Butte Field Office

2004

Fire Management Plan

Developed By: _____ _____
Field Office Fire Management Officer Date

Recommended By: _____ _____
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Approved By: _____ _____
State Director Date

Table of Contents

I Introduction

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Butte Field Office Fire Management Plan (FMP) is to identify and integrate all wildland fire management guidance, direction, and activities required to implement national fire policy and fire management direction from the following: Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review-1995 and 2001; The Interagency Fire Management Plan Template; and A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment: 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan.

The FMP was developed around a Field Office fire management program and addresses all aspects of it, including wildland urban interface (WUI), rural fire assistance, prescribed fire, fuels management, prevention, and suppression. The FMP identifies a fire program that meets identified fire management objectives.

B. Relationship to environment Compliance

All fire management objectives, constraints, and activities contained within this plan are consistent with the following source documents: Headwaters Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Dillon Management Framework Plan as amended.

C. Collaboration

The FMP is a strategic document identifying approved fire management direction determined by the RMP and analyzed in the final environmental impact statement for that plan. This RMP was developed with input from and consultation with representatives from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Forest Service (FS), the State of Montana, and interested citizens. The FMP meets the national requirement that all BLM administered lands subject to wildland fires are managed under a current FMP. The FMP also meets regulatory compliance requirements with the National Environmental Policy Act as it 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 and the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act will be required.

D. Authorities

- 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).
- 2001 Annual Appropriations Acts for the Department of the Interior.
- United States Department of the Interior Manual (910 DM 1.3).
- 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.
- 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 and Fire Policy

The Fire Management Plan has been tiered to decisions contained within the Headwaters Resource Management Plan, Dillon Management Framework Plan, the Interim Wilderness Guidance, Limestone Hills Training Site Fire Suppression Plan, Elkhorn Fire Management Plan, and the Federal Wildland Fire Policy. These plans provide the basis for the development of fire management goals and objectives.

The FMP derives overall program guidance from the following:

- 1998 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, National Cohesive Strategy goal is to coordinate an aggressive, collaborative approach to reduce the threat of wildland fire to communities and to restore and maintain land health.

- 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, tribes, conservation, and commodity groups and community-based restoration groups to reduce wildland fire risk 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."

<u>Goals Related to Fire and Fuels Management from the Resource Management Plan and Plan Amendments</u>

- Human Life: Protect human life, both the public and firefighters. This is the single, overriding priority in fire management.

- Property and Resources: Protect human communities, their infrastructure, and the natural resources on which they depend. Other property and improvements may be protected.

Setting priorities among human communities, other property, and natural resources will be based on the values to be protected, human health and safety, and the costs of protection. The risk of wildfire to communities and property will be reduced using the full range of options available to fire managers, including prescribed fire, wildland fire use for resource benefit, and mechanical fuels reduction.

- Wildlife components, including Special Status Species (Federally listed Threatened and Endangered species and designated critical habitat, Federally Proposed species and proposed critical habitat, Candidate Species, BLM Sensitive Species and State Species of Concern): Protect, maintain, preserve, and/or restore habitats necessary for the conservation of species, and the ecosystems upon which they depend, to maintain viable

and diverse populations of native terrestrial and aquatic species including special status species.

- Vegetation components: Improve ecosystem health and maintain or restore the range of ecological conditions in which native floral and herbaceous components thrived and evolved.

- Cultural, Historical and Paleontological: Protect high value cultural, historical and paleontological resources.

- Designated Special Areas: Protect the characteristics that warranted designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs), Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), National Monuments and National Conservation Areas.

Natural and Biological Resource Objectives

- Air: Meet federal and state air quality standards through proper management of emissions.

- Flora and Fauna– Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species: Ensure that BLM actions will not reduce the likelihood of survival or recovery of any listed species or destroy or adversely affect or modify designated critical habitat to those species.

- Water: Meet Federal and State water quality standards and prevent degradation through Best Management Practices during and after fires and vegetative treatments.

- Visual: Meet established Visual Resource Management (VRM) class objectives through appropriately planning fuel reduction treatments. VRM will be a consideration for any post-fire erosion control and other burned area rehabilitation and restoration needs.

- Public Lands Health: Meet Standards for Public Lands Health through appropriately planning fuel reduction treatment projects. These standards will be considered for all phases of treatment irregardless of the environment the treatment is taking place in (grasslands, shrublands, woodland and forest).

Resource Use Objectives

Vegetation: Fire and fuels management and related actions will reduce the amount of forest, shrub, and grass lands that are characterized as Fire Regime

Condition Class (FRCC) II and III.

- where fire regimes have been moderately to significantly altered from their historical ranges
- where there is a moderate to high risk of losing key ecosystem components
- where vegetative attributes have been significantly altered from their historical range
- where fire return frequencies have departed from their historical frequencies by more than one return interval

Wilderness/Wilderness Study Areas: Fire and fuels management actions will meet the wilderness non-impairment mandate for Wilderness Areas. For Wilderness Study Areas fire and fuels management will strive to avoid unnecessary impairment that would affect the suitability toward wilderness designation of these areas. The ultimate goal would be to return fire to its natural role in these ecosystems.

III. Wildland Fire Management Strategies

A. General Management Considerations

1. Fire Suppression Responsibilities

Under terms of an agreement entered into by the Montana State Director and Regional Forester, Northern Region United States Forest Service on February 18, 1982, wildfire suppression agencies agreed to aid/cooperate in the suppression of wildfires. This agreement is referred to as the BLM/FS Master Agreement. On December 1, 1986, the State Director and Regional Forester also agreed to implement Phase II of the BLM/USFS Protection Adjustment. At that time the Butte District was directed by Instruction Memorandum No. MT-87-68 to proceed with developing operating plans with adjoining National Forests to implement Phase II.

On February 3, 1987, an operating plan for fire protection exchange adjustments was agreed to by District Managers for Butte and Lewistown. Also concurring with the fire protection exchange adjustment were the Forest Supervisors of the Beaverhead, Deerlodge, Gallatin, Helena, and Lolo National Forests. Effective that date, the Butte District's public lands of approximately 1.4 million acres became the wildfire protection responsibility of the Forest Service. The Forest Service then entered into an agreement with the Montana Department Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), to have the DNRC assume protection responsibility on a

portion of the public lands. All parties to this agreement currently work under the Cooperative Fire Management Agreement (Six Party Agreement), dated March 1998.

2. Wildland Urban Interface

The operational roles of the BLM in the wildland urban interface are wildland firefighting, hazardous fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. Structural fire suppression is the responsibility of tribal, State, or local governments, as described in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations.

3. Agency Administrator and Employee Roles

Agency Administrators will ensure employees are trained, certified and available to participate in the wildland fire program locally, regionally, and nationally as the situation demands, as described in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations.

4. Fire Management Program Evaluation

As required in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations the Butte Field Office will evaluate its program annually to ensure accountability, facilitate resolution of conflict, and identify resource shortages and priorities. This process will be facilitated through the annual review of interagency operating agreements, the completion of readiness reviews, formal program reviews, the FPA process, and by performing after action reviews of fuels management projects by the fuels interdisciplinary (ID) team.

B. Wildland Fire Management Goals

The goals of the Fire Management Program are:

- Firefighter and public safety are the highest priority in every fire management activity.
- Identify appropriate management response (AMR) goals, objectives, and constraints by specific Fire Management Units (FMU) within the Fire Planning Units. All wildland fire management activities will be managed as described in the FMU guidance outlined in Chapter III, section D.
- Work collaboratively with communities at risk within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) to develop plans for risk reduction.
- Allow wildland fire to protect, maintain and enhance public resources, and as nearly as possible, be allowed to function in its ecological role when appropriate for the site and situation.

- Create an integrated approach to fire and resource management across the landscape and agency boundaries. This approach will be designed to meet the desired outcomes of Land and Resource Management Plans.
- To provide a program that fosters interagency interaction, cooperation and effectiveness for all fire management activities. The program should be evident within all levels of the agencies, cooperators, and other public entities.

C. Direction for Fire Management (including both fire suppression and fuels management) to Other Resource Values

This direction would not be mandatory during wildland fire suppression if using it would compromise protection of life or property.

1. Aquatic Species (including Special Status Species) and Habitat Fuels Management

- Provide additional protection of aquatic species beyond Streamside Management Zone (SMZ) boundaries, Riparian Protection Zones (RPZs) would be identified to protect the following specific key ecological functions:
- water quality, to a degree that provides for stable and productive riparian and aquatic ecosystems;
- stream channel integrity, channel processes, and the sediment regime (including the elements of timing, volume, and character of sediment input and transport) under which the riparian and aquatic ecosystems developed;
- instream flows to support healthy riparian and aquatic habitats, the stability and effective function of stream channels, and the ability to route flood discharges;
- Natural timing and variability of the water table elevation in meadows and wetlands.
- Diversity and productivity of native and desired non-native plant communities in riparian zones.
- The width necessary to protect stream and riparian area structure and function should be determined from watershed and site-specific analysis. Interim RPZ boundaries described below should be considered default boundaries until final boundaries are determined by watershed or site-specific analysis. Final RPZ boundaries may be narrower or wider, depending on local conditions and results of the project specific analysis.
- Interim RPZ boundaries within forested zones would be:
- Streams, ponds, lakes containing Special Status Fish Species: two site-potential tree heights
- Other fish-bearing streams: two site-potential tree height

- Ponds, lakes, and wetlands greater than 1 acre: the RPZ consists of the body of water or wetland and the area to the outer edges of the riparian vegetation, or to the extent of the seasonally saturated soil, or to the extent of moderately and highly unstable areas, or to a distance equal to one site-potential tree height (whichever is greatest)
- Interim RPZ boundaries for non-forested rangeland ecosystems would consist of the body of water or wetland and the area to the outer edges of the riparian vegetation, or to the extent of the seasonally saturated soil, or to the extent of moderately and highly unstable areas, or (in segments where trees are present) to a distance equal to one site-potential tree height (whichever is greatest).
- Fuels treatments could occur within these RPZs; however, riparian values would receive primary management emphasis during fuels treatments.
- All proposed fuels treatments within RPZs should analyze particular risk from wildfire and fuels management projects to isolated, depressed populations in degraded habitats without access to local or regional refugia. Proposed treatments should incorporate specific design features to avoid any further degradation of habitat.
- If RPZ boundaries are narrower than SMZ boundaries, fuels treatments would still comply with applicable state laws and Water Quality/Forestry Best Management Practices that BLM has adopted.
- Aerial retardant application would be restricted over areas with listed or sensitive fish species.
- Fire camps and staging areas will be outside of the RPZ.
- Fish screens will be used on suction hoses when pumping water out of fish bearing streams or lakes.
- A BLM resource advisor and, if feasible, a wildlife biologist, would be on site during suppression and rehabilitation activities to give guidance and ensure compliance with the guidelines and decisions established to protect fish and wildlife values.

