Protection Act of September 20, 1922 (42 Stat. 857; U.S.C. 594).
- Taylor Grazing Act of June 28, 1934 (48 Stat. 1269; U.S.C. 315).
- Reciprocal Fire Protection Act of May 27, 1955(69 Stat. 66; 42 U.S.C. 1856, 1856a).
- Economy Act of June 30, 1932 (47 Stat. 417; 31 U.S.C. 686).
- The Federal Land Management and Policy Act of 1976 (FLPMA) (Public Law 94-579; 43 U.S.C. 1701).
- Disaster Relief Act, Section 417 (Public Law 93-288).
- Annual Appropriations Acts for the Department of the Interior.
- United States Department of the Interior Manual (910 DM 1.3).
- 2001 Updated Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy Update).
- 1998 Departmental Manual 620 Chapter 1, Wildland Fire Management General Policy and Procedures.

## **II. Relationship to Land Management Planning/Fire Policy**

### **A. Policy**

The Lewistown FMP derives overall program guidance from the following:

- 2000 BLM Handbook 9214, “Prescribed Fire Management” - Describes authority and policy for prescribed fire use on public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.
- September 2000, “Managing the Impacts of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment”
- October 2000, the National Cohesive Strategy goal is to coordinate an aggressive, collaborative approach to reduce the threat of wildland fire to communities and restore and maintain land health [www.fireplan.gov](http://www.fireplan.gov).
- January 2001 Review and update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy
- August 2001, “Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment -10 Year Comprehensive Strategy” - Provides a foundation for wildland agencies to work closely with all levels of government, tribal, conservation, commodity groups, and community-based restoration groups to reduce the risk of wildland fire to communities and the environment.
- May 2002, “Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment, 10 Year Comprehensive Strategy – Implementation Plan”
- August 2002, “Healthy Forests - An Initiative for Wildfire Prevention and Stronger Communities”
- Interdisciplinary Watershed Plans
- 2003 OHV EIS Management Plan Amendments
- 1997 Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management
- 1994 Judith Resource Area RMP
- 1992 West Hi-Line RMP

- 1984 Headwaters RMP
- 1989 Rocky Mountain Front EA
- 1978 Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, and 1993 update.
- June 2001, State Director’s Interim Guidance for Managing the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument.

### **B. Resource Management Plan Guidance**

Wildland fire management activities within the Lewistown Field Office follow direction from the Montana Dakotas EA/Plan Amendment for Fire and Fuels Management (State Fire Plan), which amended fire management direction for all RMP’s.

The State Fire Plan designated fire suppression priorities and objectives for all areas. See the individual FMU (Fire Management Unit) descriptions in the column titled “Priorities” for the applicable suppression strategy for each FMU as dictated by the State Fire Plan.

### **C. Goals, Standards, Objectives, and/or Desired Future Condition**

Specific resource-related fire objectives were listed in the proposed action that was adopted in the 2003 Decision Record. The specific objectives for fire management activities are listed in Appendix H.

In addition, site-specific objectives and desired future conditions for certain areas can be found in the following Interdisciplinary Watershed Plans:

1. Woodhawk Watershed Plan, 1997
2. Two Calf Watershed Plan, 1998
3. Armells Watershed Plan, 2000
4. Lower Crooked Creek Watershed Plan, 2000
5. Upper Missouri Watershed Plan, 2002
6. Arrow Creek Watershed Plan, 2004

### **III. Wildland Fire Management Strategies**

#### **A. General Management Considerations**

In order to comply with: the current National Fire Plan; the West Highline, Judith Valley Phillips, and Headwaters RMPs; Woodhawk, Two Calf, Armells, Upper Missouri, and Arrow Creek Watershed Plans; and the Montana Dakotas EA/Plan Amendment for Fire and Fuels Management, the LFO will:

- Use fire to restore and/or sustain ecosystem health based on sound scientific principles and information, balanced with other societal goals, including public health and safety, as well as air quality.
- Identify appropriate management response (AMR) goals, objectives, and constraints by, specific FMUs within the LFO. All wildland fire management activities will be managed as described in the FMU guidance outlined in Section III.
- Provide an AMR on all wildland fires, with emphasis on minimizing suppression costs, considering fire fighter and public safety, benefits and values to be protected consistent with resource objectives, standards and guidelines.
- Meet management goals and objectives through the use of prescribed fire, mechanical treatment, wildland fire for resource benefit, chemical treatment, biological treatment, and cultural treatment.
- Work collaboratively with communities at risk within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) to develop plans for risk reduction. The Federal Register Notice list is located at: <http://www.fireplan.gov/> and [http://www.fireplan.gov/communities\\_at\\_risk.cfm](http://www.fireplan.gov/communities_at_risk.cfm) and is not totally inclusive of all communities. The Fire/Fuels Management Environmental Assessment Plan Amendment for Montana and the Dakotas (2003) also identified a list of some communities that are included within the LFO boundaries.
- Work collaboratively with federal, state, and local partners to develop cross boundary management strategies and prioritize cross agency fire management actions.

- Provide protection from wildland fire and wildland fire activities to all oil and gas infrastructure. Infrastructure includes pipelines, well heads, pump stations, other related out buildings and access road systems. Gas and oil wells, pipelines and other infrastructure is not inherently a fire hazard or a risk to start fires. These structures/systems do not provide increased suppression or fire prevention workload to the Zone fire program.

#### **B. Wildland Fire Management Goals**

The LFO will conduct all wildland fire management actions in compliance with the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Policy and the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Policy Update guiding principles. These principles are:

- Firefighter and public safety are the highest priority in every fire management activity.
- Assess risk to communities in terms of direct wildland fire impact and economic values, and implement effective programs to mitigate that risk through collaborative planning and projects.
- Implement the full range of wildland fire and fuels management practices, including prescribed fire, fire use, mechanical, chemical, biological, and cultural treatments that will move all affected landscapes toward desired future condition as described in the RMP.
- Establish partnerships with all interagency cooperators to facilitate coordinated fire management activities.
- Maintain an efficient and effective organization for the suppression of wildland fires consistent with the values at risk.
- Encourage close coordination and collaboration among specialists within and among the LFO, federal employees, interested organizations, private landowners, state, and local partners.
- Develop and use the best scientific information available to deliver technical and community assistance to support ecological, economic, and social sustainability.

- Allow wildland fire to protect, maintain, and enhance resources, while being allowed to function in its ecological role when appropriate for the site and situation.
- Create an integrated approach to fire and resource management.

Specific fire programmatic direction for each FMU of the LFO is outlined in Chapter III Section D of the L-FMP.

### **C. Wildland Fire Management Options**

The LFO will provide an AMR on all wildland fires, with emphasis on minimizing suppression costs, considering fire fighter and public safety, and benefits and values to be protected consistent with resource objectives, standards, and guidelines. Responses to each wildland fire will be initiated in a timely manner with a force mix, based upon established fire management direction as documented in the approved RMPs. The use of appropriate management response will allow land managers to tailor preplanned wildland fire responses to meet objectives established in resource management plans and their associated implementation plans.

### **D. Description of Wildland Fire Management Strategies by Fire Management Unit**

The Fire Management Plan establishes geographic areas as FMUs. In this section, the Fire Management Plan establishes prescriptive criteria and other guidance, which provide additional direction to allow managers to implement the objectives of the Resource Management Plans and activity-level plans for each FMU.

The following section contains FMU Matrices for each Lewistown Field Office FMU including a description of each FMU stating fire management objectives, constraints, and planned actions for that FMU.

Breaks, LFO FMU 1

<b>FMU Name / Number:</b> Breaks, LFO / FMU 1 <b>Size/Land Status:</b> The area includes approximately 1,012,645 acres: BLM – 326,869; Bankhead-Jones – 29,401; USFWS – 167; state – 76,169; private – 578,648; water – 1391 <b>Last Revised:</b> Feb. 2004		<b>Field Office (FO): Lewistown (060)</b> <b>FO Manager: FO Manager:</b> Mike Stewart - acting (406) 538-1944 <b>Resource Advisor:</b> LFO or HFS Resource Specialist <b>FO Fuels Management Specialist:</b> Steve Knox (406) 538-1976 <b>BLM Central Zone Fire Management Officer:</b> Mitch Maycox (406) 538-1986			
Fire History (Reported by federal agencies)	Current Conditions, Vegetation	Desired Condition/ Resource Management Objectives	Potential Impacts from Unplanned Wildland Fire	Management Opportunities and/or Constraints	Priorities
1980 to 2004 Total Fires 200 Total Acres 14,809  Class A 35 fires 2.4 acres  Class B 97 fires 226 acres  Class C 44 fires 1226 acres  Class D 9 fires 1594 acres  Class E 10 fires 4987 acres  Class F 3 fires 6665 acres  Unknown 2 fires 109 acres	The landform is a series of drainages and ridges running mostly north to south. The area is made up of rolling upland plateaus with moderate to deeply incised canyons. Some of the private uplands are in annual cereal crop production and some are in the Conservation Reserve Program. Native vegetation is primarily sagebrush and sagebrush / grasslands verging into Ponderosa Pine, Douglas-fir, and juniper communities. Riparian vegetation including native shrubs and Cottonwood trees exists along the Missouri river and drainages throughout this polygon. Water sources within the area include small reservoirs, water-savers, wells, pipelines, and natural streams and rivers.  Access in this area depends on the weather as roads become difficult to drive with precipitation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage for sagebrush grassland and Missouri Breaks interface to provide season-long forage for wildlife</li> <li>2. Minimize erosion</li> <li>3. Manage native vegetation to meet standards for rangeland health</li> <li>4. Maintain stable soils and sustain current land uses</li> <li>5. Maintain (as much as possible) sagebrush habitats, especially those in identified sage grouse nesting and wintering areas and big game concentration areas.</li> <li>6. Scattered stands of Ponderosa Pine, especially those exhibiting old growth characteristics, shall be maintained where possible.</li> </ol>	Concerns include the presence of Elk, Mule deer, and Bighorn sheep; the mix of public and private land with crop production; difficult access; cultural, paleontological, and vegetative values that might be influenced by fire fighting equipment; the presence of Bald Eagle and Pallid Sturgeon; and the use of earth moving/tillage equipment.  This area has historical values with the Nez Perce and Lewis and Clark Trails and its diverse wildlife populations.	<p><b>Suppression/Protection:</b> Each fire occurrence will result in appropriate suppression responses. Fire suppression will be based on current fire danger, resource availability, and predicted weather. Fire suppression may be used to ensure safety of fire suppression personnel, reduce the cost of fire suppression, and provide an opportunity to return fire to its natural role in the ecology of the area.</p> <p><b>Restoration:</b> Restoration will focus on rangeland and forest health, maintaining vegetative diversity by reducing conifer encroachment into meadows and by rejuvenating and increasing deciduous trees and shrubs.</p> <p><b>Prescribed fire:</b> Emphasis will be on maintaining native vegetation diversity and health.</p> <p><b>Fuels Treatments:</b> The majority of treatments will be prescribed fire.</p>	Emphasis on protection of life, property, improvements, and resources  <p><b>Multiple fire protection priority:</b> Moderate, appropriate suppression</p> <p><b>Rehabilitation and Restoration priority:</b> Moderate, initial suppression damage will be rehabilitated immediately</p> <p><b>Fuels Buildup:</b> Moderate to heavy in forested areas</p> <p><b>Noxious Weeds:</b> Priority will be to mitigate implementation activities to reduce the chance of new infestations of noxious weeds. Pre- and postburn treat in prescribed fire areas; postburn treat in wildland fire areas.</p>

