

Regions 1, 2 and 4 Breakout Group¹

Land Management Planning (LMP)

Participants: Ann Acheson, Brian Bischof, Dierdre Dether, Shane Greer, Bob Hammer, Chris Hockett, Patti Koppenol, Dave Levinson, Terry Svalberg

LMP Breakout Notes

1) What common messages can Fire & Air agree to with regards to Air Quality and Fire Use in the LMP process within the region? Possible examples might include:

All agreed that some common message is needed to demonstrate solidarity. Some combination of the two should take us in the right direction, but the statement should include more than just ecosystem management purposes (i.e. community protection from catastrophic wildfire, WFU). We already cannot violate NAAQS, but recognize some visibility impact is inevitable. Articulating that without fueling industry and environmental opposition would require some word-smithing to ensure the appropriate message is disseminated. (Get exact wording from Ann).

The Forest Service will not plan to use fire in a way that is predicted to result in a NAAQS exceedence.

Fire Use will attempt to minimize (mitigate?) visibility impacts but we agree that visibility impacts are acceptable, natural, and even inevitable.

2) Where will/should LMP direction for fire and air quality issues originate? WO, Regions, or Forests?

Yes....All seem to agree that some level of LMP direction should be included in revisions. However, some question on how much detail to include. See #3 below.

3) What questions need to be answered in the LMP process? What specifically needs to be disclosed?

Needs to address the fundamental difference between the LMP (programmatic) and program-level planning processes. Units need this to be clearly defined. Avoidance of too much detail as some of that falls into state regulatory agencies responsibility (i.e. compliance with air quality (NAAQS)). Including this information could make data available to be used in enforcement actions, and based on large-scale predictions, which could make the results less than accurate. However, more language to qualify how impacts to project-level programs would be analyzed. Maybe develop a Special Team (including a Planning expert) to flush-out roles and responsibilities of the different functional areas as related to LMP and project-level planning.

¹ *These notes have been slightly edited for style but remain largely as originally received from the breakout group reporters. Discussion questions that were provided to the groups, but that were not addressed, have been removed. The original list of questions can be found in a separate document entitled "Breakout Handout" on the Fire & Air Workshop web page.*

4) What are the unique roles for Fire & Air in the LMP process in your region? (Use Matrix provided below)

Group agreed that roles and responsibilities should have a lead determined, but all effected functional areas would be partners. This is the optimal state and not how most regions/forests are currently aligned.

5) Identify the top 3-5 highlights from this breakout session and write them below. Be prepared to report these back to the workshop. Record highlights here:

1. SWAT approach to flush-out differences and challenges between programmatic and project-level planning. Needs to be represented by fire, air and planning functions.
2. Matrix needs to have a lead, but remaining parties should be partners.
3. Re-worded common message to say (look above at #1)

Flipcharts from report back:

Need a national SWAT to decide what needs to be addressed, complied with, and disclosed at the programmatic level for all Regions. And what are the links to SIP?

In this group, the roles were not seen as important as the level commitment of whomever was taking on the task.

Common positions...(see their notes)

Regions 1, 2 and 4 Breakout Group

State Implementation Plan (SIP) and Smoke Management Plan (SMP)

SIP/SMP Breakout Notes

1) Increased Fire and Air collaboration on RPO/SIP/SMP maximizes our ability to meet FS objectives. What other advantages are there?

Having staff participate that understands air quality and the implications to land management activities due to new regulations. Lack of involvement in RPOs and participation in SMP/SIPs would potentially mean that our best interests are not well represented during rule development and RPO guidance documents. However, expertise and availability of personnel do not allow for the level of commitment required (see # 3). Especially important as related to the calculation of the Emissions Budget. Some concern over final emissions factors and accurate planned acres estimates could result in inaccurate emissions inventory. Possibly being so underestimated that our planned workload is not properly reflected.

2) What common messages can Fire and Air take on Air Quality & Fire Use in the RPO/SIP/SMP process within your region? Possible examples might include:

- Unlike exceedances of the NAAQS, visibility impairment from fire use for ecosystem management purposes are acceptable in Forest Service managed Class I Wilderness areas.
- FS fire use for ecosystem management purposes, based on an approved fire management plan, should not be regulated in the same way as industrial sources in the protection of visibility.
- Prescribed fire is a best available control measure (BACM) for wildfire emissions.

3) How can we best interact with States/what are our opportunities to do so? (E.g., RPO involvement, etc.).

Need to have dedicated individuals that have time to devote to making the meetings. That individual(s) need to have some background in air quality and prescribed fire. Pursue creative personnel options to staff a position (i.e. Coop agreement with state).

4) What are the leadership and/or organizational changes at the WO, Research and/or RO level that would encourage increased Fire and Air collaboration?

Additional staff dedicated to the effort. Staffing issues and budget restrictions at the regional and forest levels forces additional duties on existing personnel. As a result, the expertise and available time may not be readily available to participate at the level currently required.

Flipchart notes from report back:

Staffing: how to leverage in SIP participation.

IPAs, sharing position with other agencies – need to come up with more creative ways to get staffing.

And what exactly would roles/duties be? Need to get more specific here.

Regions 1, 2 and 4 Breakout Group

Data Needs/Strategies

Data Needs Breakout Notes

1) What are some information and/or data gaps in your region that limit your ability to estimate emissions for fire tracking, emissions estimation, and emissions inventory?

Need to acquire credible data that supports claims about emissions trade-offs (short-term impacts vs. long term benefits). At the same time, we need to gather data that supports the other impacts to ecosystems/watersheds as a result of catastrophic wildfire.

2) What information needs have been identified in your region for LMPs, SIPs, SMPs, and/or RPOs?

