

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

# **Reference Manual #18: Wildland Fire Management**

## **Chapter 11 - Wildland Fire Reporting**

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Reviewed by the Chief, Division of Fire and Aviation Management

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## **WILDLAND FIRE REPORTING**

### **1 Introduction**

Fire reporting information is important data used in long-range wildland fire planning, operational decisions, general information reporting, and programmatic performance analysis. It is imperative that the park collect, input, manage, and certify wildland fire data accurately and promptly. The data contained in the wildland fire reporting system is frequently requested to fulfill any number of queries from interested members of the public, lawmakers, and researchers – all who rely on the accuracy of the reports. The Final fire report serves as the authoritative agency record of the incident.

The information needed for the Final NPS Wildland Fire Report is entered in the Interagency Fire Occurrence Reporting Modules system ([InFORM](#)). InFORM is the DOI approved system of record for wildland fire reports. This system serves all our Federal and Non-federal wildland fire partners and is the authoritative source for all wildland fire occurrence records. Information about how to setup your account and more information about the InFORM system can be found at [InFORM \(arcgis.com\)](#).

All wildland fires (any non-structure fire that occurs in vegetation or natural fuels)- including both wildfires and prescribed fires- that burn on NPS land or receive a response from the NPS require a final fire report. In addition to actual wildland fire incidents, false alarms (a suspected wildfire that turns out to be something else or nothing at all) must be reported. Wildfires greater than 10 acres require a fire perimeter to be captured. For wildfires less than 10 acres; it is strongly recommended that a perimeter is collected.

Additional information about Interagency Final Fire Reports and Datasets can be found in Chapter 11 of the Red Book.

### **2 Responsibilities**

#### **2.1 National Level**

The Branch of Wildland Fire is responsible for the management and direction of the wildland fire reporting program. It is also responsible for reporting fire statistics for program reviews, Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) performance standards, and all official end-of-year fire statistics to the public and other research groups. The Branch provides a representative to the InFORM system to address management of the wildland fire reporting requirements and updates. The following is a list of other responsibilities:

- Assist regions in the review of wildland fire reports.
- Provide a subject matter expert when necessary.
- Maintain and update the final fire reporting documentation.
- Coordinate with interagency partners to ensure reporting fields in the fire report are consistent in content and definition with other agency's wildland fire reports where possible.
- Provide a process for access to the Fire reporting system.
- Work toward improving the overall quality of the NPS final fire reporting data, both spatial and tabular.

## 2.2 Regional Level

It is the responsibility of the regions to ensure all parks have certified fire reports in the fire reporting system of record. Regional fire reporting managers (typically, the Regional Fire GIS staff) manage the records throughout the year, but especially at the end of each fiscal quarter and at the end of each calendar year for an audit of each park's wildland fire data for the previous year. This periodic review ensures that the NPS fire reporting data is of the highest quality and accurately reflects what has happened on the ground. The Regional Office will maintain a list of individuals with delegated authority to certify fire reports at the Park level.

## 2.3 Park Level

Parks are required to accurately complete and certify all wildfires using InFORM. **Wildland Fire Reports are required to be certified in the [InFORM Fire Reporting Module](#) no later than ten (10) days after the incident has been declared out.**

Detailed technical instructions for filling out the report can be found on the InFORM project [website](#). The Park Superintendent is ultimately responsible for ensuring a certified fire report exists for each wildland fire (wildfire and prescribed) that burns NPS land; this authority is typically delegated to the Zone or Park Fire Management Officer (or the designated official in the annual delegation of authority) for the unit that has jurisdiction at the point of origin. If the jurisdictional unit at the point of origin is not a participant in the InFORM modules, it is the NPS responsibility to certify the record of fires that burned NPS land.

## 3 Importance of Accurate Wildland Fire Data

Information collected on wildland fire reports is important historical data used in wildland fire planning, information reporting, budget formulation and risk analysis to improve the understanding of program actions and outcomes. In addition, this information is used in bureau performance evaluations to determine how successfully each bureau is achieving its wildland fire goals and objectives. Wildland fire managers, researchers, predictive services, fire planning groups, Geographic Area Coordination Centers groups, Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) groups, and others depend on the accuracy of this information to provide long-range fire planning, support resource allocations, and funding decisions. The point-of-origin of a fire determines who is legally responsible for any action as a result of that fire. It is imperative the park determines as accurately as possible the point-of-origin and that location must be entered into InFORM.

#### **4 Records Management**

Requirements for Fire Management Records are found in Item 3 of the Service-wide Records Schedule. NPS fire incident records (including the Individual Fire Report) are retained according to the approved Wildland Fire Incident Records Schedule for the US Forest Service (DAA-0095-2021-005).

Wildland fire records for fires occurring prior to 2020 will be transferred into InFORM and the digital record for those fires will become the official record in lieu of hardcopy reports. Electronic fire report records in InFORM are managed in compliance with 36 C.F.R. § 1236.10 thru § 1236.20 and will be transferred as permanent records to the National Archives in accordance with 36 C.F.R. Part 1235.

Existing hardcopy fire reports for fires prior to 2020 should be retained by the originating office until specific records retention guidance for Individual Fire Reports is provided by DOI.