2. Cultural and Paleontological Guidance

Fire Suppression

- The appropriate BLM archaeologist, paleontologist, or cultural resource program lead would recommend the following guidance for each fire as appropriate:
- Fire suppression tactics would limit surface disturbance to protect cultural resource values in designated cultural Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), archeological districts, and other areas known or suspected to contain cultural resources, including historic structures and features. Use of earth moving/tillage equipment should be avoided for wildland fire suppression in areas with special designations to protect cultural resources and values,

archeological districts, and other areas known to possess cultural resources. The use of heavy equipment and off-road vehicles should be limited to existing roads and trails within these areas during rehabilitation.

- The aerial application of fire retardant would be restricted over areas that contain petroglyphs and pictographs.
- Fire camps and fire staging areas should be placed outside and sufficiently distant from known or identified cultural resources. Use of off-road motorized vehicles outside of fire camp and staging areas should be avoided to prevent inadvertent impacts to cultural resources.
- An intensive cultural resource inventory (Class III) as described in BLM Manual 8110 should be completed on areas disturbed by suppression activities, e.g., fire lines, fire camp areas, and staging areas before starting rehabilitation. Cultural resources discovered in or near disturbed areas should be protected from further damage during rehabilitation. Where cultural resources have been disturbed by suppression activities stabilization work may be implemented. This may entail a careful return of the berm over the site, seeding, or covering the site with protective mesh and culturally sterile material. These emergency actions should be considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the archaeologist assigned to the fire. Consultation with the SHPO would be done in accordance with existing agreements or 36 CFR 800.
- A BLM resource advisor and, if feasible, an archaeologist, would be on site during suppression and rehabilitation activities to give guidance and ensure compliance with the guidelines and decisions established to protect cultural resource values. Guidelines should include prohibitions against the collection of artifactual materials from archaeological and historical resources.
- The archaeologist assigned to the fire would work with the rehabilitation team to ensure that cultural resources, including historic structures and features, are considered during fire suppression restoration actions. Site treatment plans would be prepared for historic properties that have been damaged by fire suppression and require more detailed stabilization efforts. These treatment plans would protect the site from secondary effects of the fire and fire suppression activities.
- Monitoring of sensitive site areas would be conducted when fire suppression rehabilitation plans are within close proximity to historic properties, or could have an indirect effect on an existing resource.
- If stabilization/protective measures were employed for cultural resources a report summarizing those actions should be submitted to an appropriate SHPO. The report should include a description of the fire impacts, fire suppression and rehabilitation, and salvage

activities. It should also include the number and types of sites affected and stabilized.

- In accordance with the existing agreements or 36 CFR 800, the SHPO would be notified of a fire emergency and the suppression efforts associated with the emergency. Adjustments to these procedures may be made in response to comments from consulting parties; e.g. the SHPO, either programmatically through existing agreements or on a case-by-case basis where no agreement exists.
- Surface disturbance should be limited within designated ACECs and formations known to contain significant fossil resources to protect paleontological values. In these areas with designated paleontological resources, the use of heavy equipment and off-road vehicles would be limited to existing roads and trails during rehabilitation.
- Fire camps and fire staging areas should be placed outside and sufficiently distant from known or identified fossil localities. Use of motorized vehicles outside of fire camp and staging areas in known fossil producing formations should be avoided to prevent inadvertent impacts to fossil resources.
- Significant fossils that are exposed by suppression activities or would be damaged by rehabilitation work should be recovered by a qualified Paleontologist.

Fuels Management

- Follow protocol described in IM MT No. 99-032 for Butte. This would allow for a sample inventory instead of a Class III intensive survey of an entire target area.
- If a class III inventory is used instead of the sample inventory described in IM No. MT 99-032, no additional consultation with SHPO would be required.
- Where known fossil resources are suspected but unknown and where the area cannot be avoided the following measures would be employed: 1. Conduct an inventory to identify the presence or absence of fossil resources employing a qualified paleontologist, 2. in areas where fossil resources are suspected or have been identified avoid using surface disturbing motorized vehicles, heavy equipment, or hand tools, and 3. advise fire personnel and others to refrain from collecting fossils on public lands.
- To the extent possible during fuels treatment planning, use a qualified paleontologist to assess the risk of damages and to recommend ways to minimize damage to fossil resources resulting from implementation of the plan.

3. Terrestrial Wildlife Species (including Special Status Species) and Habitat Direction common to both Wildland Fire Management and Fuels Management

The following conservation measures would be applied to protect Threatened and Endangered terrestrial wildlife species:

1. Whooping Crane (Threatened)

- No human disturbance within ½ mile of occupied whooping crane habitat or potential habitat where whooping cranes have been identified within the past three years from April 1 to August 31
- No helicopter/aircraft activity or aerial retardant application within ½ mile of occupied whooping crane habitat or potential habitat where whooping cranes have been identified within the past three years from April 1 to August 31.

2. Black-footed Ferret (Endangered)

- No heavy equipment operation off of existing roads within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns with documented occurrence of black-footed ferret
- No aerial retardant application within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns with documented occurrence of black-footed ferret
- No surface disturbance (fire line construction) should occur in prairie dog towns with documented occurrence of black-footed ferret.

3. Gray Wolf (Endangered)

- No human disturbance or associated activities within 1 mile of a den or rendezvous site from April 15 to June 30.

4. Bald Eagle (Threatened)

- No human disturbance within ½ mile of bald eagle nests from February 1 through August 15;
- No human disturbance within 1/4 mile of a winter roost from November 1 through March 1 or, if within 1/4 mile, activity should be restricted to a period of 9 am to 3 pm;
- No helicopter/aircraft activity or aerial retardant application within ½ mile of known bald eagle nest sites from January 1 through August 15; or within 1/4 mile of a winter roost from November 1 through March 1;
- No prescribed burning activities within 1 mile upwind of nest sites from January 1 through August 15; or within 1 mile upwind of a winter roost between November 1 and March 1.

5. Canada Lynx (Threatened)

- Activities shall not cause a greater than 30% temporary loss or 15% permanent loss of suitable habitat in a decade. In addition, 10% of the Lynx Assessment Unit (LAU) shall remain in denning habitat in patches larger than five acres;
- Processes used to reduce fuel levels, prepare sites for planting or for reintroduction of fire shall preserve the majority of large standing dead trees and large woody debris (denning habitat);
- Precommercial thinning or introduction of fire into lynx habitat shall only occur when the forest stand no longer provides snowshoe hare habitat. This occurs when self-pruning processes have eliminated snowshoe hare cover and forage availability.
- Following disturbance such as blowdown, fire, insects, and disease that could contribute to lynx habitat, do not salvage harvest when the affected area is smaller than 5 acres (exceptions would include areas such as developed campgrounds). Where larger areas are affected, retain a minimum of 10% of the affected area per LAU in patches of at least 5 acres;
- Design burn prescriptions to create snowshoe hare habitat (e.g. regeneration of aspen and lodgepole pine);
- Minimize construction of temporary roads, firebreaks, machine lines, etc. on ridges, saddles, or areas that would create permanent travel ways that could facilitate increased access by competitors (e.g. coyote, bobcat);
- Restrict livestock grazing of fire created openings, aspen stands, willow carrs, and other potential lynx habitat until successful regeneration of shrub and tree components occurs.

6. Grizzly Bear (Threatened)

- Within the Recovery Zone, as defined in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (USFWS 1993), any off-road vehicular travel or vehicular travel on restricted roads shall adhere to access standards/direction as provided in local or regional interagency agreements, Biological Opinions, or local Land Use Plans;
- All activities requiring overnight stays or establishment of a base camp shall be limited to fewer than 20 individuals and less than 5 days duration within the Recovery Zone (defined in Grizzly Bear Recover Plan (USFWS 1993));
- Firewood collection within the Recovery Zone (defined in Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (USFWS 1993)) shall be limited to roadside hazard tree removal, road maintenance, or campground maintenance activities;
- Activities within the Recovery Zone (defined in Grizzly Bear Recover Plan (USFWS 1993)) in Riparian, Meadows, and Stream Corridors including restoration and improvement projects

must not occur between April 1 and July 1 or must be completed in one day;
- Within the Recovery Zone (defined in Grizzly Bear Recover Plan (USFWS 1993)) projects that would significantly change the vegetative community should not be implemented in huckleberry producing sites;
- In order to minimize the potential for habituation or human conflict, activities within the Recovery Zone (defined in Grizzly Bear Recover Plan (USFWS 1993)) will adhere to Interagency Grizzly Bear Guidelines or local interagency grizzly bear standards for sanitation measures or storage of potential attractants;
- Within the Recovery Zone (defined in Grizzly Bear Recover Plan (USFWS 1993)) activities will not involve planting or seeding of highly palatable forage species near roads or facilities used by humans.

7. Mountain Plover (Proposed)
- No human disturbance within 1/4 mile of occupied mountain plover nest sites from April 1 to July 31;
- No helicopter/aircraft activity or aerial retardant application within ½ mile of occupied mountain plover nest sites;
- No prescribed burning within 1 mile upwind of any occupied mountain plover nest sites from April 1 to July 31.

4. Vegetation Direction

Wildland Fire Suppression

The following conservation measures would be applied to protect Threatened plant species:

A. Ute Ladies'-tresses (Threatened)
- All proposed action areas within potential habitat shall be surveyed by a botanically qualified biologist, botanist, or ecologist to determine the presence/absence of the species;
- No action that would potentially affect the species will be taken within suitable habitat if surveys are not completed to determine the presence or absence of the species;
- Areas of occupied habitat within a proposed project area will have a "site specific" no activity buffer established by a qualified botanist, biologist, or ecologist, to protect occupied habitat;
- Best Management Practices should be applied to protect the area from invasive plant species;

- Non-native species should not be used in revegetation of suitable habitat.

5. Visual Direction

Wildland Fire Suppression

- The use of heavy equipment and retardant for wildland fire suppression should be avoided in designated VRM Class I and Class II areas unless the impact of the fire would more severely impact the VRM values than the impact of equipment and retardant.
- Fire rehabilitation of VRM Class I and II areas should be coordinated with a VRM specialist.
- Fuels management projects should be coordinated with a VRM specialist.

D. Wildland Fire Management Options

Fire Suppression

Fire management specialists in concert with resource specialists from other disciplines determined fire management categories, management objectives and the appropriate management response for each FMU. The fire management categories are as follows:

- Category A- Areas where fire is not desired at all.

  Suppression Strategy -Use Appropriate Management Response (AMR) to suppress all fires in accordance with management objectives based on current conditions and fire location. Emphasis is on rapid suppression responses and techniques. Multiple fire day priority is Highest.

  Rationale for Categorization- Direct threats to life or property; broken ownership pattern with scattered tracts adjacent to multiple jurisdictions; ecosystem is not fire dependent; long fire return intervals.

  Fire/fuels Management Activities- Mitigation and suppression required; fire should not be used to manage fuels.

- Category B- Fire plays natural role in the function of the ecosystem; however these are areas where unplanned ignitions could cause negative effects because of current conditions.

