

Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group Meeting
October 14, 2009
Ameritel Inn
Pocatello, Idaho

Attendees:

Keith Birch, IDL Fuels Specialist	birchkei@silverstar.com
Kraig Carroll, USFS Fire Management	kcarroll@fs.fed.us
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Joe Daniels, Oneida Co. Commissioner	euardajoe@ATCNet.com
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Kristy Swartz, USFS Fuels Specialist	
Val Navo, Fort Hall	
Merlin Miller, Chubbuck Fire Department	
Corey Child, Madison County Emergency Services	corey.child@rexburg.org
Jackie Young, Note Taker – USFS	jlyoung@fs.fed.us

Introduction (Kimball):

Went over the agenda for the next two days. Explained the committee process and what it involves to participate on a committee.

Will go through a round of agency and county updates, discuss the 2010 conference. Paula Jones, Three Rivers RC&D, will head up the tour with the group tomorrow to Lava Ranch. Friday there will be hazard assessment/home evaluation training with about 30 fire chiefs attending for folks staying over.

Follow-up from June Meeting (Kimball):

- Evaluated Region 4 FS “Above Base” proposals. After regional allocation, Idaho received about \$600,000 for R4 projects.
- In June, a media article was released nationwide on a study from Colorado about hazardous fuels treatments in the WUI in the past five years. The study showed amount of treatment within WUI was relatively low, and it generated a lot of questions. We looked into this (and so did the Forest Service nationally), and there were limitations on the data used and many fuels treatment projects weren’t identified. The ISFPWG ran the NFPORS data for Idaho – numbers show in Idaho, 54 percent of projects of the last 5 years are in WUI (summary of this analysis was included in meeting pamphlet).
- Different definitions of WUI – the Colorado report assumed one definition. There is the HFRA “default” definition. Many Idaho counties have completed WUI mapping in accordance with HFRA –about 40 percent of our counties have mapped, and they are on the website. Federal agencies have created mapping for community protection areas to allocate dollars. The Idaho Roadless rule developed “Community Protection Zones” (which include projections of community growth). So, the point is, beware of different “WUI” definitions and concepts.
- ISFPWG encourages county work groups to map their WUI to identify specific risk areas near communities in the county.
- County visits – ISFPWG members visited several counties since June including Teton, Fremont, Latah, Idaho, Ada, and the 5 Panhandle counties (four of which have “stimulus” hazardous fuels projects).

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):

- Presented slide show – Idaho State Assessment of Forest Resources and State Resource Strategy; and West Wide Wildfire Risk Assessment (WWA) (see www.wflcweb.orgwwra) to be completed in 2011. State of Idaho will provide data and input for WWA (more information included in handouts). Tribal partners and many diverse stakeholders are involved in the State Assessment and Resource Strategy.
- Developed a draft guide for working groups/Interdisciplinary teams to use to discuss fire in the landscape. The guide prompts discussion about what role fire plays in the landscape (past, present, future), and what can we do to restore fire-adapted landscapes. The Restoration committee is looking for a group to use the guide and report back to the committee.

WUI Development (Larson):

- Was hoping for a Governor’s task force to be developed to look at one- and two-family dwellings, access, and water supply issues. Developed a task group of association of Idaho

Cities (non-wildland individuals selected by lobbying groups). There was an effort in the legislature last year to throw out the International Fire Code. Bannock County was first to adopt WUI, Ada County has as well. This code does not address one- and two-family dwellings.

- Looking at updating the WUI Code to define driveways and access roads, water supply issues.
- Purchased several NFPA Standards/WUI Codes books, free and available to the counties. They also offered to visit with counties.
- By the January meeting, hope to see some legislation written on WUI Codes for single-family dwellings.
- Elected officials listen to constituents complaints. Departments need to contact agencies ahead of time.

Home Evaluation Cadre (Summers):

- Tasked with developing a standard home assessment that would be across the state, and tying in with Firewise program.
- Not a lot of changes since June. Three forms were created; home evaluation forms, information, homeowner form for on sight visits and protocol. Getting a number of phone calls on proposed changes to forms. Red Zones - compile over the next year and incorporate into the Red Zone, some are doing hard copies.
- Cadre is in need of additional members. There are 7-8 currently. Coeur d'Alene conducted training on the forms process. Goal to outreach to insurance companies on Firewise.
- Insurance companies are doing their own assessment work currently.
- In June meeting it was discussed whether this committee should endorse products for fire prevention. Decision was that it is not appropriate for the committee to do that. Spread the news of concepts or programs to prevent. Committee will not endorse Red Zone.

