

# Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group Meeting

Idaho Commerce and Labor Building

Twin Falls, Idaho

**January 17- 18, 2007**

Wednesday, January 17, 2007

## Attending-

Members	Guests
Robert Cope- IAC	Dave Bassler- Sawtooth FS
Eric Geisler- Coeur d'Alene Tribe	Julie Thomas- Mid Snake RC&D
Mark Larson- State Fire Marshal	Curtis Jensen- Twin Falls BLM
Leonard Wehking- State BLM FMO	Randy Richter- Sawtooth FS
Doug Brown- IFCA	Joe Adamski- FS
Gary Jarvis- FS	Jonathan Oppenheimer- ICL
Dave Jackson- BHS	Brad Hufford- BHS
Dennis Seidman- USFWS	Chris Simonson- TF BLM FMO
Kurt Naccarato- IDL	Brett Ingles- BSU, Facilitator
Len Diaz- BIA	Robert Feeley—BHS, Citizen Corps
	Brad Weekly—NW Insurance Council
	Jackie Frey- IEMA

## Welcome and Introduction

- Overview of Agenda for the day
- Introduction of New Members: Joe Daniels (not present), Len Diaz, and Jackie Frey
- Discussion of need for more representation to know what counties are capable of in this process, to continue later in the day.

## Search for New National Fire Plan Coordinator

- Discussion of the few people that have expressed interest.
- Is a federal position sponsored by the Forest Service- not entirely clear.
- Because it is funded with NFP dollars, should be open to individuals from any agency to apply.
- Support staff is Kurt Naccarato and Suzanne Schedler.
- Still unsure of when will be able to fill, will most likely be located at Coeur d'Alene.

## Prioritization of HFT Projects at State Level

- Discussion of allowing proposals from county and general public and then to the Forest Service. Similar to CWPP (Cope).
- Question: Who advises FS on these?
- Question: Is there a mechanism for public input? (NEPA)
- Wehking- Looking at prioritizing nationwide, how then can we do it on a state level? Most important factor is having projects in the CWPP.
- Discussion of "Above Base" dollars- process and involvement, continues sporadically throughout.

- Geisler- Need to decide what are the parts that go into prioritization? What are the priorities to protect? Then work with national data sets.
- Cope- This is an attempt to increase cooperation between federal agencies and CWPPs.
- Naccarato- If CWPP is used properly, flows nicely upward. All should be represented when setting priorities.
- Question: Is the way the committee is currently sorting projects a problem?
- Ingles- Needs to be looked at outside of a federal context. For the state as a whole, what are the priorities?
- Cope- When Andy Brunelle spoke about this last fall, he was talking about prioritizing land, not dollars.
- Geisler- Need to focus on broader ownership. BLM and FS already does mapping for counties.
- Frey- This process needs to start local. Locals understand the area and have ownership in the issues.
- Ingles- Does prioritization *need* to happen at a state level?
- Cope- This Working Group needs to recognize high priority areas and balance within priorities.
- Jensen- Identifying priority projects and then not getting them done creates a problem. In prioritizing, we can't guarantee that counties can actually do those projects.
- Clarification- This Working Group isn't looking to make numerical priorities, but just identify them as High to Low.
- Discussion to continue later.

### **Idaho Interagency Assessment of Wildland Fire Risk to Communities**

- Krista Waid from Idaho BLM State Office presenting. Background of document and highlights. Document can be used in Above Base funding and for counties in CWPPs.
- Final product- map of relative risk ratings across Idaho. Looking for approval from this group.
- Rating might be low for a county in the mix of the whole state. Their own assessment will be totally different. Map will not usurp local knowledge.
- Product hopeful to be on-line by March 1. Will be changes and updates through the future. Counties could also submit needed changes.
- Ecosystem and Landfire data would be an entirely separate track.
- General thought from the group that this is an excellent product- hugely beneficial to previous discussion of prioritization.
- Thought to replace "Draft" with "Working Paper." Also make certain of clarity of use to counties.

### **Revised Idaho Implementation Strategy**

- Ingles- Haven't set guidance as to how counties will use this document. Letter being given to group is an attempt to steer counties toward prioritization. Will be followed up with newsletter and a call. At last meeting, discussion expressed that it was important that priorities be made. Letter asks counties what priorities are for hazardous fuels in several areas.

