# Spatial Wildland Fire Management Plan
## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

**What is it**?

The spatial Fire Management Plan process displays key information of strategic direction and operational guidance into a geospatial and graphical format.

**Is it required?**

No. At present, the concept is being utilized by two BIA agencies. The standard is the 2009 interagency fire management plan template.

**How does it relate to the existing planning process and guidance?**

It largely replaces the traditional text-based FMP document with a more streamlined document, coupled with more extensive map and graphic products.

**Why change? What are the benefits?**

Critical information is more readily accessible in graphic format to users such as managers, operational staff, incident teams, cooperators and the public.

Routine updates are easier (can be updated on the maps without making any changes to the approved document) as conditions change (e.g. fuels projects are completed and/or wildfires occur).

Updates can be real-time for incident specific information.

Geospatially represented information can be integrated with other efforts such as WFDSS, unit management plans, etc.

**Is this a new process – has anyone ever tried it?**

Pilot projects are planned or underway in most federal land management agencies. The pilot projects are voluntary efforts by individual field units, and are supported by national and state/regional offices.

The FWS has completed a spatial fire management plan, including environmental compliance, for all units in the state of New Mexico. They are working with other units to develop additional pilot projects.

The BIA completed one in Western Region and one in Southwest Region and has initiated projects in two other regions. NPS initiated pilot projects in several units, and the BLM will be applying the concept to the Boise BLM District as their first pilot project.

The USFS has piloted a similar effort to develop Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) ready products based on forest plan direction.

The BIA does not currently require it, but this concept is being utilized by several BIA agencies. The goal is to develop a process to help improve the quality of the WFMP product, making the information more useful and easily accessible (especially during emergency decision making), and minimize unnecessary information in the spatial WFMP narrative. The BIA template is consistent with and meets the intent of the 2009 WFMP template used by all DOI agencies.

In most cases, there will be a text-based component of the wildland fire management plan (WFMP) that is greatly reduced in size since much of the information from the original document has been moved to "*mapsheets*".

Mapsheets are a collection of succinct text, geospatial information, tables and other elements that can be referenced quickly and provide intuitive access to critical fire management information. Each unit will have one or more mapsheets representing different information themes, such as "Strategic planning/Operations, Current conditions.

**1.** The purpose of the BIA spatial WFMP template is to provide a framework to facilitate and expedite the fire management planning process. The template was designed to be applicable to each BIA region and agency to insure that it fulfils the requirements necessary for the location being planned for. Within the template, text has been representatively color coded:

- Black text: applies nationally to all units in Indian Country and should meet all agency needs. (Intent is that all, or at least most, text in black will stay the same and be used by all units)

- Blue text: applies regionally and should be initially updated by the region and then applicable (text remaining the same) to all units within that region.

- Red text: Applies to each unit as an example of information minimally required for the fire management plan. All text in red is intended to be updated by each local unit, making sure that it is applicable to their own unique location. If any text in red is not applicable to that local unit, it should be discarded or revised to reflect the local unit's goals and objectives. The unit should also add any text that they feel is important/necessary to represent their local situation.

**2.** The intent of the narrative is to include only high level, strategic direction that adequately describes the unit's fire program. The Planning/Operations mapsheets are a spatial representation of the strategic goals and objectives located in chapter 3, while also providing some decision support direction.

**3.** The additional Current conditions mapsheet is intended to address any additional descriptive fire management information such as current condition, fuel type, vegetation types, and fire occurrence. Other fire operational and day to day preparedness plans should be addressed and found in the annual Operations Plan (AOP).

Mapsheets are custom made by the local unit, region or with assistant from BIA-NIFC.

**4.** There are 3 FMU definitions used in this standardized process which represent Indian country. The Asset Protection Unit (APU) and Resource Management Unit (RMU) should adequately apply to most units, while the Wildland Management Unit (WMU) definition will apply on a limited basis to units with a wilderness or roadless area. These standardized definitions can easily be uploaded directly into WFDSS for use in documenting decisions.

**5.** Within any of the 3 FMUs described above, additional delineation may be made to describe unique areas with similar management constraints, requirements, and/or guidelines. These are called Management Action Areas (MAA), enabling further refinement of descriptions of how an agency or tribe may want to manage fire on the landscape. These can be uploaded directly into WFDSS as "management requirements" for use in documenting decisions.