Prairie Potholes, LFO FMU 2

<p><b>FMU Name / Number:</b> Prairie Potholes, LFO / FMU 2</p> <p><b>Size/Land Status:</b> The area includes approximately 1,874,563 acres: BLM – 96,103; Bankhead-Jones – 172,013; USFWS – 2981; Military Reservations – 82; state – 145,711; private – 1,428,813; water – 28,860</p> <p><b>Last Revised:</b> January 27, 2004</p>		<p><b>Field Office (FO):</b> Lewistown (060)</p> <p><b>FO Manager:</b> Mike Stewart - acting (406) 538-1944</p> <p><b>Resource Advisor:</b> HFS Resource Specialist</p> <p><b>FO Fuels Management Specialist:</b> Steve Knox (406) 538-1976</p> <p><b>BLM Central Zone Fire Management Officer:</b> Mitch Maycox (406) 538-1986</p>			
Fire History (Federal Agencies)	Current Conditions, Vegetation	Desired Condition/ Resource Management Objectives	Potential Impacts from Unplanned Wildland Fire	Management Opportunities and/or Constraints	Priorities
<p>1980 to 2003 Total Fires 41 Total Acres 1401</p> <p>Class A 17 fires 1.4acres</p> <p>Class B 16 fires 33 acres</p> <p>Class C 6 fires 147 acres</p> <p>Class D 1 fire 100 acres</p> <p>Class F 1 fire 1120 acres</p>	<p>The Prairie Potholes FMU encompasses the glaciated plains that lie north of the Milk River corridor. This FMU is bordered by the Milk River to the south, Sage Creek to the west, the Blaine/Phillips county line on the east, and the U.S./Canada border along the north.</p> <p>There is extensive public land within this FMU scattered in small tracts to modest sized blocks.</p> <p>Topography is generally rolling uplands comprised of silty soils with fair productivity.</p> <p>Vegetation consists primarily of grain and hay crops with some lands in CRP. Native range is mixed grasses with minor components of sage and other brush species. Water sources within the area include small reservoirs, water-savers, wells, pipelines, and natural streams and rivers.</p> <p>The BLM land near Fresno includes dissected coulees along the Milk River. Chain of Lakes Coulee is a wetland area. Wild Horse Lake is a dry lakebed most of the year. Native vegetation in this area is mixed prairie grasslands. Coulees and draws here contain minor wooded communities. Improvements at Chain of Lakes Coulee have resulted in mature marshes and riparian areas dominated by herbaceous species.</p> <p>Northern Blaine County is generally glaciated plains with native vegetation consisting mostly of mixed and short grass species.</p> <p>Private land is predominately farmed for dry land grain production. CRP is common. Native vegetation was plowed and reseeded to perennial plants, mostly crested wheatgrass. Coulees include a diversity of sage and other brush species.</p>	<p>1. Manage native vegetation to meet standards for rangeland health and to create islands of habitat for birds and wildlife, and to maintain stable soils and sustain current land uses</p> <p>2. Maintain sagebrush habitats, especially those in identified sage grouse nesting and wintering areas and big game concentration areas</p>	<p>Obvious concerns focus around structural developments, crop lands, livestock, and livestock forage needs.</p> <p>Special concerns and constraints include public, state, and private lands, as well as vegetative values; all of which might be affected by fire-fighting equipment.</p> <p>Wildlife habitats for waterfowl, upland birds, songbirds, deer, and antelope are also a concern.</p>	<p><b>Suppression/Protection:</b> Wildland fire is not desired due to large amount of private and state land and agricultural production throughout the area. Management of unplanned fire occurrence will be based on values at risk, current and predicted weather, and current land management direction.</p> <p><b>Restoration:</b> Restoration efforts in this FMU will be focused on rangeland health. Limited opportunities for treating riparian and forested areas may exist. Restoration activities will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, and area concerns or constraints.</p> <p><b>Prescribed fire:</b> Prescribed fire may used based on management direction and the ability to reach a formal agreements with adjacent landowners. Emphasis would then be placed on maintaining native vegetative diversity and health.</p> <p><b>Fuels Treatments:</b> Fuels treatments within this FMU will primarily consist of prescribed fire. Potentially, use of livestock could also be incorporated.</p>	<p>Emphasis on prevention, education, and suppression</p> <p><b>Multiple fire protection:</b> High Priority</p> <p><b>Rehabilitation:</b> Moderate priority; impacts caused by fire suppression will be rehabilitated immediately</p> <p><b>Fuels Buildup:</b> Low to moderate priority; prescribed fire and livestock management may be used to achieve desired plant communities and to reduce hazardous fuel loads</p> <p><b>Noxious Weeds:</b> Priority will be to mitigate implementation activities to reduce the chance of new infestations of noxious weeds. Pre- and postburn treat in prescribed fire areas; postburn treat in wildland fire areas.</p>

Front, LFO FMU 3

<p><b>FMU Name / Number:</b> Front, LFO / FMU 3</p> <p><b>Size/Land Status:</b> The area includes approximately 451,052 acres. BLM - 27,302; state - 70,874; private - 344,774; USFWS - 1,020; water - 7,082</p> <p><b>Last Revised:</b> February 6, 2004</p>		<p><b>Field Office (FO):</b> Lewistown (060)</p> <p><b>FO Manager:</b> Mike Stewart - acting (406) 538-1944</p> <p><b>Resource Advisor:</b> LFO or HFS Resource Specialist</p> <p><b>FO Fuels Management Specialist:</b> Steve Knox (406) 538-1976</p> <p><b>BLM Central Zone Fire Management Officer:</b> Mitch Maycox (406) 538-1986</p>			
Fire History (Reported by federal agencies)	Current Conditions, Vegetation	Desired Condition/ Resource Management Objectives	Potential Impacts from Unplanned Wildland Fire	Management Opportunities and/or Constraints	Priorities
<p>1980 to 2003</p> <p>Total fires 5</p> <p>Total acres 4,562</p> <p>Class B 2 fires 2 acres</p> <p>Class E 1 fire 600 acres</p> <p>Class F 2 fires 3960 acres</p>	<p>The Front unit consists of the edge and foothills of the Rocky Mountain Front reaching from the Blackfeet Reservation to Rodgers Pass. This area includes steep mountains and outcrops, rolling hills, gently sloping open-lands, and associated drainages. There is a great diversity of vegetation ranging from short-grass prairie to old growth timber. Water sources within the area include small reservoirs, water-savers, wells, pipelines, and natural streams and rivers.</p> <p>Included in this unit are four "Outstanding Natural Areas" (ONA): Blindhorse; Ear Mountain; Chute Mountain; and Deep Creek/Battle Creek. These areas were designated to be managed for their outstanding scenic and wildland values.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage native vegetation to meet standards for rangeland health</li> <li>2. Maintain stable soils and sustain current land uses</li> <li>3. Maintain or enhance stands of conifers exhibiting old growth characteristics</li> <li>4. Fire may be desirable; each occurrence will get special consideration; obvious concerns focus around structural developments, crop lands, and livestock operations; social and political considerations will determine how each fire occurrence will be managed</li> </ol>	<p>Wildlife species that may be impacted from wildland fire or treatment activities include elk, mule deer, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, grizzly and black bear, gray wolf, and numerous bird species (including raptors).</p> <p>Special concerns and constraints include the use of heavy equipment and aerial resources in the ONA's.</p> <p>The Front unit is a sensitive area for cultural resources, including high densities of cultural resources at lower elevations. Traditional cultural properties may also be expected at middle and higher elevations.</p>	<p><b>Suppression/Protection:</b> Initial attack fire suppression is the responsibility of the Lewis and Clark National Forest under the Six Party Fire Protection Agreement.</p> <p>Steep slopes and heavy dog hair timber pose safety hazards for fire fighters.</p> <p>Management will attempt to minimize damage to ONA values in compliance with the Rocky Mountain Front Outstanding Natural Area Activity Plan/ Environmental Assessment. Suppression methods may include use of engines and hand-line construction. Use of heavy equipment and fire retardant will be avoided except when needed to prevent fire from spreading to adjacent private lands and when specifically authorized by the Field Manager. Staging areas and fire camps will be placed outside of ONA boundaries unless otherwise authorized by the Field Manager. Management will also keep a resource advisor on site during wildland fire suppression and rehabilitation to ensure compliance with decisions and guidelines.</p> <p><b>Restoration:</b> Restoration will focus on rangeland and forest health, maintaining vegetative diversity by reducing conifer encroachment into meadows and by rejuvenating and increasing deciduous trees and shrubs.</p> <p><b>Prescribed fire:</b> Prescribed fire will be used to reduce hazardous fuels and to maintain vegetative diversity, wildlife habitat, and forage values based on management direction and agreements with adjacent landowners.</p> <p><b>Fuels Treatments:</b> Mechanical and/or manual treatments will be used in areas where prescribed fire cannot be safely or effectively used.</p>	<p>Emphasis on prevention, education, and suppression</p> <p><b>Multiple fire protection priority:</b> Moderate</p> <p><b>Rehabilitation priority:</b> A resource advisor will be consulted to assess impacts to natural, cultural, and economic resource values.</p> <p><b>Fuels Buildup:</b> Generally high in forested areas; low to moderate in grass and shrub lands</p> <p><b>Noxious Weeds:</b> Priority will be to mitigate implementation activities to reduce the chance of new infestations of noxious weeds. Pre- and postburn treat in prescribed fire areas; postburn treat in wildland fire areas.</p>