- Jackson- Could there be a disclaimer so that even if it's not the number one project, any of them could be accomplished?
- Cope- A lot of this is already done for grant applications. When you turn in a grant application, have to detail what you'll be doing with that money.
- Frey- Communities look for funding in several different places. Should we encourage them to apply for multiple for multiple grants?
- Ingles- If RFA program continues, then there will be an effort to make RFA more compatible with VFA (possibly one application).
- Wehking- All DOI and likely Agriculture, when funded each year one of the criteria is that projects be in the CWPP. Gives more latitude to treat federal lands within the county.
- Simonson- There are so many factors of what we can and cannot implement, struggle with locally. When we have projects numbered but we can't do number one, does send an awkward message. Often the highest priority projects are the most controversial and hardest to get done.
- Discussion of reason for specific details in prioritization. Having a list of projects will be used as criteria for determining grant funding.
- **Clarification- Only wanting to prioritize those projects that grants are being applied for.**
- Wehking- Feds come up with three year plan of work. Then make sure counties agree with and align their concerns with ours. Having projects in CWPP makes it considered a priority, regardless of where funding comes from. If it's not there, it's not a priority.
- Ingles- This effort is also looking to make it easier to amend your CWPP. Can't always tell what priorities are in these documents. This is also a way to actually prioritize if needed. Expectation that county update their own appendix. With RFA, will have incentive to update each year.
- **By next FY, are we going to require a prioritization list if you wanting to receive funding through a grant program? To we utilize that projects have been given priority as a criteria for funding?**
- Frey- Local emergency coordinator, work directly with RC&D and local agencies. We meet and discuss these issues, will come together as normal. Addendum is simply to change or prioritize the existing plan.
- Clarification- County Working Group not the same as an LEPC. Change Language to read "encourage association with LEPC."
- Oppenheimer- No where in letter is there given who else might be involved. Local officials or other interested stakeholders might also be included with counties- at point when saying "at a minimum."
- Same language as is in the state strategy will be included. Local government and county government basically same definition.
- Ingles- Will plan to put this into effect for FY 08. Processes for VFA and RFA- do we want them to be separate? Take collaborative process a step further- eliminate duplication. Change will mean RFA is first and then VFA. State panel would be incorporated into VFA process.
- Jensen- not a bad idea to bring both panels together. Just don't want to see local experience left out- applications are often weak and they can clarify real need.
- Specifically went through changes suggested to the letter.

- Wehking- “Identify and update project working needs” to be added regarding prioritization specifics in the beginning. Clarify that this is just an update to their funding needs.

**Break for Lunch at 11:50. Resume at 1:20.**

### **County Working Group Presentation**

- Introduction by Julie Thomas. Two RC&D Councils in south central Idaho area, made up of city, county, other non-profits, other agencies. Professionally operate on an “it’s ok” attitude- each Idaho city or county will work differently. Some of these groups are called Working Groups and others are Mitigation Groups. Over the last year, one of the major projects has been to update county fire plans.
- Other presenters: Tim Peterson, Hagerman Fire Chief and Pat Bishop, Gooding Fire Chief.
- Make-up of the working groups- County Commissioner on each, city and county fire chiefs, emergency coordinator, representatives from federal agencies.
- Tim Peterson- Presentation of county fire plan process, assessment of urban interface risk within county. Particular access issue in Hagerman District. Took to county commissioners and realized need to take action. Changed requirements for homeowners and enforced code. Looked also at land treatments. Mitigation Plan has especially helped to open up doors of communication. Bought radio spots this year- every other day from July 1- October 1, was very successful and hoping to do next year also.
- Wehking- Wasn’t there a website set up for people to get their burn permits? (Thought that yes there was.)
- Cope- Do local fire districts deal with WUI clear into the ignition zone like federal agencies do? (Answer- Yes, there is a buffer and doesn’t end at county line.)
- Pat Bishop- All of county also got Red Zoned this last year. Everything is now mapped out and planned and on the computer that is in our trucks. Is the kind of tool that hasn’t really even been tapped yet.
- Wehking- That being done is huge tool federally, specifically when an Incident Management Team comes in. Huge congratulations!
- Thomas- Needing a tool to do mapping and meeting with county residents was identified in first county mitigation plans. Red Zone has been the answer and a huge opportunity. Education is a commitment, but counties in south central Idaho are willing to do that.
- Fuels projects- Have identified those areas that are in great need and now all counties understand that. Now at the point that something can happen on the ground within the next few years.
- Opened to questions and open discussion.- discussion of codes, laws, working interagency, upcoming issues, need for a good RC&D Coordinator to keep Working Groups together and productive.
- Frey- No Sheriff would tell you that Emergency Management is there number one priority. Not one person can run things to make progress like this- takes diversity.
- Ingles- Is there anything at the state level that can be done to help with efforts of working groups? (Answer: Funding and keeping in communication.) This Working Group trying to do a better job of working together.

