

## APPENDIX 2 Guidance Applying to Individual Management Areas

The Garnet RMP designated Management Areas for public land. Each MA has guidelines for future management (See Appendix 8 for map of MAs). The Missoula Field Office manages 140,636 surface acres. The following table illustrates the approximate breakdown of the acres between the fourteen management areas.

Table 1

|                   | MA 1  | MA 2  | MA 3   | MA 4  | MA 5   | MA 6   | MA 7  | MA 8 | MA 9  | MA 10 | MA 11 | MA 12  | MA 13 | MA 14 |
|-------------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| Acres             | 1,554 | 3,475 | 25,633 | 8,695 | 49,965 | 24,856 | 2,586 | 520  | 9,471 | 802   | 160   | 11,747 | 352   | 820   |
| % of Field Office | 1.1%  | 2.5%  | 18.2%  | 6.2%  | 35.5%  | 17.7%  | 1.8%  | 0.4% | 6.7%  | 0.6%  | 0.1%  | 8.4%   | 0.2%  | 0.6%  |

### 1. Wildfire in Management Areas

#### Management Area 1, Riparian Protection Zone

#### Management Area-2, Riparian Multiple Use Zone

The Garnet RMP does not provide specific guidelines for management of wildfire in MA1 or MA

2. The RMP does state that it is the Missoula Field Office policy to “maintain, enhance or restore... water quality and stream stability on all public lands”. Historically, riparian zones and aquatic systems have been influenced by wildfire and they are generally well adapted to recover after fire. Except as specified in Appendix 8 and Tables 5.7, 6.7, 7.7 and 8.7, there is no requirement to protect riparian vegetation from burning in a wildfire event. If fire suppression operations must be conducted in riparian zones, Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (see Appendix 1) and the IBTCSI guidelines listed in Appendix 2 should be followed.

Since the Garnet RMP was approved, a new policy and guidelines have been established which outline management guidelines for riparian and aquatic habitats. The Montana legislature passed the Streamside Management Zone Law in 1991. In 1996 the Missoula Field Office adopted by Memoranda interim guidance, Interim Bull Trout Habitat Conservation Strategy and Implementation (IBTCSI) May 1996, which describes the extent of Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs) and lists Standards and Guidelines for management activities. When bull trout were subsequently listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1998, Section 7 Consultation on the Garnet RMP specified that IBTCSI would be applied to all activities in watersheds containing bull trout or in areas with potential affects to downstream bull trout habitat.

While RHCAs apply only to occupied and directly affected bull trout habitats, the management guidelines for RHCAs provide sound guidance for management of most cold water fisheries. Many of the streams on the subject public lands contain westslope cutthroat trout (WCT), a BLM Special Status species. Populations of WCT have been severely reduced throughout their original range and lands managed by the Missoula Field Office provide refugia for remaining, isolated stocks. Therefore IBTCSI guidelines will also be used for wildfire suppression where isolated pure stocks of WCT have been identified to protect both bull trout and WCT.

*RHCAs described by IBTCSI:*

Under IBTCSI, Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs) are the basic management unit for the protection of bull trout and their habitat. RHCAs include traditional riparian corridors, wetlands, intermittent streams, and other areas that help maintain the integrity of aquatic ecosystems. See Table 4.1 Appendix 4, for a description of RHCAs categories and widths. RHCAs have been delineated for all streams on public lands containing bull trout and in areas where management activities have the potential to affect downstream bull trout habitat (See Appendix 8).

**Table 2 Categories and standard widths of IBTCSI Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs).** RHCAs are delineated in all watersheds containing bull trout or where management activities may affect bull trout and their habitat downstream.

**Category 1 - Fish-bearing Streams:** RHCAs consist of the stream and the area on either side of the stream extending from the edges of the active stream channel to the top of the inner gorge, or to the outer edges of the 100-year floodplain, or to the outer edges of riparian vegetation, or to a distance equal to the height of two site-potential trees, of 300 feet slope distance (600 feet, including both sides of the stream channel), whichever is greatest.