Suppression Strategy-Use AMR to suppress all fires in accordance with management objectives based on current conditions and fire location. Implement the full range of wildland fire and fuels management practices, including prescribed fire, mechanical, chemical, biological, and cultural treatments that will move all affected landscapes toward desired future condition as described in the RMP. AMR strategies would be tailored to address areas where plant communities are at risk due to current conditions/time of year or other ecological constraints. Multiple fire day priority is high.

Rationale for Categorization- Unplanned ignitions would have negative effects on ecosystems unless mitigated.

Fire/fuels Management Activities- Suppression required; fire and non-fire fuels treatments may be used.

- Category C- Areas where wildland fire is desired but where there are significant constraints that must be considered for its use.

  Suppression Strategy-Use AMR to implement protection objectives in accordance with management objectives based on current conditions and fire location. Implement the full range of wildland fire and fuels management practices, including prescribed fire, fire use, mechanical, chemical, biological, and cultural treatments that will enhance or maintain desired conditions as described in the RMP. AMR strategies would be tailored to address areas of significant constraints including Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), critical habitat for T&E species, areas of soil instability, and areas of other critical resource constraints. Multiple fire day priority is medium.

  Rationale for Categorization- Significant ecological, social, or political constraints exist.

  Fire/fuels Management Activities- Suppression required; fire and non-fire fuels treatments may be used.

- Category D - Areas where wildland fire is desired and there are few or no constraints for its use.

  Suppression Strategy-Use AMR to implement fire use objectives in accordance with management objectives based on current conditions and fire location. Wildland Fire Implementation Plans (WFIP) will be prepared to meet management objectives for fires

managed for resource benefits. Multiple fire priority would be lowest.

Rationale for Categorization- Few ecological, social, or political constraints exist. There is less need for fuels treatments.

For all FMU's suppression objectives including the target acreages were defined by the following criteria: the fire intensity level fire (FIL) that would be expected within the FMU, the size of the public land and its proximity to private in holdings, the FMU's level of use by the public, the FMU's proximity to private residences and communities, the FMU's wilderness values, the FMU's historic fire regime, and the unique biological, cultural, historical or archeological resources within the FMU.

Wildland Fire Use

The use of wildland fire for resource benefit can be an appropriate management response and is currently allowed for in a portion of the Elkhorns FMU. The fire use is a product of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) the Butte Field Office entered into with the Helena and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forests, and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in June 1992. Under this MOU the Elkhorns Cooperative Management Area was established to align land management goals amongst the various partners involved. A landscape analysis was developed shortly after the signing of the MOU, and as part of this analysis it was desired to place fire back into its natural role in the ecosystem. The Elkhorn Fire Management Plan was completed in 1999 to allow for the use of fire in it natural role. All fire management decisions in the Elkhorns are guided by this plan.

E. Descriptions of the Wildland Fire Management Strategies by Fire Management Unit

The Fire Management Plan establishes geographic areas as Fire Management Units (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.

Common to All FMUs:

Fire regime/condition class

Historically, fire was the dominant disturbance agent within the vegetative communities the Butte Field Office. The fire regimes within these vegetative communities are complicated and diverse. Fire can benefit several conifer species by aiding in reproduction, maintaining stand density within a site's specific

carrying capacity, reducing insect and disease epidemics and cycling nutrients on the site. A variety of shrub, grass and forb species, important components of wildlife habitat, also depend on fire to varying degrees. Conversely, fire can adversely affect communities through high intensity fires which result in high mortality of conifers in forest communities and which can cause widespread severe erosion, mass wasting, and other undesired environmental effects.

An understanding of fire frequency and severity prior to fire suppression efforts and how it relates to vegetative cover types is important in order to manage wildfire and prescribed fire within the Field Office. Table 1 describes the broad fire frequency and fire severity for fire and fuels management which occurs in the Field Office. The table illustrates the important and complex role fire historically played across landscapes in west central Montana. It also provides insight into how fire functions as a disturbance force and what affects fire has on plant communities in the area. Fire's historical role will be an important consideration when prescribing and managing fire in the Field Office.

Table 1 Natural Fire Frequency and Severity

Fire Group*	Cover Type Description	Frequency	Severity**
1	0-35 year frequency and low (surface fires most common) to mixed severity (less than 75% of the dominant overstory vegetation replaced	0-35 yrs	NL
2	0-35 year frequency and high (stand replacement) severity (greater than 75% of the dominant overstory vegetation replaced	0-35 yrs	L-M
3	35-100+ year frequency and mixed severity (less than 75% of the dominant overstory vegetation replaced	35-100 yrs	M-L
4	35-100+ year frequency and high (stand replacement) severity (greater than 75% of the dominant overstory vegetation replaced	35-100 yrs	L-M
5	200+ year frequency and high (stand replacement) severity	200 + yrs	L-M

* Coarse-scale definitions for natural (historical) fire regimes have been developed by Hardy et al. (2001) and Schmidt et al. (2002) and interpreted for fire and fuels management by Hann and Bunnell (2001)
** NL-Non-lethal, L-Lethal, & M-Mixed Severity Fire Regimes

For a given vegetation type, the fire regime condition class (FRCC) concept describes the degree of departure in: (1) vegetation structure, and (2) fire frequency/severity. This measure describes both the health of the fire regime, and also the appropriateness of the vegetation community for the site. Condition Class 1 corresponds to landscapes where these variables are intact, while Condition Class 3 landscapes have highly altered ecological integrity. Condition Class 2 includes lands having moderate departure in fire regime health and structural integrity.

Fire regime condition class mapping for the Butte Field Office is complete and is currently being integrated into the revision of the RMP and project level decisions for vegetation management.

Fire Management Objectives

Goal: Hazard fuel reduction around the urban interface.

Objectives
Reduce hazardous fuels by the use of mechanical and prescribed fire where applicable around communities at risk from wildfire.

Goal: Suppress all unwanted wildland fires with minimum cost, using an appropriate suppression response, while protecting values at risk.

Objectives
Use an Appropriate Management Response (AMR) to manage all fires in accordance with management objectives based on current conditions and locations.

Goal: Establish or update cooperative agreements to maximize coordination with agencies' cooperators.

Objectives
Review all existing agreements annually, updating or changing them as necessary to promote full cooperation in mutual fire management.

Fire Management Strategies

Fire Suppression: The Headwaters RMP guidance for fire suppression is to control, during the first burn period, all wildland fires on or threatening public land. Under the concept of Appropriate Management Response the range of responses available to implement protection objectives for unplanned ignitions are:

Monitoring and holding actions to check or confine spread
Control and extinguishment with an emphasis on Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST)

Criteria to use for developing a management response:
Risk to firefighters and public health and safety
Land and Resource Management Objectives
Weather
Fuel Conditions
Threats and values to be protected
Cost efficiencies
Resource Availability

Management strategies and action points will be based on fire activity and location. Normally, specific actions or combinations of actions will be determined on site by the incident commander.

Fuel Management Treatment Target Acreage

In September 2003 the Montana State Director signed the Record of Decision for the *Fire/Fuels Management Plan Environmental Assessment/Plan Amendment for Montana and the Dakotas*; this plan updates all the RMPs in the state to improve implementation of the National Fire Plan and 2001 Federal Fire Policy. As part this plan anticipated fuels treatment levels in acres were listed by FMU category. No acres were tied to a specific RMP. The Headwaters RMP when authored in 1984 estimated burning on 300 acres of rangeland for grazing improvement but placed no limit on burning for wildlife habitat improvement during the 20 year life of the plan. The acres to be treated with prescribed fire per decade were modified via the amendment mentioned above. Landscape specific treatments, including acres to be treated, are derived in the project planning process.

The Butte Field Office is currently completing a Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies (RAMS) assessment for the Field Office. Once the RAMS assessment is completed it will outline the fuels management program of work for the next decade. This program of work will include a description of areas to be treated on a priority basis and acres to be treated by year by treatment type.

Fire Management Unit (FMU) Description

Category A Fire Management Units

A17 Bozeman-Livingston Scattered Tracts

1. Area description: This area consists of numerous tracts with various fuel types scattered throughout the Bozeman and Livingston area.

2. Characteristics: The tracts making up this FMU are primarily are generally less than a section in size and are dominated by sage/grass fuel types. The tracts are generally have no public access and are surrounded by private land.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	1	60
Human	1	25

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: The scattered land pattern and large areas of adjoining private land make modified fire suppression or active prescribed fire impractical. This area also contains the Yellowstone River Island WSA. This area has high resource values including cultural, relic vegetation, and high visual and scenic values. A Resource Advisor should assist the Incident Commander in making suppression decisions. This area should normally involve an alternate suppression strategy due to limited access. Intensive fire suppression techniques should not be used.

5. Communities at Risk: None

6. Fire Management Objectives:

   Goal: Minimize impacts of unwanted fires on adjacent private land.

   Objective: Apply mechanical fuel reduction where applicable to reduce potential damage from wildland fire.

7. Fire Management Strategy

   Suppression - Wildland fire is not desired in this area due to the large amount of private and agricultural land, interface with subdivisions, and other developments. The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the Bozeman and Livingston scattered tracts would be aggressive fire suppression. Confine or contain unplanned ignitions to smallest feasible size.

   All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

   Wildland Fire Use – Wildland fire use for resource benefit is not planned for this FMU.

   Prescribed Fire - Prescribed fires would not be used in this area due to the large amount of private land, agricultural lands, and rural subdivisions.

   Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical treatments may be considered as needed but no treatments are considered at this time.

   Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will

be commensurate with resource values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: The Gallatin National Forest has primary fire suppression responsibility.

Category B Fire Management Units

B5 Boulder River

1. Area description: The area includes approximately 264,400 acres (5 percent BLM, 17 percent private, and 78 percent FS). The area contains a "cultural mining district" which requires special protection of historical values. This area is also part of a Forest Service Landscape Plan.

2. Characteristics: This area contains approximately 40 percent transitional woodland fuel type dominated by Douglas-fir, 40 percent sagebrush/grass, and 20 percent lodgepole pine/Douglas-fir fuel type. The area is dissected by two highways, Interstate 15 and Montana Highway 69. The terrain can best be described as the transitional foothills of the Boulder Batholith leading into the National Forest.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	3	12457.2
Human	2	.2

   The FMU supports a number of fuel complexes, including grass,

grass/sage, Douglas-fir, and mixed-conifer.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: Unplanned fire is likely to damage property. Subdivisions have created an intermix which limits opportunities for modified suppression. The historic mining district also limits suppression and prescribed fire opportunities. The presence of a Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) power line affects fire suppression tactics. Open mine shafts, air vents, and large collapsed stopes should be avoided.

5. Communities at Risk: Basin and Boulder

6. Fire Management Objectives:

Goal: Reduce wildland fire hazard around identified cultural sites.

Objectives: Apply mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed fire where applicable around vulnerable historic resources to minimize damage from wildland fire.

Goal: Reduce wildland fire hazard around identified communities at risk.

Objectives: Apply mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed fire where applicable around vulnerable communities to minimize damage from wildland fire. Use community education and outreach on prudent Firewise practices.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression - Unplanned fire is not desired due to the intermix with Boulder, the High Ore Mine area, and other developments. The appropriate management response to wildland fire would be aggressive fire suppression.

