

National Fire Plan

Department of the Interior and US Department of Agriculture
www.fireplan.gov



FY 2003 Programs in New Mexico

The USDA Forest Service (FS) and the Department of the Interior (DOI) agencies are in the third year of successful implementation of National Fire Plan (NFP) activities. The NFP was developed in August 2000, following a landmark wildland fire season, with the intent of actively responding to severe wildland fires and their impacts to communities while assuring sufficient firefighting capacity for the future. The NFP addresses five key points: Firefighting, Rehabilitation, Hazardous Fuels Reduction, Community Assistance, and Accountability.

(dollars displayed in thousands)

USDA / DOI	Actual 2002	**Estimated 2003
Preparedness	42,230	36,691
Operations		
Suppression*		
Hazardous Fuel	26,207	33,112
Rehabilitation	2,704	228
Fire Facilities	208	
Research and Development	0	
Joint Fire Sciences	0	
Forest Health Management	137	383
State Fire Assistance	2,183	2,820
Volunteer Fire Assistance /Rural Fire Assistance	677	711
Economic Action Program	80	236
TOTAL	74,426	74,181

* Suppression costs for New Mexico totaled \$99.5 million in 2002.

** Actual funding will be displayed in the 2003 Annual Performance Report.

Program Highlights

- Interagency National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) training was held this fall with participation from Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and USDA Forest Service. Training together allowed interaction on the programs complexities, and discussions on project priorities and locations.
- The Jemez Mountain Schools in Gallina, NM received a National Fire Plan grant to purchase, install, and operate a biomass heating system. The goal is to help reduce the school's average propane heating costs from \$19,000 per month to \$7,500 per month. Local forest thinning projects will provide the biomass needed to run the heating system.
- National Fire Plan grant funding has allowed local crews from the Tres Piedras and El Rito communities near the Carson National Forest to thin and prescribe burn areas around communities that are prone to intense wildland fires. Tres Piedras Ranger District staff on the Carson National Forest and the Forest Trust worked together to develop a skilled local workforce that can work to restore healthy fire conditions to parts of the forest adjacent to their communities.
- Bureau of Land Management and USDA Forest Service crews recently completed a ponderosa pine and watershed improvement project in Dark Canyon. The area received treatments of mechanical thinning and prescribed fire to decrease the hazardous fuel loads.
- The Bureau of Land Management used "demonstration" homes in the Wild Horse Subdivision as a workshop and promotion of creating defensible space to protect the homes in the subdivision from wildland fires.
- The Bureau of Land Management and the Boy Scouts of America are working in partnership to reduce hazardous fuel levels at Camp Frank Rand in the foothills of northern New Mexico near the Pecos Wilderness Area. The Boy Scouts have provided over 1,000 of volunteer labor on projects in the area.

Fire Preparedness and Facilities

- Preparedness Resources
 - ≠# USDA Forest Service will maintain preparedness resources at the 2002 level.
 - ≠# Department of the Interior will have a total of 300 firefighting personnel, 44 engines, 3 helicopters, 8 water/foam tenders, 4 dozers, 2 tractor/plows, and 3 airtankers.
- Facilities
 - ≠# Department of the Interior will provide \$252,000 in funding for the Ramah Navajo office.

Rehabilitation

- Rehabilitation consists of 1) immediate actions to reduce threats to public safety, property and natural and cultural resources, and 2) long-term actions to help restore healthy ecosystems and replace infrastructure damaged by fire.
- DOI funding will cover ecological stabilization, reforestation (seeding, cultural protection invasive species, contour tree felling, monitoring).
- USDA Forest Service funding will be used to improve overall watershed condition and restore severely burned forests and rangelands. Projects include reforestation, watershed restoration, road and trail rehabilitation, fish and wildlife habitat restoration, planting and seeding and preventing invasive plants. Projects funded will be those continued from FY 01 and FY 02, and those fires from FY 02 that need Rehabilitation and Restoration funding.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction

- Approximately 165,800 acres are planned for hazardous fuels treatment by federal agencies; an estimated 30,000 acres will be treated in the wildland urban interface.
- An estimated \$33 million will be spent on hazardous fuels treatment work.
- Forest Health Management funding is estimated at \$383,000.

Community Assistance

- Rural Fire Assistance (DOI): Estimated funding – \$472,000
 - ≠# 49 rural/volunteer fire departments will receive assistance.
- State Fire Assistance (FS): Estimated funding - \$2.8 million
- Volunteer Fire Assistance Program (FS): Estimated funding – \$239,000
- Economic Action Program (FS): Estimated funding – \$383,000

Accountability

- DOI and USDA Forest Service developed a uniform set of performance measures to assess program effectiveness for FY 2003 and FY 2004 program measurement.
- DOI and USDA Forest Service, with input from the National Association of State Foresters, developed action plans for nearly all of the 23 tasks in the Implementation Plan for the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy. The State Foresters and their partners are continuing to develop field guidance for fuels reduction projects.
- DOI and USDA Forest Service developed the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS), a common data collection and reporting system for gathering project plans and accomplishments.

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