

NPS Guidance for Post-Wildfire Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring (FTEM) Reporting

September 2020

(this document will be updated)

Per the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Chapter 17, Fuels Management) and Departmental direction, when a wildfire starts in or interacts with a fuel treatment area the outcome must be documented to examine whether the treatment had the desired effect of reducing fire behavior and/or supporting fire operations, i.e. contributing to firefighters safety/effective management, etc.

Reporting treatment effectiveness is essential for justifying the fuels management program, therefore, post-wildfire assessments must be reported in the FTEM database stored within the [Interagency Fuel Treatment Decision Support System](#) (IFTDSS). Through a series of questions (fire weather, fuels, etc.), FTEM users document and evaluate data used to:

- Address Congressional and Office of Management and Budget concerns regarding the overall effectiveness of the fuels management program;
- Verify whether fuels management treatments have changed fire behavior;
- Establish baseline data to use when making future fuels management program decisions;
- Document lessons learned from wildfire to adjust future fuels treatment prescriptions;
- Share information with partnering agencies, the public, and Congressional representatives to demonstrate fuels management program successes.

FTEM reporting must be completed within 30-days from when a wildfire is contained, however, it is recommended that fire management staff to begin assessment reporting as quickly as possible. Data entry can be initiated during an active and ongoing incident. Throughout the wildfire season, fire/fuels managers are encouraged to log into IFTDSS and check for any identified interactions in the FTEM database within their network parks and/or fire group.

FTEM produces a map of wildfire and completed treatment locations and creates a “check for interaction” (red flame icon) to identify any wildfire that has a potential interaction with a previous fuels treatment area. If a red flame icon is present, managers must take one of the following actions:

- Complete an assessment report when a wildfire interacted with a previous treatment area, i.e. change the red flame icon to “Monitoring Completed” (green flame icon). Assessment reports must be completed for all valid interactions regardless of the age of the treatment or the effect on the wildfire outcome; or
- Remove the treatment links to the wildfire, i.e. change the red flame icon to “No Interaction” (grey flame icon) when the wildfire had no interaction with any past treatment, i.e. the system-generated interaction is invalid.

If a past treatment contributed to the aid or control of the fire incident but no system-generated interactions are shown, then fire managers must add the contributing treatment and complete the reporting process, i.e. change a grey flame icon to a green flame icon.

- Assessment reporting should be completed if the treatment was utilized tactically (used as a control feature, staging area, safety zone, etc.) regardless of whether the fire burned in or adjacent to the treatment.

When working in the FTEM database, users should also be attentive to the following situations:

- If a wildfire intersects with an area that has been treated multiple times, the treatment that had the most impact on changing fire behavior or gaining a tactical advantage should be selected for reporting;
 - Retain only one treatment when multiple treatment polygons overlap, then remove the other treatments from the picklist. Additional information about treatment history can be added in the comments or uploaded as a separate attachment.
 - Retain the most recent treatment if the interacting treatments all had similar impacts on management of the wildfire.
- Depending on the size and shape of a fuels treatment, a large fire may interact with a treatment at multiple points over an extended period, however, only one intersection should be reported;
 - Multiple treatment areas can be selected if they are separated and have distinct footprints (i.e. are in different locations and don't overlap).
- Small fires are automatically spatially buffered and may create false interactions;
- Non-fire incidents (i.e. severity, step-up, and false alarms) appear in the FTEM database due to IRWIN's inability to differentiate them from actual fires, these fuels treatment interactions must be deleted.

Additional guidance and instructions for using the FTEM database and system are found on the IFTDSS webpage and in the [NPS 2018 FTEM Announcement Memo](#).

For additional assistance or questions, please contact your regional fuels coordinator/ FTEM lead or the NPS FTEM Administrator, Mike Van Hemelryck at 208-387-5206 (office), or 208-870-0111 (cell).