All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use- Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- The use of fire would be limited as a management tool due to intermix with subdivisions and the historical mining district. Fire may be used to limit timber encroachment into willow,

aspen, and sagebrush/grass communities; to open willow, conifer woodlands and aspen stands; and to improve age structure and stand vitality. Prescribed fire would used to treat 2000 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuel treatments can be used to treat 1500 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire suppression is the responsibility of Montana DNRC and the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

B10 North Hills

1. Area description:
   The area includes approximately 32,350 acres (20 percent BLM, 7 percent state, and 73 percent private). The area is bounded by Interstate 15 on the west the Missouri River on the east McLeod Gulch on the North and U.S. Highway 12 on the south. Forest Service also shares boundaries on the east side.

2. Characteristics: This area is characterized by rolling terrain dominated by grassland and ponderosa pine fuel types. The ponderosa pine fuel types are generally overstocked. The northern half of this area is predominately

grassland. The southern portion contains dense stands of ponderosa pine and several subdivisions.

3. Wildland fire occurrence:

   Lightning is the predominate cause of unplanned wildfires in the FMU. Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	7	37.5
Human	2	220.1

   Fire season can start as early as mid-April and last until mid-November. The occurrence of spring rains, in May and June typically dictate the severity of the summer fire season. The FMU supports a number of fuel complexes, including grass, grass/sage, and ponderosa pine.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: This area contains numerous subdivisions. North Hills is in Lewis and Clark County near Helena. It has medium population density, medium escaped fire potential, and medium potential for loss of life or property.

5. Communities at Risk: Helena and Sieben

6. Fire Management Objectives:

   Goal: Reduce wildland fire hazard around identified communities at risk.

   Objectives: Apply mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed fire where applicable around vulnerable communities to minimize damage from wildland fire. Use community education and outreach on prudent Firewise practices.

   Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

   Objectives:

   Ponderosa pine
   Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for ponderosa pine forest ecosystems.

   Grasslands
   Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

All types
Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression - Wildland fire is not desired in this area due to the interface with subdivisions and other developments. The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the North Hills area will be aggressive fire suppression.

All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- The use of fire would be limited as a management tool due to intermix with subdivisions, air quality issues, and private property. Fire may be used to limit timber encroachment into willow, aspen, and sagebrush/grass communities; to open willow, conifer woodlands and aspen stands; and to improve age structure and stand vitality. Prescribed fire would used to treat 1000 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuel treatments can be used to treat 1500 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource

objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire Suppression is the responsibility of the Montana DNRC.

B12 Scratchgravel Hills

1. Area description: This area is approximately four miles northwest of Helena in Lewis and Clark County. Private homes and developments have been built throughout the area. The area includes approximately 58,590 acres (12 percent BLM, 3 percent state, and 85 percent private).

2. Characteristics: This FMU is best characterized by grassland hills which have been colonized by dense stands of ponderosa pine of varying age classes. The area is adjacent to the Lincoln Highway Montana 279 and the Montana Rail Link main line into Helena.

3. Wildland fire occurrence:

   Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	4	10.4
Human	7	7.6

   Fire season can start as early as mid-April and can last until mid-November. The occurrence of spring rains, in May and June typically dictate the severity of the summer fire season. The FMU supports a fuel complex primarily of grass, grass/sage, and ponderosa pine.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: The area contains numerous subdivisions and access is limited. Population density is high; escaped fire potential is medium; the potential for loss of life or property is high; community support and community safe efforts are high. The area has a high density of homes and roads.

5. Communities at Risk: Austin, Helena, Fort Harrison

6. Fire Management Objectives:

Goal: Reduce wildland fire hazard around identified communities at risk.

Objectives: Apply mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed fire where

applicable around vulnerable communities to minimize damage from wildland fire. Use community education and outreach on prudent Firewise practices.

Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

Objectives:

Ponderosa pine
Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for ponderosa pine forest ecosystems.

Grasslands
Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

All types
Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression - Wildland fire is not desired in this area due to the interface with subdivisions and other developments. The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the Scratchgravel Hills area will be aggressive fire suppression.

All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- The use of fire would be limited as a management tool due to intermix with subdivisions, air quality issues, and private property. Fire may be used to limit timber encroachment into willow, aspen, and sagebrush/grass communities; to open willow, conifer woodlands and aspen stands; and to improve age structure and stand vitality. Prescribed fire would used to treat 500 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuel treatments can be used to treat 1000 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire suppression is the responsibility of the Montana DNRC.

B14 Spokane Hills and North

1. Area description: This area is characterized by a scattered land pattern with numerous subdivisions. The area includes approximately 151,000 acres (4 percent BLM, 6 percent state, and 90 percent private).

2. Characteristics: This FMU is predominately a ponderosa pine/grass fuel type. Much of this area burned in 2000. The area is bounded on the east by the lake shore of Hauser and Canyon Ferry reservoirs. Access is primarily from U.S. Highway 12 and Montana 284.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	4	115.90
Human	3	15511.70

   Fire season can start as early as mid-April and can last until mid-November. The majority of BLM ownership with in the FMU was burned during one fire event in 2000. The FMU supports a fuel complex of grass and ponderosa pine.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: Access to public land is difficult due to steep terrain and surrounding private land. Subdivisions limit opportunities for modified suppression and increase the potential impacts of smoke.

5. Communities at Risk: East Helena, Canyon Ferry, and York

6. Fire Management Objectives:

Goal: Reduce wildland fire hazard around identified communities at risk.

Objectives: Apply mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed fire where applicable around vulnerable communities to minimize damage from wildland fire. Use community education and outreach on prudent Firewise practices.

Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

Objectives:

Ponderosa pine
Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for ponderosa pine forest ecosystems.

Grasslands
Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

All types
Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression - Wildland fire is not desired in this area due to the interface with subdivisions and other developments. The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the Spokane Hills area will be aggressive fire suppression.

All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- The use of fire would be limited as a management tool due to intermix with subdivisions, air quality issues, and private property. Fire may be used to limit timber encroachment into willow, aspen, and sagebrush/grass communities; to open willow, conifer woodlands and aspen stands; and to improve age structure and stand vitality. Prescribed fire would used to treat 1500 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuel treatments can be used to treat 1500 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire suppression is the responsibility of the Montana DNRC.

B16 Wise River Townsite

1. Area description: This FMU is the area surrounding the community of Wise River from the Big Hole River south to the Forest boundary, with the west boundary being Alder Creek and the east boundary being the Wise River. The area includes approximately 10,100 acres (14 percent BLM, 1 percent state, 78 percent private, and 7 percent FS).

2. Characteristics: The area is also characterized by numerous roads from past mining activities. The area is characterized by steep

topography and close proximity to the highway. The predominant fuel types are grass/sage and mixed conifer. Hay pastures and riparian vegetation is also present never the river bottoms.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	0	0
Human	1	.4

   The FMU supports a fuel complex of grass and mixed-conifer.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: The area has high value property and sensitive viewsheds along the Big Hole River corridor. There is close proximity to private land and structures. It is an interface area that is expanding from the townsite and is becoming more difficult to defend from potential wildfire.

   Proximity to private land and structures limits suppression options. Obvious concerns focus on structural developments, croplands, livestock and livestock forage needs.

5. Communities at Risk: Wise River

6. Fire Management Objectives:

Goal: Reduce wildland fire hazard around identified communities at risk.

Objectives: Apply mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed fire where applicable around vulnerable communities to minimize damage from wildland fire. Use community education and outreach on prudent Firewise practices.

Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

Objectives:

Douglas-fir
Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for Douglas-fir forest ecosystems.

Grasslands
Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

All types
Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression - Wildland fire is not desired in this area due to the interface with subdivisions and other developments. The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the Wise River area will be aggressive fire suppression.

All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- The use of fire would be limited as a management tool due to intermix with subdivisions, air quality issues, and private property. Fire may be used to limit timber encroachment into willow, aspen, and sagebrush/grass communities; to open willow, conifer woodlands and aspen stands; and to improve age structure and stand vitality. Prescribed fire would used to treat 500 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuel treatments can be used to treat 1000 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.

- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire suppression is the responsibility of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

Category C Fire Management Units

C1 Absaroka Foothills

1. Area description: This area is on the western fringe of the Absaroka Mountain Range. Some subdivisions exist, primarily in the Paradise Valley area. Paradise Valley is south of Livingston in Park County. It has medium population density; low escaped fire potential; low potential for loss of life or property; medium community support; and low community safe efforts.
   The area includes approximately 67,700 acres (6 percent BLM, 3 percent state, 52 percent private, and 39 percent FS).

2. Characteristics: This FMU characterized by its foothills topography contains approximately 50 percent Douglas-fir fuel type and 50 percent sagebrush/grass fuel type. Primary access into the FMU is via Montana Highway 572.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	0	0
Human	0	0

   Fire season can start as early as mid-April in the lower elevations and last until mid-October. The occurrence of spring rains, in May and June typically dictate the severity of the summer fire season. The FMU supports a number of fuel complexes, including grass, and mixed-conifer.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: Manage native vegetation to meet standards for rangeland and forest health. Maintain stable soils and sustain current land uses. Sagebrush habitats, especially those in identified sage grouse nesting and wintering areas and big game concentration areas should be maintained to the maximum extent possible.

   Fire management opportunities are limited by poor access and the small size of BLM-administered tracts in the area.

5. Communities at Risk: Chico

6. Fire Management Objectives:

   Goal: Reduce wildland fire hazard around identified communities at risk.

   Objectives: Apply mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed fire where applicable around vulnerable communities to minimize damage from wildland fire. Use community education and outreach on prudent Firewise practices.

   Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

   Objectives:

   Forest Ecosystems
   Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for forest ecosystems.

   Grasslands
   Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

   All types
   Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

   Suppression - The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the Absaroka Foothills area is to prevent wildland fire from spreading to adjacent private land. Opportunities may exist to formulate joint suppression strategies with the Gallatin National Forest where the agencies share a common boundary.

All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- The use of fire would be limited as a management tool due to intermix of ownerships. Fire may be used to limit timber encroachment into willow, aspen, and sagebrush/grass communities; to open willow, conifer woodlands and aspen stands; and to improve age structure and stand vitality. Prescribed fire would used to treat 500 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuel treatments can be used to treat 1000 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire Suppression is the responsibility of the Gallatin National Forest.

C2 Big Belt Mountains

1. Area description: This area is best described as the western fringe of the Big Belt Mountains. This area contains a few isolated ranches and farms. The area includes approximately 328,000 acres (1 percent BLM, 23 percent private, and 76 percent FS).

2. Characteristics: This area is on the fringe of the Big Belt Mountains and consists primarily of ponderosa pine fuel types at the lower elevations. Douglas-fir occurs in drainages and on northern aspects. Primary access into the FMU is via Montana Highway 284.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	3	6.2
Human	2	2.0

   Fire season can start as early as mid-April in the lower elevations and last until mid-October. The occurrence of spring rains, in May and June typically dictate the severity of the summer fire season. The FMU supports a number of fuel complexes, including grass, ponderosa pine and mixed-conifer.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: Fire management will be influenced by transitional big game winter range, adjoining private lands, and the Helena National Forest.

