

Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group Meeting
June 10 – 11, 2009
Brooklyn Annex
Salmon, Idaho

Attendees:

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Tim Droegmiller, Nez Perce Tribe	timd@nezperce.org
Tod Johnson, NPS	Tod_Johnson@nps.gov

Follow up from January Meeting (Kimball):

- Went over the action items.
- Reviewed the 2009 Working Group Goals:
 - Support county wildland fire interagency working groups in updating and implementing County Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs).
 - Inform and align Idaho's wildfire community. Lead the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group in mission to provide statewide oversight and support for the National Fire Plan (NFP) program.
 - Develop the new Idaho Firewise statewide education program.
 - Identify more opportunities for utilization of wood biomass.
 - Actively work with counties to encourage more communities to join the Firewise Communities USA program. Idaho currently has only six Firewise Communities. A goal is to increase the number to ten or more in Idaho in 2009.
- Presented the state map of Relative Risk to Communities from Wildfire. This is a good resource for understanding relative risk across the state. For understanding risk within counties and for developing projects, we've found it's more accurate to use information from counties and other local sources to assess risk.

Committee Reports:

There are several committees that continue with ongoing work between meetings. The following is a report from each of those committees on their progress since the last meeting.

Restoration Committee (Kimball):

- Reviewed the Draft Guide for Group Discussion (regarding the role of fire) developed by the Restoration Committee. This Guide is part of a broader goal to have informal concept dialogue regarding the role of fire in the landscape with collaborative groups and agency planners.
- Please provide comments on the draft Guide to the Committee by July 1st.

Education Committee (Skinner):

- Reviewed the focus topics -
 - How to be safe with fire.
 - How to mitigate fire.
 - The science of fire.
 - Understanding fire management and the tools that fire managers have to manage fire.
 - Roles and responsibilities of different fire agencies.
- Update on new website in development - idahofirewise.org
 - The Committee sent out a Request for Proposals and selected Drake Cooper, a company out of Boise, to help design a new website with a "clearinghouse" for local users to find wildfire prevention and education information and materials.
 - Hope to have the basic frame of the website out by mid-summer.

- AmeriCorps position:
 - In the recruitment phase right now but funding is still uncertain.
 - If this position doesn't come through, will try to get someone part time.
- Thank you for the generous contributions!!!
 - Department of Homeland Security - \$10,000
 - IDL - \$13,000 (combination of Forest Service and IDL)
 - Nez Perce Tribe - \$7,000
 - Proposed budget is in the packet – please respond back to the Committee by July 1st.
- Considering having a director for the Committee.

Communication Committee (Kimball):

- The purpose of this Committee is to share information about progress and key messages from the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group. Since January, the Committee put out one Media Release regarding stimulus funds, and provided briefings to the Congressionals.
- The Committee uses the Annual Report of the State Working Group as a communications tool.
- Suggestions for other communication needs:
 - The 3rd week in June has been proclaimed by the Governor as “Wildfire Awareness Week.” Harry has been working on some news releases that are in for approval right now. Those could be sent out each day during that week.

WUI Development Committee (Larson):

- There will be a Governor’s task force this summer to look at the relationship between counties and Rural Fire Districts as well as the access and water supply issues for 1- and 2-family dwellings.
- Encourage counties to get the NFPA standards and spread to their neighboring counties.
- The working group sent a letter to all county commissioners in the state asking them to have dialogues with their county emergency staff and local fire chiefs about WUI development and options to ensure problems aren’t continuing with new building.
- Trying to develop a culture in Idaho where homeowner’s feel the need to do take the responsibility for protecting their homes.

Home Evaluation Cadre (Summers):

- The Guide and forms have been finalized. These were developed for use by all entities, ensuring consistency across the state. The form is on the website.
- Homeland security is looking at ways to fund Red Zone across the state.
- Two trainings coming up: June 18 in Coeur d’Alene and July 8 at Wilderness Ranch (just outside of Boise).
- Dave shared a truck-mounted model of the Watershield (roof wetting system) in the afternoon.