- Thomas- Isn't my or your job to change the minds of those that put demands on or ask specifics of us. We have to just try and work for them and let their differences and reasons be ok. All we need is for the things that come from the Working Group to be understandable.
- Discussion of importance for county efforts to work hand in hand- ex. All Hazard Mitigation Plan and Planning and Zoning Comprehensive Plan. Put people in harms way when don't work together.

### **Draft Communication Strategy**

- Ingles- Communications is a work in progress and designed to always be so. Trying to identify stakeholders. Specifically to address today: What conferences or meetings should we have representation at to make counties aware of what we can offer them?
- Jackson- Could be of benefit to make a key point to clarify resources available to them.
- Wehking- Feel that we already have communication with internal stakeholders. May not be aware of the work of this group, but they are of policy changes. Should read differently.
- Jarvis- On our own levels, we make sure line officers are involved. They do need to know what goes on with this committee and how it affects them.
- Richter- Fair assessment that they don't know the work of this group.
- Jarvis- Solution could be that we just do our part in our jobs of educating folks. Our role on this group is to take our work back also.
- Jackson- Making sure that folks are getting involved at local level is one of the main functions of this group.
- Ingles- Media trying to utilize to get our message out include website, email updates from Suzanne, newsletter- to be put out in conjunction with these meetings, brochure, information packets, local education.
- Geisler- Would like to see us find out what local groups are producing and publish that across a wider audience. Sometimes easier to print more than less.
- Went through list of places could participate to help work better with counties. Hope that folks that are already going to these events will take at least a few minutes to talk about the State Working Group. Also hopeful that new NFP Coordinator can be the mouthpiece at some of these events. Discussion included who and where could be added to current plans/ efforts. Ingles will attempt to remind folks that made new commitments. Various members committed to each on the list. Need for brochures/ informational material expressed. Some events switched for others (Idaho Prepare Conference and Idaho Environmental Conference).
- Thomas- Andy Brunelle should be your best way to hit the Idaho Forest Supervisors- that is his role.
- Meeting suggestion to reach into Region One- Incident Commanders Meeting.

### **Discussion of How to Help Working Groups in Inactive Parts of Idaho**

- Looking specifically at Nez Perce County, Franklin, Elmore and Washington.
- Idea is that we try to meet with local federal or tribal officials first. All we can do at this state level is to encourage a group formation and a meeting.

- Discussion of current status or attitude of these counties. Not wanting to go through effort to get a grant, or else don't know how. Some also have folks that are overwhelmed.
- Thought that getting RC&D involved with these counties is crucial. RC&D will simply have to take the lead in some of these counties.
- Suggestion to contract some of the needed efforts out.
- Jackson and Adamski will both work with Elmore County to bring folks together. Also given Bob Narus' name from Boise BLM.
- Names also identified for Franklin County. John Kidd- FS, Ken Fagent- BHS. Will work with Bear Lake RC&D too.
- Nez Perce County will have to be Western States Grant. Very little federal land in that county. Working more with tribes. Discussion of how to encourage tribe to get more involved- Len Diaz will get more involved individually.
- Noted that most of the counties that don't have much action going on with working groups are within the Red/ High Risk area of the Risk Assessment Map given earlier today.
- Discussion of need for more internal communication within this State group. Can also solicit others that want to be kept informed to be included as well.
- **Do we want to try and have a monthly conference call between the core of this group and any others needed?** General thought that trying a call would be a good idea.
- **Do we want to have a start-up sub-committee with those counties needing help?** Thought that needed a group tailored more to each county instead of having one handle all of them.
- Discussion of RFA and VFA applications- becoming one application? Because of the differences between the two, thought to continue the way that we are, continue to coordinate efforts. May be able to deal with in a conference call. Ingles will talk to Jon Skinner about further.

**ADJOURN for the day at 4:20 p.m.**

ISFPWG Meeting Continued  
Thursday, January 18, 2007

New Attendees Today:

- Robert Feeley- Citizen Corp. Coordinator
- Brad Weekly- Northwest Insurance Council

**Introduction and Overview of the Day- Ingles**

**Changes to FY 07 "Above Base"- Gary Jarvis**

- Definition of "Above Base" funding- Dollars that come off the top of each Forest's fuels budget and are combined to equal \$3.1 million. Forests are then able to compete for some of that money to complete specific fuels projects.
- It is difficult to prioritize which projects are most important. Recently met with other specialists in Salt Lake to determine a checklist for doing that.

