

BehavePlus fire modeling system Change Log

Summary of changes from the old BEHAVE through each version of BehavePlus



The BEHAVE fire behavior prediction and fuel modeling system was first available to the field in 1984. JFSP funded a much-needed redesign and update to the BehavePlus fire modeling system version 1.0, which was released in 2002. Version 2.0 was released in 2003, Version 3.0 in 2005, Version 4.0 in 2008, and Version 5.0 in 2009. Each version update has offered additional features and fire modeling capabilities. The current version of the program is Version 5.0.5 (Build 307), released in 2011. The most significant changes are provided here.

Fire Characteristics Chart

- Fire Characteristics Chart Version 2.0, a stand-alone addition to BehavePlus for surface and crown fire characteristics charts and FireFamilyPlus for fire danger rating characteristics charts, July 12, 2013.
 - Changes include: addition of fire danger rating characteristics charts, ability to import fire behavior data created in BehavePlus, addition of logarithmic fire behavior charts, a new saved file format, updated help document, and several bug fixes.
- Fire Characteristics Chart Version 1.0, a stand-alone addition to BehavePlus for surface and crown fire characteristics charts, June 22, 2010.
- Fire Characteristics Chart Version 1.0 Beta1, a supplemental program for surface and crown fire characteristics charts, November 22, 2010.

BehavePlus version 5

- Version 5.0.5 (Build 307), a palmetto-gallberry bug fix and SURFACE Module options window change to accommodate small monitors, August 12, 2011.
- Version 5.0.4 (Build 305), a bug fix, March 6, 2011.
- Version 5.0.3 (Build 301), a bug fix, November 22, 2010.
- Version 5.0.2 (Build 299), a bug fix, August 3, 2010.
- Version 5.0.1 (Build 297), a bug fix upgrade, April 15, 2010.
- Version 5.0.0 (Build 295) formal release, April 5, 2010. Approved by BLM for installation May 25, 2010.
- Version 5.0.0 Beta3 (Build 291), has a complete fix to the SURFACE two-fuel spread direction bug, February 1, 2010.
- Version 5.0.0 Beta2 (Build 290), has a partial fix to a problem with SURFACE, two-fuel model option, using multiple spread directions, December 14, 2009.
- Version 5.0.0 Beta1 (Build 289), an upgrade with new models and features, November 13, 2009.
- The User's Guide was not updated for version 5.0. The updates did not affect operation of the program. The version 4.0 User's Guide is still applicable.
- The Variables paper was updated for version 5.0. There are new and changed variables. Updates are also reflected in the Help windows.