Sweet Grass Hills, LFO FMU 4

<b>FMU Name / Number:</b> Sweet Grass Hills, LFO / FMU 4 <b>Size/Land Status:</b> The area includes approximately 1,995,488 acres: BLM – 23,408; USFWS – 3675; state – 164,388; private – 1,788,702; water – 15,315 <b>Last Revised:</b> January 27, 2004		<b>Field Office (FO):</b> Lewistown (060) <b>FO Manager:</b> Mike Stewart - acting (406) 538-1944 <b>Resource Advisor:</b> HFO Resource Specialist <b>FO Fuels Management Specialist:</b> Steve Knox (406) 538-1976 <b>BLM Central Zone Fire Management Officer:</b> Mitch Maycox (406) 538-1986			
Fire History (Reported by Fed agencies)	Current Conditions, Vegetation	Desired Condition/ Resource Management Objectives	Potential Impacts from Unplanned Wildland Fire	Management Opportunities and/or Constraints	Priorities
1980 to 2003 Total Fires 9 Total Acres 125 Class A 6 fires .5 acres Class B 2 fires 4.5 acres Class C 1 fire 20 acres Class D 1 fire 100 acres	<p>The Sweet Grass Hills FMU is located in the northern half of Toole, Liberty, Hill and Glacier Counties. The FMU is bordered by U.S. Highway 2 on the south, the Blackfoot Indian Reservation on the west, the Canadian border to the North, and Sage Creek on the east. The small amount of BLM land within this FMU generally consists of moderate sized blocks surrounded by private land. The unit also includes the Kevin Rim ACEC (wildlife and raptors) and the Sweetgrass Hills ACEC (Native American cultural values and protection of watershed values).</p> <p>The topography of this FMU is largely a product of geological forces. Igneous intrusive rocks caused the uplift of the hills followed by erosion of these uplifted units. The less resistant sandstones and shales form subdued foothills encircle the Sweetgrass Hills. Below about 5000 feet in elevation, glacial deposits form an undulating surface that becomes less evident as the foothills transition into the surrounding prairies.</p> <p>Water sources within the area include small reservoirs, water-savers, wells, pipelines, and natural streams and rivers.</p> <p>Sub-alpine fir, spruce, lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, and limber pine are all found in the Sweet Grass Hills. Common juniper, huckleberry, twinflower, bunchberry dogwood, Oregon grape, kinnininnick, serviceberry, and western snowberry are present as understory vegetation in the forest types. Grassland types are generally limited to the surrounding foothills and prairies. Rough and Idaho fescue are the dominant grass species in the foothills.</p> <p>Most of the flat, arid prairie surrounding the Sweetgrass Hills has been altered by agriculture. Little native prairie, probably formerly dominated by western wheatgrass, needle-and-thread, and blue grama, now remains.</p> <p>Absence of fescue species differentiates the prairie grassland from the foothills and sub-alpine grasslands. Dominant species include wheatgrasses (primarily western in association with thickspike and bluebunch), green needlegrass, blue grama, and dryland sedges (threadleaf and needleleaf).</p> <p>Riparian areas, upland drainages, and swales in this FMU generally support a low shrub type dominated by western snowberry and rose. Shrubby cinquefoil/rough fescue habitat is also present and generally increases with grazing.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage native vegetation to meet standards for rangeland health; and to maintain stable soils and sustain current land uses</li> <li>2. Maintain big game concentration areas</li> <li>3. Restore forest structure and vegetative diversity to within the historic range of variation</li> <li>4. Maintain native species where they currently exist while managing non-native weeds</li> <li>5. Manage riparian and wetlands for proper functioning condition</li> <li>6. Protect, maintain, and enhance crucial wildlife habitats</li> <li>7. Maintain adequate areas of thermal cover for big game species (elk, mule deer, and white-tail deer)</li> <li>8. Maintain and protect elk calving areas</li> </ol>	<p>Special concerns and constraints include the Sweet Grass Hills ACEC (cultural, wildlife, T&amp;E) and the local water supply for SGH. Both of the ACECs are designated as <i>category B</i>. This designation requires that all unplanned fires be aggressively suppressed and not used for resource benefit. This designation does allow for fire and non-fire fuels treatments.</p> <p>Special wildlife concerns and constraints include: presence of bald eagle and peregrine falcon and critical elk and deer habitat.</p> <p>Significant cultural sacred areas and paleontological areas are abundant throughout this FMU and might be affected by fire fighting equipment or the use of earth moving/tillage equipment.</p> <p>Other concerns and constraints include public, state, and private lands, the abundance of crop lands, and livestock forage needs.</p>	<p><b>Suppression/Protection:</b> Wildland fire is not desired due to the large amount of private and state land and agricultural production throughout the area. Unplanned fire events will be aggressively suppressed while allowing for fire fighter and public safety as top priority.</p> <p><b>Restoration:</b> Restoration will focus on rangeland and forest health, maintaining vegetative diversity by reducing conifer encroachment into meadows and by rejuvenating and increasing deciduous trees and shrubs.</p> <p><b>Prescribed fire:</b> Prescribed fire could be used depending on management direction, feasibility, safety, and ability to reach formal agreement with adjacent landowners.</p> <p><b>Fuels Treatments:</b> Mechanical and/or manual treatments may be used in areas where prescribed fire cannot be safely or effectively used as a first entry, or where sale of forest products may offset the overall cost of treatments and provide economic benefit to local communities.</p>	<p>Emphasis on prevention, education, and suppression</p> <p><b>Multiple fire protection priority:</b> High</p> <p><b>Rehabilitation:</b> A resource advisor will be on site during wildland fire suppression and rehabilitation efforts to minimize negative impacts to natural, cultural, and economic resource values.</p> <p><b>Fuels Buildup:</b> (Levels to be determined)</p> <p>Prescribed fire and/or non-fire fuels treatments will focus on treating hazardous fuels and achieving desired plant communities.</p> <p><b>Noxious Weeds:</b> Priority will be to mitigate implementation activities to reduce the chance of new infestations of noxious weeds. Pre- and postburn treat in prescribed fire areas; postburn treat in wildland fire areas.</p>

Prairie Forests, LFO FMU 5

<b>FMU Name / Number:</b> Prairie Forests, LFO / FMU 5 <b>Size/Land Status:</b> The area includes approximately 1,646,848 acres: BLM – 57,946; Bankhead-Jones – 157,891; USFWS – 2,847; state – 110,179; private – 1,308,374; water – 9,611 <b>Last Revised:</b> January 27,2004		<b>Field Office (FO): Lewistown (060)</b> <b>FO Manager:</b> Mike Stewart - acting (406) 538-1944 <b>Resource Advisor:</b> LFO Resource Specialist <b>FO Fuels Management Specialist:</b> Steve Knox (406) 538-1976 <b>BLM Central Zone Fire Management Officer:</b> Mitch Maycox (406) 538-1986			
Fire History (Reported by federal agencies)	Current Conditions, Vegetation	Desired Condition/ Resource Management Objectives	Potential Impacts from Unplanned Wildland Fire	Management Opportunities and/or Constraints	Priorities
1980 to 2003 Total Fires 91 Total Acres 1,719  Class A 26 fires 1.5 acres  Class B 32 fires 66 acres  Class C 20 fires 751 acres  Class D 6 fires 954 acres  Class E 6 fires 3728 acres  Class F 1 fire 2318 acres	<p>The majority of the prairie forest polygon is private land with crops or small tracts of timber consisting of ponderosa pine. Most of the BLM land was farmed in the past (LU Land) and consists primarily of crested wheat, mixed native grasses, and some scattered sagebrush.</p> <p>The riparian vegetation along the drainage provides yearlong habitat for antelope and deer. Numerous power lines, highways, and small towns are found in the area.</p> <p>Another area for special consideration would be the Acid Shale Pine Forest ACEC located in eastern Fergus and western Petroleum Counties. This area is important because of its endemic plant community and is a fragile watershed.</p> <p>Water sources within the area include small reservoirs, water-savers, wells, pipelines, and natural streams and rivers.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage native vegetation to meet standards for rangeland health</li> <li>2. Maintain stable soils and sustain current land uses</li> <li>3. Maintain (to the maximum extent possible) sagebrush habitats, especially those in identified sage grouse nesting and wintering areas and big game concentration areas</li> <li>4. Maintain (where possible) scattered stands of ponderosa pine, especially those exhibiting old growth characteristics</li> </ol>	<p>Special concerns and constraints include scattered land pattern and proximity to private land; ACECs with cultural, paleontological, and vegetative values that might be impacted by fire fighting equipment; and the use of earth moving/tillage equipment.</p> <p>Sensitive areas for cultural resources will be discussed with the resource advisor.</p>	<p><b>Suppression/Protection:</b> Wildland fire is not desired due to large amounts of private and state land and agricultural production throughout the area. Management of unplanned fire occurrence will be based on values at risk, current and predicted weather, and current land management direction.</p> <p><b>Restoration:</b> Restoration will focus on rangeland and forest health, maintaining vegetative diversity by reducing conifer encroachment into meadows and by rejuvenating and increasing deciduous trees and shrubs.</p> <p><b>Prescribed fire:</b> Prescribed fire will be used to reduce hazardous fuels and restore or maintain vegetative diversity, wildlife habitat, and forage values based on management direction and agreements with adjacent landowners.</p> <p><b>Fuels Treatments:</b> Fuels management will be coordinated with private landowners, affected interests, and other agencies. Disposal of forest products from the Acid Shale-Pine Forest ACEC will be prohibited unless necessary for stand preservation.</p>	<p>Emphasis on prevention, education, and suppression</p> <p><b>Multiple fire protection priority:</b> High</p> <p><b>Rehabilitation and Restoration priority:</b> Moderate, initial suppression damage will be rehabilitated immediately</p> <p><b>Fuels Buildup:</b> Generally high in forested areas; low to moderate in grass and shrub lands</p> <p><b>Noxious Weeds:</b> Priority will be to mitigate implementation activities to reduce the chance of new infestations of noxious weeds. Pre- and postburn treat in prescribed fire areas; postburn treat in wildland fire areas.</p>

Island Ranges, LFO FMU 6

<b>FMU Name / Number:</b> Island Ranges LFO / FMU 6 <b>Size/Land Status:</b> The area includes approximately 4,006,020 acres: BLM – 80,560; Bankhead-Jones – 39,835; USFS – 218,154; USFWS – 182; state – 273,597; Private – 3,389,275; water - 4417 <b>Last Revised:</b> January 27, 2004		<b>Field Office (FO): Lewistown (060)</b> <b>FO Manager:</b> Mike Stewart - acting (406) 538-1944 <b>Resource Advisor:</b> LFO Resource Specialist <b>FO Fuels Management Specialist:</b> Steve Knox (406) 538-1976 <b>BLM Central Zone Fire Management Officer:</b> Mitch Maycox (406) 538-1986			
Fire History (Reported by federal agencies)	Current Conditions, Vegetation	Desired Condition/ Resource Management Objectives	Potential Impacts from Unplanned Wildland Fire	Management Opportunities and/or Constraints	Priorities
1980 to 2003 Total Fires 266 Total Acres 112,935  Class A 105 fires 9.4 acres  Class B 118 fires 188 acres  Class C 29 fires 716 acres  Class D 5 fires 770 acres  Class E 3 fires 1600 acres  Class F 5 fires 7591 acres  Class G 1 fire 6300 acres	<p>The Big Snowy, Little Snowy, Little Belt, and Highwood Mountains have small tracts of BLM land adjacent to private, FS, or state lands. Larger tracts of BLM land occur in the Judith and Moccasin Mountains, interspersed with private and state lands. All these areas are mountainous with steep slopes and heavy timber. In the foothills adjacent to the mountains, timber occurs in disjunctive glades on both steep slopes and gently rolling hills.</p> <p>Commercial timber is abundant. Douglas fir appears on north slopes at lower elevations and all slopes at mid elevations. Ponderosa pine appears on all slopes at lower elevations, on rolling hills, and on south slopes at mid elevations. Lodgepole pine is present as a minor stand component at all elevations and appears in pure stands at higher elevations. Engelmann spruce appears in riparian draws at mid to higher elevations. Limber pine appears in isolated pockets at the highest elevations on dry, rocky ridges.</p> <p>Riparian vegetation, including a wide variety of deciduous shrubs, aspen, cottonwood, and birch, appears along small streams and drainages. Dry, perennial grasslands are interspersed with the timber at lower elevations and where soils are shallow. At higher elevations such grasslands may include wet meadows.</p> <p>Grasslands often include a mix of native species (western and bluebunch wheatgrass; rough and Idaho fescue; bluegrasses; little bluestem) and naturalized exotics (primarily smooth brome and timothy). Dry shrubs, such as Wyoming big sagebrush, rabbit brushes, snowberry, and native rose, occur on the grass-timber ecotone or within the grasslands.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage native vegetation to meet standards for rangeland health</li> <li>2. Maintain stable soils and sustain current land uses</li> <li>3. Maintain (to the maximum extent possible) sagebrush habitats, especially those in identified sage grouse nesting and wintering areas and big game concentration areas</li> <li>4. Maintain (where possible) scattered stands of ponderosa pine, especially those exhibiting old growth characteristics</li> </ol>	<p>Obvious concerns focus around threats to residential and ranch structures, crop lands, and livestock forage typical of rural intermix.</p> <p>Private and public timberlands throughout the FMU are at moderate to high risk for large catastrophic fire due to fuel buildup from fire exclusion, past logging practices, and unnaturally dense forests.</p> <p>The scenic values for the Scenic ACEC in the Judith Mountains would suffer extreme negative impacts from escaped wildfire.</p> <p>Special concerns and constraints include the scattered land pattern of federal, state, and private land; ACECs with cultural, paleontological, and vegetative values that might be impacted by fire fighting equipment; and the use of earth moving/tillage equipment in the Wilderness Study Area on the Lewis and Clark National Forest.</p> <p>Sensitive areas for cultural resources include the Dry Range west of the Smith River in Meagher County.</p> <p>Wildlife habitat for deer, antelope, elk, upland birds, and songbirds is also a concern, as is impact to streams and fish populations from catastrophic</p>	<p><b>Suppression/Protection:</b> Wildland fire is not desired due to large amounts of private and state land and agricultural production throughout the area. Management of unplanned fire occurrence will be based on values at risk, current and predicted weather, and current land management direction.</p> <p><b>Restoration:</b> Restoration will focus on rangeland and forest health, maintaining vegetative diversity by reducing conifer encroachment into meadows and by rejuvenating and increasing deciduous trees and shrubs.</p>	<p>Emphasis on mitigation, prevention, education, and suppression</p> <p><b>Multiple fire protection priority:</b> High</p> <p><b>Rehabilitation</b> Moderate, initial suppression damage will be rehabilitated immediately</p> <p><b>Fuels Buildup:</b> Generally high in forested areas; low to moderate in grass and shrub lands</p>