**Category 2 - Permanently flowing non-fish bearing streams:** RHCAs consist of the stream and the area on either side of the stream extending from the edges of the active stream channel to the top of the inner gorge, or to the outer edges of the 100-year floodplain, or to the outer edges of riparian vegetation, or to a distance equal to the height of one site-potential tree, or 150 feet slope distance (300 feet, including both sides of the stream channel), whichever is greatest.

**Category 4 - Seasonally flowing or intermittent streams, wetlands less than 1 acre, landslides, and landslide-prone areas:** This category includes features with high variability in size and site-specific characteristics. At a minimum the RHCAs must include:

- a. the extent of landslides and landslide-prone areas;
- b. The intermittent stream channel and the area to the top of the inner gorge;
- c. The intermittent stream channel or wetland and the area to the outer edges of the riparian vegetation;
- d. For Priority Watersheds, the area from the edges of the stream channel, wetland, landslide, or landslide-prone area to a distance equal to the higher of one-half site potential tree, or 50 feet slope distance, whichever is greatest.

In non-forested rangeland ecosystems, the RHCA width for permanently flowing streams in categories 1 and 2 is the extent of the 100-year floodplain.

*IBTCSI Standards and Guidelines for Fire Suppression in RHCAs Common to all FMZs:*

#### Fire/Fuels Management

FM-1. Design fuel treatment and fire suppression strategies, practices, and actions so as not to prevent attainment of riparian management objectives (RMOs), and to minimize disturbance of riparian ground cover and vegetation. Strategies should recognize the role of fire in ecosystem function and identify those instances where fire suppression or fuel management actions could perpetuate or be damaging to long-term ecosystem function, listed fish, or designated critical habitat.

FM-2. Locate incident bases, camps, helibases, staging areas, helispots, and other centers for incident activities outside of RHCA. If the only suitable location for such activities is within the RHCA, an exemption may be granted following a review and recommendation by a resource advisor. The advisor will prescribe the location, use conditions, and rehabilitation requirements, with avoidance of adverse effects to listed fish a primary goal. Use an interdisciplinary team, including a fishery biologist, to predetermine incident base and helibase locations during pre-suppression planning, with avoidance of potential adverse effects to listed fish a primary goal.

FM-3. Avoid delivery of chemical retardant, foam, or additives to surface waters. An exception may be warranted in situations where overriding immediate safety imperatives exist, or, following a review and recommendation by a resource advisor, and a fishery biologist, when the action agency determines an escape fire would cause more long-term damage to fish habitats than chemical delivery to surface waters.

FM-5. Immediately establish an emergency team to develop a rehabilitation treatment plan to attain RMOs and avoid adverse effects on listed fish whenever RHCA are significantly damaged by a wildfire or a prescribed fire burning out of prescription.

*Additional guidelines for operating within riparian areas include:*

- Avoid fireline construction within these areas.
- Do not dam culvert inlets for water supplies - outlets may often have pools, or at least can be dammed with far less potential for impact. Do not excavate streams for watering pools. Use porta-tanks, pumps, and hose to bring water to an engine access spot rather than constructing access to streamside.

See Appendix 3 for further guidance on maintaining soil and water quality.

#### MA-3 : General Forest Management

- Wildfires would be confined, contained, or controlled to protect forest vegetation from unwanted disturbance. Salvage and rehabilitation actions will be used to achieve desired future condition if they have been identified in a Watershed Assessment. If a Watershed Assessment has not been completed on an area the wildfire burned, an interdisciplinary team will define the forest communities present and the level of salvage and rehabilitation needed to restore these communities to an acceptable forest health level and reduce the risk of accelerated soil erosion.

- Using earth moving equipment in or adjacent to wallows, licks and wildlife security areas has the potential to adversely affect these specialized habitats. All the restrictions applied to earth moving heavy equipment use during timber harvest or other stand treatments should be applied to protect these specialized habitats during fire. There is no requirement to protect these features from burning during a wildfire event. Rehabilitation work in or near these features following suppression efforts should be guided by the management guidelines for ground and vegetation disturbance or product removal contained in the Management Area Guidelines (MA-3 guidelines referenced on pages 43-44 of the Garnet RMP). The resource advisor will have discretion to modify those guidelines in the interest of crew safety or the urgent need to prevent a fire from escaping.