West Wide Wildfire Risk Assessment (Kimball):

- Reviewed the briefing paper provided with the agenda.
- Money is coming off the top to fund this (Western State Foresters).
- Sanborn Map Company has been awarded the contract.
- Product should be useful to assess risk at state and county levels.

Idaho State Mapping Project (Conran):

- A PowerPoint presentation was given to share mapping of Madison County. Butte and Custer Counties will be the next projects. After they are complete, Franklin County will be the only one left.
- Counties do not have to use this model. If there is one that works better, that is fine. Or, this tool can be tweaked for local use.

County Working Group Visits (Kimball):

- Bingham County: working to schedule a check-in visit.
- Bear Lake County: working to schedule a check-in visit.
- Teton County: working to schedule a check-in visit.
- Gem County: working to schedule a check-in visit.
- Bannock County
 - Had a workshop with about 20 fire chiefs in Pocatello. Discussed home evaluations, stay and defend, what is happening at Painted Rocks in Darby, priorities for mitigation, and where they need to be going for grants.
 - The county is working to reduce fuels at Lava Ranch – a highly vulnerable home area in a thicket of fuels and trees. In July, Steve hopes to visit the annual homeowners’ picnic and meeting. The county is giving a presentation about wildfire risk and proposed mitigation at this meeting.
 - June 27 – SE Idaho agencies will be doing some interagency training similar to that presented by the Gateway Interagency Firefighting Front (GIFF).
- Ada County
 - Had two county working group meetings in the last two months. Getting CWPP out and dusting it off. Field trip coming up toward the end of June. Will be looking at some subdivisions in the whole county. Thinking about the Western States Grant due in August.
- Panhandle Counties
 - Kootenai County is working on MOUs with the state. Hoping for new jobs, contractors, etc.
 - Applied for an AmeriCorps worker.
 - Idaho County working on CWPP update.
 - Meeting next week on updates.
 - Latah County working group meeting June 25.
 - Shoshone County is regrouping with a new leader and putting proposals together.
 - Valley County working on an amendment to their building permits requiring a plan for WUI mitigation in new construction.

Agency Updates (All):

- Craig Glazier (R1 Forest Service)
 - The Northern Region will be receiving an additional 4 million dollars (stimulus).
 - This is in addition to the 1.1 million that was received earlier.
 - This spring Gail West, public affairs officer, has been traveling around to the Northern counties talking about changes to the Wildland Fire Policy and Inciweb being used as the primary information tool for the Idaho Panhandle. It has been very well received and stimulated great discussion.
- Julie Thomas (RC&Ds)
 - Julie handed out a report from the RC&D coordinators regarding projects being implemented by the RC&D.
 - First firewise community in the area was completed and has been approved. This area is mostly surrounded by BLM and has had several large fires that skirted the area. This encouraged a couple of other subdivisions to want to get signed on.
 - Have a good Red Zone program, which has been implemented in 4 counties.
- Jon Skinner (BLM)
 - Rural Fire Assistance Program is receiving 7 million nationally, which means 4 to 5 hundred thousand dollars to Idaho.
 - There are local interagency prioritization meetings going on right now.
 - Ready Reserve program received a lot of money. Funding many WUI simulation exercises.
 - Four projects in Idaho have been funded
- Kurt Naccarato (IDL)
 - Four counties received money out of the 2 million (stimulus).
 - The CFP money priorities have been set and sent in to the Region
 - Western States Grant – haven't heard back.
 - Managed to keep our heads above water with the salary cuts. The Department has done well in holding our own. Haven't had to lay off permanent employees.
- Mark Stephensen (Bureau of Homeland Security)
 - All grant information is on this website bsh.idaho.gov.
 - Reviewing the mitigation plan.
 - Rounding out seismic and flood groups to mirror this group.
- David Hasz (Idaho Emergency Mangers Association)
 - Working with West Nile statewide.
 - Counties moving ahead with WUI plans, have a coordinator now.
 - Five counties have been working all winter on the Fire Prevention Coop.
 - Board in place, with representation from all counties
- Tim Droegmiller (Nez Perce Tribe)
 - Took in 12 applications for grants from departments on and adjacent to the reservation.
 - Very active in fire prevention in the schools.
 - Projects on private lands in the vicinity of tribal lands.