5. Communities at Risk: Canyon Ferry and York

6. Fire Management Objectives:
   Goal: Reduce wildland fire hazard around identified communities at risk.

   Objectives: Apply mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed fire where applicable around vulnerable communities to minimize damage from wildland fire. Use community education and outreach on prudent Firewise practices.

   Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

Objectives:

Ponderosa pine
Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for ponderosa pine forest ecosystems.

Grasslands
Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

All types
Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression - The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the Big Belt Mountains area is to prevent wildland fire from spreading to adjacent private land. Opportunities may exist to formulate joint suppression strategies with the Helena National Forest where the agencies share a common boundary.

All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- The use of fire as a management tool is desired due to vegetative communities present in the FMU. However it will be necessary to take into consideration the intermix of land ownership, air quality issues, and private property. Fire may be used to limit timber encroachment into willow, aspen, and sagebrush/grass communities; to open willow, conifer woodlands and aspen stands; and to improve age structure and stand vitality. Prescribed fire would used to treat 500 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuels can be used to treat 1000 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All

rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire suppression is the responsibility of the Helena National Forest.

C3 Big Hole River

1. Area description: This FMU primarily lies south of the Big Hole River from Divide west to where Papoose Creek enters the Big Hole River. The area includes approximately 68,800 acres (26 percent BLM, 3 percent state, 25 percent private, and 46 percent FS).

2. Characteristics: The area is characterized by steep topography and close proximity to the highway. The area is also characterized by numerous roads from past mining activities. Approximately 50 percent consists of open sagebrush/grass parks. Another 45 percent is Douglas-fir. Mountain mahogany is scattered throughout the area occurring on steep, rocky south and west-facing slopes. Much of this is overtopped by Douglas-fir. The remaining 5 percent of the area contains drainages dominated by lodgepole pine. Montana Highway 43 dissects the entire FMU.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	4	.4
Human	4	.6

Fire season can start as early as mid-April in the lower elevations and last until mid-October. The occurrence of spring rains, in May and June typically dictate the severity of the summer fire season. The FMU supports a number of fuel complexes, including grass, grass/sage, and mixed-conifer.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: Numerous homes and ranches are present along the Big Hole River corridor.

   The FMU is considered critical big game winter range; fire management activities should be closely coordinated with wildlife staff.

   The Big Hole River corridor is an area with high visual quality this will need to be considered as part of fire management activities.

   Fire management should be coordinated with the Forest Service. Steep topography and close proximity to the highway and private land limit suppression options.

   All fires exceeding initial attack will require a BLM resource advisor.

5. Communities at Risk: Dewey, Fishtrap, and Wise River

6. Fire Management Objectives:
   Goal: Reduce wildland fire hazard around identified communities at risk.

   Objectives: Apply mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed fire where applicable around vulnerable communities to minimize damage from wildland fire. Use community education and outreach on prudent Firewise practices.

   Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

   Objectives:

   Douglas-fir
   Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for Douglas-fir forest ecosystems.

   Grasslands
   Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

All types
Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

Objectives:

Reduce conifer encroachment into sagebrush/grass foothills and parklands to improve winter habitat for mule deer and elk. Protect one mile corridor along the Big Hole River for visual quality.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression - The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the Big Hole River area is to prevent wildland fire from spreading to adjacent private land. Opportunities may exist to formulate joint suppression strategies with the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest where the agencies share a common boundary.

All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- The use of fire as a management tool is desired due to vegetative communities present in the FMU. However it will be necessary to take into consideration the intermix of land ownership, visual quality issues, big game winter range, and private property. Fire may be used to limit timber encroachment into willow, aspen, and sagebrush/grass communities; to open willow, conifer woodlands and aspen stands; and to improve age structure and stand vitality. Prescribed fire would used to treat 1500 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuels can be used to treat 1500 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire suppression is the responsibility of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

C4 Blackfoot

This area is managed for the Butte Field Office by the Missoula Field Office and the FMU unit is fully described in the Missoula FMP.

C6 Clancy-Marysville

1. Area description: This FMU primarily lies west of Interstate 15 from the top of Boulder Hill north into Helena with the western perimeter following the Helena National Forest boundary. From Helena the FMU boundary goes northwest along Seven Mile Creek and then turns north at Austin and continues north to approximately Flesher Pass. The western edge continues to follow the Helena Forest Boundary.

   Subdivisions are prevalent throughout the Clancy and Marysville areas. The Great Divide Ski Area with numerous structures is also present within this polygon. The Divide-Marysville area near Helena contains some areas with high density of homes and roads. It has high population density; escaped fire potential is medium; potential for escaped fire is medium; potential for loss of life or property is high; and community support and community safe efforts are considered high. The area includes approximately 269,000 acres (10 percent BLM, 1 percent state, 44 percent private, and 45 percent FS).

2. Characteristics: This area contains very scattered and mixed ownership. Fuel types vary from high elevation conifers to sagebrush/grass communities. There are numerous subdivisions throughout the area. The Marysville area, in Lewis and Clark County, contains heavy coniferous commercial forests of lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir which are overstocked. This timber is in the 100 year age

class. The area also contains a ski area and a historic mining district.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	12	2.5
Human	15	130.7

   Fire season can start as early as mid-April in the lower elevations and last until mid-October. The occurrence of spring rains, in May and June typically dictate the severity of the summer fire season. The FMU supports a number of fuel complexes, including grass, ponderosa pine and mixed-conifer.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: Subdivisions are prevalent throughout the Clancy and Marysville areas. The Great Divide Ski Area with numerous structures is also present within this polygon. The Clancy-Unionville area near Helena contains some areas with high density of homes and roads.

   The Helena area is a non-attainment area in terms of air quality standards so this will need to be considered as part of fire management activities.

   Cultural resource values are a concern for protection in the FMU. Appropriate cultural resource clearances will be required before any fuels management activities are initiated.

   A resource advisor will be assigned to any fire that exceeds initial attack.

   Interface with subdivisions and other private developments will limit opportunities for modified suppression of wildfires. The Marysville historic mining district limits the use of heavy equipment. The Great Divide Ski Area also limits suppression options and the use of heavy equipment. Avoidance of open mine shafts, air vents, and large collapsed stopes will be required during fire suppression operations.

5. Communities at Risk: Alhambra, Austin, Clancy, Corbin, Fort Harrison, Helena, Jefferson City, Marysville, Montana City, Rimini, Unionville, and Wickes

6. Fire Management Objectives:
   Goal: Reduce wildland fire hazard around identified communities at risk.

   Objectives: Apply mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed fire where applicable around vulnerable communities to minimize damage from wildland fire. Use community education and outreach on prudent Firewise practices.

   Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

   Objectives:

   Ponderosa pine
   Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for ponderosa pine forest ecosystems.

   Mixed conifer forest
   Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for mixed conifer forest ecosystems.

   Grasslands
   Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

   All types
   Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

   Suppression - The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the Clancy-Marysville area is to prevent wildland fire from spreading to adjacent private land. Aggressive fire suppression may be necessary until fuels modification is complete in urban interface areas. Opportunities may exist to formulate joint suppression strategies with the Helena National Forest where the agencies share a common boundary.

   All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

   Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- The use of fire as a management tool is desired due to vegetative communities present in the FMU. However it will be necessary to take into consideration the urban interface present, the intermix of land ownership, air quality issues, and private property. Fire may be used to limit timber encroachment into willow, aspen, and sagebrush/grass communities; to open willow, conifer woodlands and aspen stands; and to improve age structure and stand vitality. Prescribed fire would used to treat 1500 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuels can be used to treat 2500 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire suppression is the responsibility of the Montana DNRC and Helena National Forest.

C7 Elkhorn Mountains

1. Area description: The area consists of the South Elkhorns, the North Elkhorns, and Crow Creek management units. The FMU also encompasses the Limestone Hills military training ground, an area used by the National Guard for live fire military training exercises.

Some isolated homes and ranches occur on adjoining land. Subdivisions are present on the north end of the Elkhorn Mountain Range. The area includes approximately 472,000 acres (14 percent BLM, 3 percent state, 49 percent private, and 34 percent FS).

2. Characteristics: The area contains approximately 50 percent sagebrush/grassland fuel type, 30 percent woodland transition-mixed juniper, limber pine, Douglas-fir, and 20 percent Douglas-fir/lodgepole pine and ponderosa pine fuel type. Smaller areas of alpine timber also occur at higher elevations. Conifers are generally overstocked from past fire exclusion and are encroaching into sagebrush/grass areas. Conifer communities are about 100 years old and lack diversity of age classes. Many areas of aspen and willow are disappearing due to conifer encroachment.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Humans are the predominate cause of unplanned wildfires in the FMU. Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	20	134.9
Human	37	3275.70

   Fire season can start as early as mid-April in the lower elevations and last until mid-October. The occurrence of spring rains, in May and June typically dictate the severity of the summer fire season. The FMU supports a number of fuel complexes, including grass, grass/sage, ponderosa pine, and mixed-conifer.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: The FMU is considered critical big game winter range; fire management activities should be closely coordinated with wildlife staff.

   Management should complement Forest Service objectives within the Landscape Plan. Adjoining private land may limit fire management opportunities. Close coordination with adjoining landowners is necessary. Urban interface in the North Elkhorns near Helena and Clancy limits suppression opportunities and makes prescribed fire management difficult. Much of the area should be treated mechanically prior to burning due to heavy fuel loading. The Elkhorns Tack on WSA precludes use of mechanical equipment. The presence of (BPA) power lines complicates suppression efforts.

A resource advisor will be assigned to any fire that exceeds initial attack.

All fire management activities will need to be compliant with operating plan and the fire suppression plan for the Limestone Hills Training Site.

5. Communities at Risk: Alhambra and Montana City

6. Fire Management Objectives:
   Goal: Reduce wildland fire hazard around identified communities at risk.

   Objectives: Apply mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed fire where applicable around vulnerable communities to minimize damage from wildland fire. Use community education and outreach on prudent Firewise practices.

   Goal: Be consistent with the Elkhorns Fire Management Plan.

   Objectives: Reduce conifer encroachment into sagebrush/grass parklands and foothills to improve habitat for elk and deer. Reduce excess fuels buildup in woodland habitat by managing naturally occurring fire to achieve resource objectives.

   Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

   Objectives:

   Ponderosa pine
   Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for ponderosa pine forest ecosystems.

   Douglas-fir
   Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for Douglas-fir forest ecosystems.

   Grasslands
   Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

   All types
   Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression - The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the Elkhorn Mountains area is to prevent wildland fire from spreading to adjacent private land. Opportunities may exist to formulate joint suppression strategies with the Helena and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest where the agencies share a common boundary.

All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is planned for this FMU. The implementation of fire use is through the Elkshorns Fire Management Plan.