#### MA-4: Elk Summer and Fall Habitat Component

##### MA-5: Big Game Summer and Fall Range

- Fire suppression objectives and tactics for these management areas should focus on retaining connected dense cover around and between bio-activity features such as wallows, mineral licks, travel corridors, forage and security habitat.

- During the suppression effort, operational constraints for earth moving heavy equipment similar to harvest or stand treatment actions would be applicable for equipment operating in or adjacent to wallows, licks and security areas. There is no requirement to protect the features from burning during the wildfire event. Rehabilitation work in or near the features following suppression efforts should be guided by the management guidelines for ground and vegetation disturbance or product removal contained in the Management Area Guidelines (MA-4 guidelines referenced on pages 44-46 and MA-5 guidelines referenced on pages 46-47 of the Garnet RMP). The resource advisor will have discretion to modify those guidelines in the interest of suppression safety or escape fire potential.

##### MA-6: Big Game Winter Range

- Fire suppression objectives and tactics should retain as much canopy of large and very large trees as possible. The use of earth moving heavy equipment through open parks and on steep terrain should be minimized. Fire rehabilitation should concentrate on soil stabilization and native plant restoration. Attention to these details will enhance the resulting big game habitat condition for thermal cover and forage following a wildfire event.

##### MA-7: Noncommercial Forest and TPCC Withdrawn Commercial Forest

- Wildfires would be confined, contained, or controlled to protect forest vegetation from unwanted disturbance. Salvage and rehabilitation actions will be used to achieve desired future condition if they have been identified in a Watershed Assessment.

##### MA-8: Areas Recommended for Wilderness Designation

###### - WILDFIRE OBJECTIVE

-Three Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) exist within the Missoula Field Office; only one of which (Quigg West) has been recommended for designation as Wilderness. Until Fire Use Management Plans are developed for each WSA the following suppression guidelines provide interim guidance for all three areas. See Appendix 5 for detailed interim guidance and policy related to fire management within WSAs.

- No earth moving heavy equipment will be used in these areas unless specifically authorized by the Field Manager. Mobile ground engines are not considered heavy equipment and may be taken off-road if living trees greater than 4 inches d.b.h. are not cut.

- MIST will be used to suppress fires in these areas (see Appendix 1 for MIST).

##### MA-9: Special Management Areas

###### - WILDFIRE OBJECTIVE

- No earth moving heavy equipment will be used in these areas unless specifically authorized by the Field Manager. Mobile ground engines are not considered heavy equipment and may be taken off-road if living trees greater than 4 inches d.b.h. are not cut.

- MIST will be used to suppress fires in these areas (see Appendix 1 for MIST).

#### MA-10: Developed and Undeveloped Recreation Sites

##### - WILDFIRE OBJECTIVE

- No earth moving heavy equipment will be used in these areas unless specifically authorized by the Field Manager. Mobile ground engines are not considered heavy equipment and may be taken off-road if living trees greater than 4 inches d.b.h. are not cut.

- MIST will be used to suppress fires in these areas (see Appendix 1 for MIST).

- At developed recreation areas (campgrounds, day use sites, etc), no tree felling(over 4 inches d.b.h.) would be done after the first initial attack operational period without approval from a local BLM Resource Advisor.

#### MA-11: Historical and Cultural Sites

- Wildfire suppression methods are dependent on the type of site that is being threatened and will be selected to minimize or eliminate the impact on site values. The archaeologist will provide advice on fire tactics whenever a known site is threatened by fire. Fire will not destroy some MA-11s and in these cases fire will be allowed to pass over the sites and heavy equipment will not be used to protect them. Other areas are designated as “restrictive use areas” and the Missoula Field Office Archaeologist needs to be consulted prior to any heavy equipment use in those areas. Each MA-11 and their restrictions will be discussed in each of the four Fire Management Zone sections of this document.

#### MA-12: Visual Corridor

-Wildfires would be confined, contained, or controlled with suppression methods that do not impair visual quality whenever possible.