- Bob Cope/Joe Daniels (Idaho Association of Counties)
 - Governor's Roadless Area Implementation Committee will start working on June 29 and 30.
 - Will have an effect on this group.
- Mark Larson (State Fire Marshal)
 - Suffered some budget cutbacks, but are managing.
 - International Fire Code
 - Dealing with push back from some elected officials.
 - The summer will be interesting. Generally speaking, when you get a group of code people and elected officials butting heads, code people will usually lose.
 - In the final touches of putting together annual report. Included excerpts and summaries from other entities, and devoted a lot of pages to the fire community, with great reception.
 - The Idaho Fire Code is available on the website.
- Jeff Handel (Idaho Department of Parks and Rec.)
 - Been assessing what is done in the Parks with wildland fires. Don't have much for training or equipment, but have good relationships with cooperators.
 - Looking at possible mitigation projects in Parks.

Upcoming Events:

- 2010 is the 100th anniversary of the big 1910 fire in Northern Idaho.
 - Large kickoff conference in the spring and summer
 - Julie Molzahn has been assigned as the regional PAO to oversee these efforts.
 - The Idaho Panhandle National Forests will coordinate community events in Idaho and possibly a conference or other event on August 20-21.
 - The Region envisions a spring kickoff meeting (April or May) talking about the significance of the Fire Management Plan since the fire.
 - Working to decide on the conference and date.
 - The 1910 Fire Commemoration will be highly publicized with many local events.
- Statewide Wildland Fire Conference/All Hazard Conference (together with the BHS all hazard conference this year) – October 2010
 - See handout from Brett- volunteers for the Conference Committee are needed.
 - Will take place at the Grove, downtown Boise.
- Some are contemplating developing another video- a documentary that will capture "fire decision making in progress".
 - Decision-making strategies and tactics along with real footage of the fire from the air
 - Larry Svalberg indicated that the Salmon-Challis National Forest is willing to take county commissioners and other key local folks on a tour during fire season.

- Firewise Communities USA
 - Interest is picking up.
 - Need to make the process less intimidating.
 - Home assessment trainings this summer in Northern Idaho and Boise – going to address doing the community assessment portion of the Firewise USA process. The June 18 training will be at a community in Coeur d’Alene that has inquired about becoming Firewise.
 - Contractors are interested in selling communities with Firewise status.

Developing Homeowner Responsibility (Kimball):

- Common public attitude that the agencies will “take care” of homeowner.
- The Committee supports requests for community projects with the NFP grant money, not necessarily individual homeowner requests.
- There are workshops available for communities to learn how to prepare homes. On top of these workshops, one-on-one contact with homeowners at their home would be very beneficial. Local fire officials could designate a day to be in the neighborhood and talk with residents.
- Discussions were held regarding convincing homeowners that we may not be there if fire hits; it is their responsibility to protect their own home.

