



GIFFORD PINCHOT NATIONAL FOREST

## **FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Reviewed and Updated by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
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Interagency Federal fire policy requires that every area with burnable vegetation must have a Fire Management Plan (FMP). This FMP provides information concerning the fire process for the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and compiles guidance from existing sources such as but not limited to, the Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LMP), national policy, and national and regional directives.

The potential consequences to firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and values to be protected help determine the management response to wildfire. Firefighter and public safety are the first consideration and are always the priority during every response to wildfire.

The following chapters discuss broad forest and specific Fire Management Unit (FMU) characteristics and guidance.

**Chapter 1** introduces the area covered by the FMP, includes a map of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, addresses the agencies involved, and states why the forest is developing the FMP.

**Chapter 2** establishes the link between higher-level planning documents, legislation, and policies and the actions described in FMP.

**Chapter 3** articulates specific goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and/or desired future condition(s), as established in the forest's LMP, which apply to all the forest's FMUs and those that are unique to the forest's individual FMUs.

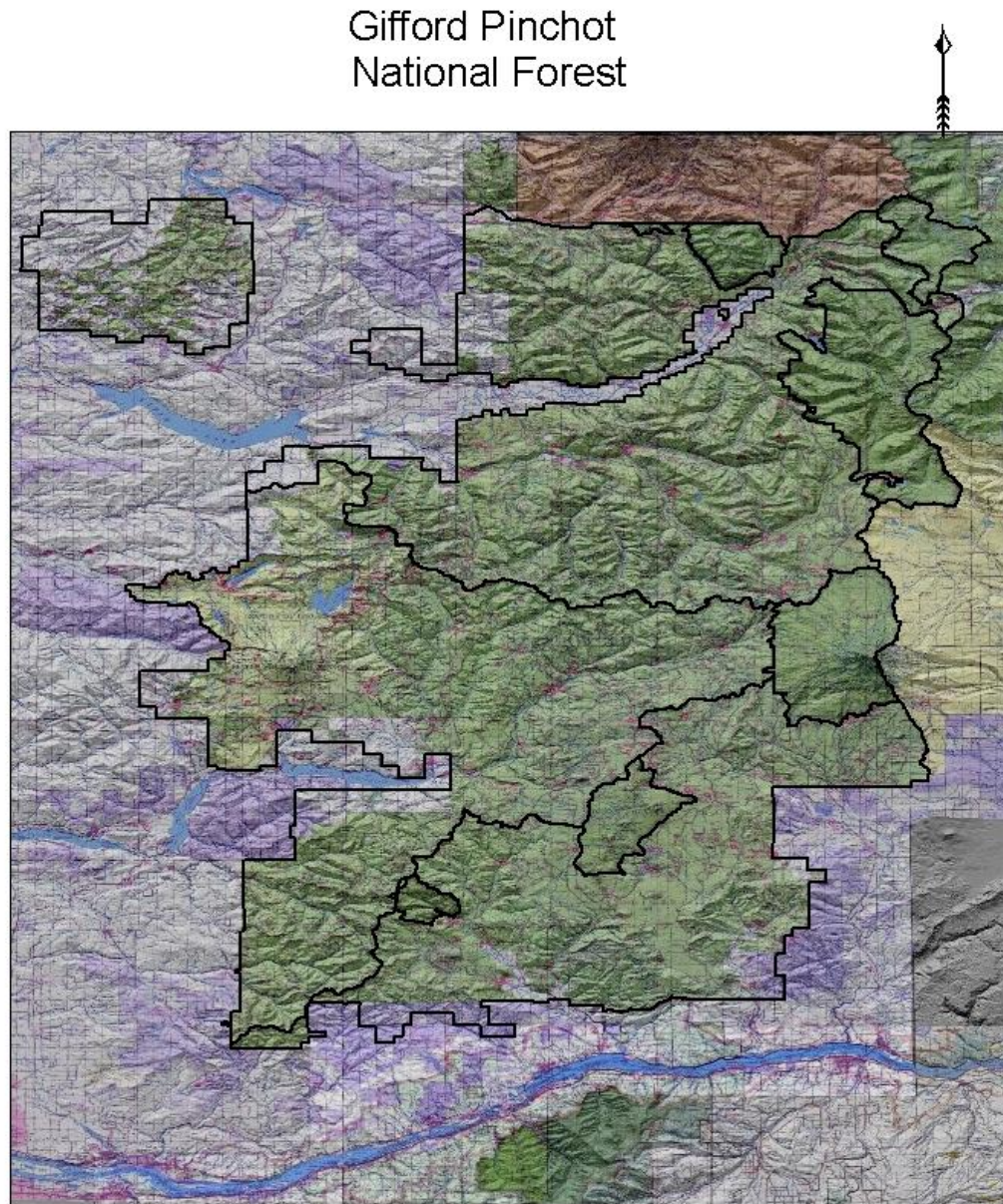
## Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest (GPNF) developed this FMP as a decision support tool to help fire personnel and decision makers determine the management response to an unplanned ignition. FMPs do not make decisions. Instead, they provide information, organized by FMUs, which provides a finer scale summarization of information than is possible at the forest level. These descriptions bring specific detail about the identifiable areas on the ground. FMPs are not static documents. They will evolve and be revised as conditions change on the ground and as modifications are made to the Gifford Pinchot LRMP.