- Wildfire suppression methods that maintain visual quality will be selected whenever possible. (Visual Resource Management Guidelines are referenced on pages 21-22 and Appendix E, pages 91-93 of the Garnet RMP).

#### MA-13: Nonforest Habitat

- Wildfires would be confined, contained, or controlled with suppression methods that do not impair visual quality whenever possible.

- Fire suppression strategies and tactics should retain as much canopy of large and very large trees as possible and minimize the use of mechanized equipment through open parks and on steep terrain. Suppression rehabilitation should concentrate on soil stabilization and native plant restoration. Attention to these details will enhance the resulting big game habitat condition for thermal cover and forage following a wildfire event.

#### MA-14: Mineral Production Area

- Wildfire suppression strategies and tactics should strive to protect property and improvements located on unpatented mining claims

- Firefighters and logistics personnel should take special precaution in areas of current and historic mining, as dangerous mine shafts/adits, explosives, and hazardous waste may be present.

### **Use of Prescribed Fire in Management Areas**

The guidance listed under the following MAs is general guidance. Prescribed burn and/or fuel treatment plans will be developed on a site specific basis. Refer to section 3.2 Prescribed Fire and Other Fuels Management for a description of how these plans are developed. If a MA is not listed below, all prescribed burn and fuel treatment guidance will be issued within the site specific plans.

#### Management Area 1, Riparian Protection Zone

#### Management Area-2, Riparian Multiple Use Zone

- FM-4 (IBTCSI designation) Design prescribed burn projects and prescriptions to contribute to the attainment of the riparian management objectives.

#### MA-3: General Forest Management

- Following silvicultural treatments, prescribed fire would be used to reduce fuel loading and prepare site for regeneration.

- Periodic prescribed fire would favor broadly adapted seral species, enhance nutrient cycling and control stocking to maintain healthy stands and optimize timber growing potential. Periodic burning would also enhance wildlife habitat components through shrub restoration, snag recruitment, and augmentation of coarse down woody debris.

#### MA-7: Noncommercial Forest and TPCC Withdrawn Commercial Forest

- Periodic prescribed fire would favor broadly adapted seral species, enhance nutrient cycling and control stocking to maintain healthy stands and optimize timber growing potential. Periodic burning would also enhance wildlife habitat components through shrub restoration, snag recruitment, and augmentation of coarse down woody debris.

#### MA-8: Areas Recommended for Wilderness Designation

- Because the use of some fire suppression tactics and fuel management treatments is limited inside the WSAs, site-specific fire use management plans will be prepared for the individual WSAs which consider the use of prescribed fire to reduce fuel loading and thus reduce the risk of high-intensity, wide-spread wildfire.

#### MA-11: Historical and Cultural Sites

- Fire will not normally be prescribed as a management tool in these areas. Mechanical fuel reduction treatments may be used when necessary to reduce the risk of damage to the site(s) by wildfire.

-Commercial forest land is set aside.

-Noncommercial forest land is unavailable for wood product harvest.

### MA-13: Nonforest Habitat

-Periodic prescribed fire would favor broadly adapted seral species, enhance nutrient cycling and control tree encroachment to maintain healthy grass/shrub stands. Periodic burning may also enhance wildlife habitat components through shrub restoration, snag recruitment, and augmentation of coarse down woody debris.

### General Riparian Area Management

RA-2. Trees may be felled in RHCA when they pose a safety risk. Keep felled trees on site when needed to meet woody debris objectives.

RA-3. Apply herbicides, pesticides, and other toxicants, and other chemicals in a manner that does not retard or prevent attainment of RMOs and avoids adverse effects on listed fish.

RA-4. Prohibit storage of fuels and other toxicants within RHCA. Prohibit refueling within RHCA unless there are no other alternatives. Refueling sites within a RHCA must be approved by the USFS or BLM and have an approved spill containment plan.

RA-5. Locate water drafting sites to avoid adverse effects to listed fish and instream flows, and in a manner that does not retard or prevent attainment of IBTCSI RMOs.