Island Ranges, LFO FMU 6 - continued

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<b>FMU Name / Number:</b> Island Ranges, LFO / FMU 6 <i>continued</i>					
<b>Fire History</b> (Reported by federal agencies)	<b>Current Conditions, Vegetation</b>	<b>Desired Condition/ Resource Management Objectives</b>	<b>Potential Impacts from Unplanned Wildland Fire</b>	<b>Management Opportunities and/or Constraints</b>	<b>Priorities</b>
<b>See first page</b>	<p>Residences are scattered and population densities are low, as is characteristic of a rural-wildland intermix. Many small communities and ranches are adjacent to public lands containing timber and steep slopes.</p> <p>The eastern part of the FMU is a mix of private and BLM land in pasture, small grains, CRP, or small tracts of commercial timber consisting of ponderosa pine. Most BLM land is crested wheatgrass, mixed native grasses, and some scattered sagebrush. Numerous power lines, highways, and small towns are found in the area.</p> <p>The Acid Shale Pine Forest ACEC located in eastern Fergus and western Petroleum Counties is important because of its pine / juniper forests.</p> <p>Secondary roads provide access to the ranches, homes, and cabins scattered throughout the area. Numerous mining roads also exist.</p> <p>Water sources within the area include small reservoirs, water-savers, wells, pipelines, and natural streams and rivers.</p>	<p>5. Reduce the risk of large, catastrophic fires in forested areas</p> <p>6. Restore forest structure and vegetative diversity to within the historic range of variation</p>	<p>In the Judith and Moccasin Mountains, communities include Maiden, Giltedge, Hilger, Roy, Brooks, Danvers, Kendall, Hanover and Spring Creek Colony. Scattered homes occur in many canyons, such as Limekiln Canyon and Ruby Gulch. A Boy Scout camp and Camp are both important recreational sites, with concentrations of over 100 people at times during the summer.</p> <p>Communities in the Little Belt Mountains include Sapphire Village, Monarch, Neihart, Raynesford, Belt, Riceville and numerous others. Ranches and rural and recreational residences are common.</p>	<p><b>Prescribed fire:</b> Prescribed fire will be used to reduce hazardous fuels and restore or maintain vegetative diversity, wildlife habitat, and forage values based on management direction and agreements with adjacent landowners.</p> <p><b>Fuels Treatments:</b> Mechanical and/or manual treatments will be used in areas where prescribed fire cannot be safely or effectively used as a first entry, or where sale of forest products may offset the overall cost of treatments and provide economic benefit to local communities.</p>	<p><b>Noxious Weeds:</b> Priority will be to mitigate implementation activities to reduce the chance of new infestations of noxious weeds. Pre- and postburn treat in prescribed fire areas; postburn treat in wildland fire areas.</p>

Big Open, LFO FMU 7

<b>FMU Name / Number:</b> Big Open, LFO / FMU 7 <b>Size/Land Status:</b> The area includes approximately 7,187,253 acres: BLM – 95,530; USFWS – 9958; Military Reservations – 3139; Bureau of Reclamation – 5317; state – 621,256; private – 6,382,034; water – 70,019 <b>Last Revised:</b> February 6, 2004		<b>Field Office (FO): Lewistown (060)</b> <b>FO Manager:</b> Mike Stewart - acting (406) 538-1944 <b>Resource Advisor:</b> LFO or HFS Resource Specialist <b>FO Fuels Management Specialist:</b> Steve Knox (406) 538-1976 <b>BLM Central Zone Fire Management Officer:</b> Mitch Maycox (406) 538-1986			
Fire History (Reported by federal agencies)	Current Conditions, Vegetation	Desired Condition/ Resource Management Objectives	Potential Impacts from Unplanned Wildland Fire	Management Opportunities and/or Constraints	Priorities
1980 to 2003 Total Fires 104 Total Acres 112,935  Class A 33 fires 1.9 acres  Class B 29 fires 55 acres  Class C 21 fires 1039 acres  Class D 4 fires 580 acres  Class E 2 fires 1250 acres  Class F 4 fires 8700 acres  Class G 2 fires 191,300 acres  Unknown 9 fires unk acres	<p>The Big Open FMU is a large expanse of rolling plains (mixed and short-grass prairie and foothills) dissected by the Marias and Missouri rivers. The unit is bordered by Highway 2 on the north, extending to the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation on the east, the Rocky Mountain front on the west, and the Missouri River breaks, the Highwoods, and Little Belt Mountains to the south with associated drainages. Much of the land is private and farming is prevalent. Dry land grain production is dominant. Some private lands have been planted to perennial grasslands. Coulees have a diversity of grasses, forbs, sagebrush, and other shrubs. The public lands are scattered and usually native range, consisting of mid-grasses, shrubs, and occasionally conifer trees.</p> <p>The Bears Paw Mountains are included in this unit. This area is Douglas fir and ponderosa pine with grass and shrubs in the foothills.</p> <p>This unit includes Lonesome Lake (18,000 acres), a flat area with gently sloping coulees and a large ephemeral lake. It is an island of native grasslands in a vast area of farmland. The area contains a high density of archaeological features (tipi rings, cairns) and is important to the Gros Ventre (Atsina) Tribe as a place where they habitually camped.</p> <p>There are numerous lakes and reservoirs in this unit. Numerous power lines, highways, and developments are found in the area. Water sources within the area include lakes, reservoirs, water-savers, wells, pipelines, and natural streams and rivers.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage native vegetation to meet standards for rangeland health and to create islands of habitat for birds and wildlife</li> <li>2. Maintain stable soils and sustain current land uses</li> <li>3. Sagebrush habitats, especially those in identified sage grouse nesting and wintering areas should be maintained or enhanced</li> <li>4. Scattered stands of Ponderosa Pine, especially those exhibiting old growth characteristics, shall be maintained or enhanced</li> </ol>	<p>Structural developments, crop lands and livestock operations could be adversely impacted from unplanned wildland fire.</p> <p>Special concerns and constraints are scattered land pattern of public, state, and private land.</p> <p>Wildlife habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, songbirds, and ungulates is also a concern.</p>	<p><b>Suppression/Protection:</b> Wildland fire is not desired due to large amount of private and state land and agricultural production throughout the area. Management of unplanned fire occurrence would be based on values at risk, current and predicted weather, and current land management direction.</p> <p><b>Restoration:</b> Restoration will focus on rangeland and forest health, maintaining vegetative diversity by reducing conifer encroachment into meadows and by rejuvenating and increasing deciduous trees and shrubs.</p> <p><b>Prescribed Fire:</b> Prescribed fire will be used to reduce hazardous fuels and restore or maintain vegetative diversity, wildlife habitat, and forage values based on management direction and agreements with adjacent landowners.</p> <p><b>Fuels Treatments:</b> Mechanical and/or manual treatments will be used in areas where prescribed fire cannot be safely or effectively used.</p>	<p>Emphasis on prevention, education, and suppression</p> <p><b>Multiple fire protection priority:</b> High to moderate</p> <p><b>Rehabilitation:</b> A resource advisor will be consulted to assess impacts to natural, cultural, and economic resource values</p> <p><b>Fuels Buildup:</b> Generally high in forested areas; low to moderate in grass and shrub lands</p> <p><b>Noxious Weeds:</b> Priority will be to mitigate implementation activities to reduce the chance of new infestations of noxious weeds. Pre- and postburn treat in prescribed fire areas; postburn treat in wildland fire areas.</p>

Monument FMU 8

<b>FMU Name / Number:</b> Upper Missouri Breaks National Monument / FMU 8 <b>Size/Land Status:</b> The area includes approximately 506,129 acres: BLM - 367,228; Bankhead-Jones – 7,209; state - 38,770; private - 79,872; USFWS - 436; water - 12,578 <b>Last Revised:</b> Feb. 2004		<b>Field Office (FO): Lewistown (060)</b> <b>Monument Manager:</b> Gary Slagel (406) 538-1950 <b>Resource Advisor:</b> LFO or HFS Resource Specialist <b>FO Fuels Management Specialist:</b> Steve Knox (406) 538-1976 <b>BLM Central Zone Fire Management Officer:</b> Mitch Maycox (406) 538-1986			
Fire History (Reported by federal agencies)	Current Conditions, Vegetation	Desired Condition/ Resource Management Objectives	Potential Impacts from Unplanned Wild land Fire	Management Opportunities and/or Constraints	Priorities
1980 to 2003 Total fires 154 Total acres 13,588  Class A 34 fires 2 acres  Class B 79 fires 170 acres  Class C 24 fires 665 acres  Class D 6 fires 884 acres  Class E 6 fires 3321 acres  Class F 3 fires 7600 acres	The land form is a series of drainages and ridges running mostly north to south. The area is made up of rolling upland plateaus with moderate to deeply incised canyons. Some of the private uplands are an annual cereal crop production and some are in the Conservation Reserve Program. Native vegetation is primarily sage brush and sage brush grasslands verging into Ponderosa Pine, Douglas-fir, and juniper communities. Riparian vegetation including native shrubs and Cottonwood trees exists along the Missouri river and drainages throughout this polygon. Water sources within the area include small reservoirs, water-savers, wells, pipelines, and natural streams and rivers.  Access in this area depends on the weather as roads become difficult to drive with precipitation.  Ranches and recreation areas are scattered along the Missouri River. Ranches are located throughout the Breaks polygon. Vegetation consists of grass and sagebrush lands with scattered pockets of timber and crop lands near most ranches. Recreation sites along the Missouri River include the Richard Wood Watchable Wildlife area, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing, Stafford Ferry, and James Kipp Park.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage for sagebrush grassland and Missouri Breaks interface to provide season long forage for wildlife.</li> <li>2. Limit or minimize erosion.</li> <li>3. Manage native vegetation to meet standards for rangeland health.</li> <li>4. Maintain stable soils and sustain current land uses.</li> <li>5. Maintain sagebrush habitats, especially those in identified sage grouse nesting and wintering areas and big game concentration areas to the maximum extent possible.</li> <li>6. Scattered stands of Ponderosa Pine, especially those exhibiting old growth characteristics, shall be maintained where possible.</li> </ol>	Concerns include the presence of elk, mule deer, and Bighorn sheep; the mix of public and private land with crop production; difficult access; ACECs with cultural, paleontological, and vegetative values that might be accessed by fire fighting equipment; the presence of Bald Eagle and Pallid Sturgeon; and the use of earth moving/tillage equipment in the Wilderness Study Areas. Sensitive areas for cultural resources include the Cow Creek ACEC, Nez Perce National Historic Trail.  This area has historical values with the Nez Perce and Lewis and Clark Trails and its diverse wildlife populations. WSAs include Woodhawk, Dog Creek, Stafford, Ervin Ridge, and Cow Creek.	<p><b>Suppression/Protection:</b> The BLM will suppress fires at minimum cost considering fire fighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected. Appropriate management responses to wild land fire in the monument, including the wilderness study areas, will include traditional fire line tactics, including the use of natural barriers and hand constructed fire line. The application of fire retardant will be prohibited within the White Cliffs section of the monument</p> <p><b>Restoration:</b> Restoration will focus on rangeland and forest health, maintaining vegetative diversity by reducing conifer encroachment into meadows and by rejuvenating and increasing deciduous trees and shrubs.</p> <p><b>Prescribed fire:</b> Prescription burns will be pursued in the monument to protect infrastructure or wildlife habitat that would be permanently lost in the event of a catastrophic wild fire.</p> <p><b>Fuels Treatments:</b> The BLM will coordinate fuel management with private landowners, affected interests, and other agencies. Land uses will be monitored and adjusted as necessary after a fire.</p>	<p><b>Multiple fire protection priority:</b> Moderate</p> <p><b>Rehabilitation and Restoration priority:</b> Staging areas and fire camps will be placed outside the monument wherever possible. Using earth moving/tillage equipment is prohibited for wild land fire suppression in the monument, unless waived by the authorized officer.</p> <p><b>Fuels Buildup:</b> Prescribed fire may be used to achieve desired plant communities and to reduce hazardous fuel loads</p> <p><b>Noxious Weeds:</b> Priority will be to mitigate implementation activities to reduce the chance of new infestations of noxious weeds. Pre- and postburn treat in prescribed fire areas; postburn treat in wildland fire areas.</p>

