



IDAHO STATE FIRE PLAN WORKING GROUP

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August 4, 2005

Dear Board of County Commissioners:

Greetings from the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group.

We are the collaborative body of agencies, organizations, and tribes that are responsible for a coordinated approach to implementation of the National Fire Plan and related initiatives, such as the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) in Idaho.

To fully facilitate the efficient implementation of hazardous fuels reduction projects on federal lands near our communities, your county wildland fire interagency group and county wildland fire mitigation plan must meet the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) criteria. HFRA was passed by Congress and signed into law in late 2003, with the intent of making it easier for federal land managers to address hazardous fuels situations on public lands. In Idaho, we were well down the road with our county mitigation planning effort prior to the passage of HFRA. We have already said that it is our intent that our county mitigation plans function as the Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) identified in the Act, but to do so, they must meet the criteria of the Act.

We urge you to become personally involved and to provide leadership at the local level in convening the agencies, fire chiefs, and interested citizens and stakeholders in the dialogue about wildland fire protection and forest health in Idaho. Please share this letter of guidance with your county wildland fire coordinator and local agency members of your county wildland fire interagency working group.

Yours,

R. E. Cope

Idaho Association of Counties representative to the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group
Lemhi County Commissioner

Enclosed: Guidance from the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group
County/Community Wildfire Protection Plan Checklist

A collaborative effort of the following member agencies and organizations:

Idaho Department of Lands ♦ US Forest Service ♦ Idaho Association of Counties ♦ Bureau of Land Management ♦ US Fish & Wildlife Service ♦
Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor ♦ Idaho Fire Chiefs Association ♦ Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security ♦ Idaho State Fire Marshal ♦
National Park Service ♦ Bureau of Indian Affairs ♦ Nez Perce Tribe ♦ Coeur d'Alene Tribe ♦ Shoshone-Bannock Tribe ♦ Office of the Governor
♦ Idaho Resource Conservation & Development Councils ♦

Guidance from the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group to Idaho's Counties, Agencies, and Interested Citizens August 4, 2005

The Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group is working diligently to provide Idaho's counties with assistance in developing and implementing their wildland fire mitigation plans. In fact, the Working Group and the Idaho Department of Lands is ready to deal exclusively with counties in allocating grant funds for fire mitigation projects on non federal lands. Members of the Working Group will be reviewing the county mitigation plans during the months of August and September to determine whether the CWPP criteria are being met and to recommend actions the county wildland fire groups, under the leadership of the county, need to perform to meet the proper standards. These recommendations should be ready for distribution at the Idaho Association of Counties (IAC) annual conference in Boise this September.

In the meantime, there are some guidelines that can be applied to all Idaho counties in general.

1. Make sure that the wildland urban interface is accurately mapped, following the guidelines defined in your mitigation plan. The Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group believes that this task is crucial to meet the requirements of HFRA.
2. Make sure that your county interagency wildland fire group or Local Emergency Planning Committee is meeting regularly to re-prioritize projects and areas as older projects are completed. A specific numeric priority is not required, but projects and areas should be assigned a priority such as high, moderate, or low. The revisions and reprioritizations and mapped wildland urban interface need to be submitted to the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) for posting on the IDL website as quickly as possible so that current versions of the plans are available for review.
3. Be sure to document the parties involved in any updates of the fire mitigation plans so that the collaborative nature of the effort can be demonstrated. To fully understand the requirements of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, please refer to our June 18, 2004 letter of guidance which may be viewed at:
http://www2.state.id.us/lands/nat_fire_plan/hfi-hfra_materials/cope_ltr_co_commr.pdf

Counties should be aware that members of the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group are ready and willing to offer assistance anywhere that it may be needed. Bear in mind the fact that HFRA projects can help greatly in reduction of hazardous fuels, restoration of ecosystems through prescribed fire or timber harvest, and that these projects can be a significant stimulus to local economies.

An active, dynamic county wildland fire mitigation plan, along with revisions and project prioritization, is much more likely to result in active funding than a plan that stagnates on the shelf. We appreciate your efforts to make our private and public lands more healthy and fire-resistant.