- Additional lessons have been developed. All lessons are now labeled version 5.0. There is a statement on the first page of each lesson indicating the extent of the changes from the version 4.0 lesson. In some cases the only change was the headers and footers. Many of the screen captures were not redone and are still labeled version 4.0.0.
- Additional models have been added to the CROWN module. The previous values are on the 'Spread Outputs' tab. The new output variables are on the 'Intensity Outputs' tab. A new flow diagram is in the help window. New variables include crown fireline intensity and flame length, power of the fire and of the wind, and wind-driven or plume-dominated fire.
- The tree mortality models have been updated in the MORTALITY module to match those in FOFEM. Ten new mortality equations are available. In some cases the results are very different from the old equations. The help system gives the equations and a table of the inputs used for each. The option of directly entering bark thickness was removed because the new equations don't use that variable. The 'Mortality equation' variable added in version 4 was removed. The flow diagram was removed from the help system because it is not applicable to the new equations.
- Changes were made to several overstory variables. This fixes a fatal crash situation in version 4.0. The change resolves potential inconsistencies in the relationship among 'Canopy Height', 'Canopy Base Height', and 'Crown Ratio'. The variable 'Tree Height' was changed to 'Torching Tree Height' and is used only in SPOT to calculate spotting distance from torching trees. 'Canopy Height' is now used as input to MORTALITY rather than 'Tree Height'.
- A new variable, 'Downwind Canopy Height', was added to the SPOT module and is used in the calculation of spotting distance. This value can differ from 'Canopy Height' at the site of the fire.
- A new variable, 'Live fuel load portion', was added to the SURFACE Fuels Outputs tab.
- The SURFACE 'Basic Outputs' tab variables list was getting too long. So two additional tabs were added: 'Wind Outputs' and 'Slope Outputs.'
- Help > Installation Info now includes the path name of the startup worksheet file.
- The Workspace notation at the bottom of the worksheet is now updated as soon as the workspace is changed, created, or cloned.
- The maximum allowed value for wind speed was changed. Previous values were unreasonably high.
- 'Surface Spread Distance' is now correctly calculated for directions other than the direction of maximum spread (a bug in version 4).
- The description of the Southern California (SoCalifornia) folder for Chaparral custom fuel models was changed from a defunct web site to a reference that is available on the BehavePlus Publications page.
- The dead fuel moisture of extinction for fuel model SCAL15 was changed to the correct value, changed from 15% to 13%. (v5.0.3)
- The SCORCH module now uses the selected SURFACE module 'Wind Speed' input option even when SURFACE is not active.
- A two fuel model bug was fixed to produce the correct fireline intensity and flame length results. Other two-fuel bugs were fixed.
- The name of the 0Startup.bpw file was changed to 0Default.bpw to avoid confusion. The 0Default.bpw worksheet file includes all of the selections for input options and output variables, appearance options, etc. and can be used as a starting place for defining a new worksheet. The startup worksheet, on the other hand, is the worksheet that opens when

the program starts. The user can change the startup worksheet on the File menu (an option added in version 4).

- The decimal display set under Configure > Custom Units preferences is no longer applied to input variables. The decimal precision entered by the user onto the worksheet (or via the Guide dialog) is maintained on the worksheet, used in the calculations, and displayed in output tables. This resolves previous problems with rounding. The value displayed on the worksheet is used in the calculations, not a stored value with more precision.
- When the units set is changed, six decimal places are given for input values (trailing zeros are suppressed). This helps the problem of rounding and changed values with units conversions.
- The Example Worksheets, FuelModeling.bpw and FuelModelingMetric.bpw, set six decimal places for fuel load variables for 'Initialize from a Fuel Model'.
- When a change to units or decimals is made using Configure > Custom units preferences, the question is asked: "Save as Units Set File?" An answer of "No" applies the changes to the current session without a saving a Units Set file for future use.
- The Units and Decimals lesson was updated to explain current operation.
- A tool for Slope from map measurements has been added for quick calculations.
- The Wind Adjustment Factor help file includes an updated diagram and table. An error in the unsheltered WAF for fuel model SH4 is corrected (from 0.4 to 0.5). (v5.0.3)
- The maximum value allowed as input for fuel loading for all classes was increased from 31 to 45 ton/ac (100 tonne/ha). (v5.0.3)
- A new publication is available (<http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/36989>):
- Heinsch, Faith Ann; Andrews, Patricia L. 2010. **BehavePlus fire modeling system, version 5.0: Design and Features**. Gen. Tech. Rep. RMRS-GTR-249. Fort Collins, CO: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station. 111 p.
- The Fire Characteristics Chart, a supplement to the BehavePlus fire modeling system has been released. This program, a stand-alone version of the chart, provides graphical representation of modeled or observed fire behavior for surface and crown fire. It replaces the limited chart created in the SURFACE module of BehavePlus. (v1.0)
- A new publication related to the Fire Characteristics Chart is available (<http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/37380>):
- Andrews, Patricia L.; Heinsch, Faith Ann; Schelvan, Luke. 2011. **How to generate and interpret fire characteristics charts for surface and crown fire behavior**. Gen. Tech. Rep. RMRS-GTR-253. Fort Collins, CO: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station. 40 p.
- An error has been corrected in the special case palmetto-gallberry fuel model (not one of the 53 standard fuel models). The answer was wrong for live moisture less than 120%. (v5.0.5)
- The SURFACE options window is smaller to fit on small monitors. The "Fuel & Moisture" tab is now split into two tabs. (v5.0.5)

BehavePlus version 4

- Version 4.0.0 formal release, September 19, 2008.
- Version 4.0.0 Beta, an upgrade containing many new features, May 5, 2008.
- The User's Guide is updated to reflect operational changes.

