

Errata Sheet - Chapter II - Alternatives (Including the Preferred Alternative)
Yosemite Fire Management Plan – Environmental Impact Statement 2004
Amendment to Incorporate Guidance for Implementing the 2009 Federal Wildland Fire Policy

The following errata and clarifications to the final Yosemite Fire Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (FMP/EIS) are presented below.

Chapter II - Alternatives Page II - 18	<p><u>Original Text:</u></p> <p>Annual Constraints to Burning</p> <p>Under all action alternatives, the amount of mechanical fuel reduction would decline after fuels in and near WUI areas were reduced. After fuel levels were within target conditions, it should be possible to use prescribed fire to maintain fuel levels and vegetation within targeted conditions. Similarly, the number of wildland fires that would be allowed to burn could be expected to increase over time, as more and more prescribed fire units were brought within target conditions. Wildland fire would then be used as feasible to maintain ecosystem health and function, as it currently does in most parts of the Wilderness. Prescribed fire would continue to be used where natural fires cannot be allowed to burn for safety reasons.</p> <p><u>2017 Amendment</u></p> <p>Annual Constraints to Burning</p> <p>Under all action alternatives, the amount of mechanical fuel reduction would decline after fuels in and near WUI areas were reduced. After fuel levels were within target conditions, it should be possible to use prescribed fire to maintain fuel levels and vegetation within targeted conditions. Similarly, the number of wildland wildfires that would be allowed to burn could be expected to increase over time, as more and more prescribed fire units were brought within target conditions. Wildland The use of wildfires to meet resource objectives would could then be used considered as feasible tool to maintain ecosystem health and function, as it currently does in most parts of the Wilderness. Prescribed fire would continue to be used where natural fires cannot be allowed to burn for safety reasons.</p>
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Alternatives**
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Original Text:

Following safety issues, the largest constraints to burning will be smoke management and air quality regulations. Prescribed fires and wildland fires that may burn for longer than two weeks will generate II-18 Yosemite Fire Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement Alternatives complaints to local air districts. Smoke management techniques, including the division of large burn units into smaller blocks to facilitate checking fire spread when dispersion conditions deteriorate, will continue to be incorporated into prescribed fire and wildland fire plans. Smoke emissions should decrease as target conditions are reached.

2017 Amendment

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Original Text:

Fire Management Units

Fire Use Unit

The Fire Use Unit is by far the largest management unit, containing 83% (621,059 acres) of the park. In this unit, managed wildland fire (typically lightning-ignited) would be the primary tool used to meet ecological target conditions. In a small portion of the Fire Use Unit (48,912 acres), additional prescribed burning may be necessary to reduce fuel loads to a point where managed wildland fire would be safe and appropriate, especially near the boundary of the Fire Use and Suppression Units. In these areas, prescribed fire units would be designated (Map 2-21).

2017 Amendment

Fire Management Units

Fire Use Unit

Wildland Fire Management Unit

~~The Fire Use~~ This Unit is by far the largest management unit, containing 83% ~~(621,059 acres)~~ 99% (750,000 acres) - comprises most of the park including all of the Wilderness. In this unit, ~~managed wildland~~ wildfire (typically lightning-ignited) would be the primary tool used to meet ecological target conditions. In ~~a small portion of the Fire Use Unit~~ in the western part of the park (48,912 acres), additional prescribed burning may be necessary to reduce fuel loads to a point where ~~managed wildland~~ wildfire would be safe and appropriate, especially near the boundary of the ~~Fire Use and Suppression Units~~ Park. In these areas, prescribed fire units would be

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Original Text:

Fire Management Units

Suppression Unit

The remaining 17% (128,044 acres) of the park would be in the Suppression Unit. Many areas in the Suppression Unit are at high risk of large, high-intensity, stand replacement fires due to high fuel loads and vegetation characteristics that create hazardous conditions. Community and visitor protection would be paramount. All wildland fires in the Suppression Unit would be immediately suppressed using the Appropriate Management Response strategy (Appendix 3). Prescribed burning and mechanical fuel reduction techniques would be used in specific areas to reduce the risk of uncontrollable wildland fires, to restore and maintain ecosystems, and to reduce hazardous fuel loads. Lightning fires would not be allowed to burn in this unit for resource benefits, as they will in the Fire Use Unit.