Prescribed Fire- Fire/other methods may be used to open the closed timber stands to promote a diversity of age structure and return sites to a more open savannah type. Fire may be used to reduce conifer encroachment into willow, grass/shrub, and aspen communities. Big game winter range may be maintained or improved by using fire to improve winter forage by rejuvenating grasses, big sagebrush, mountain mahogany and bitterbrush and limiting conifer encroachment. Prescribed fire would used to treat 8000 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuels can be used to treat 1500 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area

or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire suppression is the responsibility of the Montana DNRC, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, and Helena National Forest.

C8 Fleecer Mountains

1. Area description: This FMU primarily lies north of the Big Hole River from Divide west to where Papoose Creek enters the Big Hole River. The area includes 284,000 acres (6 percent BLM, 2 percent state, 55 percent private, and 37 percent FS).

2. Characteristics: The area is characterized by steep topography and close proximity to the highway. The area is also characterized by numerous roads from past mining activities. Approximately 40 percent of the area is sagebrush/grass fuel type and 50 percent is woodland transitional forest dominated by Douglas-fir. About 5-10 percent of this forest type also includes lodgepole pine and spruce. Mountain mahogany occurs on rocky areas and is present on about 10 percent of the area.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	7	.7
Human	8	75.9

   Fire season can start as early as mid-April in the lower elevations and last until mid-October. The occurrence of spring rains, in May and June typically dictate the severity of the summer fire season. The FMU supports a number of fuel complexes, including grass, grass/sage and mixed-conifer.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: The combination of steep topography and proximity to the highway and private land limits suppression options. Poor access limits opportunities for suppression and prescribed fire activities in the steep/rocky mountain mahogany

areas. Use of mechanized equipment is limited within the watershed of the Big Hole River to protect critical habitat for the Arctic Grayling.

The FMU is considered critical big game winter range; fire management activities should be closely coordinated with wildlife staff.

The Big Hole River corridor is an area with high visual quality this will need to be considered as part of fire management activities.

Fire management should be coordinated with the Forest Service. Steep topography and close proximity to the highway and private land limit suppression options.

All fires exceeding initial attack will require a BLM resource advisor.

5. Communities at Risk: None

6. Fire Management Objectives:
Goal: Use prescribed fire and surrogate fire treatments to enhance wildlife habitat and create vegetative diversity.

Objectives: Reduce conifer encroachment into sagebrush/grass parklands and foothills to maintain/enhance winter range for elk and mule deer.

Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

Objectives:

Douglas-fir
Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for Douglas-fir forest ecosystems.

Grasslands
Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

All types
Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression - The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the Fleecer Mountain area is to prevent wildland fire from

spreading to adjacent private land. Opportunities may exist to formulate joint suppression strategies with the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest where the agencies share a common boundary.

Fires within one mile of the Big Hole River should be immediately suppressed to protect the visual quality of the river corridor.

All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- Prescribed fire is the preferred treatment method to limit the encroachment of Douglas-fir into sagebrush/grass parks. Fire may be used to open stands of aspen to encourage reproduction and improve the health of these communities. Fire may be used to revitalize mountain mahogany communities.
Prescribed fire would used to treat 1500 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuels can be used to treat 1000 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire suppression is the responsibility of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

C9 McCartney-Rochester

1. Area description: This FMU encompasses areas managed by both the Butte and Dillon Field Offices. The area is east of the Pioneer Mountain Range. The area includes approximately 274,000 acres (43 percent BLM, 5 percent state, 36 percent private, and 16 percent FS). The area is also characterized by numerous roads from past mining activities.

2. Characteristics: This FMU is characterized by terrain as varied as granite spires intermixed with conifer to rolling foothills. About 70 percent consists of a scattered grass/timber fuel type and the remaining 30 percent is conifer type consisting of Douglas-fir, juniper, and limber pine.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	3	.7
Human	2	154.1

   Fire season can start as early as mid-April in the lower elevations and last until mid-October. The occurrence of spring rains, in May and June typically dictate the severity of the summer fire season. The FMU supports a number of fuel complexes, including grass, sage, and Douglas-fir, and mixed conifer.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: The Humbug Spires WSA restricts the use of mechanical equipment. Fire management should be coordinated with the Forest Service. Protection of cultural resources (mining related) and private property requires careful consideration and consultation. The protection of mining-related cultural resources and private property are also concerns.

5. Communities at Risk: None

6. Fire Management Objectives:
   Goal: Protect the wilderness character of Humburg Spires WSA.

Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

Objectives:

Lodgepole pine
Maintain/enhance lodgepole pine communities for a variety of size and age classes and stand structure.

Douglas-fir
Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for Douglas-fir forest ecosystems.

Grasslands
Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

All types
Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression - The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the McCartney-Rochester area is to prevent wildland fire from spreading to adjacent private land. Opportunities exist to formulate joint suppression strategies with the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest where the agencies share a common boundary.

All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- Prescribed fire is the preferred treatment method to limit the encroachment of Douglas-fir into sagebrush/grass parks. Fire may be used to open stands of aspen to encourage reproduction and improve the health of these communities. Fire may be used to revitalize mountain mahogany communities.
Prescribed fire would used to treat 2500 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires.

Mechanical fuels can be used to treat 1000 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire suppression is the responsibility of Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

C11 Pipestone

1. Area description: This FMU is located east of Butte primarily in southern Jefferson County.

   Subdivisions are present in the Toll Mountain and Pipestone areas. These are near Whitehall in Jefferson County. They are characterized by medium population density; medium escaped fire potential; medium potential for loss of life or property; medium community support; and low community safe efforts. The area includes 369,300 acres (11 percent BLM, 4 percent state, 46 percent private, and 39 percent FS).

2. Characteristics: About 40 percent of the area contains sagebrush/grass fuel types; another 40 percent is dominated by either transitional or true timber fuel types made up primarily of Douglas-fir. About 10 percent of the area consists of large boulder fields. There are also large areas of south facing mountain mahogany stands.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	6	2.6
Human	8	61.30

   Fire season can start as early as mid-April in the lower elevations and last until mid-October. The occurrence of spring rains, in May and June typically dictate the severity of the summer fire season. The FMU supports a number of fuel complexes, including grass, grass/sage, Douglas-fir and mixed-conifer.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: Subdivisions make fire management more difficult. Highly erosive soils contribute heavy sediment loads within the watershed, particularly if heavy equipment is used.

   All fires exceeding initial attack will require a BLM resource advisor.

   Cultural resource values are a concern for protection in the FMU. Appropriate cultural resource clearances will be required before any fuels management activities are initiated.

   Interstate 90 dissects the western portion of the FMU; fire management actions will need to consider the potential impacts to the highway.

5. Communities at Risk: Pipestone and Whitehall

6. Fire Management Objectives:
   Goal: Reduce wildland fire hazard around identified communities at risk.

   Objectives: Apply mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed fire where applicable around vulnerable communities to minimize damage from wildland fire. Use community education and outreach on prudent Firewise practices.

   Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

Objectives:

Douglas-fir
Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for Douglas-fir forest ecosystems.

Grasslands
Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

All types
Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression - The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the Pipestone area is to prevent wildland fire from spreading to adjacent private land. Opportunities exist to formulate joint suppression strategies with the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest where the agencies share a common boundary.

All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- Prescribed fire is the preferred treatment method to limit the encroachment of Douglas-fir into sagebrush/grass parks. Fire may be used to open stands of aspen to encourage reproduction and improve the health of these communities. Fire may be used to revitalize mountain mahogany communities.
Prescribed fire would used to treat 2500 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuels can be used to treat 1500 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with resource values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns

should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire Suppression is the responsibility of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

C13 Sleeping Giant

1. Area description: This FMU is located north Helena between Interstate 15 and the west shore of Holter Lake. This area contains the Sleeping Giant/Sheep Creek WSA (10,597 acres), and the Sleeping Giant ACEC (11,609 acres).

2. Characteristics: It is characterized by steep, rugged topography with numerous rock outcroppings. Approximately 50 percent of the area is forested with Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, and limber pine being the major species. The remainder of the area contains open grasslands, rock outcroppings, and talus slopes. Approximately 2000 acres contain substantial amounts of overstory Douglas-fir/pine mortality where 25-50 percent is dead.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Lightning is the predominate cause of unplanned wildfires in the FMU. Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	17	14.2
Human	3	.50

   Fire season can start as early as mid-April in the lower elevations and last until mid-October. The occurrence of spring rains, in May and June typically dictate the severity of the summer fire season. The FMU supports a number of fuel complexes, including grass, grass/sage,

ponderosa pine, and mixed-conifer.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: Maintain the qualities of the Sleeping Giant ACEC. This ACEC was designated for dispersed recreation opportunities, natural scenic qualities, and high value wildlife habitat.

   No fires are desired in portions of the Sleeping Giant WSA within the viewsheds seen from the Missouri River.

   Use of mechanized equipment is limited due to the Wilderness Study Area (WSA) designation.

   All fires exceeding initial attack will require a BLM resource advisor.

5. Communities at Risk: None

6. Fire Management Objectives:

   Goal: Maintain the natural and visual qualities of these specially designated areas.

   Objectives: Suppression actions should be done in a manner that least impairs wilderness characteristics in the Sleeping Giant/Sheep Creek WSA.

   Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

   Objectives:

   Ponderosa pine
   Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for ponderosa pine forest ecosystems.

   Douglas-fir
   Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for Douglas-fir forest ecosystems.

   Grasslands
   Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

   All types
   Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

Suppression - The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the Sleeping Giant area is to prevent wildland fire from spreading to adjacent private land. . No fires are desired in portions of the Sleeping Giant WSA within the viewsheds seen from the Missouri River. Suppression actions should be done in a manner that least impairs wilderness characteristics in the Sleeping Giant/Sheep Creek WSA. Use of mechanized equipment is limited due to the Wilderness Study Area (WSA) designation.

All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- Prescribed fire may be used only after very careful consideration and planning to open up encroached areas of timber and restore ponderosa pine savannah communities, in order to improve habitat for priority native wildlife species. Prescribed fire would used to treat 1500 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuels can be used to treat 1000 acres per decade. Use of mechanized equipment is limited due to the Wilderness Study Area (WSA) designation.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area

or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire suppression is the responsibility of the Montana DNRC.

C15 Three Forks

1. Area description: This FMU is located east of Montana Highway 69 with the eastern boundary being the Gallatin Park county line. The area includes numerous scattered tracts in northern Gallatin County. The FMU contains the Black Sage WSA. The area includes approximately 356,000 acres (8 percent BLM, 5 percent state, and 87 percent private).

2. Characteristics: This area is predominately a juniper/limber pine/grassland fuel type. The Horseshoe area contains commercial Douglas-fir fuel types.

3. Wildland Fire History:

   Humans are the predominate cause of unplanned wildfires in the FMU. Between 1980 and 2003 the following fires and burned acres were reported.

	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	1	.50
Human	7	52

   Fire season can start as early as mid-April in the lower elevations and last until mid-October. The occurrence of spring rains, in May and June typically dictate the severity of the summer fire season. The FMU supports a number of fuel complexes, including grass, grass/sage, Douglas-fir, and mixed-conifer.