Lemhi County Update (Drnjevic):

- Williams Lake Project
 - Jon Skinner was very helpful in getting the grant money
- Chips Creek Project
 - There are three creeks that come in. One comes down behind the courthouse.
- Tower Creek Project
 - Some landowners were hesitant to allow the contractors to conduct fuels reduction.
- Moose Creek Estates Project
 - Have also participated in other projects, i.e. pheromone packets and weed control.
- Additional Projects
 - Roadside Treatments
 - Sunset Heights (Withington Creek Fire)
 - Elk Bend
 - Community Outreach
 - Flyers
 - Brochures
- Upcoming Projects
 - Hughes Creek
 - Ditch Creek
 - Gibbonsville
 - Carmen Creek
- Jim Tucker (BLM Salmon Field office) presented a PowerPoint Presentation

- Russ Bacon (North Fork District Ranger) discussed North Zone projects

Custer County Update (Hammond):

- Some of the North Custer Fire District is in Lemhi County.
- Added an additional 500 acres at Thompson Creek Mine. The Mine is shutting down in July for a month.
- All fire districts have city and rural in the same station.
- Some issues
 - Two separate power companies.
 - Three separate telephone companies.
 - Most land area in the county has no road access.
 - Most of the fire districts have agreements with the Salmon-Challis National Forest for initial attack.
- Updating the 2005 Fire Plan with Fuels Specialist John Fowler (USFS).
- Two recent wildland fire exercises – simulations with Challis and Stanley.
- Forest is active in trying to get rid of some of the fuels in the Challis watershed.
- Looking at building a new fire station in Challis. The current one was constructed in 1983.
- Having some dispatching issues. South Custer County usually responds from calls out of Butte Dispatch.
- Recently passed a burn ordinance for the North Custer Fire District which enables them to recoup some costs.

Other Topics/Announcements (All):

- Karin Drnjevic thanked the BLM and Forest Service for their responsiveness and support to the County.
- Jake (Wild West Institute) – Montana Communities in Wildfire conference. Would encourage Idaho to create a statewide Firesafe council.

Thursday, June 11, 2009

Welcome/Overview (Kimball)

Region 4 Forest Service “Above Base” Project Prioritization (Cope/Bennett):

Need a ranking of 1-10. These projects will go to the Regional Office and compete with other states.

- Myrtle Fuels Reduction Projects – Chris Church
 - No Stewardship, but will offer biomass removal.
 - Will be contracted 100%.
- Knox Fuels Reduction Project – Chris Church
 - No Stewardship, but will offer biomass removal.
 - Will be contracted 100%.
- Placerville/Bogus Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project – Allyn Spanfellner
 - Will be contracted 100%.
 - Not in Roadless Area.
- West Fork Prescribed Burn Project – Kristy Swartz

- Some work being done on private lands.
- Not a stewardship project, and no biomass utilization.
- Cub River Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project – Kristy Swartz
 - 98% contracted.
 - Groups of Scouts spend a lot of time in this area.
- Red Creek Prescribed Fire Project – Kristy Swartz
 - Not a WUI project.
 - Not a Stewardship project, and no biomass utilization.
- North Island Park WUI – Kristy Swartz
 - Commercial Harvest
- Soda Point Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project – Kristy Swartz
 - Protection of communication sites
- Cuprum Fuels Management Project – Gary Phillips
 - Biomass opportunities
 - 100% contracted
- Hughes Creek Fuels Reduction – Russ Bacon
 - Some commercial timber sale
 - Stewardship project area

The projects were ranked and prioritized. Lynn Bennett filled out the spreadsheet for sending to the Regional Office.

Process suggestions:

- At the very least, have someone available by telephone to answer questions about their projects.
- Pre-work (including maps) should be put on FRAMES early so the Working Group can study prior to the meeting. When the Group comes to the meeting, they will have their rankings prepared with their cover sheet (this will help to cut down on paper during the meeting).
- Change the question to “What Priority is it in the CWPP?”.
- Let preparers know that incomplete answers will lead to lower scores.
- Send a message back to the Regional Office asking them to re-examine their criteria, and have some Working Group members involved in that re-examination.
- Project presenters present more information on “dwellings” instead of “structures”.
- Allow any kind of presentation, as long as it only lasts 10 minutes including question and answer session.
- Limit presentations to no more than three per Forest.

**Fall Meeting Date and Location:
October 14-15, 2009, in Idaho Falls**

Meeting Adjourned