- A new Variables paper includes variable descriptions from the help windows and input/output tables (Andrews 2008). The pdf document is available through the help system and includes many internal linkages to make it a useful reference guide.
- As part of a JFSP funded project, the tutorials were updated, new lessons are available, and a plan for future training material development is planned.
- The BehavePlus program and supporting material has been moved to a new web site: www.firelab.org, for fire behavior and fire danger software. Look under the Apps & Products link. The link to www.firemodels.org will redirect to the new site for at least a year.
- Photographs and values for canopy cover, stand height, canopy bulk density, and canopy base height are available in help windows. The information is taken from Scott and Reinhardt (2005) 'Stereo photo guide for estimating fuel characteristics in conifer stands.'
- The user has the option of identifying a worksheet to open at startup, rather than the BasicStart.bpw worksheet.
- A tool was added to calculate horizontal map distance from ground map distance and direction with respect to upslope.
- The option was added to not impose the maximum reliable wind speed limit for the Rothermel surface fire spread model. Spread rate increases with increasing wind speed rather than being constant for high wind speeds.
- The option was added to input curing level (fuel loading load transfer portion) for dynamic fuel models rather than calculating curing from live herbaceous fuel moisture.
- A special case fuel model was added for western aspen (Brown and Simmerman 1986).
- If bark thickness is a user input for MORTALITY, 'mortality equation' (spruce or not-spruce) is an input. This clarifies that the 206 species available for 'mortality species' is used only to calculate bark thickness.
- Additional output variables are available for SURFACE. 'Intermediate' output values will aid understanding of the Rothermel surface fire spread model.
- Fuel model names were changed to specifically mention short and long needle litter and to clarify that the fuel models are for surface fuel, not for the overstory.
 - 8—'Closed timber litter' to 'Short needle litter'
 - 9—'Hardwood litter' to 'Long needle or hardwood litter'
 - 10—'Timber with litter & understory' to 'Timber litter & understory'
 - TU4—'Dwarf conifer with understory' to 'Dwarf conifer understory'
- Output variables were added to help understanding of calculated Wind Adjustment Factor: Crown fill portion and WAF calculation (sheltered or unsheltered).
- Crown fire area and perimeter output variables were added, using the equations in Rothermel (1991).
- 'Conditional crown fire' was added as a 'fire type'. In version 3 if Transition to crown fire? was 'no', then the fire type was 'surface', whether 'Active crown fire?' was 'yes' or 'no'.
- Changes to the main menu are more logical. For example, File > New is now File > Open worksheet.
- File > saveAs > Results > Spreadsheet or Html is now File > Export results. In version 3, save as spreadsheet save the output table without input values as a .txt file. In version 4, only html files are exported. These files can be viewed in a browser, or they can be opened with spreadsheet software and then saved in spreadsheet format.
- An ExportFolder has been added as the default location for Export results.
- For the option 'Table shading for acceptable fire conditions,' the option is added to produce tables with blank cells rather than crossed out values. The option is available in Configure > Appearance preferences > Tables tab.

- Values entered in the 'Fine dead fuel moisture' tool are remembered the next time the tool is used for the current session.
- Another option has been added for worksheet header lines, for prescribed fire planning.
- The range of values allowed for some input variables has been expanded. For example, the minimum value for 'elapsed time' is now 0.1 hours rather than 0.5 hours.
- The Language option was eliminated. Portuguese was available in version 3, as an example of how a translated version of BehavePlus could be developed. Due to lack of interest, the option has been disabled for now.
- In version 3.0.2, the program sometimes ran slowly or not at all, particularly when installed in the default directory of 'C:/SEM'. A change to the installation process fixes the problem in version 4.0.

