



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

## DOI WILDLAND FIRE PROGRAM POLICY MEMORANDUM No. 2023-005

To: Director, Bureau of Land Management  
Director, National Park Service  
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation  
Director, U.S. Geological Survey

From: Jeffery Rupert, Director, Office of Wildland Fire

Subject: Guidance for Full-Year Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Allocations and Execution for the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Public Law 117-328)

Due Dates: April 7, 2023: For Fuels Management, to update information in the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System for full-year allocations  
April 28, 2023: To submit a national-level bureau strategic recruiting plan  
October 15, 2023: For Fuels Management and Burned Area Rehabilitation, to report annual accomplishments

Effective Date: Immediately

Expiration Date: Remains in effect unless rescinded or modified.

**Purpose:** This Policy Memorandum (PM) provides direction regarding budget allocations and execution for the Department of the Interior's Wildland Fire Management (WFM) program for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, based on the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Public Law (P.L.) 117-328.

**Background: Appropriations:** [P.L. 117-328](#) was enacted December 29, 2022. The law appropriates a total of \$1,507,786,000 for Interior's WFM program for FY 2023. All of these appropriations are available until expended.

Title I of Division G (the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2023) appropriates \$663,786,000 for Interior's WFM account and \$340,000,000 for Interior's Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund. The appropriations for the Reserve Fund are available for transfer to the WFM account for the purpose of Suppression Operations.

The appropriations for the WFM account are available for these activities in the following amounts:

- Preparedness: \$381,816,000;

- Fuels Management: \$247,000,000; and
- Other Operations: \$34,970,000.

The appropriations for Other Operations include the following amounts for the three subactivities:

- Burned Area Rehabilitation: \$20,470,000;
- Facilities Construction and Maintenance: \$10,000,000; and
- Joint Fire Science Program: \$4,500,000.

Title VII of Division N (the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023) appropriates \$504,000,000 for Interior's WFM account. These appropriations are available for these activities in the following amounts:

- Preparedness: \$45,343,000; and
- Suppression Operations: \$458,657,000.

**Congressional Directives:** The statements and reports associated with P.L. 117-328 include several briefing requirements, reporting requirements, and other directives for Interior's and the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) wildland fire management programs. A summary of these provisions follows. This list is not exhaustive. Each of the linked documents has more detailed information. Some of the requirements are only for USDA or the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) but they have a nexus to Interior's WFM program; we are providing those for your awareness.

- Section 440 of Title IV in Division G waives the **premium pay cap** for the pay of certain wildland fire employees for services performed during 2023 for Interior and USDA.
- The [Joint Explanatory Statement](#) (JES) for Division G of P.L. 117-328 (or 2023 JES-Division G):
  - Directs Interior to provide a briefing to the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, within 60 days of enactment (i.e., the end of **February 2023**) on the proposed **distribution of hazardous fuels funding** to its component bureaus, the allocation methodology, and how Interior takes into account areas with special designations, such as the Oregon and California Grant Lands (This directive is continued from the [Joint Explanatory Statement](#) for P.L. 117-103, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022; or 2022 JES.);
  - Directs Interior to report to the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, at the end of each fiscal year on the **number of acres treated** by prescribed fire, mechanical fuels reduction, and thinning activities, as well as the acres treated in the wildland-urban interface and the costs associated with such activities (This directive is continued from the 2022 JES.);
  - Directs Interior to continue to develop **technologies to allow aerial assets to safely operate in degraded visual environments**, specifically wildfire smoke;

