

Meeting Notes
Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group
October 10-11, 2007
Sandpoint, ID

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

STEVE KIMBALL – NFP COORDINATOR
BRIAN SHIPLETT – IDL
DAVID HASZ – IDAHO EMERGENCY MANAGERS ASSOCIATION
DENNIS SEIDMAN – US FISH & WILDLIFE
DEAN ELLIS – IDAHO FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION
PATRICK WARKER – COEUR D'ALENE TRIBE
GARY JARVIS – US FOREST SERVICE
JOE DANIELS – IDAHO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
LEN DIAZ – BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
LEONARD WEHKING – BLM
MARK LARSON – STATE FIRE MARSHAL
ROBERT COPE – IDAHO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
RUSS MANWARING – RC&Ds
TIM DROEGMILLER – NEZ PERCE TRIBE

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

ANDREW MOCK – IDL
BOB HATFIELD – BONNER COUNTY
BONFIRE MEMBERS
BRETT INGLES – BOISE STATE
CHARLLA ADAMS – BOISE STATE
DAVE SUMMERS - IDL
ED ROBINSON – IDL
HARRY STEELE – IDL
JONATHAN OPPENHEIMER – IDAHO CONSERVATION LEAGUE
JOYCE DEARSTYNE – FRAMING OUR COMMUNITY
KEVIN BENTON – IDL
KURT NACCARATO – IDL
LARRY ISENBERG – SYNERGISTIC SOLUTIONS
LINDA MCFADDAN – IDAHO PANHANDLE NF
LONNIE NEWTON - BLM
MARK STEPHENSEN – BUREAU OF HOMELAND SECURITY
MITCH SILVERS – OFFICE OF SENATOR CRAPO
NORM SUENKEL – BENEWAH COUNTY
PAT GARBUTT – USFS R1
SANDY VON BEHREN – KOOTENAI CO. LEPC
SUSAN JENKINS – USFS NEZ PERCE NF
TERRIE JAIN – ROCKY MOUNTAIN RESEARCH STATION

Follow up needed for items highlighted.

October 10

Introductions & Opening Remarks

Brett Ingles opened the meeting. Steve Kimball welcomed the group and outlined the meeting purpose and objectives. The meeting is a coming together of the State Working Group and others interested to check-in on progress and learn about new developments regarding National Fire Plan work in Idaho. The objectives of the meeting include increasing awareness, reviewing ongoing actions, identifying and prioritizing new actions, interacting with Bonner County BonFire, and discussing our work strategy and issues.

Pocatello Meeting Follow-Up

The group reviewed progress on action items from the June ISFPWG meeting in Pocatello:

- Maps of risk areas and conditions – County Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) have maps of conditions, risk areas, etc., but these are quite variable. IDL is working with Boise State University (BSU) contractors to secure county maps of WUI and projects for posting on the State Working Group website. Charlla Adams (BSU) will present this project later in the meeting.
- Assessment of activity of county working groups – Steve handed out a summary of CWPP status showing dates of CWPP updates and risk areas/projects. Steve, Kurt, Brett, and others have made contacts to assess activity of counties. County working group activity is variable and visits to assist targeted counties are ongoing. All Working Group members are encouraged to be engaged with county groups and help spark those that are inactive. The communication plan we are developing addresses progress of county working group and key areas of concern/projects identified.
- Counties targeted for State Working Group involvement -
 - Valley - John Lillehaug (IDL) has agreed to provide support to the group. The Valley County group has had one meeting since the State Working Group last met.
 - Washington - Made contact- need to help with more progress.
 - Custer - Meeting planned with BLM/USFS in the works.
 - Clark and Fremont - Trip planned for November. We'll check in on progress and try to spark further progress. We'll include Bonneville County in this trip.
- Biomass – Russ Manwaring reported on a biomass committee in Southwest Idaho. The committee has recently hired a coordinator. Steve highlighted the need to develop more feasible uses for biomass. Joyce Dearstyne (Framing our Community, Elk City) has funding to start a public sorting yard for value added products. Cope said he expects changes in attitude on biomass and renewable energy sources. A large shift might have a negative effect on Idaho. We need to track a House Resolution that would create a statewide biomass coordinator, create a revolving loan fund that could be utilized to provide initial startup funds, develop renewable energy standards, and increase rates paid for renewable resources.
- Communication Plan – Working with Governor's office and congressional delegation. We'll discuss later in this meeting.
- Fire Regime 4 – Leonard is not optimistic. DOA has formed a task group due to Murphy Fire. BLM has a new prioritization approach that is complicating things. Sagebrush vegetation type is not a high priority nationally.
- Building projects from the ground up – Myrtle Creek project is a good example. A key is to include diverse interests early to build support to accomplish goals.
- State All-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Mark Stephenson (BHS) is making progress - will present at this meeting (goal is to be more site-specific in the update).

