



*Integrating  
science, technology  
and fire management.*

## Wildland Fire Management RD&A

### July 2019 Fire Policy: Brief History of Fire Guidance\*

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- 1870s-1960s **10 a.m. Suppression Policy** until Leopold Report, Wilderness Act
- 1968-1988 **Prescribed Natural Fire (PNF) Program** allowed 1600 lightning fires and 1400 Rx burns in NPS and 503 PNFs in USFS Wilderness
- 1988 Yellowstone & Canyon Creek Fires capture public's attention
- 1989 **"Final Report on Fire Management Policy"** was initiated by Secretaries to evaluate fire management in National Parks and Wilderness Areas. Determination: Programs/Plans need improvement.
- 1994 saw 34 firefighter fatalities, with 14 on South Canyon (most in one incident since 1953)
- 1995 **"Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy & Program Review."** First combined federal policy for DOI and USFS. Use of Fire acknowledged; agencies/bureaus need to figure out a way to work together.
- 1998 **"Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy Implementation Procedures Reference Guide,"** written by Zimmerman and Bunnell Resulting standardized procedures to implement the Federal Fire Policy. Introduces AMR, Go/No-go, Risk Assessment, WFIP/WFSA, Stage I, II, III, & MMA
- 1998 The Annual "Red Book" begins publication
- 2001 **"Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy"** as a response to Fires of 2000 & Cerro Grande. Replaces 1995 Policy; further refines AMR; nine guiding principles are introduced.
- 2003 **"Interagency Strategy for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy."** Process flowchart becomes more complex. WFU still used.
- 2005 **"Wildland Fire Use Implementation and Procedures Reference Guide."** Replaces 1998 Guide and clarifies what is/isn't allowed under Policy. Relative Risk Assessments, printable forms.
- 2006 OIG Report on USFS Costs
- 2006 Cohesive Fuels Treatment Strategy is needed to lessen impacts of catastrophic fires
- 2008 WFLC Memo to affirm soundness of 1995/2001 Policy
  - Provided "Revised Direction"
  - Removed WFU distinction—fire is planned or unplanned
  - More than one Objective per fire is allowed
  - No longer must keep "suppression" strategy
  - WFDSS replaces WFSA/WFIP as process/documentation
- 2009 "Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy." New flowchart; adds bullets from WFLC Memo; replaces 2003 Guidance.
- What's Next? Dingell Act (2019), Camp Fire with 84 civilian fatalities (2018), Workforce planning → Congressional, Agency, Bureau, State Responses?

*\*Compiled by Tonja Opperman, WFM RD&A...not peer-reviewed.*