2017 Amendment

Fire Management Units

~~Suppression Unit~~

~~Community and Infrastructure Protection Strategy~~

The remaining 1% (7,491 acres) of the park would be in the ~~Suppression~~ ~~Community and Infrastructure Protection Strategy~~ Unit. Many ~~developed~~ areas in the ~~Suppression Unit~~ western part of the park are at high risk of large, high-intensity, stand replacement fires due to high fuel loads and vegetation characteristics that create hazardous conditions. Community and visitor protection would be paramount. ~~The initial response to a wildfire within close proximity to the Community Protection Zone will be one of protection of life and property. All wildland fires in the Suppression Unit would be immediately suppressed using the Appropriate Management Response strategy (Appendix 3).~~ Prescribed burning and mechanical fuel reduction techniques would be used in specific areas to reduce the risk of uncontrollable ~~wildland~~ wildfires, to restore and maintain ecosystems, and to reduce hazardous fuel loads. ~~Lightning fires would not be allowed to burn in this unit for resource benefits, as they will in the Fire Use Unit.~~

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Original Text:

Special Management Areas

Special Management Areas occur in both the Fire Use and Suppression Units. They include WUI communities and other developed areas, three giant sequoia groves (Mariposa, Tuolumne, and Merced), and the boundaries of Yosemite National Park. These areas require special management because unwanted, high-intensity wildland fire could alter these areas substantially with potentially irretrievable results. They also indicate some of the logic behind the selection and prioritization of fire management projects within Yosemite National Park.

2017 Amendment

Special Management Areas

Special Management Areas occur ~~in both the Fire Use and Suppression Units~~ throughout the park. They include WUI communities and other developed areas, three giant sequoia groves (Mariposa, Tuolumne, and Merced), and the boundaries of Yosemite National Park. These areas require special management because unwanted, high-intensity ~~wildland~~ wildfire could alter these areas substantially with potentially irretrievable results. They also indicate some of the logic behind the selection and prioritization of fire management projects within Yosemite National Park.

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Original Text:

Beyond the six WUI areas, prescribed fire, and where feasible, wildland fire, would be used for forest restoration and maintenance activities. Smaller developments, such as backcountry cabins, would be protected from wildland fire by hand thinning wildland fuels near them. Mechanical work, such as handline construction, would be done to prepare an area for a prescribed fire and to protect the area from an approaching wildland fire. It would also be used within 200' of road centerlines and under utility lines to reduce hazardous wildland fuel loads.

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Beyond the six WUI areas, prescribed fire, and where feasible, ~~wildland~~ wildfire, would be used for forest restoration and maintenance activities. Smaller developments, such as backcountry cabins, would be protected from ~~wildland~~ wildfire by hand thinning wildland fuels near them. Mechanical work, such as handline construction, would be done to prepare an area for a prescribed fire and to protect the area from an approaching ~~wildland~~ wildfire. It would also be used within 200' of road centerlines and under utility lines to reduce hazardous wildland fuel loads.

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Original Text:

Boundary Areas

Boundary areas are a priority for fuels management because of the risk of unwanted wildland fires that could burn into or out of the park. For example, part of the western boundary of the park from Chiquito Pass in the south to Kibbie Pass in the northwest is particularly flammable and at high risk of wildland fire due to current high fuel loading. Other boundary areas have a low risk of unwanted wildland fire.

The fire management objectives for boundary areas are to re-establish natural fuel loads and vegetation conditions to meet target ecological conditions. Fire management projects within boundary areas would require review by all agencies that share jurisdiction.

Agreements may be developed with neighboring agencies to allow fires to burn across jurisdictional boundaries, if safe and appropriate. If an agreement with a neighboring agency were not in place, the Yosemite fire management staff would keep wildland fires within park boundaries.