Snowies (USFS), LFO FMU 9

<b>FMU Name / Number:</b> Snowies - USFS <b>Size/Land Status:</b> The area includes approximately 119,947 acres: USFS – 114,375; BLM – 326; state – 31; private – 5161; water - 54 <b>Last Revised:</b> January 27, 2004		<b>Field Office (FO): Lewistown (060)</b> <b>BLM FO Manager:</b> Mike Stewart - acting (406) 538-1944 <b>Resource Advisor:</b> USFS Gary Phillipe, Dean Rowland, Brian Logan Judith RD (406) 566-2292 <b>BLM Fuels Management Specialist:</b> Steve Knox (406) 538-1982 <b>BLM Central Zone Fire Management Officer:</b> Mitch Maycox (406) 538-1986			
Fire History (Reported by federal agencies)	Current Conditions, Vegetation	Desired Condition/ Resource Management Objectives	Potential Impacts from Unplanned Wildland Fire	Management Opportunities and/or Constraints	Priorities
1980 to 2003 Total Fires 54 Total Acres 8654  Class A 29 fires 2.1 acres  Class B 21 fires 21 acres  Class C 1 fire 17 acres  Class D 1 fire 180 acres  Class F 2 fires 8434 acres	The Big Snowies has blocks of BLM land surrounded by both USFS and private land. BLM has IA responsibilities on USFS system lands. The north side of mountain range includes the Judith Ranger District, and the south side includes the Musselshell Ranger District. The mountains in this area are flat-topped ridges of alpine tundra with Douglas fir on slopes, and Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir/grasslands on lower slopes and benchlands.  Crystal Lake campground corridor (one way ingress/egress) and southern fringe of the Big Snowies are in FMU 1. The majority of this mountain range is in FMU 3. Large steep canyons with rugged terrain characterize this mountain range. Use MIMT whenever possible. Access is by trail or aerial operations.		Special concerns and constraints include: West Slope Cutthroat Trout found in the west and east forks of Cottonwood Creek, the east fork of Big Springs Creek, and Half Moon Creek; proximity to private land, limited vehicle access; use of earth moving and other mechanized tillage equipment is limited and requires line officer approval prior to use in the Big Snowies WSA; Crystal Lake Campground and Cabin are located outside of the WSA; and high public recreation use area with one way ingress/egress.	<b>Suppression/Protection</b> Use MIMT whenever possible. Access is by trail or aerial operations.  <b>Restoration:</b>  <b>Prescribed fire:</b>  <b>Fuels Treatments:</b>	<b>Multiple fire protection priority:</b>  <b>Rehabilitation and Restoration priority:</b>  <b>Fuels Buildup:</b>  <b>Noxious Weeds:</b>

Twin Coulee WSA (BiFO), LFO FMU 10

<b>FMU Name / Number:</b> Twin Coulee WSA - BiFO <b>Size/Land Status:</b> The area includes approximately 12,733 acres BLM – 7106; state – 797; private - 4830 <b>Last Revised:</b> January 27, 2004 (by CMZ)		<b>Field Office (FO): Billings (010)</b> <b>FO Manager:</b> Sandy Brooks (406) 896-5013 <b>Resource Advisor:</b> BiFO Resource Specialist <b>FO Fuels Management Specialist:</b> Bob Meidinger (406) 896-5247 <b>BLM Central Zone Fire Management Officer:</b> Mitch Maycox (406) 538-1986			
Fire History (Reported by federal agencies)	Current Conditions, Vegetation	Desired Condition/ Resource Management Objectives	Potential Impacts from Unplanned Wildland Fire	Management Opportunities and/or Constraints	Priorities
1980 to 2004 Total Fires 3 Total Acres 873  Class B 2 fires 3 acres  Class E 1 fire 870 acres	Reference BLM Billings Field Office Fire Management Plan: FMU #5 - Twin Coulee WSA	Reference BLM Billings Field Office Fire Management Plan: FMU #5 - Twin Coulee WSA	Reference BLM Billings Field Office Fire Management Plan: FMU #5 - Twin Coulee WSA	<b>Suppression/Protection:</b>  <b>Restoration:</b>  <b>Prescribed fire:</b>  <b>Fuels Treatments:</b> Reference BLM Billings Field Office Fire Management Plan: FMU #5 - Twin Coulee WSA	<b>Multiple fire                  protection priority:                  Rehabilitation and                  Restoration                  priority:                  Fuels Buildup:                  Noxious Weeds:</b> Reference BLM Billings Field Office Fire Management Plan: FMU #5 - Twin Coulee WSA



## **IV. Fire Management Components:**

### **A. Wildland Fire Suppression**

The Lewistown FMP is based on the concept that all wildland fires will be subject to an initial response (Initial Action). Copies of the agreement outlining constraints and management objectives will be developed and made available to cooperators who provide suppression services.

#### **1. Fire Planning Unit Fire History**

Refer to matrices on pages 5-15 of this document.

#### **2. Suppression and Preparedness Actions**

All wildland fire suppression and preparedness actions will follow policy and guidance provided in but not limited to:

- National Fire Plan and 2001 Federal Fire Policy
- 2003 Fire/Fuels Management Plan for Montana and the Dakotas
- Current Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Operations Handbook

The Central Zone's fire suppression/operations resources are based in Lewistown at the Central Zone Fire Complex located at the Lewistown Airport and the Little Rockies Fire Station located just north of Zortman Montana. The current list of resources includes:

#### Lewistown

- Zone FMO
- Zone AFMO
- Lewistown FOS
- Dispatch Center Manager
- 3 IA/Aviation Dispatchers
- Zone Warehouse Manger
- Helicopter Module (7 person)
- Single Engine Air tanker Manager
- 1 type 4 Engine w/ 7 person crew
- 3 type 6 Engines w/ 5 person crew
- 1 type 1 water tender w/ 2 person crew
- 1 exclusive use Air Attack platform w/collateral duty or detailed ATGS
- 1 CWN Single Engine Air tanker as needed
- 1 exclusive use Type III helicopter (mid July-September)

Lewistown personnel - 40

#### Zortman

- Zortman FOS
- 1 type 4 Engine w/ 7 person crew

- 2 type 6 Engines w/ 5 person crew
- Zortman personnel – 18

Total Central Zone Personnel - 56

Historically, our goal is to be fully staffed and fire ready by the Memorial Day weekend and reduce our operations staff/resources by September 30<sup>th</sup>.

All Initial Actions for wildland fires on BLM lands within the Central Zone will utilize appropriate response concepts based on Firefighter safety, available resources, and guidance provided by appropriate land management plans and assigned Resource Advisors. Dispatching Run Cards are developed and in use by Lewistown Interagency Dispatch to assist in making appropriate response decisions.

To provide for safe and efficient wildfire suppression/management, interagency cooperation is essential within the Central Zone. Our primary cooperators include:

- Lewis & Clark N.F
- Charles M. Russell N.W.R
- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
- County Fire Wardens and Volunteer Departments and Districts:
  - Blaine County (Havre FS)
  - Cascade County (Great Falls FS)
  - Chouteau County (Havre FS)
  - Fergus County (Lewistown FO)
  - Glacier County (Havre FS)
  - Golden Valley County (Billings FO & Musselshell RD)
  - Hill County (Havre FS)
  - Judith Basin County (Lewistown FO)
  - Lewis & Clark County, North (Great Falls FS)
  - Liberty County (Havre FS)
  - Meagher County (Lewistown FO)
  - Petroleum County (Lewistown FO)
  - Phillips County (Malta FO)
  - Pondera County (Lewistown FO)
  - Teton County (Lewistown FO)
  - Toole County (Havre FS)
  - Valley County (Glasgow FS)

Due to the large number of local firefighters from organized departments and from the public at large, and due to personnel that may or may not be aware of site specific suppression objectives and/or limitations, it is imperative that a qualified Incident Commander and Resource Advisor arrive on scene in a timely manner.

The Central Zone is also responsible by agreement for initial attack on USFS lands in the Big and Little Snowy Mountains (Musselshell & Judith Ranger Districts). The Central Zone will also provide initial attack on wildland fires, under offset agreements, for parts of Blaine, Phillips and Valley Counties. For further information, reference the current listed agreements:

- Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement (A.K.A Six Party Agreement)
- Annual Operating Plan between Lewis & Clark NF and Bureau of Land Management, Lewistown Field Office.
- Memorandum of Understandings with Blaine, Phillips, and Valley Counties.

### **3. Fire Prevention, Community Assistance, and Education**

#### ***a. Fire Prevention***

With an average of only two human-caused fires every 10 years on BLM-managed land, fire prevention on federal land does not receive a large emphasis. Prevention efforts are focused primarily on the Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River Corridor where the majority of back-country recreation takes place during the primary fire season. Prohibition of the use of fireworks, tracer ammunition, and burning of hazardous or explosive materials on any BLM land has recently been enacted by the State Director.

Human-caused fires occur on private land within the field office primarily as a result of debris burning or agricultural operations. Thus, the primary focus of prevention activities is cooperation with, and support of, local and state entities. Central Fire Zone personnel work with personnel from the Montana DNRC - Northeastern Land Office, to handle the coordination of fire restrictions among all federal, state, tribal, and county agencies in a 13 county area of northeastern Montana. Refer to Appendix G for the Fire Restriction and Closures Plan.