- Process- Forest submits a presentation of their projects to the deciding committee. Committee uses a specific weighting to rank each project- nine criteria that Forests are provided beforehand. Those that compete the best get money to complete their project. Example from last year in Region IV- only three or four projects didn't get funded.
- This process fits very well the guidelines that the National Fire Plan outlines for how it should be done.
- Question- What kinds of non-WUI projects compete for these dollars? (Answer: A watershed outside of WUI. Non-WUI have to be very competitive, though didn't want to entirely rule out non-WUI projects. Non-WUI projects are considered mitigation.)
- Question: For communities in WUI area, if a county identifies a project to help protect that community, how can they about proposing that the FS submit it under above base? (Answer: Doesn't have to be above base to make it happen. If Forests and communities are doing what they're supposed to be doing, then part of their funding has WUI targets associated. Projects that aren't collaborative aren't rated very well.)
- Cope- Counties usually can only take it so far as to identify an area that needs attention or improvement- they don't have the expertise to accomplish NEPA, etc.
- Jarvis- Forests are generally ok with this process. They do feel they are getting the opportunity to get money for their special projects.
- Diaz- Tribes and reservations aren't usually participating in CWPP, but do have prevention plans. If they work out a prevention plan or project, that is a CWPP equivalent.
- Jarvis- Is there a possibility that the five Forests in Region IV, that they would submit a project that tribes would be involved with? (Answer: Yes.) A project submitted where the tribe had a plan in place would hold a lot of weight.
- Question- When talking about interagency collaboration- what was the thinking on interagency collaboration? (Answer: This is the reason that Forests have to fill out checklist and it gets rated on that. That avoids BLM and FS meeting alone to prioritize.) Is collaboration just a yes or no? (Answer: Yes- it is a yes or no. If the answer is yes, then you move on to the weighting process. Those projects that aren't doing any collaboration are automatically ranked low.)
- If they're using a contractor to do the work of the project it will have more weight. As long as money is obligated for the contractor by the end of the FY, things are good. The money is lost is not obligated.
- Steps such as NEPA, etc. have to be completed for obligation. Once a decision signed, may take two or three years to accomplish a project. Recommended that before submitting for above base, the decision be signed so that don't get bogged down in NEPA and lose that money anyway.
- Cope- Since we know what the FS budget is looking like, has there been a discussion of increasing the commercial activities to help both the FS budget and local school districts? (Answer: Don't have a good answer. Do hear about it from time to time.)
- General thought that timber cutting days in the FS are gone. But, there are other means.
- Ingles- Is there a timeframe for project applications and when the committee will look at them? (Answer: Has to be to Jarvis by June 20, 2007. Presentations would need to be made early June.)
- Jarvis- This proposal isn't a big shock to the Forests. Only different for some of the other states- more involved than they were used to.

## **Update on All Hazard Mitigation Plans- Jackson and Hufford**

- FEMA Peer Review Process- evaluate All Hazard Mitigation Plans or look at flood, fire, earthquake projects. Anyone interested- Jackson will send an application. Gives a feel for the way that FEMA looks at Mitigation and what is important in their evaluation.
- **Status of Idaho All Hazard Mitigation Plans-** 15 counties that have signed and approved plans, two that almost at that level- just need signatures, 17 plans that are in progress- including Twin Falls, expecting eight applications to develop for counties. Only one county in the state not fully engaged in thinking about mitigation planning now- Shoshone County; Idaho County also in limbo.
- Tribes- Nez Perce and Duck Valley Shoshone have state level plans. Can apply through FEMA directly or as a sub-applicant. CDA tribe interested- BIA will collaborate. Shoshone-Bannock working with FEMA, not sure where at in process.
- 2007 is the year for the review of the State All Hazard Plan for Idaho. Flooding continues to be the big dollar cost in Idaho.
- Need this group to help with updating the wildfire portion of this plan. The Risk Assessment from yesterday will be a great tool to add. When updated, if a community wanted to do fire mitigation on non-federal lands, then that would be an eligible project for a FEMA grant. State projects would also be PDM eligible.
- These grants are longer cycle- three year period of work to complete. Match is a 25% non-federal match- can be cash or in-kind. \$100 million dollars is available, of which \$500,000 is guaranteed for Idaho. Rest can be competed for nationally. Must also put together a good project, with collaboration, etc.
- Big component of PDM grant is the cost-benefit analysis. FEMA has provided software for this- have to show that there is a 1:1 cost benefit. Example- If fire closes the road for a day is an economic factor that can be counted toward. Also move up in ranking if protecting critical infra-structure.
- Frey- Need to have an approved grant done before you can apply for a PDM grant. Components have put Twin Falls County as somewhat of a standstill.
- Jackson- However, if IDL wanted to submit a project, they could do it as a state agency.
- Question- How involved has this group been in the state's All Hazard Mitigation Plans in the past? (Answer: Not at all.) Will be actively engaging this group as subject matter experts in the future.
- Ingles- How do you want this group to help? (Answer: Section that describes fire in Idaho could be re-done in State Plan. Also tie in Risk Assessment information.)
- Wehking- Important to remember that that is a Working Document.
- Cope- Did try to make clear in the beginning that the counties mitigation plans would be part of the All Hazard Plan.
- Jackson- Going to take information from the county level and increase. Really need to identify in our plan the things that we need to do on state owned lands, then can support what the counties want to do too.
- Hufford- As sites identified, can determine safety and viability of them.
- Thomas- With county fire groups right now, one of the biggest topics is communications. How is Homeland Security involved in that? (Answer: Federal government taken a survey of all states and is on the web now, completed. As part of that, the state asked Ada