2017 Amendment

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Original Text:

Strategies Used to Maintain and Restore Ecosystems

Managed Wildland Fire

Any fire that burns within wildlands and is not a prescribed fire (or a structural fire) is called a wildland fire. Lightning ignites most wildland fires in the park, though human-caused fires may also become wildland fires. Managed wildland fire is the primary tool for restoring and maintaining vegetation in the Fire Use Unit.

Managed wildland fire is the practice of allowing a naturally-ignited wildland fire to burn while keeping it within a specific area called a maximum manageable area (MMA). Safety of firefighters and the public is the primary concern in managing a wildland fire. Through pre-planning, monitoring, and holding actions, many wildland fires can be kept well away from people, buildings and infrastructure, and valued resources such as

historic buildings. Adverse effects on special resources (i.e., historic buildings, special-status species) can often be mitigated through a variety of actions. Elements of managing a wildland fire include public information and education, coordination with other agencies, and fire behavior research.

Because fire is a natural process in the Sierra Nevada, allowing wildland fires to burn meets park goals to maintain a natural environment. Wildland fires have been managed in Yosemite to meet resource objectives since 1972. Allowing natural fires to burn also helps maintain cultural resources such as landscapes and archaeological features.

Managed wildland fires were originally associated with Wilderness portions of the park. The first managed wildland fires were restricted to barren areas of the Sierra Crest, which rarely burned. As knowledge about fire ecology and fire behavior increased, and as management experience increased, this area was expanded

From 1972 through 2002, 586 wildland fires have been managed, burning a total of 81,264 acres of the park. The largest number of acres burned with managed wildland fire in one year was in 1999 (14,870 acres). The second and third largest years were 1988 (12,265 acres), and 2001 (9,410 acres). Recurring fire events in Yosemite have validated scientific theories of fire ecology that were developed several decades ago.

Wildland fires that are ignited by lightning can be allowed to burn if they occur in the Fire Use Unit and meet the criteria shown in Appendix 3. The majority of managed wildland fires are less than $\frac{1}{4}$ acre. Most of these small fires occur in red fir and lodgepole pine forests and burn only a few days. During a dry year, a larger percentage of ignitions burn until the end of the season, usually late October when the first substantial precipitation occurs.

Fires that grow large and burn for weeks or months typically experience three phases of activity. The first phase is the establishment period when, after an electrical storm has passed, the fire spreads slowly on damp fuels. This phase usually lasts from 1 - 14 days. In the second phase, area and linear rates of spread and intensity can greatly accelerate as fuels dry out. Depending on the prevailing winds, relative humidity, the fire's potential for upslope movement, and the existence of natural barriers, the fire displays alternating episodes of rapid movement and relative dormancy.

Phase two may be temporarily interrupted by precipitation from additional electrical storms. This phase may continue for several weeks until the fire is confined, either by natural barriers or rains from a major frontal storm system (NPS 1990). During exceptionally dry years and periods of drought, it is common for these fires to burn actively into late November and December if no moisture arrives.

In phase three, after late September, shorter days and lower seasonal temperatures will

cause an overall decrease of activity. The fire may continue to burn for several weeks, but does not actively advance as in phase two. In Yosemite National Park, there is a 90% chance of a fire-season ending event by October 17th.

Because a fire may burn throughout the summer and fall, the effects of a managed wildland fire on plants, animals, soils, and cultural resources can vary throughout the fire area. A large fire typically burns from late-spring or early-summer, when vegetation may or may not be completely cured, through the entire summer and into fall.

Effects mimic the phases noted above with extensive fuel reduction occurring during periods of high activity when fuels are driest, and less so as the season progresses. Depending on fuel moisture conditions, within one fire there are areas of very little fuel consumption as well as areas of total fuel consumption. Hotter areas create an arrangement of small to large openings (gaps) in the canopy, which allow light onto the forest floor to start new plants or restore plants that require more sunlight than is found in dense, overgrown forests. The variability of environmental conditions and wildland fire creates a mosaic of effects on the landscape. This mosaic is hard to replicate using small prescribed fires, and is even more difficult to replicate with mechanical methods.