- Requires **USDA's U.S. Forest Service (USFS)** to brief the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, within 90 days of enactment of the law (i.e., the end of **March 2023**) on the **housing** necessary to support a permanent workforce, detailing the deferred maintenance for existing housing and required new housing, and highlighting any current barriers such as market rate requirements and federal housing price determinations; and
- Directs **USDA/USFS** to develop policies to implement the findings in its **Aerial Firefighting Use and Effectiveness study** and brief the House and Senate appropriations subcommittees within 90 days of enactment of the law (i.e., the end of **March 2023**).
- According to the 2023 JES-Division G, [House Report 117-400](#) carries the same weight as the JES unless the JES expressly indicates otherwise. House Report 117-400 contains several policy provisions and requirements of either direct or indirect relevance to Interior's WFM program. Among them are the following:
  - Directs Interior and USDA/USFS to brief the House and Senate Appropriations Committees within 180 days of enactment of the law (i.e., the end of **June 2023**) on limitations to expanding hiring of people who are **formerly incarcerated** (*This briefing occurred February 28, 2023.*);
  - Directs Interior, in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and USDA/USFS, to conduct a comprehensive **study on long-term health effects that wildland firefighters experience**; encourages that the report include information on the effects from firefighter exposure to fires, smoke, and toxic fumes when in service and include the race/ethnicity, age, gender, and time of service of wildland firefighters; and further directs for the report to include recommendations to Congress on what legislative actions are needed to support wildland firefighters in preventing health issues from this toxic exposure, similar to veterans that are exposed to burn pits (see also [P.L. 117-326](#), the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, which contains related provisions);
  - Urges Interior and USDA to ensure that a broad network of academic researchers is considered for funding from the **Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP)** and that the program addresses the range of research needs to enhance wildland fire resiliency and to address barriers to wildfire management, and encourages JFSP to enhance its attention to understanding how invasive species affect fuels, fire behavior, and fire regimes and exploring how indigenous practices may be beneficial to wildfire prevention, response, and resilience;
  - Directs Interior to conduct an analysis of the resources and educational initiatives needed to communicate to impacted communities on **best practices to prevent and respond to wildfires** and provide recommendations to the House Appropriations Committee. The Committee expects Interior to prioritize support of federal, state, and local efforts to increase awareness of and preparedness for the threat of wildfires and suppression efforts;

- Directs Interior to assess fire prone areas that are not adequately observed by fire surveillance cameras and to consider acquiring additional camera systems and **Remote Automated Weather Station networks** and deploying them, where possible and appropriate, on existing radio communications towers;
- Directs Interior, in conjunction with USDA, the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, and local stakeholders, to develop a strategy within one year of enactment of the law (i.e., the end of **December 2023**) to protect **giant sequoias and groves** from catastrophic fire;
- Directs **USDA/USFS** to provide a report within 90 days of enactment of the law (i.e., the end of **March 2023**) on planned **vegetation management** actions to address the threat of wildfires;
- Directs **USDA/USFS** to provide a report within 90 days of enactment of the law (i.e., the end of **March 2023**) on a strategy to ensure **burned area recovery** work is being adequately prioritized, including a plan to establish a new budget line in fiscal year 2024 or other actions to prioritize this work, if appropriate; and
- Directs **USDA/USFS** to provide a report by the end of **June 2023** that assesses feasibility of working with National Interagency Aviation Committee and International Airtanker Board to conduct **evaluation of innovative new technologies, such as the Container Aerial Fire Fighting System**.
- The [Joint Explanatory Statement](#) for Division E of P.L. 117-328 directs **OPM** to analyze how **pay for wildland and other federal firefighters** might be modified or reformed to address concerns about pay-related matters, such as classification and work hours, and report to Congress by the end of **March 2023**. Further, it instructs OPM to use this information to assess the need for special rates of pay under section 5305 of title 5, United States Code, for federal wildland firefighters, including estimates of the cost of providing any proposed special rates and include that information in its reporting.

**Coordination:** The Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) consulted bureaus and offices participating in Interior's WFM program in developing this PM.

**Scope:** This PM applies to budget allocations and execution for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Park Service (NPS), OWF, and any other bureaus or offices that receive funding under this PM.

**Existing Policy Affected:** DOI Wildland Fire Program PM No. 2023-001

**Authority:** Departmental Manual (DM) Part 620 Wildland Fire Management

**Timeframe:** This PM applies to funding made available by P.L. 117-328, which covers the period from October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023. The funding is available until it is expended.

**Policy: Budget Allocations:** See below for Tables 1, 2, and 3, which show allocation amounts from P.L. 117-328 for the full fiscal year, by bureau or office. All of this funding is available until expended.

Table 1 shows allocations of regular appropriations. Table 2 shows allocations of disaster relief emergency supplemental appropriations. Table 3 shows the combined total of the approved allocations in Tables 1 and 2.

