



Fire Program Analysis (FPA) Responses to Year 1 Field Issues and Concerns

Over the last year, the Fire Program Analysis (FPA) Project welcomed and received feedback from the field about how the application model works, the user interface, and the validity the results are for their FPU's. This document represents those issues and concerns, and explains the resolutions the FPA team developed and items for the Year 2 analysis.

For ease of reading, this document groups your issues and concerns into broader categories. Scroll down to view the entire document or click on the links below to go to specific topics.

Table of Contents

- [FPA Impact on the Field](#)Page 2
- [Fuels](#)Page 3
- [Initial Response Simulation \(IRS\)](#)Page 5
- Support
 - [Communications](#)Page 7
 - [Training](#)Page 8



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FPA Impact on the Field

You Told Us...	FPA Response...
<p>There was more of a workload on the field to implement phase 2 of FPA than was anticipated or included in the FPU's program of work.</p>	<p>The FPA Team continues to strive to minimize the workload impact the field.</p> <p>FPA expected the workload for the initial/learning year was going to be greater than subsequent analysis years, even though much of the input data was migrated from FPA Phase 1.</p> <p>However, it is a fine balance to have accurate and quality data for local and national analyses, and burdening the field with data entry and creating multiple analysis alternatives.</p>
<p>FPA submission deadlines are too short, or are not coordinated with deadlines for LANDFIRE, or they overlap with other fire program due dates.</p>	<p>FPA's schedule is tightly linked with the annual national budget submission schedule, which is dictated by Presidential and Congressional budget due dates.</p> <p>Multiple fire programs such as LANDFIRE overlap with FPA deadlines. FPA will continue to coordinate closely with LANDFIRE and other fire programs to maximize benefits to the field.</p> <p>The first year for FPA allowed an extended submission date for FPU's analyses that overlapped the beginning of the annual FPA schedule.</p> <p>In "Year 2," FPA is trying to work more closely within the annual budget cycle. An annual schedule is important so that FPU's analysis input is available to the Washington Office decision makers in time to help them develop out-year budget requests.</p> <p>As we begin the "Year 3" analysis, (planning for FY2013), we expect FPU's will be less likely to update boundaries or make significant changes to other inputs to FPA prior to the annual analysis period (June to February).</p>



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Fuels

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<p>FPA's global adjustment to LANDFIRE's FBFMs 102 & 122 for the entire FPU was inaccurate.</p>	<p>For Year 2, FPA will use the LANDFIRE Fire Behavior Fuel Model (FBFM) data without any adjustments.</p> <p>FPA will not globally adjust the LANDFIRE data in the Initial Response Simulator (IRS) or the Large Fire Module (LFM) for analysis.</p>
<p>Non-burnable areas in LANDFIRE occur too frequently in the FPU.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0f0ff; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p>A paper is under development that discusses solution for non-burnable occurrence in the Initial Response Simulator and Large Fire Module.</p> </div> <p>For Year 2, FPA will use these protocols in IRS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For FBFMs NB1 (Urban Developed), NB2 (Snow/Ice), NB8 (Open Water), NB9 (bare ground): The FPA system assigns a fuel type to each modeled ignition within the Fire Workload Area (FWA) by drawing from the existing fuel types within the FWA. ▪ For FBFM NB3 (Ag): The system will assign a GS1 fuel type and then use the calculated fuel moistures, and wind speed of the originally designated fuel type. ▪ For NB6 (emergent wetland), or NB7 (moss) IRS will default the Rate of Spread (ROS) to 10 chains per hour with a 5-foot flame length and a Fire Intensity Level of 1. If needed, the FPU will be able to adjust this default in IRS to match historically observed ROS for the fuel model in that FPU.
<p>LANDFIRE fuels, as modeled in FPA, sometimes result in modeled behavior that is not as expected by local planners.</p>	<p>FPU planners will have the ability to adjust the Rate of Spread (ROS) in the Initial Response Simulator (IRS) for each LANDFIRE fuel model within each FWA. This functionality will be available to the FPA system in September 2009.</p>



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Increasing the investment in the FPU's fuel program appears to have had little effect in the outputs.	This anomaly appeared in "Year 1" analyses, especially in those FPUs with small fuels programs. For "Year 2" the Project is reviewing FPA Performance Metric #3, (a three-part calculation that includes acres treated for hazardous fuels), to determine if it can more effectively show the benefits of fuels treatments.
Fire Planners expressed a lack of understanding of FPA's use of long-term fuels in the model.	<p>FPA will offer a long-term fuels treatment online workshop for "Year 2" analyses. This information will be included with a LiveMeeting™ session that provides instructional information on how to develop the long terms fuels option. This session will be recorded and made available on line for future use by the FPU.</p> <p>FPA also plans LiveMeeting™ for interpretation of the results of including the long-term fuels treatments.</p> <p>Exact dates and times are to be determined.</p>
FPUs with few fires are finding it difficult to show the effect of fuel treatments when running the IRS.	<p>As dictated by scope, the FPA models do not measure benefits of fuel treatments for management purposes other than the reduction of wildland fire risk.</p> <p>If an FPU has few fires, and a small fuels program, FPA will show little strategic movement by small increments of increase or decrease in budgets. However, if the fuel treatments have strategic value to the FPU's long-term fuels strategy should reflect that benefit in the performance metrics.</p>
The cost benefit to the FPU, especially FPUs with a "smaller" fire and fuels management program given the time they have invested in FPA.	<p>FPA asked the EOG, IST, and the Budget Leads to assess if all FPUs, especially the ones with "smaller" programs, must fully participate each year in the FPA process.</p> <p>The EOG decided that all FPUs must participate in the Year 2 analysis. They believe with improved data quality inputs, improvements in the FPA application, and better understanding of the models by the FPU planners, there will be improved outputs that may benefit smaller units in the future.</p>