2017 Amendment

Strategies Used to Maintain and Restore Ecosystems

Managing Wildfires to meet Protection and Resource Objectives

Any fire that burns within wildlands and is not a prescribed fire (or a structural fire) is called a ~~wildland~~ wildfire. Lightning ignites most ~~wildland~~ wildfires in the park, though human-caused fires may also become ~~wildland~~ wildfires. ~~Managed-wildland~~ **Managing the safe and effective use of wildfires** is the primary tool for restoring and maintaining vegetation throughout most of the park ~~in the Fire Use Unit~~.

~~Managed-wildland fire~~ **Managing a wildfire to meet resource objectives** is the practice of allowing a naturally-ignited ~~wildland~~-wildfire to burn while keeping it within a specific area identified ~~in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System~~ **called a maximum manageable area (MMA)**. Safety of firefighters and the public is the primary concern in managing a ~~wildland~~ wildfire. Through pre-planning, monitoring, and holding actions, many ~~wildland~~ wildfires can be kept well away from people, buildings and infrastructure, and valued resources such as historic buildings. Adverse effects on special resources (i.e., historic buildings, special-status species) can often be mitigated through a variety of actions. Elements of managing a ~~wildland~~ wildfire include public information and education, coordination with other agencies, and fire behavior research.

Because fire is a natural process in the Sierra Nevada, allowing ~~wildland~~-wildfires to burn meets park goals to maintain a natural environment. ~~Wildland~~-Wildfires have been managed in Yosemite to meet resource objectives since 1972. Allowing natural fires to burn also helps maintain cultural resources such as landscapes and archaeological

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~~Managed wildland~~ Wildfires were originally associated with Wilderness portions of the park. The first ~~managed wildland~~ wildfires to be used to meet resource objectives were restricted to barren areas of the Sierra Crest, which rarely burned. As knowledge about fire ecology and fire behavior increased, and as management experience increased, this area was expanded

From 1972 through 2002, 586 ~~wildland~~ lightning caused wildfires have been managed to meet park objectives, burning a total of 81,264 acres of the park. The largest number of acres burned ~~with managed wildland~~ using wildfire to meet resource objectives in one year was in 1999 (14,870 acres). The second and third largest years were 1988 (12,265 acres), and 2001 (9,410 acres). Recurring fire events in Yosemite have validated scientific theories of fire ecology that were developed several decades ago.

~~Wildland~~ Wildfires that are ignited by lightning can be allowed to burn if they occur in the Fire Use Unit and meet the criteria shown in Appendix 3. The majority of ~~managed wildland~~ wildfires are less than ¼ acre. Most of these small fires occur in red fir and lodgepole pine forests and burn only a few days. During a dry year, a larger percentage of ignitions burn until the end of the season, usually late October when the first substantial precipitation occurs.

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In phase three, after late September, shorter days and lower seasonal temperatures will cause an overall decrease of activity. The fire may continue to burn for several weeks, but does not actively advance as in phase two. In Yosemite National Park, there is a 90% chance of a fire-season ending event by October 17th.

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the fire area. A large fire typically burns from late-spring or early-summer, when vegetation may or may not be completely cured, through the entire summer and into fall.

Effects mimic the phases noted above with extensive fuel reduction occurring during periods of high activity when fuels are driest, and less so as the season progresses. Depending on fuel moisture conditions, within one fire there are areas of very little fuel consumption as well as areas of total fuel consumption. Hotter areas create an arrangement of small to large openings (gaps) in the canopy, which allow light onto the forest floor to start new plants or restore plants that require more sunlight than is found in dense, overgrown forests. The variability of environmental conditions and wildland of a wildfire creates a mosaic of effects on the landscape. This mosaic is hard to replicate using small prescribed fires, and is even more difficult to replicate with mechanical methods.