BehavePlus version 3

- Version 3.0.2, a bug fix upgrade, July 7, 2006.
- Version 3.0.1, a bug fix upgrade, June 17, 2005.
- Version 3.0.0, an upgrade containing many new features, June 7, 2005.
- A new CROWN module to calculate transition to crown fire and crown fire spread rate is added.
- Calculation of wind adjustment factor (WAF) for fuel sheltered by overstory trees is added to SURFACE.
- Table shading according to user-specified ranges of acceptable conditions for prescribed fire planning is available.
- A CONTAIN option is added for single resource dispatch so tables and graphs can be produced for ranges of line construction rate, etc.
- The ability to export table output to a spreadsheet for further analysis or custom display is available.
- RH module is replaced by an RH tool.
- The step function from the calculation of probability of ignition by a firebrand is resolved and removed.
- Forty new surface fuel models, some with dynamic herbaceous live-to-dead fuel load transfer as a function of live fuel moisture are available in SURFACE.
- A new moisture scenario set (named "FuelModeling") that was used to develop the new fuel models is added.
- Custom fuel models can be exported in the file format required by FARSITE, FlamMap, and NEXUS.
- When the program starts up, a new "BasicStart.bpw" example worksheet is automatically loaded.
- Module names are included on the Output Variables and Run Options lists for added clarity.
- The "Fuel/Vegetation" worksheet section has been split into "Surface/Understory" and "Overstory" sections.
- The Worksheet Appearance Dialog has a new option "show descriptions only for entered variable codes" as well as the "show descriptions for all discrete variable codes". The new option is the default for example worksheets.
- A "SurfaceCrown.bpm" worksheet has been added to the set of example worksheets.
- An updated User's Guide reflects operational changes. An index has been added.
- In-program help screens are updated with variable definitions and explanations.

- Tutorials 1-4 are updated and reorganized.
- New tutorials focus on new modeling capabilities.

BehavePlus version 2

- Version 2.0.2, a maintenance and bug fix upgrade, October 23, 2003.
- Version 2.0.1, a maintenance and bug fix upgrade, September 4, 2003.
- Version 2.0.0, an upgrade containing many new features, July 11, 2003.
- Safety zone size model is added as a new SAFETY module.
- Containment model is added as a new CONTAIN module. This is a new model that allows multiple resources to make direct or parallel attack.
- Probability of ignition by lightning model is added to the IGNITE module.
- Three methods of weighting two fuel models for rate of spread calculations is added to the SURFACE module.
- Dynamic palmetto-gallberry fuel model (Hough and Albini 1978) is added to the SURFACE module.
- Size diagram output is added to SIZE.
- Contain diagram output is in CONTAIN.
- Direction diagram is added to SURFACE.
- Fire characteristics chart diagram output is added to SURFACE.
- Fine dead fuel moisture is added as a new tool.
- A Run Option section is added to the worksheets for clarification.
- The contents of the Notes section on example worksheets is blank. The description of the worksheet that was there for version 1 is not necessary, especially with the addition of the Run Options section.
- The 'Standard' worksheet folder that was supplied with version 1 of the program is called the ExampleWorksheets folder in version 2 to better reflect what it is. The worksheets in that folder are just some that the developers put together. The term 'standard' gave them significance that they didn't deserve.
- The Blank.bpw Worksheet that was in version 1 is called the 0Startup.bpw Worksheet in version 2 to better reflect what it is—the worksheet to use as a startup in selecting calculation modules. (The '0' as a first character of the file name puts it as the first item on the list for easy selection.)
- The program now automatically loads the 0Startup.bpw worksheet upon initiation. This saves some steps if the worksheet is set up by module selection. If a previously saved worksheet is desired, it is selected and loaded as before with File > New.
- The Fuel model guide button gives you access to the photographs and descriptions in Anderson (1982) "Aids to selecting fuel models" and to the selection key in Rothermel (1983) "How to predict the spread and intensity of forest and range fires".
- The Program Help and the Users Guide for version 1 have been replaced by a single, new document—a users guide in PDF format that can be both printed and accessed online for specific help.
- A Language option has been added. Portuguese is provided as an example.
- Additional Workspace options aid in file management.
- Graph y-axes are now user-scalable.