NOTE:

Please send the following electronically (to sschedler@idl.state.id.us) for posting on the Web:

- Most current County Plans
 - Data currently available to the Working Group for review may be viewed at this link:
http://www2.state.id.us/lands/nat_fire_plan/county_wui_plans/index.htm
(If this is not the most current version of your county plan, please send update.)
- Supplements (Including project prioritization updates for the federal and non federal lands.)
- Locally defined, mapped wildland urban interface (WUI) in GIS or PDF format

County: _____

Reviewer: _____

Date of Review: _____

Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group 2005 County/Community Wildfire Protection Plan – Review Checklist

Question #	Non Existent	Low Moderate High	Question / Objectives	Findings
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Rating Level: **Non Existent** – nothing mentioned **Low** – brief mention & description of risk with little reference to mitigation action
Moderate – risks and mitigation actions are realistically described **High** – extensive information & details referencing risks & mitigation

A	10-Year Comprehensive Strategy – National Fire Plan (origin: 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan – March 2002)			
1			Does the Plan emphasis measure the reduction of risk to communities and the environment from wildfire?	
2			Does the Plan strategy and focus include improving fire prevention and suppression capability of the local fire protection organizations?	
3			Does the Plan strategy and focus include reducing hazardous fuels?	
4			Does the Plan strategy and focus include restoration of fire adapted ecosystems?	
5			Does the Plan incorporate accountability through performance measures and monitoring for results?	
B	Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan (origin; Idaho Statewide NFP Implementation Strategy - July 2002)			
1			Does the plan provide documentation used to develop the mitigation plan? How the plan was developed, who was involved and how the public was involved?	
2			Does the Plan display a risk assessment to identify vulnerabilities to wildland in the wildland urban interface (WUI)?	
3			Does the plan prioritize mitigation strategy that addresses each of the risks?	
4			Does a process for maintenance of the plan which will include monitoring and evaluation of mitigation activities exist?	
5			Does the plan display documentation that the plan has been formally adopted by the involved agencies?	

County: _____

Question #	Non Existent	Low Moderate High	Question / Objectives	Findings
C	HEALTHY FOREST RESTORATION ACT (HFRA) (origin; Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan - March 2004)			
C 1	Minimum requirements for a CWPP to meet HFRA use			
1a			Were recommendations in the final CWPP clearly indicating whether priority projects primarily serve to protect the community and its essential infrastructure?	
1b			Collaboration: Was the plan collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in conjunction with federal agencies, Tribal Government, neighborhood associations, & other stakeholders?	
1c			Prioritized Fuel Reduction: Are hazardous fuels reduction treatments and recommended types and method of treatments identified and prioritized within the plan?	
1d			Treatment of Structural Ignitability: Are recommended measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed in the plan?	
C 2	HFRA Approval Process			
2a			Have three (3) entities mutually agreed to the final content of the CWPP; including; counties or cities, local fire department, the state entity responsible for forest management. * In Idaho, this means signatures by the County, Fire Departments and the Idaho Department of Lands	
2b			Have these signatory entities consulted with and involved representatives from the USFS, BLM and other interested parties.	
C 3	Additional Step-by-Step Recommendations to help communities develop a CWPP			
3a			In Counties/Communities where several local governments and fire departments are within the planning area, did each level of government authority identify a representative to participate as a core team member?	
3b			Was public notification and meetings convened to acquire specific and generalized input to the plan and proposed mitigation actions?	
3c			Has the County/community established a localized definition and boundary for the WUI area/s within the plan?	

County: _____

Question #	Non Existent	Low Moderate High	Question / Objectives	Findings
3d			Utilizing available technology and local expertise, were community WUI and adjacent landscapes of interest base maps completed? To include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inhabited areas at potential risk to wildland fire, - areas containing critical human infrastructure, - preliminary designation of the community's WUI zone 	
3e			Within the plan, were Community Risk Assessments maps completed with an appropriate risk-level rating? To include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fuel Hazard, on federal and non federal lands - Risk of Fire Occurrence, historical and local knowledge - Homes, Business, and Essential infrastructure at-risk - Other community values at-risk; critical wildlife, etc. - Local preparedness and firefighting capability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency preparedness / Evacuation Planning • Safety Zones / Mutual-Aid & Assistance Agreements • Response capability of community fire protection • ISO/Public Protection Code rating 	
3f			Are action plans included that identified roles and responsibilities, funding needs, and timetables for carrying out the highest priority projects?	
3g			Has the core CWPP workgroup reconvened and mutually agreed on the fuels treatment priorities, preferred method for fuels treatment, the location of the WUI area/s, structural ignitability recommendations, and other information and actions to be contained in the final document.	
3h			Has an assessment strategy been established to ensure that the CWPP maintains its relevance and effectiveness over the long term?	