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Alternatives**
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Original Text:

Alternative D – Multiple Action (Preferred Alternative)

Descriptions of Proposed Actions under Alternative D

This alternative divides the park into two fire management units: the Fire Use Unit (83% of the park), and the Suppression Unit (17% of the park; Map 2-20).
Suppression Unit (17% of the park)

Non-Wildland /Urban Interface, Non-Wilderness

Beyond the 1½ mile radius around the six WUI areas, wildland fuel and vegetation would only be treated with prescribed and managed wildland fire to achieve target restoration and maintenance conditions. Thinning of live and dead trees would be done to prepare these areas for prescribed burning. After initial fuel reduction work was accomplished, prescribed fire units would be set up for rotational burning to maintain an open forest structure. Passive thinning of small trees less than 20” dbh would occur within 200’ of the centerline of roads and under utility lines where canopies are closely packed.

Wilderness

Prescribed fire would be used generally to accomplish ecosystem restoration work in designated Wilderness areas of the Suppression Unit, such as near Wawona. Hand thinning and pile burning would be used where prescribed fire would not be safe. Limited passive reduction techniques would be used in non-Wilderness within 200’ of the centerline along road and utility corridors, generally on shrubs and trees less than 20” in diameter; all heavy mechanical equipment would remain outside the Wilderness boundary, and would not “reach over” from non-Wilderness to Wilderness areas. Equipment used in the Wilderness would need to meet the minimum tool requirements for Wilderness.

2017 Amendment

Alternative D – Multiple Action (Preferred Alternative)

Descriptions of Proposed Actions under Alternative D

This alternative divides the park into two fire management units: the ~~Fire Use~~ **Community and Infrastructure Protection Strategy Unit** (1% of the park), and the ~~Suppression Unit~~ **Wildland Fire Management Unit** (99% of the park; **Map 2-20 – 2017 Amendment**).

~~Suppression Unit~~ **Community and Infrastructure Protection Strategy Unit** (1% of the park)

Non-Wildland /Urban Interface, Non-Wilderness

Beyond the 1½ mile radius around the six WUI areas, wildland fuel and vegetation would only be treated with prescribed and ~~managed-wildland~~ **wildfire** to achieve target restoration and maintenance conditions. Thinning of live and dead trees would be done to prepare these areas for prescribed burning. After initial fuel reduction work was accomplished, prescribed fire units would be set up for rotational burning to maintain an open forest structure. Passive thinning of small trees less than 20” dbh would occur within 200’ of the centerline of roads and under utility lines where canopies are closely packed.

Wilderness

Prescribed fire would be used generally to accomplish ecosystem restoration work in designated Wilderness areas of the ~~Suppression Unit~~ **park**, such as near Wawona. Hand thinning and pile burning would be used where prescribed fire would not be safe. Limited passive reduction techniques would be used in non-Wilderness within 200’ of the centerline along road and utility corridors, generally on shrubs and trees less than 20” in diameter; all heavy mechanical equipment would remain outside the Wilderness boundary, and would not “reach over” from non-Wilderness to Wilderness areas. Equipment used in the Wilderness would need to meet the minimum tool requirements for Wilderness.

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Original Text:

Fire Use Unit (83% of the park)

Non-Wildland/Urban Interface, Non-Wilderness:

There is very little development in this unit. These tracts are located mostly along road corridors and include Glacier Point, Tuolumne Meadows, White Wolf, and other areas where the Wilderness boundary is set back from existing human intrusions and development. Prescribed fire and thinning of small trees generally less than 6” dbh would be done to protect these areas as a wildland fire approaches. Hand cutting and pile burning would be used to prepare a prescribed fire unit for burning. Trees, including dead trees, would be cut as needed to provide safe and secure firelines. These activities would be

designed to reduce wildland fire intensity as fires approach non-Wilderness road and utility corridors. Managed wildland fire would be acceptable where it did not endanger buildings or sensitive sites (e.g., cultural resources).

Wilderness

Managed wildland fire would be the primary fire management strategy used in Wilderness. Use of equipment would meet minimum tool requirements for Wilderness. Hand cutting and pile burning would be used to prepare units for prescribed fire or to protect them from approaching wildland fire. Prescribed fire plans would be prepared for work in designated burn units. Managed wildland fire would be permitted anywhere in the unit pending authorization of a Wildland Fire Implementation Plan.

