



Fire Regime and Condition Class Guidebook

Date: April, 2003

Topic: Fire Regime and Condition Class Guidebook

Purpose: Implement a fire regime condition class (FRCC) guidebook for technology transfer and collaboration between federal agencies, state and private for project scale FRCC determination, Fire Management Plan (FMP) FRCC mapping, and use of prioritization tools.

Background: Forest Service, Interior Agencies, and The Nature Conservancy have completed a beta test version 1.1 of a FRCC guidebook. This project provides consistent and useful technology for determination of FRCC and use in project prioritization and planning.

A FRCC guidebook and website has been developed by fire managers and ecologists from Forest Service and Interior, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Rocky Mt. Research Station's (RMRS) Missoula Fire Lab and Fire Modeling Institute (FMI), and the USGS EROS data center. Version 1.1 beta test methodology is on the Fire Lab's Fire Monitoring and Inventory System (FIREMON) with website (fire.org/firemon) support for methods, forms, data entry, and report programs. The guidebook is designed to provide technology and achieve consistency in determination of project scale FRCC and local FMP FRCC mapping. An interagency technology transfer and beta test review workshop was conducted the week of March 17 in Tucson, AZ. In addition managers and ecologists from TNC and the Fire Learning Network (FLN) have been working with agencies and landowners developing common ground and technology for planning and implementing fuels projects. As part of this effort techniques have been tested and developed for mapping FRCC at FMP and watershed scales. A key result of these efforts has been the development of a consistent process for modeling natural reference conditions that are used as a baseline for FRCC calculation.

A geographic information system (GIS) computer prioritization tool (Multi-Resource Integration Tool, MRIT) has been developed through collaboration with the above entities, by a team located on the Flathead National Forest in the Northern Region. FRCC, wildland urban interface (WUI), and other risk data can be loaded into this tool for rapid assessment of options for prioritization of watersheds or projects. A typical set of GIS queries that take 2-4 hours to produce one mapped prioritization option can be conducted in 10-15 minutes using MRIT (www.fs.fed.us/r1/cohesive_strategy).

The guidebook and working group have been working as part of the team with the RMRS Missoula Fire Lab and Fire Modeling Institute (FMI), USGS EROS data center, and other agencies and partners in the LANDFIRE project for mapping of vegetation, fuels, FRCC, and other key fire and fuels information across the United States.

Implementation Strategy: Agency fuels and fire use strategic documents state that projects should be prioritized using consistent science-based fire regime condition class (FRCC), wildland urban interface (WUI), and associated risk data. The Government Accounting Office (GAO) has produced multiple reports indicating agencies need a consistent and effective system for prioritization of fuels and fire use projects based on FRCC and associated risk measures.

Much of the technology needed to achieve consistent science-based prioritization, planning, implementation, and monitoring has been developed. Federal agencies and state and private collaborators are moving forward in the most cost-effective way to implement the technology.

Key Points for Strategy Implementation:

- 1) A fire regime condition class (FRCC) interagency guidebook is being implemented.
- 2) Work will continue to improve natural reference condition data and FRCC descriptions through agency, TNC-FLN, and other collaborative efforts.
- 3) Work will continue on development of a general technical report (GTR) through the RMRS Fire Laboratory.
- 4) Through use of the FRCC beta test information and photos contributed by the many different users a photo series for project scale FRCC is being developed.
- 5) Upgrade and maintain the website and provide for central storage.
- 6) A guidebook chapter is being added for techniques for FMP finer scale FRCC mapping.
- 7) Implement training and maintenance for the GIS prioritization tool (MRIT).
- 8) Conduct collaborative interagency, TNC, and state and private fire and fuel management demonstrations, tests, and local workshops.

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