Imposition of Stage I or Stage II fire restrictions is based on consensus of county, state, tribal, and federal administrators who participate in a weekly conference call. If a change in the fire restrictions level is proposed, DNRC personnel make contact with county administrators who were not present during the conference call; Central Zone personnel make contact with federal administrators who were not present. Production and distribution of news releases regarding fire restrictions activities to

print, radio, and television media is handled by the Central Fire Zone personnel.

In general, closures are limited to safety concerns associated with an ongoing incident. General closures are not used as part of the fire prevention program because of the scattered land ownership pattern of both federal and state lands within the field office. This pattern makes a general closure for public lands unenforceable. The only exception to this guideline would occur if all state and private lands in an area are closed by order of the governor of Montana, in which case, federal lands would be closed as well. Such an event occurred during the summer of 2000.

#### ***b. Community Assistance***

Community Assistance activities potentially cover 14 counties within the Lewistown Field Office. Assistance to communities focuses on fire hazard assessment and mitigation planning, hazardous fuel reduction, natural resource-based economic development, fire education, and Rural Fire Assistance.

Assistance agreements for assessments, planning, hazardous fuel reduction, and landowner education have been signed with four county entities (Fergus, Chouteau, Lewis and Clark, and Teton counties) and one economic development council that covers three counties (Judith Basin, Fergus and Petroleum counties) within the field office area. Partnering entities in the counties include both conservation districts and county government.

Projects currently underway through the assistance agreements include hazardous fuel reduction in Fergus, Chouteau, and Lewis and Clark counties; county-wide fire mitigation assessment and planning in Fergus, Judith Basin, Petroleum, Chouteau, and Teton counties; individual community assessments in Lewis and Clark county; and education and outreach to landowners in Judith Basin, Fergus, and Petroleum counties.

The potential for biomass energy development is currently being pursued for school and medical facilities in Lewistown (Fergus County) and for schools in Judith Basin County. Such a project has the potential to result in energy savings for public buildings, create a market for natural resource small business, and tie in with hazardous fuel reduction plans on federal lands for both BLM and the U.S. Forest Service.

#### ***c. Education***

Education activities are primarily directed at landowners and residents regarding defensible

space and wildland fire preparation. The most extensive education program is accomplished through direct funding of community assistance agreements (see above). Landowner education is also pursued opportunistically by the following means: providing support to community assistance agreements; implementing fuels treatments on federal land; and conducting NEPA assessments for watershed implementation projects.

Educational activities for elementary, junior, and senior high school students are focused on fire safety for the younger children and fire ecology for all ages. Activities are primarily directed at providing curriculum material to schools and presenting programs and lectures when asked by local teachers.

#### **4. Fire Training**

Fire Training is provided as appropriate for all employees assigned to offices within the Central Zone. We have a standing Red Card/Training Committee in our Zone. The Committee is made up of:

- Zone Fire Management Officer
- Zone Fire Training Officer (Collateral Duty)
- Red Card Administrator (Collateral Duty)
- One Representative from each office
- One Line Officer or there Representative

The Zone Red Card/Training Committee meets as needed to prioritize training requests, make recommendations to the Zone FMO before final certification and to address any other Red Card/Fire Training issues.

All decisions are base on efficiency of the service and the long term needs of the Zone, Regional, and National fire programs. Guides and Manuals used include, but are not limited to:

- NWCG 310-2 Guide
- Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Handbook
- Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide
- DOI DM 350-354 & 9400 Manual

Most 100-200 level training will be taught within the Central Zone. These courses will be open to our interagency partners, but Montana BLM employees will receive priority. The local training schedule will be established by mid March and will be posted on the Northern Rockies Eastern Zone training web site.

The Central Zone participates in the Northern Rockies training program where we are a part of the Northern Rockies Eastern Zone. All 300 level and above training must be routed though the Northern Rockies Eastern Zone Training Committee, and follow established procedures as shown in the Eastern Zone Training Committee S.O.P.

In late March, each Zone must compile a needs analysis for the subsequent training season (following fiscal year).

All original training certifications are to be kept by the employee with copies kept in a master training file maintained by the Red Card Administrator.

##### ***a. Qualifications and Fire Line Refresher***

All qualifications will follow established interagency standards and will be certified by the Zone Fire Management Officer or State Fire Management Officer as appropriate. All Fire Training records are maintained by the Zone Red Card Administrator, with medical related records kept in the employee's master file located at the Montana State Office. Task Books will be issued and initiated by the Zone Fire Training Officer following the NWCG Task Book Administrators Guide.

Fire Line Refresher training will be provided in the spring for Central Zone employees by Central Zone fire staff. All reasonable efforts will be made to provide an adequate number of training sessions in locations that allow each employee and office the chance to participate. Work Capacity Tests will also be provided as appropriate, and will follow current Bureau guidelines.

##### ***b. Fire Season Readiness***

No Central Zone fire staff or other personnel will participate in wildfire or prescribed fire activities until all required recurrence standards are met. Fire season readiness may be adversely effected due to a reduction in the percentage of M.E.L /Work months. The goal is to have all equipment, plans, and staff 100% fire ready by Memorial Day weekend and to maintain the option for seven-day staffing through Labor Day weekend. Typically, summer seasonal employees begin leaving their positions in mid-August, which, to some degree, reduces our readiness and ability to provide resources for out of Zone assignment or details.

The Zone Fire Management staff will keep Line Management and State Office Fire Staff apprised of any fire readiness issues in a timely manner.

**5. Detection**

Wildland fire detection within the Zone is provided by a combination of ground and aerial means, including fire reports from the public, law enforcement, and government employee’s year-round. Due to the topography and modern communication systems, the majority of actively burning wildfires are reported by the public, typically to the county sheriff’s office, then relayed to the appropriate fire dispatch center. The exception to this is when aerial recon detects a wildfire, in which case the report is made directly to Lewistown Interagency Dispatch.

During times of high fire danger or after lighting activity the BLM will actively search for new starts using both ground patrols and aerial detection flights. The goal of these patrols is to have ground based firefighters and aerial supervision dispersed in order to increase the probability of preventing an escaped wildland fire.

**6. Fire Weather and Fire Danger**

Table IV A6 displays the nine Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS) that are maintained by the Central Montana Fire Zone (CMFZ). The CMFZ owns one portable RAWS station that may be installed to provide site specific weather

information for projects where permanent RAWS information is not sufficient to collect needed data for a specific site.

Lewistown Fire Dispatch Center is responsible for recurrent daily activities to manage RAWS data and the National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS). These activities include input of key dates to initiate seasonal data collection and termination; correction of observed weather observations to insure accurate data is input into NFDRS; and calculation/communication of the daily fire danger rating(s) throughout the zone (See Appendix X, Fire Danger Operating Plan).

All the listed RAWS stations, with the exception of Little Bullwacker, Bluff Creek, and Little Snowy, use NFDRS Fuel Model C along with the Energy Release Component (ERC) to develop fire danger ratings on a daily basis. Little Bullwacker and Bluff Creek use NFDRS Fuel Model L along with ERC, and Little Snowy uses Fuel Model H and a Burning Index (BI) to calculate the daily fire danger rating.

Daily fire weather forecasts are obtained twice daily throughout the fire season from the National Weather Service (NWS). These forecasts may be obtained via the internet at the following web address: <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov>

**Table IV A6: BLM RAWS STATIONS**

Name	NWS ID	NESDIS ID	Elevation	Latitude	Longitude
Little Bullwacker	240704	3256C488	3100	47.8130	109.0160
Zortman Mine	240807	324AE466	4660	47.9220	108.5520
Manning Corral	240809	3276659E	3080	47.7020	108.4780
Bluff Creek	240902	327676E8	2550	48.8710	106.9450
King Coulee	240903	3276866C	2760	47.7980	107.0230
Armells	242205	32544768	2820	47.5830	108.8690
Little Snowy	242207	3256277A	4975	46.7510	109.0230
Chain Butte	242302	325196C0	2928	47.5160	108.0330
Dry Blood Creek	242303	3276951A	3000	47.2430	108.3570

\*\*\*\*\*

**7. Aviation Management**

All aviation activities within the Central Zone will follow Departmental, Agency, State Office, and Zone policies and guidelines. The documents that are commonly used include, but are not limited to:

- 9400 Manuel
- BLM National Aviation Plan
- BLM Montana Aviation Plan
- Central Montana Zone Aviation Plan

- IHOG
- ATGS Guide
- SEAT Guide

The Central Montana Zone aviation management personnel are as follows.

- Zone Aviation Manager = Zone FMO
- Acting Unit Aviation Officer = Zone AFMO
- Aviation Dispatcher = Lewistown Dispatch Aviation Dispatcher

- Helicopter Operations = Lewistown Helitack Crew Leader
- Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) Operations = Lewistown SEAT Manager

The standard complement of initial attack aircraft include:

- Type 1 Air Attack Platform with ATGS
- Type III Helicopter with IA Module
- SEAT with support crew and manager

As warranted for extended attack or large fire support, additional aircraft to consider include:

- Recon Platform with Observer
- Additional Type III Helicopter with IA Module
- Type II Helicopter, for crew transport/bucket work
- Additional SEATs
- Additional ATGS Platform with ATGS

Aerial delivery of firefighters and aerial supervision have proven to be key components in a safe and efficient initial attack program. Providing local management oversight is facilitated by using local Fire Managers as ATGS's or aerial observers. This management oversight is also beneficial in determining when less-than-full suppression actions are warranted.

## 8. Initial Attack

IA within the Central Zone is based on the closest resource concept and utilizing the most appropriate qualified resources. This includes working as partners with local government and state resources. Appropriate response guidelines will be followed. **At no time will fire fighter or public safety be knowingly compromised.** All actions will comply with Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book) as listed in Chapter 9: Initial Attack.

Lewistown Interagency Dispatch will be responsible for all IA dispatching functions as listed in the following documents:

- Lewistown Interagency Dispatch Operations Plan
- Eastern Montana Zone MOB Guide
- Northern Rockies MOB Guide
- Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations

On-duty dispatchers will dispatch IA resources utilizing the established Run Cards and will keep

the Duty Officer informed on the status of all fires within the Zone.

All ground and aviation IA actions will comply with current BLM Red Book Standards including, but not limited to, the following:

- Daily AM briefings including weather, safety, and current situation
- Utilizing an appropriate Incident Commander based on complexity analysis

## 9. Extended Attack and Large Fire Suppression

Extended Attack fires will be managed by an appropriate and qualified Type III organization using the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Complexity Analyses. Line Manager Involvement will be required and a Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (W.F.S.A.) will be completed and followed.

The following is a possible team configuration for a basic Type III incident.

- 1 - Type III IC
- 2 to 4 - DIVS/Task Force Leader / Strike Team Leaders
- 1 - Type III Safety Officer
- 1 - Logistics Person
- 1 - Finance Person
- 1 - Camp Boss/Staging Area Manager

Consideration should be made to request the Eastern Montana C.A.T if available and with feedback from the DNRC FMO and the Team IC.

Training opportunities on incidents should be considered only with fully qualified trainers and trainees.

## B. Wildland Fire Use

Wildland fire use will not be part of the fire management strategy in the Lewistown Field Office for the following reasons:

- Flashy fuels and periodic high wind events make it difficult to hold fires to a predetermined area or size.
- Inter-mixed BLM, private and other-agency lands make it difficult to allow fire to burn under fire use without affecting those other lands.
- Most BLM land is under grazing allotments, and allowing fires to burn under a fire use plan could significantly reduce grazing during at least two growing seasons.

## C. Prescribed Fire

### 1. Planning and Documentation

#### a. Summary of Prescribed Fire Program Planning

All prescribed fire projects include pre/post project criteria. For information specific to any prescribed fire project, refer to the project burn plans.