BehavePlus version 1 compared to the old BEHAVE

- Version 1.0.0, the initial version of BehavePlus, January 24, 2002.

The old BEHAVE fire behavior prediction and fuel modeling system is a set of five DOS programs, three of which were first available in 1984. The whole look and feel of the BehavePlus fire modeling system is different, using updated user interface technology.

Following are some specific differences that will be of interest to users of the old BEHAVE system:

- BehavePlus is one program. The old BEHAVE was 5 programs (FIRE1, FIRE2, RXWINDOW, NEWMDL, TSTMDL). The separation was due to computer limitations at the time and an extended development period.
- BehavePlus gives the user control of input options that were fixed on the old BEHAVE. For example, in the old BEHAVE:
 - The DIRECT module required direct input of fuel moisture by size class, midflame wind speed, and direction of wind and spread with respect to upslope.
 - The SITE module calculated fine fuel moisture and requested input of 20-ft wind speed, exposure to the wind, and direction of wind and spread.
 - The DISPATCH module requested dead and live fuel moisture, 20-ft wind speed and wind adjustment factor. Calculations were for upslope spread with the wind.
 - In the TSTMDL program, fuel moisture was specified by category.
- In contrast, the BehavePlus SURFACE module allows users to specify the method of entry for fuel moisture, wind speed, and directions.
- In BEHAVE only continuous variables could be assigned more than one value for a maximum of 7 values. For example, wind speed could be assigned a range of values, but fuel model could not. BehavePlus allows multiple input values for every variable and there is essentially no limit to the number of values. Table output is carried over to multiple pages if necessary.
- BehavePlus produces graphs and diagrams as well as tables. The primary output of the old BEHAVE was tables. Crude graphs were produced using characters.
- The fuel modeling portion of the old BEHAVE consisted of the NEWMDL and TSTMDL programs. The features in NEWMDL are not in BehavePlus. The TSTMDL fuel model testing methods are in BehavePlus.
- BehavePlus does not include the fine dead fuel moisture model in MOISTURE and SITE modules in the FIRE2 program of BEHAVE. A better moisture model based on hourly weather data has been developed and is used in FARSITE and is being incorporated into the National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) and the FireFamily Plus program. Eventually it will be available for fire behavior calculations in BehavePlus. BehavePlus offers the fuel moisture tables as a tool.
- The CONTAIN module of BehavePlus is different from that used in BEHAVE. The old model had a mathematical problem that occasionally surfaced. BehavePlus uses a model by Fried and Fried (1996) that offers the application of multiple resources with various productivity rates and arrival times, and direct or parallel attack at either the fire head or rear.

BehavePlus does not offer the option of reverse calculation that was in the old BEHAVE (i.e. given a final fire size, what is the required line production rate).

- The RxWindow program is not and will not be part of BehavePlus. Reverse calculation becomes more difficult (essentially impossible) as models are added. The plan is to provide a new method of table shading to aid in prescribed fire planning.
- The equations in the MORTALITY module in BehavePlus have been updated to match those of FOFEM. Many new tree species have been added.
- BehavePlus lists input values by category (Fuel/Vegetation, Weather, ...) rather than by module (DIRECT, SIZE, ...) as was done in the old BEHAVE.
- In BehavePlus users select the output variables to be displayed. In BEHAVE the output list was fixed.
- Map distance calculation was a stand-alone feature in BEHAVE. It is integrated into BehavePlus.
- BEHAVE asked users whether they were using a computer with a screen. The program could be run in either WORDY or TERSE mode. BehavePlus assumes that it is being run on a 21st century personal computer.