County to do a tactical comm. plan working with other entities. Following a statewide plan, counties will be able to talk seamlessly. Problem in that federal government is staying in VHF, new allocation all for local government. SIEC plan- where local needs to interface with federal, with have a dual band system.

- Thomas- Who will help at the local level? (Answer- SIEC are the go to people.)
- Weekly- In Governor's budget in Oregon, have a project to do just what talking about- tie in one communication system.
- Hufford- That is what SIEC will do. They have a plan and the backbone is in place, just need the funding at this point. Recognize that a lot of this came out of Katrina.
- Most important step is to get everyone on a digital narrowband.

### **Citizen Corp Program- Feeley**

- Citizen Corp mission to have everyone participate in making America safer. Here to share what CC can offer to the wildland fire community.
- Get money from federal level to states and then passed on to county level. Groups of five to eight counties are considered a region.
- Most of Idaho is active in the Citizen Corp program.
- Regional Corp councils include leaders from throughout the community and county. Would like to see wildland fire folks at the table.
- Responsibility is to address dangers at the citizen level- be it fire, earthquake, pandemic flu, etc. and look to be prepared.
- Encourage people to have emergency kits, disaster plans for families, evacuation plans. Offer training at local level (CPR, etc.). Have yet to address wildland fire in the WUI- would like to see happen in the future.
- Example given of California- good at educating people about fire. Would like to see Idaho help people understand fire behavior, defensible space, access etc.
- Citizen Corp is another tool to inform communities- help them to be informed and prepared. Isn't meant to supersede Firewise or fire prevention officers, etc.
- Question- Is there a developed curriculum? (Answer: Yes.) Thought to push out to counties during regular scheduled training in the spring.
- This process has been going on for awhile, just that they haven't ever addressed wildland fire as an issue.
- Question: How would they do that? (Answer: Example of county offering a class to a community.)
- Jackson- Within BHS, public outreach is channeled through the Citizen Corp Program since it is specifically designed to engage citizens in disaster preparedness. Saw a natural link with folks like Jon Skinner at BLM.
- Frey- In the areas that have high risk, you can stress that not only can CC help with evacuation, but can also lend a hand to fire agencies. Citizen Corp helps people be able to help as volunteers in emergency situations.
- Jarvis- How tied in is CC with the FS or BLM now? (Answer: Have never been at the table and never been directly asked to be. This presentation is the first step.)
- Larson- Good folks to tie in with are the local fire chiefs. They are often strapped for time and if CC can help provide some of this preparedness that would be great.
- Jackson- In Idaho, wildland fire is one of our principle natural threats.

- Thomas- If the FS sponsored this program, then CC would come and lead an educational process? (Answer: Yes. Do encourage that it be taught locally- would be even better if instigated from a community members.)
- Jackson- CC can bring citizen volunteers in and teach them the curriculum. If your neighbor is engaged in this effort, then folks really start to pay attention.
- Wehking- Can the feds be the spark plug if needed? (Answer- Will take motivation from wherever we can.)
- Jackson- Good idea to get Robert a list of prevention officers and let him go to it meeting them.