The Central Montana Zone prescribed fire program is an interdisciplinary activity with a goal of treating natural and activity fuel accumulations to meet resource objectives, standards for rangeland health as outlined in the RMPs, Fire/Fuels Management Plan Environmental Assessment/Amendment, and area specific planning documents. These documents permit the use of management ignited fires on BLM lands in the Lewistown Field Office. Treatments have historically included hazardous fuels reduction, wildlife habitat improvement, range improvement, and reduction of activity fuels.

The development of prescribed fire treatments is typically accomplished one to three years in advance of planned treatments. Field reconnaissance and interdisciplinary analysis is completed one to two years in advance of project implementation.

To be more cost effective, project analysis may be the precursor to multi-year treatment on the scale of several thousand acres. Sub-units are used in project implementation to provide additional flexibility by taking advantage of favorable sites and seasonal windows for treatment.

The CMZ develops out-year program planning and budgeting information for prescribed fire treatments in accordance with RMPs and project level EAs. Projects will be identified in the Risk Assessment Mitigation Strategy.

Project implementation is prioritized as follows:

1. Wildland/Urban interface area.
2. Forest Health and Restoration (areas currently in condition class 2 and 3)

3. Watershed Structure and Integrity
4. Maintenance of areas currently in condition class 1

All prescribed fire plans have pre/post project criteria or silvicultural prescriptions. For specific action items refer to project level EAs and individual prescribed fire burn plans.

The 1998 BLM Handbook 9214 “Prescribed Fire Manual” provides specific guidance for the prescribed fire program. It covers guidance, planning, prescribed fire plan requirements, determination complexity, safety and qualifications, project finance, cooperation and assistance, escape fires, and reporting.

The CMZ fire program maintains 1 plastic sphere dispenser and various types of ignition torches (drip torches-25, panama-3). This equipment is constantly being maintained due to its year round use.

Table IV Ca on the following page shows prescribed fire projects.

#### b. Required Qualified Personnel

Only Qualified personnel will participate in the implementation of prescribed fire and fuels implementation projects. A list of qualified personnel is available in the CMZ dispatch office. Estimating the out-year work load, the needed positions are shown in Table IV Cb.

#### c. Monitoring and Evaluation

The goal of the CMZ monitoring program is to determine if treatments are meeting the objectives as outlined in the project plan. Prescribed fire treatment monitoring can be defined as a systematic process for collecting and recording information to provide a basis for evaluating, adjusting resource and treatment objectives, methods, and implementation practices.

Monitoring and evaluation will follow the guidance stated in the “Prescribed Fire Manual” 9214 (pg.19), RMPs, area-specific planning documents, and project burn plans. The monitoring field sheets and written protocols are located in L:\Fire Management\fuels\Field Sheets\field sheets.

**Table IV Cb - Required Qualified Personnel**

	Fuels Management Specialist	Fuels Technician	Planning and environmental Coordinator	Fire Mitigation and Education Specialist	RXB1	RXB2	RXI2
Current positions	4			1	1	2	6
Needed positions		3	1		2	3	10

**Table IV Ca**

\*The values are subject to change with additional planning, evaluation, and unforeseeable constraints.

<b>Prescribed Fire Projects</b>						
<b>Project Name</b>	<b>FMU</b>	<b>Acres*</b>	<b>Current * Condition Class (acres)</b>	<b>Projected * Condition Class 2(acres)</b>	<b>Projected * Condition Class 1 (acres)</b>	<b>Local Contractor</b>
Armells Creek Watershed	Breaks, Monument	12,200	3-6,000 2-6,600	6,000	5,000	N/A
Arrow Creek	Breaks, Monument	5,795	3-2,030 2-3,769	1,500	1,000	N/A
Beaver Creek	Snowies	30	2-30		30	N/A
Becket	Island Ranges	400	3-400	40	350	N/A
BR-12	Prairie Pothole	150	2-150		75	N/A
Driftwood	Prairie Pothole	200	2-200		145	N/A
Gilmore	Breaks, Monument	1,100	2-950		700	N/A
Grass Range	Island Ranges	160	3-50 2-110	15	90	N/A
Havre Breaks	Breaks	30,000	3-5,000 2-20,000 1-5,000	3,000	2,000	N/A
Judith Mountains	Island Ranges	500	3-500	200		N/A
Lincoln Gulch	Island Ranges	30	3-30	20		N/A
Lion Coulee	Breaks, Monument	2,780	3-1,000 2-1,780	550	1,300	N/A
Lonesome Lake	Big Open	13,120	3-700 2-12,420	200	10,000	N/A
Musselshell Breaks	Breaks	5,000	3-2,000 2-3,000	1,000	1,500	N/A
North Moccasins	Island Ranges	300	3-300	200		N/A
North Peterson	Prairie Potholes	200	2-200		75	N/A
Rogers Pass	Front	250	3-250	120		N/A
Upper Missouri	Breaks	10,000	3-6,000 2-4,000	3,500	3,000	N/A

**d. Prescribed Fire Treatment Map**

Refer to Appendix A for prescribed fire treatment maps.

**2. Air Quality and Smoke Management**

BLM Manual Sections 9211.31(E) Fire Planning and 9214.33 Prescribed Fire Management require compliance with individual state and local smoke management programs that specify the conditions under which burning may be conducted.

The entire Lewistown Field Office (FPU) lies within Airshed 9 as identified by the Montana / Idaho Airshed Group. The Montana State Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) provides oversight to the MT / Idaho Airshed Group.

**a. Air Quality Issues**

Air quality across the Lewistown Field Office is generally good. Impacts to air quality within the

FPU include occasional smoke from large fires burning elsewhere in the Northwestern U.S. or Southern Canada; localized short-term impacts from wildland or prescribed fires burning within the FPU; and dust created from wind or agricultural activities.

**b. Smoke Sensitive Areas and Class I Air Sheds**

There are no Class 1 airsheds, non-attainment areas, or impact zones located within or immediately adjacent to the FPU. There are four Class 1 airsheds that lie to the west of the FPU on the west side of the continental divide (Glacier NP, Bob Marshall, Scapegoat, and Gates of the Mountains). Impacts to these airsheds from wildland fires or prescribed fires within the FPU is possible, but quite rare because of the distance and topography

separating these sensitive areas from the FPU and a prevailing westerly wind.

### ***c. Smoke Management Restrictions and Procedures***

The best management practices from the Interagency Smoke Management Guide are incorporated into individual prescribed fire plans. Approval for implementation of all prescribed fire projects must be obtained from the DEQ through the MT/ID Airshed Group using the RAZU Online Burn Reporting System (<http://www.smokemu.org>). A list of proposed prescribed fire projects must be submitted to the MT/ID Airshed Group between January 1<sup>st</sup> and February 27<sup>th</sup> each year. Requests for approval of individual prescribed fire projects must be submitted to the MT/ID Airshed Group by 1200 MTZ the day before planned ignition. Burning accomplishments must be reported through the RAZU Online Burn Reporting System in a timely manner.

Typically, burn season is closed from December 1<sup>st</sup> to March 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Approval to burn during the closed season may be granted on a limited basis to those projects which are considered essential winter burning (i.e. pile burning with snow). Essential winter burn projects must be submitted for approval by the DEQ, through the Regional Airshed Coordinator by November 1<sup>st</sup>. Written proposals for closed season burning must include rationale as to why implementation of the project is deemed essential.

## **D. Non-Fire Fuels Treatments**

### **1. Annual Activities for Implementation**

LFO out-year planning and budgeting for treatments is developed after identification and prioritization of treatment areas. Wildland urban interface communities on the Federal Register have received priority planning and treatment. Future projects will usually be identified in the Risk Assessment Mitigation Strategy (RAMS). Project planning and treatment objectives are in accordance with RMPs and area-specific planning documents.

The development of treatment proposals is typically accomplished one to three years in advance of planned treatments. Field reconnaissance and interdisciplinary analysis are

completed one to two years in advance of project implementation.

All specific, non-fire fuels treatment project plans include pre/post project criteria or silvicultural prescriptions. For specific action items, refer to area-specific planning documents and individual project plans.

### **2. Equipment and Seasonal Use Restrictions**

Equipment and seasonal use restrictions are identified in the Approved Judith Valley Phillips RMP Appendix A, pages 33-37. Project site restrictions are located in area-specific planning documents, project plans, and contract specifications. All non-fire fuel treatments will comply with the equipment and seasonal use restrictions identified and described in Chapter IIID.

### **3. Effects Monitoring Requirements**

The goal of the CMZ monitoring program is to determine if treatments are meeting project objectives. Monitoring for non-fire fuels treatments is based on site specific planning documents, project objectives, and silvicultural prescriptions. Monitoring will ideally provide a basis for adjusting future management decisions and can provide information for education and public meetings in WUI areas.

Forest Vegetation Information System (FORVIS) methods and Forest Vegetation Simulation (FVS) software are used to inventory and monitor non-fire fuels treatments.

### **4. Reporting/Documentation Requirements**

Project level reporting requirements have been established and include submissions in National Fire Plan Operations Reporting System (NFPORS) and the Management Information System (MIS). Resource specialists associated with fuels projects report in the Rangeland Improvement Project System (RIPS) and the Budget Planning System (BPS). The CMZ fuels program is currently integrating with the LFO on the Annual Work Plan (AWP).

Service contracts require documentation as specified by the Montana BLM state office or the National Business Center. The Contracting Officer Representative maintains a service contract folder that is associated with a project folder.

Documentation requirements such as maps, agreements, monitoring, and project notes are compiled in project folders. The folders are maintained in hard copy formats and in electronic formats on lfo.share\Fire

Management\Fuels Projects. The BLM Prescribed Fire Management Handbook 9214 (Draft Oct 3003), page 1-26, specifies project file documentation requirements for fuels treatment projects.

**5. Treatment Summary Table**

1. Number of Acres Treated
2. Number of Acres Treated with By-Products Utilized
3. Number of Projects Implemented through Local Contractors
4. Total Acres Treated in Condition Class 2 moved to Condition Class 1
5. Total Acres Treated in Condition Class 3 moved to Condition Class 2 or 1

<b>Non-Fire Fuels Treatments</b>								
Project Name	FMU	WUI	1. Acres Treated	2. By-Product Utilization	3. Local Contractor	4. Condition Class 2 moved to 1 (acres)	5. Condition Class 3 moved to 2 or 1 (acres)	Current Condition Class (acres)
Maiden (JMLA)	Island Ranges	Yes	500	0	Not yet contracted	0	500	3 – 500
North Moccasins (JMLA)	Island Ranges	Yes	80	0	No	0	80	3 – 80
Dog Creek (Arrow Ck EA)	Breaks	No	300	0	No	300	0	2 – 300
Rogers Pass (Rogers Pass CMP and EA)	Front	Yes	250	0	Not yet contracted	130	120	3 – 250

The values in this table are subject to change with additional out-year planning, evaluation, and unforeseeable constraints.

## **E. Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation**

Due to the very rural nature of the area and the predominance of plains vegetation, there has not been a historic demand for emergency stabilization and rehabilitation. Plains vegetation is dominated by rhizomatous grasses, with a mix of both cool and warm season grasses. Such grass types are able to resprout quickly after fire under many seasons and conditions, and generally suffer little mortality from wildland fire. Cheat grass invasion after fire is not an issue, except where major soil disturbance has occurred and, even then, it is temporary.