The GPNF is located in southwest Washington State and stretches along the western slopes of the Cascade Mountains. The Columbia River is to the south, Mount Rainer National Park to the north, with an intermix of State and private ownership to the west. The eastern Forest boundary is shared with the Mt Baker-Snoqualmie and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests, the Yakama Indian Reservation and some State and private ownership.

Consisting of over 1.4 million acres of land, the Forest is predominately forested with Western hemlock and Douglas-fir trees at lower elevations and Silver fir, Noble fir and Mountain hemlock trees at higher elevations up to the timberline. Elevations range from just over 500 feet in the southwestern portion up to persistently snow covered mountaintops above 10,000 feet within the Cascade mountain range. The majority of the forest falls within 2000 to 3000 foot elevation, the highest point being Mt Adams at 12,281 feet. A map of the forest and general vicinity is shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Forest and General Vicinity Map



## **Chapter 2. POLICY, LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING, AND PARTNERSHIPS**

The regulations and policy in the following documents guide the fire management as outlined in this FMP.

### **2.1. National and Regional Fire Management Policy**

Forest Service policy and direction that are relevant to this plan include:

- 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review (January 2001)
- National Fire Plan
- Forest Service Manual 5100
- Forest Service Handbook 5109
- Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (February 13, 2009)

### **2.2. Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan**

- Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, Amendment 11, February 1995
- Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, Amendment 11, Update #2, June 22, 1995
- Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, Amendment 11, Update #3, June 1, 1998
- Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision, 1990

### **2.3. Partnership**

Collaboration with Regional, State, local stakeholders, tribes and the public occurs on several levels consistent with the Framework for Collaboration (10-Year Comprehensive Strategy, August 2001). Extensive coordination and public involvement was accomplished in development of the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

The Gifford Pinchot and Mt Hood National Forests share key Fire Staff Officers and cooperatively organize and coordinate wildland fire management programs. Dispatching for the two Forests and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area are coordinated through the Columbia Cascade Communication Center.

Separate Fire Management Plans were completed for the Gifford Pinchot and Mt Hood National Forests, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and other federal partners.

This fire management plan has been developed through coordination with adjacent State, tribal and rural cooperators. Key collaborators include Washington Department of Natural Resources, Yakama Nation and Yakama Agency Bureau of Indian Affairs, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Mt Rainer National Park, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the counties of Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Lewis, Yakama, Pierce and Skamania.

### **Central Cascades Fire Planning Unit**

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest falls within the Central Cascades Fire Planning Unit (NW\_WA\_007). The Central Cascades Fire Planning Unit (CC-FPU) functions as the geographic fire-planning component of the Federal Fire Program Analysis – Preparedness Module (PM) planning process.

The CC-FPU serves to facilitate the landscape-scale development of the FPA Planning System and is purposefully designed as an interagency planning unit, consisting of the following federal agencies:

- DOI Fish & Wildlife Service Region 1
- DOI Bureau of Indian Affairs – Yakama Agency
- DOI Bureau of Land Management – Spokane District
- USDA Forest Service
  - Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area
  - Gifford Pinchot National Forest
  - Mt. Hood National Forest

## **Chapter 3. FIRE MANAGEMENT UNIT DESCRIPTIONS**

The primary purpose of developing FMUs in fire management planning is to assist in organizing information in complex landscapes. FMUs divide the landscape into smaller geographic areas to easily describe safety considerations, physical, biological, social characteristics and to frame associated planning guidance based on these characteristics.

The following information, including the summaries of fuels conditions, weather and burning patterns, and other conditions in specific FMUs, helps determine the management response to an unplanned ignition and provides a quick reference to the strategic goals in the Gifford Pinchot LRMP.

