



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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To: CDD District Manager, All Field Managers
Attn: Regional, Field and District Fire Management Officers

From: State Director

Subject: Fuels Management Program Evaluation and FY 04 Changes

As has been demonstrated, treating hazardous and wildland-urban interface (WUI) fuels in California is a complex undertaking. We now have three years of experience under our belts and it seems an appropriate time to reflect on our accomplishments to date and apply lessons-learned to our FY 04 and future projects.

Past Accomplishments and Program Management

As a State, we have filled 10 fuels funded "Ologists" to assist us with specialized functions inherent in our fuel reduction efforts. These positions are located throughout the state (see attachment) and are available to assist any office as time allows. We have conducted a statewide review of our fuels program that resulted in the hiring of 5 field office fuels specialists. We have hosted a recent update of Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) to prioritize fuels and mitigation projects and identify future staffing needs. As per Departmental direction we have adopted the National Fire Program Operating and Reporting System (NFPORS) as our primary reporting system and have trained each region in its use. And, as always, we stand ready to assist each field office in its hazardous and WUI fuel reduction efforts.

With staffing levels now at more appropriate levels and past experience to guide us, we look towards the future with increased expectations. As noted in the chart below, we have performed consistently in our first three years but are accomplishing only about ½ of our fuel treatment goals, (other states are shown for comparison). We've also attached our FY 03 Fuels Workload Measures from MIS that show individual office accomplishments.

Annual Summary of State Fuels Treatment Accomplishments on Federal and Non-Federal Lands

		2001			2002			2003.	
State	Total Target	Accom	%	Total Target	Accom	%	Total Target	Accom	%
Alaska	30000	63	0%	31010	83	0%	6700	10227	152%
Arizona	29064	19749	68%	35625	24210	68%	33100	33790	102%
California	10616	5592	53%	10541	5206	49%	20946	10786	51%
Colorado	20143	17002	84%	40000	19761	49%	19300	20889	108%
Eastern States	5	5	100%	10	0	0%			
Idaho	86006	73172	85%	56537	69372	123%	199700	198427	99%
Montana	10150	10721	106%	19904	6751	34%	21810	11707	54%
Nevada	45000	16175	36%	38800	16117	42%	27910	43824	157%
New Mexico	19756	12422	63%	71000	49938	70%	69000	54330	79%
Oregon	60000	60948	102%	105730	95837	91%	93535	76739	82%
Utah	20701	24458	118%	56270	19148	34%	60850	54987	90%
Wyoming	28800	17383	60%	44249	18253	41%	47129	17692	38%

FY 2003 Workload Measures By Office

Program Element	Org	SUB	Target	Actual	Completed
Hazardous Fuel Reduction on Federal Lands (JM)	CA160	2823	4	0	0%
	CA169	2823	372	370	99%
	CA320	2823	1096	787	72%
	CA330	2823	92	98	107%
	CA340	2823	15	15	100%
	CA360	2823	262	270	103%
	CA370	2823	445	338	76%
	CA660	2823	35	70	200%
	CA680	2823	74	120	162%
	Wildland Urban Interface Fuel Reduction on Federal and Non-Federal Land (JW)	CA160	2824	213	186
CA170		2824	281	281	100%
CA180		2824	2695	389	14%
CA190		2824	105	105	100%
CA320		2824	433	63	15%
CA330		2824	13	0	0%
CA338		2824	125	95	76%
CA340		2824	957	336	35%
CA360		2824	255	183	72%
CA370		2824	95	168	177%
CA660		2824	880	365	41%
CA943	2824	14329	10648	74%	

Our failure to meet our targets can be attributed to a number of general factors including:

- Air quality issues, weather, and other factors limit prescribed burn windows.
- Environmental issues have not been addressed in a timely manner thus delaying implementation of projects
- Contracting deadlines have been missed due to fire assignments
- Some interagency agreements have been problematic or are in need of updating, and
- The Indefinite Deliverable Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts for fuel treatments arrived late and proved inadequate for many of our projects.

While some of these issues are beyond our immediate control, others are wholly within our scope of influence. We must apply the lessons-learned during the past three years to the planning and execution of our current and future projects.

Focusing on the Future

In an effort to improve our performance, increase our accountability, and keep the fuels dollars flowing to California, the following changes to the fuels management program will be implemented in FY04:

1. With burn windows difficult to meet, serious consideration and greater emphasis should be placed on alternate methods of treatment. While this may reduce our overall treated acres, this should allow us to close the gap between our targets and our accomplishments.
2. Environmental and cultural clearances should be discussed with appropriate staff prior to submittal of the project for funding to determine whether seasonal surveys or other issues might delay the completion of the project's EA or Categorical Exclusion. Delaying attention to these issues is unacceptable and funding will be pulled from projects that have not been cleared by May 1 of each year and provided to those offices that have projects ready to go.
3. Contracting of our projects should begin at the start of each fiscal year. The new fuels IDIQ contracts are being modified to be more effective and should be utilized along with local contracts whenever possible. The deadline for contracting fuel treatment projects will now be May 1 of each year, moved forward from the national contracting due date which is generally around August 1. Fire assignments will be deferred until all project contracts for an office are in place.
4. CDF crews continue to be effective partners in many of our projects. However, given the state budget and staffing situation alternatives to their participation, such as private contracting, must be considered during the planning of our projects.
5. Based on lessons learned during its inaugural use this past summer, the fuels treatment IDIQ contract is now being modified and improved for our future use. All fuels staff should become familiar with the scope of work covered by this contract and should consider using IDIQ's when contracting is needed. It's only through first hand experience that we will know whether this tool is an effective and competitive alternative to other methods of getting our acres treated.
6. High performing offices, those who have a track record of meeting their targets, will be the benefactors of supplemental funding received throughout the year from NIFC or funding taken from those offices that fail to meet deadlines or targets.

Implementation of these program changes is effective immediately. These refinements to our fuels program will hopefully improve the accountability to our performance and workload measures that each office is responsible for. With many different demands on our national budget, we must remain diligent in our efforts to reduce hazardous fuels, be accountable for the millions of dollars we've been entrusted with and continue to strive to improve our performance.

If you have questions, please contact Ed Wehking, California State Office, Branch of Fire and Aviation Management at (916)-978-4431.

Signed by:
James Wesley Abbott
Associate State Director

Authenticated by:
Richard A. Erickson
Records Management

2 Attachments:

1. List of Statewide Fuels Positions (1 pg)
2. FY04 Project Lists by Office (5 pp)