

FIRE

A VISION

Fire is a friend -- it enriches our forests. Fire plays a key role in maintaining the diversity of our vegetation and as a consequence diversity in our wildlife. But, we lay it down and put out before it gets catastrophic.

This looks into the future, although some may be happening now. It is stated in the "present tense" as if it is already that way. This gives a feel of where we are heading. It paints a general picture with a broad brush.



MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Fire, as a critical natural process, is integrated into activities on a landscape scale and across agency boundaries. Wildland fire will be used to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and, as closely as possible, be allowed to function in its natural ecological role.

This snaps a more detailed picture. It gives a feel of the intent, purpose, and goals. It is the framework for the standards and guidelines.

C. Forest-wide Prescriptions

Setting The Stage

Since the dawn of time, lightning started most fires. Over many centuries, fire influenced the life cycle of plants and plant communities. Many plants adapted to fire effects, and some are even dependent upon fires for germination and growth.

Even as the smoke clears, the new forest is born in the ashes of fertile soils. The fire cycle of a forest leads from bare ground to fresh meadows to vigorous seedling and sapling trees, fast growing closed tree stands, and finally into mature and old growth forests. Along this cycle, various plants and animals, including ourselves, have their moments of glory.

The best landscapes present a mix of opportunities and benefits. All kinds of plants and animals are found. Water is plentiful and pure. Different parts of the land are found in contrasting stages of the fire cycle. There is something for everyone.

Without fire, most of the forest would terminate in the last stage of the fire cycle. Everything would appear about the same. Plants and animals requiring other parts of the cycle would disappear.

Fire is the ignition key that starts the cycle again. It gives many plants and animals a chance to reproduce and grow again. There is renewed supply of water, wood, forage, wildlife, and places for you and me to enjoy.

Standards and Guidelines

JICARILLA RANGER DISTRICT... On the Jicarilla District, unplanned natural ignitions will be managed in accordance with personnel constraints, weather and burning conditions, or suppressed when the ignition is within a 1/4 mile of an active gas well. As a guideline, remove slash to provide future protection from wildfire and for seedbed preparation. Unplanned ignitions will be suppressed in seedling and sapling stands.

SMOKE MGT PLANS / BURN PERMITS... Prepare smoke management plans to coordinate and manage smoke dispersal with other agencies and with meteorological conditions. Obtain burning permits from New Mexico Environmental Division - Air Quality Bureau to ensure conformity with State Implementation Plans for emissions of regulated air pollutants from forest lands or facilities.

FUELS... Activity created fuels and natural fuels will be treated to a level that the maximum tolerable loss objective can be met.

MGT AREA PRESPECTIVES... A prescription for each management area will reflect the objectives and range of conditions that these objectives can be accomplished.

FIRE... Fire response will be appropriate for each planned or unplanned fire ignition by considering the fire environment and management area prescriptions. Every consideration will be given to use fire to help meet management area objectives, while providing for public safety and property protection.