Communication (Kimball):

- Committee is chartered to share info on what committee is doing with news releases, annual reports and briefings. Used the ISFPWG Annual Report as a key communication tool. Since June they have met with congressional and Governor staff in Boise and Lewiston, updating and highlighting county developments.
- Kimball toured in September with the ID Forest Products Commission and shared what it is that we do.
- News releases this summer – regarding “stimulus” projects in Bonner and Boundary Counties, and a prevention op-ed piece (by Skinner and Steele). A key role of the ISFPWG is to regularly share information about National Fire Plan progress with their agencies and groups.
- Want to pass on that counties, local fire departments and state and federal agencies are aligned and working together.

Education (Steele):

- Firewise has developed a website
- Goal – three years ago they were tasked with developing a better fire education program for State of Idaho. When fire plan dollars came out, Keep Idaho Green website needed revamping. Started working on concept of unified, interagency fire education. Made a lot of progress over the last six months. BLM has come up with \$150,000 towards hiring a director position for the educational campaign. Julie Thomas, RC&D, has taken on the task to advertise that position. They will meet to develop criteria and duties. The position will be a contractor, and would work directly under the RC&D. Under the scope of work the contract hours could be negotiable for the individual. They would be given a list of duties to accomplish and work

independently. It was opened up to the group for any suggestions, comments on key things to consider for that position.

- It was suggested that the individual have a fire education/fire background and understand fire terminology, charismatic and be able to travel around the state. Possible retiree, or on other hand young individual starting out. Facilitative skills qualities. Need wide distribution for the outreach to have large pool of candidates. It will be advertised in newspapers statewide. Call Steve Kimball, Harry Steele or John Skinner if you have suggestions. Hope to have on board in early January.
- Need to have Firewise up and running and official. Haven't finalized charter yet, but need to have a board of directors. Firewise currently is considered a subcommittee of the ISFPWG, the question was raised; how does the group want this to work now that it is developed. How do we proceed – merge into the board – or what. Until non-profit ranking established, stay with ISFPWG – using Julie Thomas' non-profit status. The new Director will be tasked with this. Asked for volunteers to help with this.
- Asked group for ideas how ISFPWG will work with Firewise in the future – separate group?
 - At some point Firewise should move to their own entity
 - Member of ISFPWG should be on the Board of Directors for Firewise
 - Doesn't have to happen immediately
 - ISFPWG is comfortable with letting Firewise off on own group
- How do we go about getting memberships to Firewise? Start marketing the website. Agencies to be members, counties, tribes, partner groups. Have common goal of wildfire education. How do you get the word out. Drake Cooper will come up with a plan to market – fees or voluntary? Idaho Public Television has a good program – different type agencies with different costs, agencies, vendors, organizations, and public. The initial thought was to have free membership to encourage people to join. Possibly do a sponsorship – if a member you can use the logo.
- Presented slideshow on the website
- Clearinghouse to come up with 20 projects to purchase/download. Could use additional dollars to get the website completed.
- Brett wrote a grant for Idaho Firewise billboards, and Idaho Fire Chiefs contributed \$1000.00
- Need feedback from the website content
- “You don't have to be in a Forest to be in a wildfire” (developed slogan)
- Three billboards have been put up across the state – Boise, Idaho Falls and Twin Falls
- Developed coffee sleeves (Wake Up And Smell The Coffee Not The Smoke... Prevent Wildfires)
- Advertised out of the U of I Vandals football ads (FS/BLM/Nez Perce Tribes)
- Americor position – Education Assistant position. Nez Perce Tribe donated \$14,000 for the position, which includes working with summer programs for children (camps, etc.) also on the 1910 fire commemorative in Coeur d'Alene. This person will come on before the director position, and will work out of Coeur d'Alene. The Director could be based out of Boise, but location of the position may be flexible.

Contact Harry Steele at IDL if you would like posters, coffee sleeves, etc until these are available online.