### **3.1. Fire Management Considerations Applicable to All Forest Fire Management Units**

The management direction and goals in the Forest Plan describe the desired future conditions of land and resources for the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and the planning, analysis, monitoring, and adjustments that must be done to make these goals a reality. Full attainment of these goals and objectives can be influenced by Congressional budget allocations, changed circumstances, or new information. National, regional, and Forest-wide fire management goals and objectives are identified below.

The Guiding Principles of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (FWFMP) are the foundation that guides development of this FMP.



### Guiding Principles

1. Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.
2. The role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent will be incorporated into the planning process.
3. Fire Management Plans, programs, and activities support land and resource management plans and their implementation.
4. Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities.
5. Fire management programs and activities are economically viable, based upon values to be protected, costs, and land and resource management.
6. Fire Management Plans and activities are based upon the best available science.
7. Fire Management Plans and activities incorporate public health and environmental quality considerations.
8. Federal, State, tribal, local, interagency, and international coordination and cooperation are essential.
9. Standardization of policies and procedures among federal wildland fire management agencies is an ongoing objective.

The goals for Fire Management on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest have been expanded from those outlined in the Forest Plan. They tier from and are closely aligned with both national and regional fire management goals and fire policy direction. The following are the fire management goals that will guide development of this FMP.

- Every fire management activity is undertaken with firefighter and public safety as the primary consideration.
- Fire Management program activities are aligned to fully complement one another in support of an ecological approach to resource management.
- Fire-related considerations are integrated into land management planning alternatives, goals and objectives.
- Fires are managed using the full range of wildland and prescribed fire options to protect, enhance and restore resources and developments within and adjacent to the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.
- Fire managers collaborate with other federal and state land management agencies, air regulators, and the public to coordinate fire management activities which may impact private or non-forest lands and/or public health

The accomplishment of these goals contribute in meeting the forest plan standards, they also contribute to meeting regional and national strategic goals such as the 10-year Comprehensive Strategy, the National Fire Plan as well as wildland fire policy.

Standards and guidelines provide a detailed comprehensive strategy to move toward the desired conditions. The Forest-wide standard and guidelines including, management response to wildland fire occurring in LRMP management areas, goals and desired condition are described in section 3.1.1 of this plan.

LRMP Management Area Desired Future Condition states the desired condition that management actions should maintain or move toward.

## MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO WILDLAND FIRE

FWFMP defines **wildland fire** as a general term describing any non-structure fire that occurs in the wildland. Wildland fires are categorized into two distinct types:

- a) Prescribed Fires – Planned ignitions
- b) Wildfires – Unplanned ignitions or prescribed fires that are declared wildfires

FWFMP allows a wildland fire to be concurrently managed for one or more objective and objectives may change as the fire spreads across the landscape.

### Prescribed Fires – Planned Ignitions

Management ignited prescribed fires are used to achieve specific objectives, including altering, maintaining, or restoring vegetative communities; achieving desired resource conditions; and to protect life, property, and values that would be degraded and/or destroyed by wildfire.

Use of planned ignitions is not addressed in this FMP. Planned ignitions are addressed in project specific NEPA documents and as described in prescribed fire implementation plans.

Prescribed fire policy includes FSM 5140 – Fire Use and the Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide, July 2008.

### Wildfires – Unplanned ignitions or prescribed fires that are declared wildfires

FWFMP for initial action on human-caused wildfire is to suppress the fire at the lowest cost with the fewest negative consequences with respect to firefighter and public safety.

The LRMP describes three possible responses to wildland fire, including confine, contain and/or control. These management responses provide flexibility toward meeting suppression objectives and the desired future condition objectives of each management area.

The management responses to wildland fire to be considered are described as:

- Confine – To restrict the fire within boundaries established either prior to the fire, during the fire, or in an escaped fire situation analysis, (the current tool is WFDSS).
- Contain – To surround a fire and any spot fires it produces with a control line, which can reasonably be expected to check the fire's spread under prevailing and predicted conditions.
- Control – To complete the control line around a fire and any interior islands to be saved, burn out any unburned areas adjacent to the fire side of the control line, and cool all hot spots that are immediate threats to the control line.

In all cases, the management response to wildland fire shall first be responsive to the #1 FWFMP guiding principle:



1. Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.

LRMP management requirements allow for some management response flexibility.

Selected management response will be based on:

- Firefighter and public safety
- LRMP management response requirements
- Management of costs in relation to values at risk
- Environmental and fire behavior factors such as fire intensity level, seasonal dryness, predicted weather and season ending events and other long-term assessments
- Anticipated fire effects such as those that move toward or achieve desired conditions or affect air quality
- Other factors specific to an incident or complex of incidents

**Management Requirements** for management response to a wildland fire on the Gifford Pinchot Forest are based on management area objectives and standards and guidelines established in the LRMP. Response options are summarized in Table 1.1 and detailed in section 3.1.1., Table 1.2.