4. Values at Risk/Resource Protection Constraints: Some isolated homes and ranches are present in this area. Adjoining private lands make access and modified suppression activities difficult.

   Maintain stable soils and sustain current land uses. Sagebrush habitats, especially those in identified sage grouse nesting and wintering areas and big game concentration areas should be maintained to the

maximum extent possible.

Use of mechanized equipment is limited due to the Wilderness Study Area (WSA) designation.

All fires exceeding initial attack will require a BLM resource advisor.

5. Communities at Risk: None

6. Fire Management Objectives:

   Goal: Maintain the natural and visual qualities of these specially designated areas.

   Objectives: Suppression actions should be done in a manner that least impairs wilderness characteristics in the Black Sage WSA.

   Goal: Use planned fire use and surrogate fire treatments to restore and maintain primary natural resources and their processes where applicable in order to move FRCC III and II to FRCC I.

   Objectives:

   Douglas-fir
   Establish and maintain a vegetative structure and mosaic within the natural range of variability for Douglas-fir forest ecosystems.

   Grasslands
   Restore fire as a key natural process that encourages native grassland ecosystems.

   All types
   Reduce established noxious and non-native plant cover.

7. Fire Management Strategies:

   Suppression - The appropriate management response to wildland fire within the Three Forks area is to prevent wildland fire from spreading to adjacent private land. Suppression actions should be done in a manner that least impairs wilderness characteristics in the Black Sage WSA. Use of mechanized equipment is limited due to the Wilderness Study Area (WSA) designation.

   All fires occurring at a Fire Intensity Level (FIL) 1-3 will be suppressed at less than 10 acres 90 percent of the time. All fires occurring at FIL 4-6 will be suppressed at less than 100 acres 75 percent of the time.

Wildland Fire Use - Wildland Fire Use for Resource benefits is not planned for this FMU.

Prescribed Fire- Prescribed fire/other methods may be used on the western portion of the area to limit encroachment of Douglas-fir and juniper into the sagebrush/grass areas. The use of fire in eastern portion would be limited as a management tool due to intermix with private property. Fire may be used to limit timber encroachment into sagebrush/grass communities; to open willow, conifer woodlands and aspen stands; and to improve age structure and stand vitality. Prescribed fire would used to treat 1000 acres per decade.

Non-Fire Treatments- Mechanical fuels management strategies should be used when prescribed fire is not appropriate to reduce fuels buildup and to avoid or mitigate the effects of potential wildland fires. Mechanical fuels can be used to treat 500 acres per decade.

Post Fire Rehabilitation and/or actions needed for Restoration – an inter-disciplinary team will develop plans for post fire rehabilitation. Post fire rehabilitation and restoration will be used to facilitate reestablishment of the potential natural community of the site. All rehabilitation actions will be commensurate with wilderness values using the minimum tool concept. The following rehabilitation concerns should be addressed:

- Slopes of 15% or greater where surface erosion is likely
- Weed free plant material will be used and preference will be given to seeding appropriate native plant species.
- Road obliteration or restoration where the road created by the suppression activity does not meet resource objectives for the area or may cause erosion.
- Areas to be rehabilitated will be inventoried for cultural resources at a Class III level prior to rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns, and constraints.
- Potential for noxious weed infestations.

8. Fire Suppression Responsibility: Fire suppression is the responsibility of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Helena National Forest, and Gallatin National Forest.

IV. Wildland Fire Management Program Components

A. Wildland Fire Suppression

The FMP is based on the concept that all wildland fires will be subject to an initial response.

Fire History

Between 1980 and 2003 the Field Office experienced 194 reported fires, of these approximately 53 percent of fires in this field office were human caused. The human caused fires are usually associated with debris burning in the spring and hunting season in the fall. The lightning fires generally occur between the months of June and August.

It should be noted that the Butte Field Office feels that there has been an under-reporting of fire occurrence on BLM jurisdiction since the protection exchange in 1987. This assumption is based upon many conversations with protecting agencies and their description of numerous fire occurrences that have never been captured by the fire reporting system. At a future date it is hoped to query dispatch fire atlases to determine if this assumption is actually true.

The annual average for all fire causes is 8.1 fires per year burning an average of 1348.40 acres per year.

Multiple fires days consisting of 2 fires or more per day have occurred 16 times with 3 or more fires occurring on two days.

The number of fires varies from year to year and is dependent on the amount of moisture associated with the annual snowpack and late spring rains. The size of fires fluctuates from year to year depending on the availability of the primary fire carrier. Perennial grasses and sagebrush are the primary fire carriers in the lower to middle elevations, and their growth is dependent upon precipitation received during the late winter and spring months. At the higher elevations primary fire carriers are perennial grasses and timber litter.

Fire occurrence is most common in the Elkhorn Mountains FMU. The majority of this field office experiences primarily Class A and B fires. The Field Office has experienced a Class D fire or greater 13 times between 1980 and 2003.

Mobilization of an Incident Management Team has occurred 8 times during this time period for fires on the Butte Field Office. The Field Office has been involved in multi-jurisdictional large fire management as well.

Fire Behavior

The Field Office supports a variety of fuel types, including grass, sage, sage/grass, juniper, ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, and mixed-conifer.

The following table represents best available information on fuels complexes within the Field Office and expected fire behavior during the fire season.

Ponderosa Pine (Timber/Litter and Grass Fuel Group)			
Fuel Model	**Rate of Spread, ch/hr**	**Flame Lengths, ft.**	**Fire Characteristics**
9	7 – 25	2.0 – 5.3	Surface fires only; potential for independent crown fire at high wind-speeds
Juniper Woodland (Timber/Litter Fuel Group)			
8	2 – 5	0.9 – 1.9	Only under low wind conditions
6	28 – 83	4.7 – 10	Only closed-canopy conditions under high wind speeds of over 20 mph at 20 feet.
Grasslands/Sagebrush (Grass Fuel Group)			
1	0 – 311	0 – 8.4	Fires burn out quickly
2	0 – 103	0 – 11	Continuous and rapid spread under high wind conditions
Douglas-fir, Lodgepole Pine & Mixed Conifer (Timber/Litter Fuel Group)			
8	0-2	.5-1.0	Surface fire only; only under severe weather do they pose a problem
Douglas-fir, Lodgepole Pine & Mixed Conifer (Timber/Litter Fuel Group)			
10	8-30	8-15	Fires burn in the surface and ground fuels with greater intensities than models; high potential for crown fire.

Suppression and Preparedness Actions

Since fire suppression is not a responsibility of the Butte Field Office the agencies providing protection will use the following as their guidance for fire suppression.

Use AMR to suppress all fires in accordance with management objectives for the FMU based on current conditions and fire location. An appropriate response could vary from limiting a fire to the smallest size possible to monitoring based upon safety concerns.

The priority for a quick suppression response for the Field Office is to prevent wildland fires from spreading into the urban interface, onto private land, and improvements on BLM lands. For any type of response, minimizing cost must be considered.

The Field Office has a small fire cache to support fuels management activities and personnel dispatches to large fires.

Requirements for fire operations can be found in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations.

The Field Office does not have a Fire Danger Operating Plan as it relies on the plans of the agencies providing fire protection.

Prevention

Under the terms of the exchange of fire protection responsibilities between the BLM Montana State Office and the Northern Region of the Forest Service fire prevention services are to be provided by the protecting agency. At the time of the development of this document it is being determined whether or not fire prevention is still a service to be provided. Until that determination is provided fire prevention activities are being performed jointly with the protecting agencies.

The full spectrum of the fire prevention program will be determined as part of the RAMS assessment being conducted for the Field Office. Following the completion of this assessment a Field Office fire prevention plan will be developed and implemented.

Special Orders and Closures

The Field Office manager or delegated acting's have authority to issue restrictions and closures. Fire restrictions and closures are normally put into place after conferring with other agencies with in the three Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG) sub zones where the Butte Field Office sets. Generally, restrictions are instituted during times of high fire

danger, fire occurrence or both, and in times when available fire personnel are limited due to high fire activity in the area (Region). All restrictions are in conformance with and use the language specified in the NRCG Restrictions and Closures Plan.

Fire Training

Training and fitness requirements for all personal involved in fire/suppression support can be found in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations. Attendance at the refresher training along with successful competition on the appropriate level of work capacity testing is a prerequisite for the issuance of a red card prior to May 1st annually.

Training files for all red carded personnel are held by the Fire Management Officer. The Western Zone Red Card Committee is responsible for issuance of position task books as well as certification of task books and qualifications. Specific guidance for the red card committee is in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations and the Montana BLM Western Fire Zone Fire Qualification Review and Certification Committee Operating Plan.

Detection

Detection of fires within the Butte Field Office is generally dependent upon reports from other agency lookouts, Field Office employees and the public. Post-high lightning activity patrols in high probability areas within the Field Office are routinely conducted on the ground, with some fire detection flights at dry times of the year. Both of these types of patrols are performed by the protecting agencies.

Fire Weather and Fire Danger

The Field Office has no permanent weather stations and relies on its interagency partners for Remote Automated Weather Station (RAWS) data. The Field Office has two portable RAWS stations for zone prescribed fire operations. National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) fire danger determinations are the responsibility of the protecting agencies.

Aviation Management

The Fire Management Officer (FMO) has been designated as the Unit Aviation Officer. All flight involving Field Office employees need to be coordinated through the FMO. Local vendors are available and are ordered through Dillon Dispatch.

The unit aviation plan can be found in Appendix B.

Initial Attack

All fires within the Field Office will be managed with suppression actions consistent with preplanned dispatch protocols in conformance with resource management objectives identified in this plan. Tactics and strategies will be based on the current and predicted weather and fire behavior. Firefighter and public safety is always the first priority. Use the following information for determining initial attack priorities.

The highest priority FMU's within the Field Office for initial attack are ranked as:

1. Bozeman-Livingston Scattered Tracts
2. Scratchgravel Hills
3. North Hills
4. Clancy-Marysville
5. Spokane Hills and North
6. Wise River Townsite
7. Boulder River
8. Big Hole River
9. Pipestone
10. Absaroka Foothills
11. Big Belt Mountains
12. Blackfoot
13. Elkhorn Mountains
14. Fleecer Mountains
15. McCartney-Rochester
16. Sleeping Giant-Sheep Creek
17. Three Forks

Extended Attack

Incident Command System (ICS) provides for a management/organizational structure on incidents that evolve in complexity or increase in size, whether within a few hours or over several days. While the criteria for incident complexity vary by local conditions, a fire that has escaped initial attack and is considered in extended attack when it:

a. Has not been contained by the initial attack resources dispatched to the fire.
b. Will not have been contained within the management objectives established for the FMU.
c. Has not been contained within the first operational period and there is no estimate of containment or control.

When complexity levels exceed initial attack capabilities, the appropriate ICS positions should be added commensurate with the complexity of the incident. The Incident Complexity Analysis and the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) will assist in determining the appropriate management structure to provide for safe and efficient fire suppression operations.