Agency Updates:

BHS (Jackson):

- From FEMA – there is a wildfire brochure; defensible space, building construction in WUI, rooftops, decks, outlying buildings, etc. A fact sheet can be found on their web page.
- New Citizens Corp - Heidi Novich is the Representative
- They have cancelled the State Emergency Management conference scheduled for next fall
- Wildfire mitigation projects – \$200,000 Adams county
- Mc Call Outdoor Science School received sprinkler systems, etc.
- Award shortly public safety communication
- Sites – 3 - Harriman State Park, Coeur d’Alene Hazard Mitigation Program - fuels management project, Tubs Hill Area, dollars from an IDL grant
- Under development – grant application cycle closes November 6th. The Department of Corrections is putting in for a grant for a back-up generator for Idaho County
- City of Pocatello – Johnny Creek Drainage
- Kootenai Electric utility protection
- Idaho County Light and Power
- Sun Valley defensible space project – people put in for grants
- Project for Red Zone software – broad BHS operation, pilot project to improve GIS capabilities

Fire Marshall (Larson):

- Boise City Fire Marshall went to the June meeting. Developing a new ordinance, not final yet, with data from fires they had
- Wrestling with budget and staffing issues

Idaho Association of Counties (Daniels):

- Attended the ISFPWG presentation in Coeur d’Alene
- Meeting with Franklin, Caribou, and Oneida counties with fire problems in subdivisions coming into counties. Trying to help planning and zoning people, and have had help from other agencies.
- Title 3 dollars for secure schools act – ability to use funds and dropped.

RC&D (Jones):

- Nothing new to report.

USFS Region 4 (Walker/Brown/Nyman):

- Quiet year – following a quiet fire season.
- WFPR budget will be coming out – several regions were deficit this year, curious with new administration to see how they will work with strategies
- April or May they will have a Spring WUI meeting in SLC
- 2009 fuel treatment projects 118 percent accomplishment, not specifically broken down for Idaho.

USFS Region 1 (Schofield):

- Idaho Panhandle – successful in selling large hazardous fuels reduction projects (several)
- She is involved in the 1910 fire commemorative on the Panhandle scheduled for next year. Hired a detailer to cover these duties until the Americor position comes on board

- Northern Idaho counties received ARRA funding from the stimulus packages. A lot of good grants that come out this year.
- Westwide assessment – come up with relative risk of fire in the west – establishing baseline of investigation activities that all of the counties and partners are doing.
- Susan Jenkins was replaced by Laura Barrett, and the Clearwater- Nez Perce will join us at our January meeting.

Kimball:

- Talking with the FS - the mountain pine beetle disease mortality contributing to fire risk has not been captured well in the recent State Assessment. In discussing this with ecologists, there is a need for more data/analysis to determine how this tree mortality relates to fire risk in Idaho. We'll highlight this need in the State Assessment and Resource Strategy.

Emergency Management (Hasz):

- Nez Perce County WUI Committee Coordinator is Tom Hopkins. Doing fuels projects also in Lewis County and Winchester State Park
- Coordinators state wide inter-operation with state government

IDL (Naccarato, Summers):

- 20 year low in fire ignitions and acres burned
- Budget cuts
- Layoffs, more to come
- Idaho County – addressed new project on the Salmon River – properties accessible only by boat, air. Interagency team met with homeowner individuals to come up with plan to protect structures and work on a pro-active approach. They conducted public meetings in Riggins. Completed home site assessments. Idaho county has a 2 phase defensible space around homes – tactics to employ – irrigation systems etc.
- Rewriting Idaho County Plan, 4 years into it, not completely redone, Hired an individual to help with that. It is more reader friendly, includes appendix, etc.
- Working with BHS on a pilot project for Red Zone in Idaho County, available to those who want to buy licenses for the counties
- Westerns States Fire Management met – 17 grant applications from counties, three were able to be funded. Funds are all used up. New county that has not participated in the past was funded. These have become highly competitive projects put together well. They have changed the grading criteria.