### **Prioritizing Working Group Priorities**

- Ingles- Talked at last meeting of whether or not we wanted to tool this group down. Everyone has different idea of what this group does. Instead of thinking about as prioritizing, look instead at goals. Where do we see this group going?
- Seidman- Wondering if now if the time to be doing that? Would be better once new NFP Coordinator in place.
- General thought in agreement.
- Wehking- Like hearing from the local working groups and what they need from us.
- Larson- If I was coming in as a new leader of this group, I would wonder what we do.
- Cope- Does this group operate around the director? If we are at a point that we can't set objectives without a director, then there is a problem.
- Geisler- Not that we can't develop out goals without that person, but would be invaluable to have them here when it is done so that they can get the background.
- Larson- Good addition to the group has been BHS. An "additional task" might be to get better on board with them.
- Thomas- From a county perspective, how we see this group- County fire plans would not have been completed without the direction of the state. Were formerly under the impression that as we sent in applications for resources, you were all paying attention and had all the pieces in place and still look at it like that. Thus as county fire groups, we need to know what is still expected of us. Would be nice to know if we're doing ok also. If we have a need who can we call from this group?
- Wehking- Some of it we aren't anything but keepers of information. But we can point you in the right direction as to where you can find the answers.
- Larson- What would be valuable is that if counties have a need for something, they can look at a list and know where to go- a resource list.
- Cope- If we look at our statewide collaborative responsibilities- One or more members will be responsible for maintaining contacts with counties. Has been one of the hardest for us to do.
- Thomas- Maybe need to re-introduce the county fire groups with this working group.
- Wehking- The counties that aren't doing anything aren't getting anything- so there are essentially extra points for those counties that are doing what they are supposed to.
- Naccarato- Have done a "What we do and who we are" and didn't get a lot of feedback from those folks.
- Frey- Help writing a successful grant would also be really helpful when getting together a resource list. I think you have the foundation that you need here, but need to start back to

re-introducing yourself. Then can show them how to be successful. Remember there are new people in these positions on a local level.

- Cope- We did get some information out at the newly elected officials training. Not sure how successful it was.
- Naccarato- Would it help to go down the membership list and put off to the side what each person can do for folks on a local level?
- Thomas- Always a learning process and we have to keep our door open.
- Ingles- The reality is for counties in your area, the main area we oversee is FS money and hazardous fuels reduction. The BLM takes over in the case of Twin Falls County.
- Wehking- This group represents the Governor and came about through strategy from that level. Still, because of a lack of involvement from counties or some agencies...
- Cope- Is there a way to improve so that we can jump a roadblock at the county level, specifically in working around commissioners.
- Wehking- Think we could do our annual level and then also get information back to the governor.
- Frey- Through the Idaho Prepared Conference, we can hand information out to key players concerning this group. Handouts from this meeting work great, and a resource list would add greatly.
- Thomas- Want to emphasize that this group has made the counties do a better job. Really do carry a lot of weight.
- Hufford- See that you are looking for clarification of what the next goal is for county fire groups. Then there is disparity between what's happening in some counties and what's happening in others. **May need a two prong strategy- this is the way ahead and this is how we're going to bring these people up to where they need to be.**
- Frey- Getting everywhere on board and caught up also just takes time.
- Wehking- This group is also the keeper of the county fire plans. Right now we've simplified so the annual update is nothing more than adding a couple of projects. If we didn't get their annual updates, some of those plans would never be touched.
- Cope- The degree of involvement with counties depends on the perception of what the threat really is. There is really not many communities where wildfire isn't a legitimate threat, but it's not always viewed as one.
- Cope- Lack of leadership on a federal level is a good thing. Allow locals to tailor to individual needs.
- Hufford- That's where your new director steps in.
- Larson- The new person is going to be the NFP Coordinator, not the Director. Need coordination as opposed to someone to tell us what to do.
- Oppenheimer- Back to the ten year collaborative strategy- not a whole lot designated as state level solely. One of the few that could take a lead on- maintaining list of communities designated as being at risk. Could look at annually, specifically in light of growth. Another- compile examples of local zoning ordinances that have successfully reduced risk of wildland fire. Would be something very valuable for counties to know what's been done elsewhere.
- Larson- This is something we have asked fire chiefs for repeatedly. Have met with resounding indifference, could perhaps approach counties and offer this group as the lead.
- Cope- Will be very diverse across the state. From very diverse to having absolutely none.

- Geisler- Not uniform across the state in how we identify communities at risk.
- Ingles- Now at point where need to interact better with counties and also have some other goals. So many things we could do in addition to getting county working groups up and running.
- Wehking- This meeting alone is helpful- Citizen Corp, GIS efforts, etc. There is a host of stuff that we already do otherwise.
- Ingles- Could just be a more clear goal or direction for all of what we do.
- Naccarato- Direction FS is going- may or may not provide structure protection to homes in WUI. Example- last year half of total spent on fire was spent on structure protection. Now state is going to counties and enforcing a penalty if zoning doesn't address the WUI.
- Wehking- And whatever happens there, the other agencies will be in step with.