Except in the Island Mountain Ranges and on the Rocky Mountain Front, forested areas generally occur in rolling terrain or in coulees that are downslope from communities and rural intermix areas. Thus, threats from erosion are not generally an issue.

In the mountain areas, severe fire could lead to erosion, and the need for emergency stabilization using erosion control measures should be evaluated.

Rehabilitation needs often include reconstruction of burned fences or other infrastructure. Depending on the vegetation, planting of conifer trees or non-sprouting shrubs, such as sagebrush, which comprise critical wildlife habitat, should be evaluated.

## **F. Community Protection**

The table in Appendix D lists the at-risk communities in the planning unit, along with their hazard rating. The hazard rating is based on a state-wide analysis of geographic data (layers) for vegetation, slope, aspect, historical fire occurrence, average wind speed, structure density, roof ratings, building construction, and ISO rating for public protection capability.

### **1. WUI Communities with Completed Fire Management Plans**

No communities within the planning area have a completed and current fire management plan.

Since early 2003, emphasis has been placed on county-wide fire mitigation plans that comply with FEMA requirements for county-wide pre-disaster mitigation plans for all risks. Such plans are currently underway in Judith Basin, Fergus, Petroleum, and Teton counties. These plans should be completed before the end of 2004.

In addition, Chouteau, Hill, and Blaine counties have indicated their interest and intent in completing such plans. These plans are expected to be completed by the end of 2005.

### **2. WUI Communities with Fire Prevention Programs**

No communities within the planning area have fire prevention plans in place or being implemented.

### **3. WUI Communities Removed from At-Risk List**

A number of communities have begun hazardous fuel reduction programs, specifically Lewis and Clark and Fergus counties. However, these programs have not yet resulted in removing any communities from the at-risk list.

### **4. Rural Fire Assistance Program**

Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) provides support to local rural and/or volunteer fire districts for needed equipment and training. Funding is administered through the Montana DNRC. Expenditures for RFA in the field office area for FY 2003 are listed on the following page in Table IV-F.2. Priorities for Rural Fire Assistance money for all areas in the planning unit include:

- a. Adequate communications equipment for use on initial attack and incidents
- b. Adequate PPE
- c. Adequate training in wildland fire for all volunteers
- d. Computer hardware to enable timely fire reporting into the state system
- e. Providing wildland engines where resources are inadequate
- f. Upgrading or replacing aging or obsolete wildland engines

**Table IV-F.2 Rural Fire Assistance Expenditures for FY 2003**

<b>Name of Individual Rural Fire Department (RFD) Volunteer Fire Department (VFD)</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>RFD/VFD Use</b>	<b>RFD/VFD Cost Share (In kind or \$ amount)</b>	<b>DOI Award Amount</b>
<b>Cascade County</b>	\$37,384	Comm. equip	\$791	<b>\$7,115</b>
Simms VF Co, Ft Shaw Rural VFD, Sun River FS, Vaughn VFD				
Dearborn VF Co, Cascade R&VFD, Ulm VF Co, Gore Hill VFC,				
Sand Coulee VF Co, Stockett VF Co, Belt RFD, Black Eagle				
RF Dist, Monarch VF Co, Neihart VFD				
<b>Chouteau County</b>	\$30,000	PPE, comm. equip	\$2,632	<b>\$23,688</b>
Big Sandy VFD, Loma RVFD, Elim VFD, Ft Benton VFD				
Carter VF Co, Knees VF Co, Highwood VF Co, Shonkin				
VF Co, Geraldine VF Co				
<b>Hill County</b>	\$20,221	Train, comm. equip	\$644	<b>\$5,798</b>
Rudyard FD, Bear Paw VFD, Box Elder RFD				
<b>Lewis &amp; Clark County</b>	\$20,000	PPE, equip	\$532	<b>\$4,791</b>
Augusta RFD, Canyon Creek RFD, Birdseye RFD,				
York VF Co, Wolf Creek FSA, Craig VFD				
<b>Liberty County</b>	\$17,663	PortaTank, PPE	\$1,871	<b>\$16,837</b>
Chester VFD, Joplin VFD				
<b>Petroleum County</b>	\$22,476	PPE, prev, eq	\$1,435	<b>\$12,917</b>
Teigen , Winnett , Flat Willow				
<b>Teton County</b>	\$116,154	PPE, comm. equip	\$608	<b>\$5,476</b>
Choteau RF Dist, Choteau VFD, Dutton RFD,				
Fairfield RF Dist, Pendro VFD, Power VFD				
<b>Toole County</b>	\$17,400	PPE	\$1,489	<b>\$13,398</b>
Sunburst VFD, Shelby VFD				
<b>Montana Eastside County Co-op Program</b>	\$50,000	equipment	\$5,556	<b>\$50,000</b>

## V. Organization

### A. Budget and Organization

Normal Year Preparedness was determined by the last NFMAS update to the fire program in 1998. The approved staff was augmented by the National Fire Plan requirement that each program be staffed at 100%+ of the Most Efficient Level from 1998. The chart in Appendix F shows the current Central Montana Zone's approved staffing level and

approximate funding level for preparedness and the fuels program. The standardized tables (V-A1 and V-A2) below and on the following pages show the current approved staffing level and approximate funding level for preparedness and the fuels program.

**Table V-A1 - Implemented Year Fire Organization.**  
Current approved staffing level.

<b>Bureau of Land Management Implemented Fire Resources</b>			
<b>Office: MT-063</b>			
<b>Resources</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Number of Personnel</b>	<b>Total Work Months</b>
<b>Number of Engines:</b>	7	37	208.5
<b>Number of Water tenders:</b>	1	0	
<b>Number of Dozers:</b>	0		
<b>Number of Tractors / plows:</b>	0		
<b>Number of Fire Boats:</b>	0		
<b>Number of Type 1 Crews:</b>	0		
<b>Number of Helitack Crews:</b>	1	9	52.5
<b>Number of Fuels Crews:</b>	0		
<b>Number of Type 2 Crews sponsored:</b>	0		
<b>Number of Smokejumpers (AK &amp; NIFC only):</b>	0		
<b>Number of Fire Management Officers:</b>	1		12
<b>Number of Assistant FMOs / FCOs:</b>	1		12
<b>Number of Fire Operations Specialists:</b>	2		24
<b>Number of Dispatchers:</b>	5		42.5
<b>Number of Other Aviation Staff (Aviation Mgr., Seat Mgr, etc.):</b>	1		7
<b>Number of Mitigation/Education/Prevention Specialists / Techs:</b>	1		12
<b>Number of Resource Specialists:</b>			
<b>Number of Fuels Specialists:</b>	4		48
<b>Number of Other Fire Staff:</b>	2		22
<b>Number of PFT funded by Preparedness:</b>	6		
<b>Number of Career Seasonals funded by Preparedness:</b>	26		
<b>Number of Temporaries funded by Preparedness:</b>	29		
<b>Number of PFT funded by Fuels:</b>	5		
<b>Number of Career Seasonals funded by Fuels:</b>	0		
<b>Number of Temporaries funded by Fuels:</b>	0		

\* In completing this table, only include Preparedness resource numbers funded by Fire Preparedness (2810) and reflect the peak fire organization resources for the year. Do not include resources funded under severity. The fuels related resources numbers are to include the resource funded by the non-WUI (2823) and WUI (2824) programs.

**Table V-A1 - Planned Fire Organization**

<b>Bureau of Land Management Planned Fire Resources</b>			
<b>Office: MT-063</b>			
<b>Resources</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Number of Personnel</b>	<b>Total Work Months</b>
<b>Number of Engines:</b>	7	39	217.5
<b>Number of Water tenders:</b>	1	2	12
<b>Number of Dozers:</b>	0		
<b>Number of Tractors / plows:</b>	0		
<b>Number of Fire Boats:</b>	0		
<b>Number of Type 1 Crews:</b>	0		
<b>Number of Helitack Crews:</b>	1	9	52.5
<b>Number of Fuels Crews:</b>	1	5	24
<b>Number of Type 2 Crews sponsored:</b>			
<b>Number of Smokejumpers (AK &amp; NIFC only):</b>			
<b>Number of Fire Management Officers:</b>	1		12
<b>Number of Assistant FMOs / FCOs:</b>	2		24
<b>Number of Fire Operations Specialists:</b>	2		24
<b>Number of Dispatchers:</b>	5		42.5
<b>Number of Other Aviation Staff (Aviation Mgr., Seat Mgr, etc.):</b>	1		7
<b>Number of Mitigation/Education/Prevention Specialists / Techs:</b>	1		12
<b>Number of Resource Specialists:</b>			
<b>Number of Fuels Specialists:</b>	4		48
<b>Number of Other Fire Staff:</b>	2		22
<b>Number of PFT funded by Preparedness:</b>	7		
<b>Number of Career Seasonals funded by Preparedness:</b>	26		
<b>Number of Temporaries funded by Preparedness:</b>	31		
<b>Number of PFT funded by Fuels:</b>	5		
<b>Number of Career Seasonals funded by Fuels:</b>	1		
<b>Number of Temporaries funded by Fuels:</b>	4		

**B. Assistance Agreements and Intra/Interagency Agreements**

Lewistown Interagency Dispatch has the following agreements or MOU's:

- Annual Operating Plan between Eastern (Billings) and Central (Lewistown) Field Offices for Twin Coulee Wilderness Study Area (WSA) located in the Little Snowy Mountains;
- MOU with Arizona BLM (Phoenix FO) and Montana BLM (Lewistown FO) to establish management guidelines to be used for the sharing of an Exclusive Use Contracted Type III (Light) Helicopter;
- Fire Operating Plan between Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge and associated satellite bases and the BLM (Lewistown, Malta and Miles City Field Offices) for Initial Attack;

- Initial Attack Agreement between the BLM-Lewistown Field Office, the Montana DNRC, and Fergus County-Montana;
- Initial Attack Agreement between the BLM-Lewistown Field Office, the Montana DNRC, and Golden Valley County-Montana;
- Initial Attack Agreement between the BLM-Lewistown Field Office, the Montana DNRC, and Petroleum County-Montana;
- Initial Attack Agreement between the BLM-Lewistown Field Office, the Montana DNRC, and Judith Basin County-Montana;
- Initial Attack Agreement between the BLM-Lewistown Field Office, the Montana DNRC, and Chouteau County-Montana;
- Annual Operating Plan between the BLM-Lewistown Field Office and the DNRC for dispatch operation;
- MOU between the BLM-Lewistown FO and Blaine County Board of County Commissioners, in cooperation with Montana Department of State Lands, Northeastern Lands Office, concerning exchange of initial attack responsibilities for fighting forest and range fire in Blaine County, Montana.

annually and revised as needed to ensure the strategic guidance provided in the plan is assisting the LFO in meeting its resource and fire management goals and objectives in the Judith, West Hi-Line, and Headwaters RMPs. Revisions, additions, and adjustments in compliance with the RMP may be incorporated into the FMP. Any major changes may require amending the RMP. The review will also ensure the fire program is being implemented in a safe, cost effective manner as directed in this FMP. As national wildland fire performance measures are issued, monitoring and evaluation protocols will be developed to meet those requirements, while following Department and Bureau guidelines.

All copies of these MOU's and agreements can be located in the LIDC.

### **C. Equipment Rental Agreements**

A copy of all rental agreements will be available in the LIDC as part of the service and supply plan.

### **D. Contract Suppression and Prescribed Fire Resources**

Copies of these agreements/contracts are available in LIC as part of the service and supply plan.

## **VI. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Lewistown FMP is a working reference for wildland fire management and hazardous fuels treatments within the LFO. It will be reviewed