FWS (Cardoza):

- Low number of fire occurrences
- Burning/hazardous fuels treatments
- Bio mass projects in Washington
- RFA grants in Idaho - equip upgrades, procurement.
- Worked with Treasure Valley on a fire prevention education
- Regionally – new push to get line officers integrated with fire

BLM (Conran):

- Community assistance in eastern Idaho had \$100,000 for three agreements; Three Rivers, High Country, ISU WUI mapping. ISU – Butte County, then Custer and Franklin
- Pocatello field office contributed \$60,000 to Three Rivers' agreement – fuels reduction projects.

- Rural fire assistance program – on again off again – new administration, 17 requests over \$200,000. National office agreed to carryover about \$130,000 this year.
 - Sold surplus fire apparatus to local fire departments
 - Slow fire year – well under average
 - There was a total of 20 arson investigations this year – recovered \$66,000 in 2008 for fire trespass. Billing is a good tool for prevention.
 - Two arson convictions this spring. Worked with arson investigators
 - Power County arson prevention; one time use cameras – made stickers to be placed on cameras for preventing arson – to raise awareness
 - Fire prevention program – 30 events on education/prevention – school media events
 - Ready Reserve Program – funded by BLM to provide wildland fire training to local fire departments. Trained 875 students this year, set up through EITC, \$40,000 more dollars into that agreement.
- (Belger):**
- Office of Inspector General will be out soon talking to partners, and are interested in talking to private land owners and cooperators.

Idaho Fire Chiefs Association (Ellis):

- Licensing grant program – this year 60 requests, totaling \$114,000 with only \$57,000 to give out. Scaled down requests.
- Idaho Fire Chiefs Association worked extensively on the fire code. Education is the key to get to legislatures before they are in session.
- Get a lot of disgruntled people with the fire code
- Code task force was set up with a lot of entities involved

NPS (Johnson):

- Tod is now managing the fuels budget for the Pacific West Region.
- 126 percent of normal
- No accomplishments in Idaho National Parks and no requests
- Will help parks update their fire management plans
- Rural fire assistance money is set to be available
- Busy fire season in Oregon and Washington, several of the fires were for resource benefits
- California and Nevada didn't see much activity
- When NPS money is out, there are five positions out there to get that money out – hoping to move a position to Oregon or Washington

Shoshone-Bannock Tribes (Briggs):

- Have been working to be more involved with Counties
- Quiet fire season

IDFG (Teare):

- Launched landscape initiative project funding – WUI projects. If you have any fuels reduction projects, contact Jim.

ISFPWG members not able to attend:

Jeff Handel, Idaho Dept of Parks and Recreation
 Jerry Miller, Idaho Dept of Commerce
 John Chatburn – Office of the Governor

Len Diaz – Bureau of Indian Affairs
 Tim Droegmiller – Nez Perce Tribe
 Coeur d'Alene Tribe Representative

County Updates:

Northwest Management (King/Bates):

Northwest Management is a consulting firm out of Moscow that works with counties on CWPP, fire planning, education and grant projects.

- Presented slide show showing High Country RC&D educational program – each county update for 2008. Funded through Eastern Idaho BLM. Present public information workshops, develop hazardous fuels treatment projects
- They have representative in Blackfoot and Idaho Falls, and are based out of Moscow
- High Country RC& D – serves nine Eastern Idaho counties.

Lemhi County (Drnjevic):

- Updated their CWPP
- WUI mapping –looked at extending the WUI
- Four Firewise communities being planned

Fremont County:

- Have updated their CWPP since 2004

Teton County:

- Accomplished two Stevens grants projects – south side of the valley
- Just completed their CWPP update
- Slide show showing rating maps
- Teton County does have ordinance for access, etc.
- Plan now defines WUI
- Smith Canyon and Pole Canyon projects

Upper Snake Interagency Wildfire Group (Conran):

Purpose of group is to bring together agencies within and around Bonneville County to facilitate more efficient response to wildfire incidents, with emphasis on WUI, and how to deal with incidents that are not in a fire district. Presented slide show describing the Group

- Modeled around the GIFF
- Encompasses Bonneville County
- BLM/FS/County Fire Departments
- Meet on monthly basis
- Kevin Conran – Chair
- Completed WUI drills - 14 agencies participated, 200 homeowners contacted, after action review, media coverage, good response
- Accomplishments – propose to landowners they join a fire district – no man’s land reverts to the sheriff.