**Break for Lunch at 11:45. Resume at 1:05.**

#### **Future Grant Application Revisions- Naccarato**

- Some counties are stockpiling grant money, operating off of past years and already approved for 2007.
- Is a moral issue- Suggestion that counties somehow be held off and money more evenly spread out.
- Some clarification and discussion of ability to hold grants over and differences between Western States and CFP, etc. Counties like Western States grants because they don't have to be tied to a federal project.
- Naccarato- Currently give counties two years to get their projects done- same timeframe for all of the grant types.
- Cope- Is it a problem for some of the counties that have to come up with money before being reimbursed? (Answer: Unsure of specifics and don't seem to be getting any bills back from the county either.)
- Naccarato- Can't forbid a county from applying. Applications come into Brian and I and they are asked to meet seven criteria. We don't rank our own state and the other states that ranked Idaho see them as really impressive without knowing the background.
- Larson- In those criteria, is efficiency or effectiveness addressed? (Answer: No. Prior work or performance not addressed and all grants weighed the same way.)
- Ingles- So is it appropriate to counsel them not to apply?
- Geisler- Better direction might be to say "you have a lot of money, spend it!"
- Jackson- If you encourage them not to apply, you may stifle a program that is successful at pushing forward applications and identifying projects. On the management side, once you make an award, the granting entity has a responsibility to hold their feet to the fire.
- Naccarato- Have made those efforts to do that. Have written many letters, etc.
- Wehking- When it gets forwarded on, could we stop it here in this working group? Haven't voted on Western States in the last year.
- Cope- Tried to farm out some of that work that was taking so much time- went to sub-group.
- Naccarato- Goal next month is to sit down with counties that didn't rank high against them. Problem also that we only want one application from each county, even if there are three or four projects covered.

- Oppenheimer- Is there any way to get the Western States folks to adapt or realize what is happening?
- Naccarato- We have decided that we will send all applications forward.
- Jarvis- Do you think that all of their projects will be completed within the time frame? Have some of these big money counties ever not made it in the timeframe required?
- Naccarato- There have been counties that money has been pulled, but, for the most part these have not been high producing counties. Just have an issue that they are getting new grants when sitting on one that hasn't even been touched.
- Jarvis- Is this problem to the point that it's costing other counties in the long run?
- Naccarato- Not yet, but that is imminent.
- Jackson- Seems not much we can do until we get more applications is and then can decide between.
- Naccarato- Did get 12 applications last year, but some of those couldn't have ever really accomplished the project. I felt like there was only one county that had a good project that didn't receive funding. Do have to agree that there is not much we can do until NFP funds dwindle or applications become more competitive.

### **Addition of New Members**

- Feeling to defer discussion of adding new members until a new coordinator.
- Wehking- Can have voting members and non-voting members and the more voting members you continue to add, the harder it is to get off the dime. Do still want to be including new people and folks from the local level.
- Cope- Question isn't of do we bring on new members, but of who do we listen to? Group doesn't particularly vote on anything.
- Frey- Membership is most beneficial in receiving information and being kept in the loop of what this group is doing.
- Jarvis- would personally like to have a fire staff officer serving as the FS representative on this group- a better fit than myself since they are on the ground working. May in the future recommend that the fire staff officers on the Forests in Idaho serve here. Since I represent four states, will eventually be hard to do all of it. Only conflict of interest may be when it comes to Above Base funding if this committee was to do a vote. Still is only one voice of many people.
- Cope- Also could refuse to be involved in that particular vote. Guidance on composition of group doesn't specify details of who be representing.
- General thoughts around that having FS fire staff involved here a good idea.
- Oppenheimer- Might just be good to have one person instead of alternating each meeting to maintain continuity. Suggestion of Andy Brunelle.
- Geisler- Among the tribes, we try to have at least one of the three of us here. This is my first meeting in a year and I can see that I'm not as up to speed as I'd like, so continuity is a good idea. Asking the new fire staff folks for a two year commitment would be good.
- Ingles- Would be a good idea, having a representative from the Regional Office from Region 1 here would be a good idea since they aren't very tied in to what goes on in Idaho.

**Quick reminder- Please contribute to the Annual Report for this Group!** Provide a short update of what your agency has been involved in under hazardous fuels by **February 15**. (Number of acres treated, etc.) If you have calendar year facts, that would be preferred, but FY is fine also. Try to have document out by April.

### **Agency Updates**

Jonathan Oppenheimer, Idaho Conservation League-

- State Fire Assistance Line item decrease, coalition coming around trying to build support to support this line item. If there are any folks that have success stories of how SFA money used, would be interested in talking with you about that.
- Also situation looking that “fire borrowing” could be worse this year than in years past and am also working on that.

Kurt Naccarato, Idaho Department of Lands-

- Helped put on first Idaho Wildland Fire Workshop.
- Recently purchased fire simulator that will use to train community leaders- walk through WUI interface. Will build the simulation to reflect Idaho fuels. Will also be getting additional software to train firefighters in S-100 and S-200 series. Simulator may be much more realistic than the sand tables are- intent that it will travel around the state. In buying this one, have an agreement that other areas of the state can purchase for significantly less.