- Grant Applications – Working Group members will be invited to comment on grant proposals and some members may participate in grant subcommittee reviews (Community Fire Protection & Partnership Funds and Western States grants). Dean, Russ, Brian and Steve participated in a recent conference call to review Western States applications.

National Fire Plan Progress & Communication Plan – Steve made contact with congressional and governor staffers in Idaho. They were invited to attend this meeting and to attend a fall field visit to the Poe Cabin Fire (if there is enough interest). The offer was also extended for a one-on-one visit with Steve and/or other working group members. Steve also has started visiting with the agencies, most recently with the leadership teams of the Idaho Panhandle and Nez Perce NF's. He'll be visiting BLM units and others this winter.

Hand outs included a draft Communication Plan and information sheets that are being developed as briefing materials. These will help increase awareness about our progress in the State and counties. Included are a summary of NFP Funds spent and accomplishments by county (including fuels treatments and education) and a summary of CWPP progress and highlights of risk areas and projects proposed for each county. Also included is a summary of Idaho wildfires in recent years which shows trends in number of fires and number of acres burned from 2001 to the present. **Please review these documents and give Steve feedback on improving them as communication tools.**

Site-Specific Hazardous Fuels Prescriptions – Terrie Jain presented considerations in designing treatments to meet desired conditions. (See powerpoint presentation posted with these notes titled *Terry Jain Presentation October 2007.*)

Presentation of Award for Doug Brown of the Idaho Fire Chief's Association – to Dean Ellis for Doug's participation on the ISFPWG.

Myrtle Creek HFRA Project – Linda McFadden shared a video and highlights of this collaborative project designed to protect the Bonners Ferry watershed. This is an example of how collaborative processes can be utilized to address priority needs identified by a city or county.

Meeting With Bonner County BonFire – Bob Hatfield and members of the Bonner County Working Group shared highlights of their group's work. This group has been highly active in hazardous fuels treatment projects development and implementation in the area. Included was a field trip to projects in the Schweitzer Mountain vicinity (home defensible space and roadside fuel break).

Wednesday Evening Optional Dinner Presentation: Presentation by Joyce Dearstyne and Susan Jenkins on the Poe Cabin Fire. **The video will be ready for review and feedback this winter. We'll have some of us work on this before final release.**

October 11

County Wildfire Protection Plans – Steve discussed his review of Idaho’s 44 CWPPs. Several counties need updates (addendums). The addendums supplement the original plans (rather than replace them). Addendums can be relatively brief and focused - need to readdress highest risk areas/needs and identify and prioritize projects to address these. State Working Group can help counties initiate the updates and/or participate in county working group update meetings. Emphasize collaboration and link grant proposals to CWPP priorities.

New GIS Mapping – Charlla Adams from BSU presented the project she is working on - a web-based map display of County WUI locations and projects. This will enable public viewing of the counties’ WUI and projects, allowing county working group members as well as state and federal officials to become more aware of efforts taking place throughout the state. **More mapping information is needed from Counties – Steve and Brett will make contact with counties to obtain this information.**

Statewide Risk Assessment Update – Steve and Leonard shared that the State Communities-at-Risk Assessment will remain a working draft document. It is available online on the Working Group Website (www.idahofireplan.org). This is one of many decision support tools available to assist with prioritization of projects and provides a statewide assessment of relative risk that is based on several data sets. Local knowledge (i.e., a CWPP) would supersede the state risk information for project identification and prioritization.

Idaho State All-Hazard Mitigation Plan 2007 – Mark Stephenson discussed the update to the fire portion of the state All-Hazard Mitigation Plan. Data from the ISFPWG’s website, the Statewide Risk Assessment, IDL, BLM, and Forest Service were used to provide greater detail to the plan. (See Mark’s PowerPoint presentation for more information.) **Mark will share a draft of the fire portion of the new plan with the Working Group when it is ready this winter.**

FS State & Private Forestry Redesign – Forest Service and National Association of State Foresters are working to redesign State & Private Forestry (S&PF). This may change delivery of the National Fire Plan program by integrating it with other S&PF programs. Included are the development of a National Assessment as well as an assessment provided by each state. These analyses will assess threats, opportunities, landscape conditions and needs, etc. Fire risk will be integrated with other threats, and these assessments will help guide prioritization of a more integrated delivery of programs and services.

Western States Fire Managers Grant Update – Kurt gave an update of the 2008 Western States Grant program. A subcommittee met in Portland in September and developed recommendations for the Western States Fire Managers on grant priorities. The number of projects that will be funded will depend on the appropriation. Idaho projects scored high in the evaluation and it is likely that several will be funded. Final awards will not be made in Idaho until the spring of 2008.