OWF notifies bureaus of Treasury transaction numbers once transfers of approved allocations have been completed. Funds that OWF is not transferring at this time will remain in the WFM “Parent” account. These amounts include a majority of the appropriations for Suppression Operations. As in previous years, OWF will consult with bureaus about the need for such funding throughout the fiscal year and transfer this funding as needs are identified, including for wildfire suppression.

**Table 1:**  
**Approved Allocations of Regular Appropriations**  
**of FY 2023 Funding for Interior Wildland Fire Management**  
**from P.L. 117-328, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023**  
(Dollars in thousands)

Activity or Subactivity	BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	OWF	WFM Parent Account	TOTAL, WFM Program
<b>Preparedness</b>	86,007	208,539	29,683	43,327	12,048	2,212	<b>381,816</b>
<b>Suppression Operations/ A</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Fuels Management</b>	62,466	109,949	32,601	32,921	4,410	4,653	<b>247,000</b>
<b>Burned Area Rehabilitation</b>	6,477	11,156	1,463	1,372	2	0	<b>20,470</b>
<b>Facilities Construction and Maintenance</b>	3,163	6,837	0	0	0	0	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Joint Fire Science Program</b>	0	4,500	0	0	0	0	<b>4,500</b>
<b>TOTAL, All Activities</b>	<b>158,113</b>	<b>340,981</b>	<b>63,747</b>	<b>77,620</b>	<b>16,460</b>	<b>6,865</b>	<b>663,786</b>

A/ All funding for this activity for FY 2023 is disaster relief emergency supplemental funding. See table 2.

**Table 2:**  
**Approved Allocations of**  
**Disaster Relief Emergency Supplemental Appropriations**  
**of FY 2023 Funding for Interior Wildland Fire Management**  
**from P.L. 117-328, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023**  
(Dollars in thousands)

Activity or Subactivity	BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	OWF	WFM Parent Account	TOTAL, WFM Program
<b>Preparedness</b>	5,637	27,325	5,088	5,793	0	1,500	<b>45,343</b>
<b>Suppression Operations (Base)/ A</b>	25,137	101,500	7,243	19,582	800	229,395	<b>383,657</b>
<b>Suppression Operations (Above Base)/ B</b>	0	0	0	0	0	75,000	<b>75,000</b>
<b>TOTAL, All Activities</b>	<b>30,774</b>	<b>128,825</b>	<b>12,331</b>	<b>25,375</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>305,895</b>	<b>504,000</b>

A/ This funding corresponds to amounts typically provided as base funding through regular appropriations, in accord with Division O of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141).

B/ This funding is above the amounts provided pursuant to P.L. 115-141, which are typically provided as base funding through regular appropriations.

**Table 3:**  
**Total Approved Allocations of FY 2023 Funding**  
**for Interior Wildland Fire Management**  
**from P.L. 117-328, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023**  
**(regardless of appropriation type)**  
(Dollars in thousands)

Activity or Subactivity	BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	OWF	WFM Parent Account	TOTAL, WFM Program
<b>Preparedness/ A</b>	91,644	235,864	34,771	49,120	12,048	3,712	<b>427,159</b>
<b>Suppression Operations/ A</b>	25,137	101,500	7,243	19,582	800	304,395	<b>458,657</b>
<b>Fuels Management</b>	62,466	109,949	32,601	32,921	4,410	4,653	<b>247,000</b>
<b>Burned Area Rehabilitation</b>	6,477	11,156	1,463	1,372	2	0	<b>20,470</b>
<b>Facilities Construction and Maintenance</b>	3,163	6,837	0	0	0	0	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Joint Fire Science Program</b>	0	4,500	0	0	0	0	<b>4,500</b>
<b>TOTAL, All Activities</b>	<b>188,887</b>	<b>469,806</b>	<b>76,078</b>	<b>102,995</b>	<b>17,260</b>	<b>312,760</b>	<b>1,167,786</b>

A/ These amounts include disaster relief emergency supplemental funding. See also table 2.

**Preparedness:** P.L. 117-328 provides a total of \$427,159,000 for Preparedness, including \$381,816,000 in regular appropriations and \$45,343,000 in disaster relief emergency supplemental appropriations. This PM approves the allocation of all of this funding, but \$3,712,000 will remain in the WFM Parent account at this time.