2017 Amendment

Fire Use Unit (83% of the park)

Wildland Fire Management (99% of the park)

Non-Wildland/Urban Interface, Non-Wilderness:

There is very little development in this unit. These tracts are located mostly along road corridors and include Glacier Point, Tuolumne Meadows, White Wolf, and other areas where the Wilderness boundary is set back from existing human intrusions and development. Prescribed fire and thinning of small trees generally less than 6" dbh would be done to protect these areas as a wildland wildfire approaches. Hand cutting and pile burning would be used to prepare a prescribed fire unit for burning. Trees, including dead trees, would be cut as needed to provide safe and secure firelines. These activities would be designed to reduce wildland wildfire intensity as fires approach non-Wilderness road and utility corridors. ~~Managed wildland~~ Managing a wildfire for protection and resource objectives would be acceptable where it did not endanger buildings or sensitive sites (e.g., cultural resources).

Wilderness

~~Managed wildland~~ Managing a wildfire for wilderness and resource values and benefits would be the primary fire management strategy used in Wilderness. Use of equipment would meet minimum tool requirements for Wilderness. Hand cutting and pile burning would be used to prepare units for prescribed fire or to protect them from approaching wildland wildfire. Prescribed fire plans would be prepared for work in designated burn units. ~~Managed wildland~~ Managing a wildfire would be permitted anywhere in the unit pending authorization of a ~~Wildland Fire Implementation Plan~~. published decision in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System

Original Text:

Table II-9 Fire and mechanical treatments using alternative D by unit area
 (an XX indicates the treatment is used in the alternative and a bold X indicates extensive use)

Alternative D	Suppression Unit			Fire Use Unit		
	Wildland / Urban Interface	Non-WUI /Non-wilderness road corridors	Wilderness	Wildland / Urban Interface	Non-WUI/ Non-wilderness road corridors	Wilderness
Aggressive reduction	X					
Passive reduction	X	X	X	X	X	X
Managed wildland fire					X	X
Prescribed fire	X	X	X	X	X	X

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Alternative D	Suppression Unit			Fire Use Unit Community Protection Strategy			
	WUI	Non-WUI /Non-wilderness road corridors	Wilderness	Inner WUI (1/4 mile buffer)	Outer WUI (1.5 mile buffer)	Non-WUI/ Non-wilderness road corridors	Wilderness
Aggressive reduction	XX			XX	XX		
Passive reduction	XX	X	X	XX	XX	XX	X
Managed wildland fire				XX	XX	XX	XX
Wildfire: Protection Objectives							
Wildfire: Resource Objectives					XX	XX	XX
Prescribed fire	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	X

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Original Text:

Protection of Sensitive Resources

Yosemite has a variety of special places and sensitive cultural and natural resources. If known sensitive cultural resource sites or habitats for a special-status species are within any proposed prescribed fire or managed wildland fire area, the area would be evaluated and suitable mitigation measures would be applied as needed.

...

With wildland fires, which are unplanned events, resource advisors would be notified of the intent to manage a fire in a certain part of the park. The location of the ignition would be reported and efforts would be made to get specialists into the area to perform basic inventory work as part of the cost of the incident.

If features are located that require mitigation, action points (geographic locations at which, if the fire reaches them, an action to mitigate is triggered) would be established and mitigation plans would be developed. Once the fire reached the action point the mitigation plan would be implemented. It could take several days to weeks before these actions were needed and the fire may not ever reach the identified resource at risk. The maximum manageable area (MMA) could also be set to exclude resources of concern

2017 Amendment

Protection of Sensitive Resources

Yosemite has a variety of special places and sensitive cultural and natural resources. If known sensitive cultural resource sites or habitats for a special-status species are within any proposed prescribed fire or ~~managed wildland~~ wildfire area, the area would be evaluated and suitable mitigation measures would be applied as needed.

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If features are located that require mitigation, action points (geographic locations at which, if the fire reaches them, an action to mitigate is triggered) would be established and mitigation plans would be developed. Once the fire reached the action point the mitigation plan would be implemented. It could take several days to weeks before these actions were needed and the fire may not ever reach the identified resource at risk. The ~~maximum manageable area (MMA)~~ planning area could also be set to exclude resources of concern.