Insurance Discussion – Mark Larson shared his opinions on developments within the insurance industry in Idaho regarding wildland fire and continuing homeowners' insurance coverage. Companies are evaluating risks and methods to structure rates in order to address these risks. AIG Company made headlines by utilizing contractors to protect homes at the Castle Rock fire near Ketchum. There is legislative interest in WUI codes and ordinances. Mark says local fire district requirements may overlap with county ordinances resulting in inconsistency. **NW Insurance Council representative Karl Newman will be invited to attend our next meeting in Boise to continue the insurance discussion.**

Ordinances & Codes – Brett talked about a proposal being developed by IDOC for zoning ordinances for Idaho communities. He is working with them to consider integrating fire mitigation/prevention measure into these ordinances.

Living on the Edge - Training Tool Demo – Harry and Andy demonstrated an early version of the new Living on the Edge program. This is a community education program developed in response to growth into rural areas. This provides hands-on learning about ways to protect homes and live safely “on the edge” of wildlands in fire-prone areas. The program is being developed by Idaho Department of Lands. There are two formats: (1) a CD-ROM for self-learning or informal group training. This teaches FIREWISE principles through interactive exercises; and (2) a computer simulation program for formal workshops that includes several advanced teaching components.

Agency Updates

Forest Service R4 – Gary Jarvis – All R4 Above Base projects were funded (\$1.2 million to Idaho out of \$3.1 million total for R4). R4 has a new Regional Forester, Harv Forsgren.

Forest Service R1 – Pat Garbutt - R1 scratched out \$300,000 in 2007 for Idaho's State & Private Forestry program. Funds for S&PF look good for 2008. Expect agency fuels target increases in 2008. A burn probability map is being developed with the Missoula lab which will help project wildfire spread.

Idaho Association of Counties – Robert Cope & Joe Daniels – Clean Water Restoration Act “a disaster”. Carol King has a new proposal for Idaho wilderness. An issue to work on is communications during incidents (interoperability). Joe expressed concerns regarding communications between local, state, and federal officials when wildfires are threatening a community.

Coeur d'Alene Tribe – Patrick Warker – Working on a multiyear fuels management plan. Working collaboratively with partners on fuels treatment projects near communities on the reservation.

Idaho Conservation League (ICL) – Jonathon Oppenheimer is working to boost fire assistance funding for NFP work. He's on a Western Governor's Association task team - for public access to NFPORS. ICL is working on local collaborative projects incl. Hughes Cr, Myrtle Cr, Twin Skins, CDA Collaborative, etc.

Bureau of Homeland Security – Mark Stephenson said the State All-Hazard Plan update is due in January. He'll send the draft of the fire component of the Plan to the Working Group for review soon.

RC&Ds – Russ Manwaring is involved with the Southwest Idaho Biomass Commission and is working on an early draft of proposed legislation for school conversion to biomass.

Idaho Department of Lands – Kurt Naccarato – 37 grants in 21 counties are now active. 2007 was a record year for \$ spent to fight fire in Idaho. More IMT's (T1,2,3) than ever. Western States Fire Managers will meet in San Diego. A west-wide Fire Risk Assessment is proposed (like the southern area assessment).

Idaho Fire Chief's Association – Dean Ellis reports the possible adoption of the 2003 International Fire Code by the legislature addressing the issue of interoperability at the state, county, and federal levels.

Nez Perce Tribe – Tim Droegmiller – Mechanical treatments on the reservation- hand and machine. The tribe will advertise for a full time Fire Management Officer this winter.

Idaho Emergency Managers Association – David Hasz – Grants may be available to address interoperability. SEIC group- communications system. Sandy Von Behren handed out a proposal for the working group to review regarding increasing education efforts through the State Working Group.

Bureau of Indian Affairs – Len Diaz says tribal HFT programs will be funded at approximately last year's level.

Next Meeting: February 12-13, 2008 in Boise

Suggestions for meeting topics:

- 1) Education/Training (Plan sessions and use of new materials (Poe Cabin video, Living on the Edge, etc)
- 2) Restoration and other elements of the National Fire Plan needing attention.
- 3) Communication Plan Implementation (getting messages out about the work and progress at the state and counties).
- 4) Insurance (Karl Newman of NW Insurance Council will attend)
- 5) Inoperability- invite someone from the State Inoperability Executive Council (SIEC) (Dodie Collier is the Project Manager). Also invite someone to discuss the State's web-based Emergency Operations Centers network. This links the county emergency operation centers at the state level and is used to share situation information on emergency operations.