Of the total amount for Preparedness, \$12,723,000 is being allocated to the bureaus and OWF for fixed cost increases. The amount for fixed cost increases is allocated proportionally based on each bureau’s or office’s share of the total FY 2022 federal Full-Time-Equivalent (FTE) personnel reported. Another \$15,000,000 is being allocated to each bureau proportionally based on its share of the total FY 2022 federal and tribal FTE reported.

A total of \$28,000,000 is being allocated to the bureaus for workforce transformation. This funding is allocated consistent with the methodology agreed among OWF and the bureaus for the FY 2021 Budget and appropriations (see [DOI Wildland Fire Program PM 2021-003](#)). See also “Strategic Recruiting Plan” below.

Within the Preparedness activity, \$14,000,000 is being allocated to BIA for temporary special pay supplements for tribal personnel. This PM also allocates Fuels Management funding for this purpose. The FY 2024 Budget requests funding for permanent pay increases for federal and tribal personnel.

The allocations also include increases totaling a net \$8,979,000 for Departmentwide Activities and Service Level Agreements in Preparedness (funding goes to BIA, BLM, FWS, NPS, and OWF). Further, the allocations include \$9,000,000 to BIA for tribal contract and administrative support related to Preparedness; \$6,000,000 to BIA for tribal workforce development; \$1,500,000 to BLM for Alaska Fire Service utility costs; and a total \$2,800,000 to BIA, BLM, FWS, and NPS for rural fire readiness.

The remainder of the Preparedness allocations are being distributed based on the continuing methodology agreed among the bureaus and OWF.

**Suppression Operations:** P.L. 117-328 provides \$458,657,000 in disaster relief emergency supplemental appropriations for Suppression Operations. Of this total amount, \$383,657,000 is the amount provided pursuant to Division O of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141). This funding is typically provided as base funding through regular appropriations. The remaining \$75,000,000 is above this amount of base funding for Suppression Operations.

OWF will transfer a total of \$154,262,000 of this funding, including amounts transferred previously during FY 2023. The remaining \$304,395,000 will remain in the WFM Parent account. OWF will allocate the remaining funding based on seasonal activity and bureau funding requirements. Please request additional allocations as the need arises.

In addition to this funding for Suppression Operations in the WFM account, P.L. 117-328 provides \$340,000,000 in additional budget authority, to remain available until transferred, in the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund account. Interior will request transfers of this funding from the Reserve Fund as the need arises. The unobligated balance in the Reserve Fund is currently \$670,000,000, which includes remaining balances from both FY 2022 and FY 2023 appropriations.

**Emergency Stabilization and Severity:** Emergency Stabilization (ES) and Severity authority levels are capped at ten percent of the ten-year rolling suppression expenditure average for Interior. See Table 4, below.

**Table 4:  
FY 2023 Funding Authority  
Emergency Stabilization and Severity  
(Dollars in thousands)**

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>BIA</b>	<b>BLM</b>	<b>FWS</b>	<b>NPS</b>	<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Emergency Stabilization (Based on Percentages)</b>	10,110	29,708	3,764	4,426	0	48,008
<b>Severity</b>	5,913	18,317	3,450	4,320	16,008	48,008

The distribution of ES authority is based on the rolling ten-year average percentage of acres burned, by bureau nationally, excluding Alaska. The percentages for FY 2023 are as follows:

- BIA: 21.06 percent;



- BLM: 61.88 percent;
- FWS: 7.84 percent; and
- NPS: 9.22 percent.

Severity authority is capped at \$32 million, with the balance held in reserve. The distribution of Severity authority is based on each bureau's base percentage split of the annual Preparedness appropriation. The percentages are as follows:

- BIA: 18.48 percent;
- BLM: 57.24 percent;
- FWS: 10.78 percent; and
- NPS: 13.50 percent.

Regardless of the source of funding, obligations count against the funding authority caps. Recoveries of prior obligations do not increase the amount of obligation authority available in a given year. In the event that a bureau anticipates that it will exceed its ES or Severity authority, OWF will coordinate and approve the redistribution of ES and/or Severity authority among bureaus, as warranted and following consultation with the bureaus.