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Initial Response Simulation (IRS)

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Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) data layer in the enterprise SILVIS data layer with 2km buffer is not extensive enough.	The extent of WUI will be updated after the 2010 Census when SILVIS data is updated.
The nationally significant Highly Valued Resource (HVR) data layer should include additional resource types/categories.	The FPA Executive Oversight Group (EOG) has directed the FPA Project to use the same nationally significant HVR layers in Year 2 for model comparison (budget planning for year FY2012).
Modeling all fires based on historic ignitions occurring 365 days a year does not represent the real situation – when traditional fire season is in most cases less than a full year.	Ignitions for modeling fires in IRS will be constrained to a "preparedness staffing season" for each FPU that represents the local "fire season" as defined by the period when 90% of ignitions occur. This will be functional in IRS in "Year 2" FPA in the August 2009 release of the system.
In IRS, when the system selected the nearest weather station, sometimes results from an out-of-area weather station influenced the model.	Limiting the FPA model in "Year 2" to utilize ignitions that only fall in the "preparedness staffing season" as described above will minimize the need for IRS to search for weather stations substantially far from the ignition point.
Not all FPUs are able to maintain or place a priority on the operation of weather stations before/after local freeze dates.	All FPA agencies' policies require that FPUs maintain and verify accuracy of weather stations. In addition, FPUs must maintain records for the appropriate period throughout the year. The Executive Oversight Group (EOG) acknowledged the importance of this policy during the June 5, 2009 meeting, and will reiterate to agency leadership the importance of complete and accurate weather station data



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<p>Historic fire occurrence data was not accurate and the FPU's should have been allowed time to correct their data.</p>	<p>FPA uses the FPA agency's official fire records, which reside in the agency's "system of record", for historic fire data. FPA will continue to emphasize the importance of accurate fire reporting data as will the FPA Executive Oversight Group</p>
<p>FPA did not model fires managed for multiple objectives in "Year 1."</p>	<p>The FPA project is working closely with the FPA Interagency Science Team (IST) to identify possible ways the workload and benefits from fires managed for multiple objectives might be represented in the "Year 2" analysis and beyond.</p> <p>The FPA system uses historical fire occurrence and historic cost data for modeling fire behavior and calculating the performance measures. Similar data for Wildland Fire Use (WFU) fires exists on a limited basis and for a limited number of FPU's.</p>



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Support

Communications

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<p>More comprehensive communication is needed so field personnel do not have to search FPA's web site for new or revised technical or informational papers.</p>	<p>Some of the white and technical papers require revision for "Year 2." FPA is currently updating these papers and will post them to the FPA website as soon as they are available. FPA is working to convert those white papers that explain how to complete a task into technical papers.</p> <p>FPA is trying to improve its communication with other related projects such as LANDFIRE by establishing a more comprehensive effort for its stakeholders. Some of the things we are doing are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Weekly organizational calls with LANDFIRE▪ FPA emails ListServ™ notices to over 900 subscribers, each a time sensitive issue that needs communicating in a consistent and timely manner, including most white and technical paper revisions.▪ FPA distributes Monthly newsletters with hot links to both general and technical audiences.▪ Briefing Papers #1-4 to assist the FPU's with briefing line officer and agency leadership▪ Monthly Geographic Area Lead conference calls.



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Training

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<p>FPA training was not available in a timely manner and when it was available, it did not meet the needs of the system users.</p>	<p>The FPA team continually seeks ways to provide learning experiences for the FPU Planners, Fire Leadership, and our Management Advisory Team (MAT) and their peers. FPA has provided a host of training options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Web Based Self Paced Training Modules - 6 online self-paced training modules were released online in May 2009.▪ LiveMeetings™ - FPA project will continue to hold topic-specific LiveMeetings™ with individual FPUs to help them understand and use the FPA system.▪ Webinars – FPA presented, recorded, and posted over 20 specific subject matter LiveMeetings webinars. A planned schedule of “Year 2” webinars will be available in July 2009.▪ User Guide - A detailed FPA User Guide was developed with feedback from the FPU planners. It can be accessed on the FPA web site at: http://www.fpa.nifc.gov/Library/Documentation/Userguides/User_guide.html▪ Workshops – FPA participated in Geographic Area hosted workshops in eight of the nine geographic areas from November 2008 to March 2009.

The FPA Team is ALWAYS eager to hear suggestions from the field as to how we can improve. Getting useful, accurate, and timely information out to stakeholders is so important to the success of the project. PLEASE, continue to provide us feedback to help us meet your needs.