



FMLB Update

The Fire Management Leadership Board (FMLB) is comprised of the National Fire Director, Fire Management Program Center – Program Managers, Program Management Specialist, Regional Fire Management Officers, and Logistic/Administrative Assistant. The Board meets three times annually to develop and recommend strategic direction for the NPS wildland fire management program and to oversee the allocation of funding and resources.

2002 Budget Overview

The purpose of the September FMLB meeting is to determine budget allocations for the upcoming fiscal year predicated upon anticipated appropriations. The budget requests are based upon submission from the parks, regions and the Fire Management Program Center.

Budget figures used were the anticipated 2002 wildland fire allocations (early September estimates). Therefore the decisions made on budget allocations are tentative.

The 2001 budget and the National Fire Plan provided a substantial increase in preparedness, fuels management, facilities and established new programs such as the Wildland Urban Interface and Rural Fire Assistance. The FMLB, in 2001, allocated the funding to comply with the appropriation stipulations, such as increasing the number of wildland fire personnel and resources at the field level, and to address existing needs and improve all elements of the wildland fire management program.

The 2002 budget does not provide any significant funding increases—it is essentially a flat budget. As compared to the 2001 budget which was intended to bring us to full performance, with the 2002 budget the NPS wildland fire program is only at 82% of full performance in preparedness. The 2003 projected budget is similar.

Personnel costs and non-discretionary elements/items (those elements and items that must be funded for program continuity and performance) account for 91% of the preparedness funds. The opportunity for

substantial increases in permanent and permanent-less-than-full-time positions is very limited because we must maintain program flexibility to respond to budget reductions.

The hazard fuels funding level remained constant. The 2002 fuels management funds are allocated completely by the regions to projects and project overhead, so additional positions and activities cannot be funded. Significant carryover for 2002 is anticipated since a number of projects could not be completed in 2001. This funding is tied to identified projects, so it is not available to fund other needs. Therefore only changes in projects and project overhead could result in additional funds. Any additions to project overhead costs must directly result in a significant increase in accomplishments.

Wildland Urban Interface projects to be funded will be determined through the Department of Interior process, with funds allocated through the bureaus. The total WUI funds requested by DOI bureaus exceed available funding. The allocation to each bureau has been weighted based upon submitted projects. The funds available to the NPS dropped to 12.9 million, down from 17.9 million. Furthermore, overhead costs are not to exceed 20% of the allocated funds. At this time we are very close to 20% so new WUI positions will not be established.

Rural Fire Assistance funding is anticipated to remain the same. Regions submitted preliminary budget estimates.

Approach

- To fully understand program needs, Monday through Wednesday was spent identifying all requests for each program

FMLB

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National Fire Director
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FMPC-Program Planning
- **Paul Broyles**
FMPC-Fire Operations and Safety
- **Gladys Crabtree**
FMPC-Information Technology
- **Roberta D'Amico**
FMPC-Communications and Education
- **Merrie Johnson**
FMPC-Qualifications/Training/
Business Management
- **Liz Roberts**
FMPC-Special Projects
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FMPC-Fire Technology
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- **Paul Anderson**
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- element (i.e., preparedness, RFA, etc.).
- On Thursday, allocation of the preparedness funds was determined.
- On Friday, allocation of the fuels management funds was determined. Potential items from fuels and WUI requests were identified that could be funded if carryover funds were available.
- The requested dollars greatly exceeded the amount available for distribution, therefore, those items that had to be funded in full or in part were identified. Errors were also identified/corrected.
- Strategies on how to allocate the limited funds in a manner that established a long term approach were discussed.
- Requests from the regions and the FMPC were re-evaluated to insure that only priority and appropriate requests were considered. This resulted in significant reductions in requests.
- Due to limited funding, the FMLB decided that it was important to implement a strategic approach to establish field positions in preparedness. The initial emphasis will be on leadership positions (see rationale for positions).

Preparedness

Existing personnel and non-discretionary costs accounted for \$27,987,300 (approximately 91% of the anticipated preparedness allocation). Therefore, \$2,842,000 remained to address all remaining preparedness needs. The following table summarizes the FMLB preliminary allocations. A brief rationale for each item is provided after the table.

Request	Allocated Dollars
Available Funds	2,842,000
(1) Leadership—Helicopters & Engines	535,100
Subtotal	2,306,900
(2) Additional Positions	146,000
Subtotal	2,160,900
(3) Supplemental Support	443,400
Subtotal	1,717,500
(4) Discretionary Line Items	530,000
Subtotal	1,187,500
(5) Training	364,000
Subtotal	823,500
(6) Research (continuation)	278,000
Subtotal	545,500
(7) Fire Mgmt. Plans: Contracts & Workshops	200,000
Subtotal	345,500
(8) Vegetation Mapping (New starts)	150,000
Subtotal	195,500
(9) Franchise (Personnel)	75,000
Subtotal	120,500
(10) Medical Test (pilot program)	62,500
Subtotal	58,000
(11) Accountable Property	35,000
Subtotal	23,000
(12) Fairshare Correction	23,000
Subtotal	0

Significant changes may occur in wildland fire budget allocations depending upon the national situation.

Rationale for Preparedness Allocations

1. **Leadership Positions: Engines & Helicopters** – Over \$5.5 million was identified for engine staffing (WCF analysis) and helicopter module staffing. The FMLB agreed that the overall strategy for funding was to address the leadership for engines, helicopters and crews because of safety concerns and long-term retention. Upgrading or extending seasons for existing PFT or STF engine leadership will cost about \$992,000. Parks within this category were examined to determine which did not meet the objective of at least 95% initial attack success. The FMLB approved \$387,900 to address leadership at the parks with less than 95% IA success. The FMLB approved \$147,200 for helicopter module leadership at BICY, SEKI, GRCA, and MEVE. Crew supervisor positions were identified at parks that currently meet 95% IA success. Additional information is needed to clearly determine the function of those positions. The objective of the FMLB is to continue to address leadership positions as funding becomes available. Once leadership positions are established additional crew positions will be addressed.