**Fuels Management:** P.L. 117-328 provides \$247,000,000 for Fuels Management. This PM approves the allocation of all of this funding. Of the total amount, \$6,761,000 is designated for fixed cost increases. It is being allocated to each bureau or office proportionally based on its share of the total FY 2022 federal FTE personnel reported.

Within the Fuels Management activity, \$10,000,000 is being allocated to BIA for temporary special pay supplements for tribal personnel. This PM also allocates Preparedness funding for this purpose. The 2024 Budget requests funding for permanent pay increases for federal and tribal personnel.

Of the total for the Fuels Management activity, \$5,000,000 allocated to BIA is designated for tribal contract and administrative support and \$6,000,000 allocated to BIA is for Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) projects. (Another \$9,000,000 will be available for RTRL projects through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.) The approved allocations also include increases totaling a net \$3,448,000 for Departmentwide Activities and Service Level Agreements in Fuels Management (funding goes to BLM, NPS, and OWF).

The direct program allocations for Fuels Management reflect the consensus methodology for workforce transformation, direct program, and "new base funding" for Fuels Management for FY 2021 (see [DOI Wildland Fire Program PM 2021-003](#)). In FY 2022, the workforce transformation and new base funding amounts were combined into the direct program line, and the consensus combined percentage allocations for FY 2021 were applied to the total direct base funding. Those updated allocation percentages are as follows:

- BIA: 19.65 percent;
- BLM: 50.43 percent;
- FWS: 15.09 percent; and
- NPS: 14.83 percent.

Within 14 days of the effective date of this policy memo (it is effective upon signature of the Director, OWF), please update information in the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS), as necessary, to reflect your bureau's final full-year FY 2023 allocation under P.L. 117-328, as shown in Tables 1 and 3 (above).

Additionally, by October 15, 2023, please report or record in NFPORS annual accomplishments with Fuels Management funds.

**Burned Area Rehabilitation:** P.L. 117-328 provides \$20,470,000 for Burned Area Rehabilitation. This PM approves the allocation of all of this funding.

Please update information in NFPORS or the Vegetation Management Action Portal (VMAP) to reflect your bureau's approved planned program of work up to the final full-year FY 2023 allocation level available under P.L. 117-328, as shown in Tables 1 and 3 (above). OWF will transfer each bureau's allocation of BAR funding as BAR projects needing funding are identified with bureau approvals in NFPORS or VMAP.

Additionally, by October 15, 2023, please report or record in NFPORS annual accomplishments completed with BAR funds.

**Facilities Construction and Maintenance:** P.L. 117-328 provides \$10,000,000 for Facilities. This PM approves the allocation of all of this funding, consistent with the project list in the 2023 budget request.

**Joint Fire Science Program:** P.L. 117-328 provides \$4,500,000 for the Joint Fire Science Program. This PM approves the allocation of all of this funding.

**Strategic Recruiting Plan:** Funding allocated by this PM is available for bureaus to hire additional staff and continue the transformation to a more permanent workforce. Attachment 1 provides a template for strategic recruiting planning—including estimating and tracking hiring actions for each bureau.

Bureaus should use the template in Attachment 1 to develop strategic recruiting plans or, if such plans already exist, to report on them. Bureaus are urged to use the template at all levels of the organization, including at the state and regional levels.

By April 28, 2023, please submit a national-level strategic recruiting plan, using the template in Attachment 1, to OWF (see the list of contacts, below).

**Carryover and Recoveries:** OWF encourages WFM bureaus to obligate prior-year funding, including carryover and recoveries, with priority focus on funds from before FY 2021. Bureaus are approved to execute carryover funds in FY 2023 in accordance with the carryover spend plans submitted to OWF at the beginning of the fiscal year. Bureaus should target obligations of prior-year funding by the end of the third quarter of FY 2023 (i.e., the end of June 2023).

**Contacts:**

For more information, you may contact:

- Regarding the budget allocations: Stephen Elmore or Kimberly Salwasser
- Regarding the strategic recruiting plan template: Ryan Wilkins
- Regarding Fuels Management or Burned Area Rehabilitation: Kristy Swartz

**Attachment:**

1. Strategic Recruiting Plan Template

CC: Interior WFM Executives  
Interior WFM Directors  
Interior WFM Budget Staff