

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

This Fire Management Plan (FMP) provides a framework for the fire management programs of the U.S. Forest Service's Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest (USFS), Bureau of Land Management's Medford District (BLM), National Park Service's Oregon Caves National Monument (NPS), and Oregon Department of Forestry's Southwest District (ODF). This joint management plan includes all aspects of managing wildland fire for safe accomplishment of both resource protection and resource management objectives. This plan applies to approximately 4 million acres of federally managed and state protected lands in Southwest Oregon, with a small portion in Northwest California (see Figure 1).

Its boundaries embrace the Siskiyou Mountains, Coastal Range, and West Side of the Cascade Range. Lands within Oregon are located within Douglas and Coos Counties to the North, Curry County to the West, Josephine County in the center and Jackson and Klamath Counties to the East (Figure 1). Lands administered by the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest within California are located in Del Norte and Siskiyou Counties.

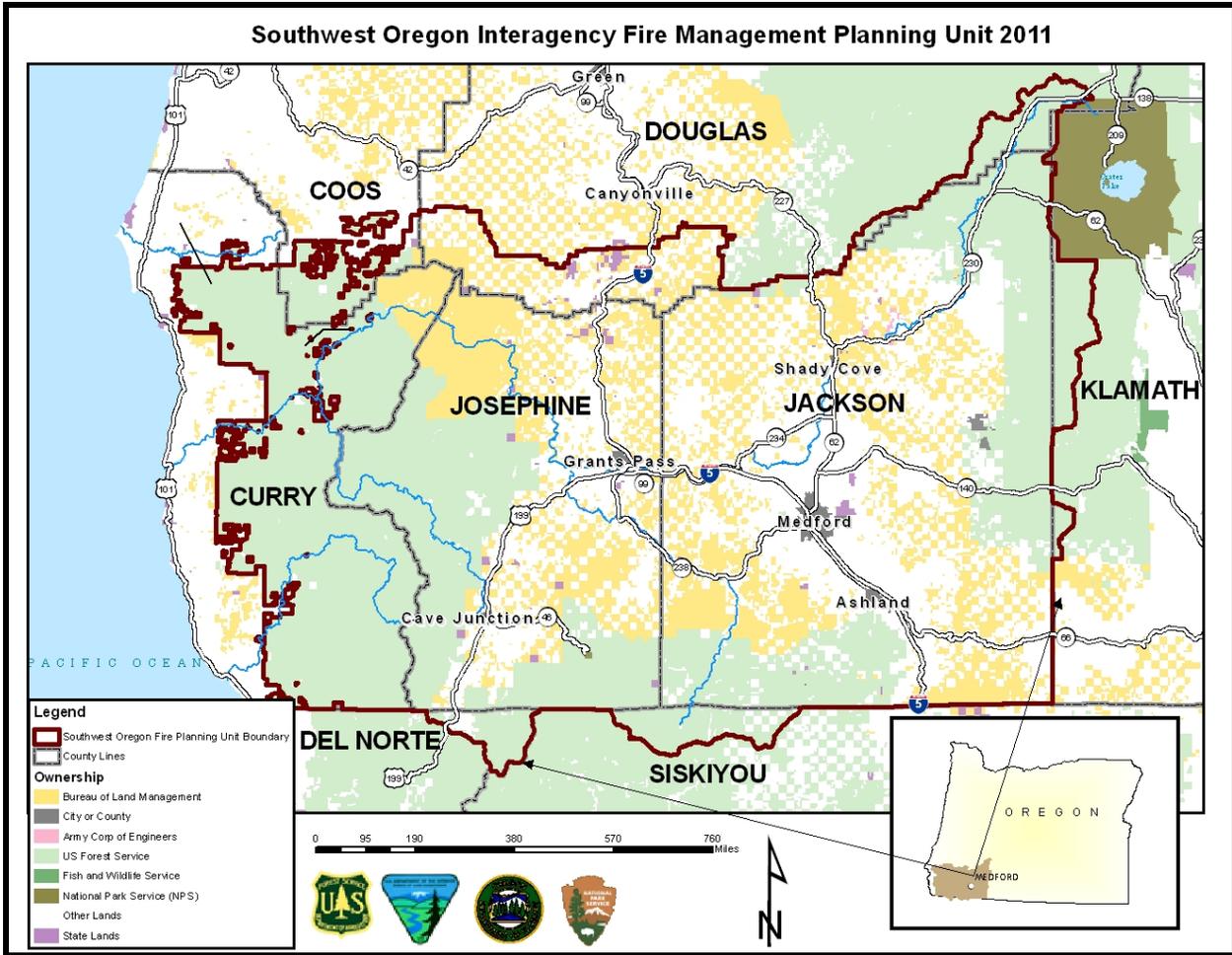


Figure 1. Southwest Oregon Fire Management Planning Unit.

The purpose of this FMP is to identify and integrate all Federal wildland fire guidance, direction, and information required to implement national fire policy and fire management direction in a single document. The FMP allows management direction to be easily accessible by fire and resource personnel. It highlights management direction to facilitate development and implementation of fire management strategies.

Contemporary wildland fires in the geographic area have grown in size and intensity in recent history thus causing numerous undesirable changes in the structure, function and composition of forest vegetation (Skinner et al. 2006). One of the primary factors responsible for the increased size, intensity, and severity of wildfires is fire exclusion in all fire-adapted ecosystems, which has led to uncharacteristically high fuel accumulations in many of those ecosystems (Arno and Allison-Bunnell 2002, Stephens and Sugihara 2006).

The increasing size, intensity, and severity of wildfires pose greater ever increasing threats to human life, property and natural resources. More people are recreating on federal lands and building homes in wildland urban interface areas,

increasing their exposure to naturally ignited wildland fires and increasing the risk of human-caused wildfire ignitions. In addition, the threat to cultural resources is increased by uncharacteristically high fire intensities and severities resulting from changes in vegetation, fuel loadings, and fire behavior. Fire suppression costs continue to increase each year.

This FMP highlights management direction to facilitate development and implementation of appropriate fire management strategies. FMPs do not make decisions and are not static documents. This document will evolve and be revisited as conditions change on the ground and as modifications are made to the Federal agencies' Land and Resource Management Plans or as new NEPA decisions are made.

This document provides information, organized by **Fire Management Units (FMUs)**, which provides a finer scale summarization of information than is possible at the forest-wide, BLM district-wide, or monument level.

Western Oregon Fire Protection Contract (BLM administered Lands)

ODF and the Douglas Fire Protective Association (DFPA) provide suppression, prevention and detection services to the BLM administered Public Lands in the Medford District through the Western Oregon Fire Protection Contract. The inter-mixed ownership patterns of the BLM lands and private land in relation to fire protection makes this an efficient arrangement for all parties. The contract is based on the resource objectives described in the Resource Management Plans (RMP) of this BLM administrative unit. The contract can be modified to reflect new or changes in resource objectives.