2. **Additional Staffing** – Each region and the FMPC prioritized additional staffing, from both the analysis deficiency list and positions not on the deficiency list or from positions not addressed by the analysis—total cost \$1,672,100. The following upgrades to existing positions or new term or stay in school positions were approved:

a. FMPC	IQCS (TERM)	\$35,000
b. IMRO	Clerk	\$35,000
c. MWR	OZAR, Engine Foreman, upgrade	\$23,300
d. NER	NERI, Engine Foreman, upgrade to STF	\$ 1,100
e. SER	REDW, Engine Foreman, GS6 to 7, PFT	\$21,500
f. PWR	Engine Foreman, GS6 to GS8 plus 13pps	\$30,200

3. **Supplemental Support** - This funding was recognized as being important to support park caches, PPE and equipment at non-Firepro parks, and increased support costs such as rent due to additional staff members. The initial request was for over \$2.2 million. The requests were re-evaluated and reduced to \$1.04 million. Requests were approved at 48% of the reduced value. The funds will be allocated to the following regions for distribution based on regional priorities. **IMRO 170,400; PWRO 84,200; SERO 62,000; NCRO 21,400; NERO 37,200; MWRO 68,200**

4. **Discretionary Budget Line Items** – The initial discretionary line item request was for \$820,000. Many of these items addressed existing initiatives/activities/contracts. Priority discretionary items were then identified and reviewed. The following items were approved: **GIS Support for NER/NCR \$50,000; MWRO \$46,000; Fire GIS \$35,000; Fire Severity \$100,000; FMPC \$276,500; Aviation \$32,500**

5. **Training** - Training is a priority, especially for our less experienced personnel. Estimating training funding is difficult due to a number of factors. Training for 2002 was initially funded at \$553,000 representing 38% of funds requested. Thirty-eight percent has been based on past estimated expenditures compared to actual requests. However, since not all the 2001 training dollars were spent, the FMLB reduced the percentage of approved training dollars down to 25%. If additional training dollars are identified at a later date they can be requested by the Regional FMO.

6. **Research** – The initial 2002 request for ongoing and new research was over \$2.6 million. Only recurring research projects were approved for \$278,000. Efforts will continue to obtain Joint Fire Science Research funding.

7. **Fire Management Plans** – Concern was expressed that by simply contracting for FMPs, NPS personnel were not developing the expertise to update or prepare FMPs. The FMLB approved \$200,000 for : (1) contracting FMPs/EAs at non-Firepro parks, (2) contracting for EAs at Firepro parks if compliance problems exit, (3) one to two regional workshops on FMP preparation or specific assistance at a park.

The rationale are provided to assist readers in understanding the FMLB considerations and long-term strategy. If you have questions contact your Regional Fire Management Officer.

The board agreed that bids will go out to see what is an appropriate cost for contracting, and then the request will come to the FMLB for approval.

8. **Vegetation Mapping (New Starts)** – The FMLB approved \$150,000 for initiating new projects. If money becomes available, the continuation of existing vegetation mapping projects will be addressed with carryover funds in preparedness, and hazard fuel reduction/WUI. Since vegetation mapping supports all program elements a variety of funding source are used during the life of the project.

9. **Personnel Franchise** – \$75,000 for 2002 was approved by the FMLB. We anticipate a reduced use of the Personnel Franchise. The regional FMOs will provide an estimate of anticipated needs at the October FMLB conference call. If necessary, the approved amount will be adjusted. FMLB will identify more stringent guidelines on what positions will be submitted to the franchise.

10. **Pilot Medical Test** – The Intermountain region will participate in the new inter-agency pilot medical program authorized by FFALC. These wildland fire medical qualifications and a physical examination process are for arduous duty firefighters.

11. **Accountable Property** – Only accountable property that was approved were critical health and safety needs for \$35,000. The initial request was \$1,973,500 and the revised total request was for \$155,700. Some of the identified accountable property should be addressed with lapse dollars and surplus funds.

12. **Fairshare Correction**– An existing PNWO Fairshare item was erroneously excluded from the non-discretionary Fairshare list.

Hazard Fuels Reduction

With the current listing of projects and associated overhead in SACS (approved projects turned on by the regions); \$100,000 for non-discretionary line items; \$375,000 for fire effects personnel (these were supported by the analysis but were erroneously omitted); and \$325,000 for non-discretionary items in Sexton's budget, there was no new money to allocate.

Priorities were identified in the event that carryover from 2001 is available. The following are listed in priority order: (1) Identified projects and overhead; (2) Rx fire training (50% of initial request—approved \$164,000); (3) Rx Fire Academy (Florida - NPS share based upon use is \$150,000); (4) Regional workshops for Rx Fire (RM-18, Chapter 10, \$41,250); (5) Continued vegetation mapping (\$940,000); and (6) Identified seasonal and term positions.

Wildland Urban Interface

Regional priorities for WUI positions were identified at a cost of \$353,000. The FMLB recognized that the NPS is currently very close to the allowed 20% for project overhead. The only positions to be considered if any carryover becomes available are seasonal or term positions. Of the nine identified positions only one is a term (shared) for \$40,000.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for January, 2002. If you have questions, concerns or any feedback, please contact your Regional FMO or Program Manager. To serve the field better, we need your feedback.

If you have questions about budget allocations, the process or the current budgetary situation contact your Regional Fire Management Officer.