Table 1.1. Summary of Management Response Options

Designated Area Name: Congressionally Reserved Areas			
Management Area	Confine	Contain	Control
Mt St Helens NVM	X	X	X
Wilderness	X	X	X

Designated Area Name: Administratively Withdrawn Areas			
Management Area	Confine	Contain	Control
Administrative Sites			X
Developed Recreation			X
Research Natural Area	X	X	X
Roaded Recreation w/o Timber Harvest		X	X
Special Interest	X	X	
Unroaded Recreation w/o Timber Harvest		X	X
Utility Sites & Corridors			X
Wild & Scenic Rivers			X
Wildlife Special	X		X

Designated Area Name: Late-Successional Reserves and Late Successional Areas			
Management Area	Confine	Contain	Control
Administrative Sites			X
Developed Recreation			X
Experimental Forest			X
General Late-Successional Reserve			X
Mountain Goat			X
Roaded Recreation			X
Special Interest			X
Unroaded Recreation w/o Timber Harvest			X
Utility Sites and Corridors			X
Visual Emphasis			X
Wild & Scenic Rivers			X
Wildlife Special			X

Designated Area Name: Matrix			
Management Area	Confine	Contain	Control
Deer & Elk Winter Range		X	
General Forest		X	X
Mountain Goat	X	X	X
Roaded Recreation w/ Timber Harvest		X	X
Scenic & Recreational Rivers			X
Visual Emphasis			X

Note: Management Area's may occur in more than one Designated Area. See Table 1.3 or LRMP for additional information.

**Strategic Objectives** for management response to a wildland fire on the Gifford Pinchot Forest are based on Northwest Forest Plan (LRMP, Amendment 11) Riparian Reserve Standards and Guidelines for Fire Management. Strategic objectives include:

- FM – 1 Design fire suppression strategies, practices, and activities to meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives, and to minimize disturbance of riparian ground cover and vegetation. Strategies should recognize the role of fire in ecosystem function and identify those instances where fire suppression or fuels management activities could be damaging to long-term ecosystem function.
- FM – 2 Locate incident bases, camps, helibases, staging areas, helispots and other centers for incident activities outside Riparian Reserves. If the only suitable location for such activities is within the Riparian Reserve, an exemption may be granted following review and recommendation by a resource advisor. The advisor will prescribe the location, use conditions, and rehabilitation requirements. Use an interdisciplinary team to predetermine suitable incident base and helibase location if in Riparian Reserves.
- FM – 3 Minimize delivery of chemical retardant, foam, or additives to surface waters. An exception may be warranted in situations where overriding immediate safety imperatives exist, or following review and recommendation by a resource advisor, when an escape would cause more long-term damage.
- FM – 5 Immediately establish an emergency team to develop a rehabilitation treatment plan needed to attain Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives whenever Riparian Reserves are significantly damaged by wildfire burning outside prescribed parameters.
- Other – In Riparian Reserves, the goal of wildfire suppression is to limit the size of all fires. When watershed and/or landscape analysis or province-level plans are completed and approved, some natural fires may be allowed to burn under prescribed conditions. Rabidly extinguishing smoldering coarse woody debris and duff should be considered to preserve these ecosystems elements. In Riparian Reserves, water drafting sites should be located and managed to minimize adverse effects on riparian habitat and water quality, as consistent with Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives.

**Type 3, 4 and 5 Incident Commanders** will base their tactics on management response guidelines described in this plan and specific requirements outlined in their Delegation of Authority to manage Type 3, 4 and 5 incidents. Extended attack Type 3 Incident Commanders may receive a supplemental Delegation of Authority and Leaders Intent expectations.

**Type 1, 2 and 3 Incident Commanders and Incident Management Teams** will be provided with an incident specific Delegation of Authority and a Leaders Intent document detailing Line Officer expectations. Incident Commanders and Incident Management Teams will base their tactics on management response guidelines described in this plan and specific requirements outlined in their Leaders Intent document.

### Wildfires – Analysis and Documentation of Unplanned Ignitions

Beginning in 2009, the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) replaced the Wildland Fire Support Analysis (WFSA) as a decision support system. When analyzing wildland fire incidents to determine management response, WFDSS is the tool that will be used to support management decisions.