The protecting agency and the BLM will jointly participate in development of the WFSA and delegation of authority for fires on BLM land. BLM and the protecting agency will provide information relevant to the initial stages of the WFSA and provide the situational briefing for the incoming management organization. If other jurisdictions are involved all affected Line Officers or their designees will sign the delegation of authority and a Unified Command will be established to deal with the incident.

Delegations of Authority will clearly spell out Line Officer expectations and roles and responsibilities for the incoming Incident Commander as identified in the WFSA including cost containment measures.

B. Wildland Fire Use

Wildland Fire Use has been identified as a beneficial resource management tool; however fire use can only occur in the Muskrat Creek Unit of the Elkhorn Wildlife Management Unit. The Elkhorn Fire Management Plan provides specific direction on the implementation of fire use within the management unit.

C. Prescribed Fire

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

The Field Office 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 (RAMS).

Project implementation is prioritized as follows:

1. Wildland/Urban interface area.
2. Forest Health and Restoration (areas that are currently in condition class 2 and 3.
3. Watershed Structure and Integrity
4. Maintain areas that are currently in condition class 1.

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 Field Office fire program maintains 1 plastic sphere dispenser, and various types of ignition torches (drip torches).

Only Qualified personnel will participate in the implementation of prescribed fire and fuels implementation projects. A list of qualified personnel is available from the FMO.

All prescribed fire treatments are monitored 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.

Smoke Management/ Air Quality

In 1978, federal, state and local government agencies and the forest products industry formed the Montana State Airshed Group. Their purpose was to manage and limit the impacts of smoke generated from necessary prescribed burning. In 1990, agencies and companies in North Idaho joined the Montana group on an operational basis to accomplish the same purposes. South Idaho agencies and companies joined the group in 1999.

Accumulation of smoke from controlled burning is limited through scientific monitoring of weather conditions and formal coordination of

burns. Members submit a list of planned burns to the Monitoring Unit in Missoula, Montana. For each planned burn, information is provided describing the type of burn to be conducted, the number of acres, as well as the location and elevation at each site. Burns are reported by "Airshed" which are geographical areas with similar topography and weather patterns. The program coordinator and a meteorologist provide timely restriction messages for airsheds with planned burning. Weather balloons may be launched and tracked to identify specific atmospheric conditions to aid in decision-making. The Missoula Monitoring Unit issues daily decisions which can restrict burning when atmospheric conditions are not conducive to adequate smoke dispersion. Restrictions may be directed by airshed, elevation or by special impact zones around populated areas. The Monitoring Unit announces burning restrictions through 17 airshed coordinators located throughout Idaho and Montana.

The Butte Field Office has land in the following airsheds: 5, 6, 7, 8A, 8B. Within the Field Office boundary is the Butte Impact Zone and two non-attainment areas, Butte and East Helena. The Gates of the Mountains Wilderness has been designated a Montana Mandatory Class 1 airshed.

Implementation of the RAZU Online Burn Reporting System began in spring of 2002. Pre-season burn lists will be entered by individual burners, giving the responsibility for submitting and proposing daily burns back to the members.

It is the responsibility of the Airshed coordinator to be the first point of contact between the members and the Monitoring Unit regarding operational smoke issues, reporting problems, or in a crisis situation such as a smoke intrusion. The coordinator will also provide assistance to burners by entering burns in the event of system problems, providing training in using the new online program, and being the point of contact for smoke related concerns.

D. Non-Fire Fuel Applications

Non-fire fuels treatments comprise a large portion of the fuels management program in the Field Office. The strategy of using non-fire treatments is primarily related to the presence of large urban interface areas within the Field Office boundary. 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.

Implementation of non-fire fuels projects is generally accomplished through the following formats: service contracts, force account labor (Fuels Crew), and labor provided IGO with Forest Service.

The fuels program will monitor 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.

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).

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 including maps, agreements, monitoring, and project notes are compiled in project folders. The folders are maintained in hard copy formats, and in electronic formats. The BLM Prescribed Fire Management Handbook 9214 specifies project file documentation requirements for fuels treatment projects.

E. Emergency Rehabilitation and Restoration

The Field Office does not have a Normal Fire Rehabilitation Plan. If emergency rehabilitation or restoration is needed, the Montana BLM Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) team will be utilized, an interdisciplinary-burned area rehabilitation team will be formed, and plans will be developed at that time.

F. Community Protection/Community Assistance

One of the five key points of the National Fire Plan, the Community Assistance program is based on cooperation and communication among federal agencies, states, local governments, tribes and interested parties. The program strives to build capacity to develop and implement citizen-driven solutions that will lessen local vulnerability to the risks of wildland fires. Specific objectives of the program include: 1) promotion of community assistance for planning, mitigation and education; 2) hazardous fuels reduction activities, training and maintenance; and 3) enhancement of local and small business employment opportunities for rural areas.

Community Assistance funds are utilized by communities for fire planning, fuels reduction projects and educational workshops. The first step for communities is to develop a community wildfire protection plan (CWPP), assessing their risks, hazards, values and protection preparedness. The CWPP must also contain mitigation strategies, based on the findings of the assessment. Components of the CWPP meet requirements established by the National Fire Plan and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act; plans are also encouraged to meet the FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation planning process, allowing communities to apply for all-risk mitigation grants.

The hazardous fuel reduction aspect focuses on the wildland-urban interface areas, reducing the risk to people and privately owned property. Fuels projects include both wildland fuels reduction (by chemical, mechanical, biological and prescribed fire means) and structural landscape fuel modification (promoting Firewise landscaping and structures and creating defensible/survivable space).

The education component includes the development and implementation of wildfire education, training and community action/involvement programs. Education may also focus on the planning and adopting of zoning regulations and ordinances to advance wildfire safety in the urban interface. A major educational strategy involves the use of the Firewise workshop for communities, where workshop activities promote combustible vegetation management, structural ignition prevention and defensible/survivable space.

Benefits of the Community Assistance program are tri-fold. The program serves to reduce the risk and consequences of wildland fire, expand the capacity for local communities to help themselves, and to enhance the economic stability of rural communities.

All counties in the Butte Field Office (Silver Bow, Deer Lodge, Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, Gallatin and Park) have been funded through the Community Assistance program to write county-wide CWPPs and are currently working on their plans. (Broadwater County completed their CWPP with help from another grant source.) Three counties (Jefferson, Lewis & Clark and Broadwater) have received additional funds to support a highly successful fuels reduction cost-share program. Additionally, Silver Bow, Gallatin, Park and Lewis & Clark counties have been funded to host educational workshops. All counties, upon completion of the CWPPs, will have a strong desire and need for future funding to complete fuels reduction projects through their established cost-share programs.

Rural Fire Assistance Program

The Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) and Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) programs provide federal funding, administered through the State Forester, to assist rural and volunteer fire departments. RFA provides funding to enhance firefighter safety and strengthen the wildland fire protection capabilities of rural fire departments that provide support on federal ground. The RFA program offers assistance with training, equipment and prevention efforts.

The VFA program provides funding to volunteer fire departments for training, firefighting equipment and organization of new departments.

The RFA/VFA programs are designed to help departments meet and/or exceed accepted standards of fire qualifications, training and performance; thus, increasing firefighter safety.

Predictions for future RFA funds include a 50% reduction in the next year and the complete phasing out of the program by the following year.

V. – Budget and Organization

A. Budget and Organization

Bureau of Land Management Implemented Fire Resources
Office: Butte Field Office

Resources	Quantity	Number of Personnel	Total Work Months
Number of Engines:	2	0	0
Number of Water tenders:	0		
Number of Dozers:	0		
Number of Tractors / plows:	0		
Number of Fire Boats:	0		
Number of Type 1 Crews:	0		
Number of Helitack Crews:	0		
Number of Fuels Crews:	1	5	30
Number of Type 2 Crews sponsored:	0		
Number of Smokejumpers (AK & NIFC only):	0		
Number of Fire Management Officers:	1		12
Number of Assistant FMOs / FCOs:	0		
Number of Fire Operations Specialists:	0		
Number of Dispatchers:	1		12
Number of Other Aviation Staff (Aviation Mgr., Seat Mgr, etc.):	0		
Number of Mitigation/Education/Prevention Specialists / Techs:	1		12
Number of Resource Specialists:	8		24
Number of Fuels Specialists:	2		24
Number of Other Fire Staff:	0		
Number of PFT funded by Preparedness:	2		
Number of Career Seasonals funded by Preparedness:	0		
Number of Temporaries funded by Preparedness:	0		
Number of PFT funded by Fuels:	4		
Number of Career Seasonals funded by Fuels:	0		
Number of Temporaries funded by Fuels:	4		

B. Assistance Agreements and Intra/Interagency Agreements

The following is a list of agreements that pertain to fire management activities for the Field Office:

Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement between United States Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management Montana and Dakotas, National Park Service Intermountain Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain Regions, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Mountain-Prairie Region, United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Northern Region and The State of Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation – this plan is the master agreement that exchanges fire protection responsibilities.

Annual Operating Plan for the Bureau of Land Management, Butte and Dillon Field Offices, Dillon Unit, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest – this plan covers the operational procedures for initial attack and other incident support activities for a portion of the Field Office.

Helena Division, Central Montana Zone Northern Rockies Coordinating Group Operating Plan - this plan covers the operational procedures for initial attack and other incident support activities for a portion of the Field Office.

Annual Operating Plan for the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Southwestern Land Office and the Bureau of Land Management Missoula and Butte Field Offices and the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Lolo National Forest - this plan covers the operational procedures for initial attack and other incident support activities for a portion of the Field Office.

Dillon Dispatch Annual Operating Plan – this plan covers the operations of the Dillon Interagency Dispatch Center.

The Helena National Forest Fire Management Plan – BLM is signature to this plan that guides the overall fire management program for the Forest.

Community Assistance Agreement with Headwaters RC&D covers Deer Lodge, Silver Bow and Jefferson Counties – this agreement is for development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, mitigation work and education.

Community Assistance Agreement with Northern Rocky Mountain RC&D covers Gallatin and Park Counties – this agreement is for development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, mitigation work and education.

Community Assistance Agreement with Lewis & Clark County covers Lewis &

Clark, Jefferson and Broadwater Counties (TRI-CO) – this agreement is for development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, mitigation work and education.

VI. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating of the fire program will occur to determine if the program and associated projects are meeting the various resource plans directions and to determine if the costs of implementing the fire program and management effects are occurring as predicted.

Monitoring related to wildland fire or fire related projects falls under the general monitoring and evaluation guidelines outlined in the Resource Management Plan. Site specific monitoring needs are identified in analysis for individual fire related projects.

As required in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations the Butte Field Office will evaluate its program annually to ensure accountability, facilitate resolution of conflict, and identify resource shortages and priorities. This process will be facilitated through the annual review of interagency operating agreements, the completion of readiness reviews, formal program reviews, the FPA process, and by performing after action reviews of fuels management projects by the fuels ID team.