No needs have been defined or final, but numerous discussions have been started about what is the appropriate data to include into LMP, SIPs and SMPs. So many unknowns at this time with respect to SIPs and SMPs that the needs are clearly known.

3) How far along is your region's FCAMMS and what can you do to help it advance? (I.e., What is needed in preparation for the FCAMMS products and what will the FCAMMS need from your region?) How will you do LMP, SIP, and SMP analyses until FCAMMS products are ready?

Region 1 - Starting to join forces with Region 6 and BlueSky RAINS

Region 2 - No Consortium, but starting to talk with Karl Zeller about selling it to the interagency partners. Had the first presentation in CO, last week. No other R2 states were in attendance.

Region 4- Nothing done to date, in UT, but discussions have begun to possibly enter into an agreement with R2 to be included into the same window. NV is already working with CA to implement. Consortium formed and partners have met a few times, but no major work completed.

4) What did you see in the BlueSky example that would work in your region and what would not?

Certainly seems to be a good tool to demonstrate anticipated emissions and dispersion for project-level activities. Unfortunately, the tool is only developed to look-out 72 hours, so it is not at this time a long range planning tool (LMPs). There was some discussion about value to daily operational decisions, even if not used in a go/no-go decision process. Could be used to validate permit conditions and resources objectives are met a day or two out.

Flipchart notes from report back:

Come together between Regions

- Short-term impacts of smoke vs. long-term impacts on ecosystems of fire
- FCAMMS are not so useful on LMP; BlueSky resource to help.

FCAMMS progress very different between 1/2/4.

Need to decide re-active vs. proactive vis-à-vis SIP process

Emission Inventory: how good does the data need to be? Do we have enough now?
Do we need to put emissions in if we have a good SMP?

Guidance on emissions inventories, e.g., WRAP, and who's doing it for forests – implications of doing/not doing them.

Regions 1, 2 and 4 Breakout Group

Regional Action Plan/National Priorities

Participants: Ann Acheson, Brian Bischof, Shane Greer, Bob Hammer, Chris Hockett, Dave Levinson, Terry Svalberg

National Priorities

1. Smoke management is directly linked to the success of NFP implementation. Without someone to focus on smoke management and collaborate with all parties, implementation could be less than successful. Nationally, we need to emphasize the importance of being successful and where it appropriately fits in with the other priorities. To do so, Air and Fire needs to work together to define the role.
2. Better define what the role of the Meteorologists at the GACCs are with respect to NOAA, NWS and FCAMMS. Seems to be a good opportunity to take more advantage of windows of opportunity with improved smoke and meteorology predictions. In addition, units could benefit from better access for analysis and planning of project-level activities.
3. Need some national guidance about minimum requirements for forest and project-level plans. How much detail is appropriate to ensure quality analyses are conducted.
4. Clearinghouse for tech transfer, new information and tools (i.e., VIEWS as related to Regional Haze). With limited time available and information scattered across the web, it is often difficult and time consuming to find.
5. Emissions inventory guidance is critical. What criteria did the contractor hired by WRAP use? Who is responsible for emissions inventories on the forests (USFS or state)? What are the implications if we aren't involved and they are over or under estimated?

Flipchart notes from report back:

- FS needs to be more vocal: make explicit the role of smoke management in the National Fire Plan
- Nationally define the role of meteorology in GACC/NOAA/FCAMMS (how do they relate, etc.)
- Define minimum requirements for both Forest and Project level planning for smoke.
- Clearinghouse for Technical Transfer Tools.

Regional Action Plan

1. Current Program elements:

PSD Program:

- Review permit application- (R2-Chris, R4-Chris, R1-Ann/Bob??) NV is hit or miss. Not always involved. Some question how ID and ND are being handled.
- Monitoring- (i.e. IMPROVE Network) IMPROVE network covered, but local AQRV forest programs seem to be an issue due to funding and other work related priorities
- Modeling- Covered through the existing contract with ARS and collaboration with NPS. Currently the money available seems to be adequate now, but could become a problem in the future if the money was pulled or diverted.
- Meetings- Never seems to be enough time to go around.

Action Item: Consider addition of 1 FTE to share between R1, R2 and R4 to review PSD applications.

2. Planning:

- NEPA Assistance (guidance, analysis and review) - This includes smoke and AQRVs. For fire see Implementation documents, below. Other resource NEPA are covered by Jeff Sorkin and Terry for R2 and R4.
- LMP assistance
- Project support (internal and external) See implementation documents, below for those assigned.
- NRIS –

Implementation documents (burn plans, WFUs, FMPs) R2/R4 fire – Brian, R1 and S Idaho-Ann; Dierdre Boise NF; Bob Hammer MT/ID, Mark E MT; Gary Jackson Salmon NF.

Action items: Workload with NEPA, LMP revisions, implementation documents and project-level support seems to be increasing faster than the current staff is capable of handling. Expect there to be a real need for smoke expertise to be directly involved with the fire community. Currently only R2 has a Smoke Management person dedicated to the fire community to work through the issues at hand. Preparation of better guidance documents could assist local units in planning and preparation and free up scarce resources to invest their time in other areas. UT and MT struggle to assist the units among all the other program priorities. Due to shortage of qualified personnel, we might consider out-sourcing NEPA analysis.

3. Collaboration:

- SIP Involvement
- Smoke Management Program
- Regional Planning Organizations
- WESTAR
- State and local agencies

National Fire Plan

Action items: Similar to previous topics and covering all this collaboration with the existing staff is tough to accomplish with other program priorities. We seem to be involved when we can be, but there is a lack of consistency in our involvement due to what was described above. Our lack of involvement can send the wrong message to those that would like our involvement.