Len Diaz, Bureau of Indian Affairs

- Working on federal air rules for reservations 9FARR. Another layer being implemented in Oregon, Idaho and Washington- is actually an EPA law from the Federal Register. Reservations can follow smoke management rules, but FARR directs reservations to follow guidelines. Concern that has potential to lower days allowed to burn.
- Will be attending the North Idaho Airshed meeting in February.

David Jackson, Bureau of Homeland Security

- New personal best for state disaster proclamations for 2006- most related to mosquito abatement. Did have a wildland fire state disaster proclamation, also a tornado that is about to be closed out.
- Getting ready to close out 2007 PDM application period. Continuing to work with counties. Updating State All Hazard Plan.
- PDM for next year- want to work with FEMA counterparts and develop a workshop that will help folks to build strong projects that can compete for federal mitigation money

Gary Jarvis, Forest Service-

- A lot being looked upon regarding bio mass utilization.
- FS in the hole right now- that is our biggest concern, Trying to figure out how not to spend so much on fire this next year. Expect to be seeing some recommendations on this issue. Projecting this year to be in the third quarter before fire borrowing.
- Thirty Mile Incident had also come back up recently. Will affect how we fight fire in the FS and all agencies through the future.

- Did meet our hazardous fuels target for Region IV for 2006. On continuing resolution, so not sure how this coming year looks.

Leonard Wehking, Bureau of Land Management-

- Also on a continuing resolution for FY07. Holding back on some contracting for fuels project. Will know in a couple weeks what budget will be, even if a year round continuing resolution. If lesser than House mark, have \$10 million less in fuels arena. Also unsure of where RFA going to go. Unsure of how much we'll be able to accomplish this year. Estimate we will accomplish 85% of target. Did get all of our targets in for Idaho in 2006.
- Agree that we don't fight fire the same way anymore- feeling that hazardous fuels treatment in the urban interface is the best action for the safety of our firefighters. On OIG report, question comes back- what is our role? We can spend money on these projects, but still what is our role in fighting WUI fires? Add Esperanza and Thirty Mile to the mix as well. No denying firefighters take more risk in the WUI, but now have people saying that they won't take risk and it's not their job to anymore. Do still feel strongly that we try to protect, but is an issue.

Mark Larson, State Fire Marshall-

- Work more and more closely with Fire Protection Districts. Working on legislative front as far as coding,
- Starting a public education grant program that has been met with limited success, so will re-approach following this meeting. Hearing at appropriations committee on February 13.
- Insurance representatives spoke at Wildland Fire Conference last year and had very good feedback. Asked him to consider becoming a participant in this group and will be seeing what he thought of today.

Dennis Seidman, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-

- Most fire activity this last year in Washington and Oregon, one in Idaho. For first time in several years, no fires at Hagerman Fish Hatchery. Area is getting to be more of a concern since houses are surrounding now.
- Also under a continuing resolution. USFWFS advice has been that RFA is still in last years budget, so there is money there in theory, but expect that money to fill other holes and RFA dollars go thee instead. CR benefits us in that we're in the midst of a civil war with California and Nevada succeeding from our union. Since under same budget, using same 60/40 split. If happened otherwise, very unsure of what would happen.

Eric Geisler, Coeur d'Alene Tribe-

- Tribe had 140% of target- mechanical acres treated. Expect this time next year should have a report on options for hazardous fuel reduction options. Still looking for a little bit of funding to finish last year of research.
- Nearly completed with cooperative planning project to prioritize fuels projects across the entire reservation and Benewah County. Have worked with 30 collaborators in that process. Will be going our and once buy in is secured, will have public meetings, etc.

- Tribe also helped to get two communities recognized as Firewise in northern Idaho. Working on four or five more within reservation boundaries.

#### Robert Cope, Idaho Assoc of Counties

- National Roadless Area Advisory Committee- petition went on to Governor Risch and hopefully when complete, project won't be so cumbersome in congress.
- Proposed regulations from EPA make no differentiation of type of particulate matter standards for smoke management. Means that several Idaho counties can't possibly meet this new standard. Looks to be a continued problem around the state.
- Went through four application of National Association of Counties representative- one was from Idaho. Suspect the one from California will get chosen, but still unsure.

#### **Details for Next Meeting**

- Spring Meeting- **June 6-7, 2007 in Pocatello.** Commissioners and Clerks meeting happening at same time.
- Fall Meeting- in Sandpoint, date TBD.

**Adjourn at 2:25 p.m.**