Bannock County (Wolfe):

- Lava Ranch Sub Division – working on project - fuel break through the subdivision – 33 miles of steep and narrow private roads. Concern for loss of life
- Working with city of Downey on watershed, more partners are needed. Project is 3000 acres
- New project – Johnny Creek, Firewise group, 130 wooden shake roads within that subdivision, applying for grant.

Shoshone-Bannock (Briggs):

- Caribou, Bannock, Bingham, Power County WUI codes – hope to have adopted by tribes.

2010 Wildland Fire Conference Overview (Ingles):

Action Items:

- Theme for conference – 10 years of the NFP
- Begin process of building agenda
- Commitment from agencies/individuals to help with conference (participate in conference calls)

Presented overview of conference discussion/ideas. Will break out into committees to come up with ideas for topics and speakers. Could provide guiding direction about where we are going – frame our approach for the next 10 years, and our strategy. Supporting local work. Things to share with folks to take back home to their county working groups. Needs assessment; what does our broad wildland fire community need to be successful. Provide compelling tools and ideas to take back with them.

Cost last year was \$85.00 and included lunch, breaks. The plan is to keep it under \$100 or less. Scholarships were available last year through BHS and BLM. Recommended that we try that again. Brett will work on that.

Could be a possibility that we not charge for lunches, however, the cost of the conference will not be decided yet, Brett will research and come back with more cost info at the January meeting.

Other locations were suggested, Pocatello, Twin Falls, Idaho Falls. Boise was well received last year.

- **Location/Date: Decision – Double Tree, Riverside – Boise, ID, October 5-6, 2010**
- **Theme: Decision – 10 Years of the National Fire Plan**

Group was divided into three break-out groups to come up with topics for the three tracks.

Structural protection: (Possible potential for panels)

- Cost share agreements ***
- Creative funding – grants
- Changes in codes (green building codes tie into WFU) ***
- Beyond the home – critical infrastructure
- Key note speaker to end luncheon – talk on Oregon Trail - Dennis Doan.
- Who's liable?? ***
- Helping your friends (how funding works when helping, making money off someone else's disaster)

Restoration

- Speakers – why do we need to treat the landscape
- Dr. Thomas Boneksen
- Evolution of fire policy for the landscape – conditions have become of concern in the landscape
 - Steven Pyne,
 - John Barley, retired Yellowstone
 - Tim Sexton FS WO***
 - Jim Agee, professor of fire in the landscape, absence and need for.
 - Dick Bahr, Boise NIFC – need for fire as treatment.

Will take a look at last year's Yellowstone conference agenda at some of their speakers

- Large private land owner strategy for landscaping ***
- Biomass – way to address landscapes

- Mountain pine beetle what we know and what we don't – have an ecologist
- Federal fire implementation strategy (panel) Mike Dudley/George Weldon ***
- Bob Mutch – Missoula – WFU
- Tools; state assessment/risk assessment (not for break-out session)
- Rehab – Murphy Fire Rehabilitation BAER post fire rehabilitation
- Rangeland

Firewise

- National campaign (are you ready campaign)
- How do you get funding opportunities/grants ***
- Non-traditional partnerships that are out there
- How to give presentations (schools)
- Ed Smith – “Ember Aware Program” (Nevada)
- Success story – whole Firewise communities (Montana) from small to entire town community/state
- Overview of Idaho Firewise***John Skinner
- Firewise community assessments 101***

(* items that were narrowed down as the final topics in each group)**

Brett would like a list of those interested to work on the conference committee (conference calls). Need group to work together and delegate. Brett will throw out an e-mail indicating when they will have the first conference call, then once a month. Once you commit to first call, please continue. First call will try and assign roles – more individuals involved with just smaller roles works smoothly, need to find someone to help with the vendor groups.

Dean Ellis will check with Corrine Abby.

Consider sending out a survey to the community asking what things they would like to see at the conference.

Closing

Meet at the hotel at 800 in the morning. Paula will have lunches. Dress warm and bring water. Will head to Lava Ranch and should be back between 4:00 and 5:00 pm. Friday – meet at Farm Bureau at 0830 for home evaluation training.

January meeting and location

- **Decision: January 13-14 in Stanley, Idaho, Mountain Village Resort. The location has been reserved for this time so ISFPWG should plan on these dates in Stanley. January 12th and the afternoon of the 14th are for travel.**