WFDSS is appropriate for all incident complexity levels (i.e., Type 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 Incidents). For all complexity levels, the decision making process for selecting a management response(s) will be analyzed and documented utilizing WFDSS.

Described above are Northwest Forest Plan (LRMP, Amendment 11) strategic objectives and management requirements that are included in WFDSS and guide management response.

Generally, the level of planning, analysis and documentation increases with incident complexity level, with Type 5 incidents requiring minimal analysis and documentation and a Type 1 incidents requiring more intensive analysis and documentation.

Table 1.2 provides a reference tool that may be used as a guide when determining the level of analysis, planning, and documentation necessary for fires of various incident complexities and selected management response.

Table 1.2. Level of WFDDSS Planning, Analysis and Documentation Requirements for Selected Management Response(s)

	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
Suggested Incident Complexity	Initial Attack (Type 3, 4, and 5) incidents: Pre-planned response for Initial Attack fires follows pre-planned response from FMP and annual Delegation of Authority to Manage Type 3, 4 and 5 Incidents.	Extended Attack and/or short-term duration (Type 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) incidents and fires managed for safety, access or resource benefit objectives.	Extended Attack and/or mid to long-term duration (Type 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) incidents:
Objectives	Following pre-planned response from FMP and annual Delegation of Authority to Manage Type 3, 4 and 5 Incidents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Objectives and Management Requirements pre-loaded by Fire Management Unit</li> <li>Incident Objectives and Requirements tiered from Strategic Objectives and Management Requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Objectives and Management Requirements pre-loaded by Fire Management Unit</li> <li>Incident Objectives and Requirements tiered from Strategic Objectives and Management Requirements</li> </ul>
Course of Action	Following pre-planned response from FMP and annual Delegation of Authority to Manage Type 3, 4 and 5 Incidents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Direction for the Course of Action (COA) tiered from the Incident Objectives and Requirements</li> <li>If appropriate, Management Action Points (MAPs) are Considered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Direction for the Course of Action (COA) tiered from the Incident Objectives and Requirements</li> <li>If appropriate, Management Action Points (MAPs) are Considered</li> </ul>
Documentation Required	<p>Minimal Documentation if following pre-planned response from FMP and annual Delegation of Authority to Manage Type 3, 4 and 5 Incidents.</p> <p>Alternate management response fires, such as indirect action for safety or access considerations or resource benefit purposes requires a Resource Benefit fire decision document (DAR-Decision Analysis Report).</p> <p>Unplanned ignitions requiring a DAR will most likely require a level 2 or 3 level of analysis and planning</p>	<p>More Documentation requirements</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire Behavior Models</li> <li>Values Inventory</li> <li>Relative Risk/Response Level Charts</li> <li>Resource availability to complete COA</li> <li>Cost &amp; cost development method</li> </ul>	<p>Most Documentation Requirements Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long term fire</li> <li>Expense</li> <li>Evaluation of fire environment, values and the landscape</li> <li>More modeling</li> <li>Documentation detail necessary for management response</li> <li>Assessment of resources necessary and available to achieve the decision and objectives</li> </ul> <p>Things to Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire Behavior Models</li> <li>Values at Risk</li> <li>Relative Risk/Response Level Charts</li> <li>Resources availability to complete the COA</li> <li>Cost projections &amp; how cost was developed</li> </ul>
Agency Administrator Signature Required	<p><b>It Depends –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No signature is required – If following pre-planned response from FMP and annual Delegation of Authority to Manage Type 3, 4 and 5 Incidents.</li> <li>Signature is required – If there is a decision made to use an alternate suppression response, for safety or access considerations or resource benefit.</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes

Concepts in a WFDDSS website article titled: *Response Levels and Wildland Fire Decision Support System Content Outline* were used to develop this reference tool.

### **3.1.1. Gifford Pinchot Land and Resource Management Plan and FMU Guidance**

LRMP guidance, as it relates to fire protection, is displayed in the following tables 1.3. Separate tables were developed for LRMP Management Areas occurring in the four Designated Areas.

Designated Areas are identified as follows:

1. Congressionally Reserved Areas
2. Administratively Withdrawn Areas
3. Late-Successional Reserves and Managed Late Successional Areas
4. Matrix

Management Area descriptions include fire management unit (FMU), goals, desired future condition, fire protection standards & guidelines and non-fire protection standards & guidelines that should be considered. User note: Management Areas may fall within more than one Designated Area.

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**3.1.2. Physical Characteristics that Apply to All Fire Management Units**

See Fire Management Unit descriptions for Cowlitz Valley, Mount St Helens, Mt. Adams, and Wilderness FMUs.