

**Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group
Quarterly Meeting
Boise, Idaho
September 28-29, 2006**

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

BRIAN SHIPLETT – IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS
DAVID JACKSON – BUREAU OF HOMELAND SECURITY
DOUG BROWN – IDAHO FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION
JERRY MILLER – IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR
KEN KISER – US FOREST SERVICE REGION 4
LEONARD WEHKING – BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MARK LARSON – IDAHO STATE FIRE MARSHAL
PEG POLICHIO – US FOREST SERVICE
ROBERT COPE – IDAHO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
RUSS MANWARING – IDAHO RC&D COORDINATOR
TIM DROEGMILLER – NEZ PERCE TRIBE – BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS REP

GUESTS

BRETT INGLES – BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY
DALE ANDERSON – BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
DAVE SUMMERS – IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS
GARY BROWN – US FOREST SERVICE PAYETTE NF
GARY JARVIS – US FOREST SERVICE REGION 4
JONATHAN OPPENHEIMER – IDAHO CONSERVATION LEAGUE
KELCI KARL ROBINSON – IDAHO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
KURT NACCARATO – IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS
MYRON HOTINGER – BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT STATE OFFICE
PAT BEHRENS – US FOREST SERVICE IDAHO PANHANDLE NF
RON LITZ – IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
SUZANNE SCHEDLER – IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS

Tasks

- Task 1: Communication Strategy
 - Ingles (lead)
 - Jackson
 - Schedler
- Task 2: Brochure for New County Commissioners and Other Stakeholders
 - Ingles (lead)
 - Jackson
 - Schedler
- Task 3: Revise Above Base Prioritization Process
 - Jarvis (lead)
 - Naccarato - IDL
 - Hotinger – BLM

Meeting is called to order at 8:10 a.m.

Polichio – Overview of agenda and call for introduction of all in attendance.

Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group – Where do we go from here?

Litz – Compliments Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group and its Chair, Peg Polichio, for accomplishments. Peg, as the representative of the National Fire Plan in Idaho, has been able to navigate to places that individual agencies could not. The group's collaborative efforts have been outstanding, overcoming territorial and agency barriers. How do we make this last?

- Develop a succession plan
 - ISFPWG needs a chairman – leadership needs to be established to ensure continuity.
 - ISFPWG should determine who will continue to comprise the group as the National Fire Plan implementation continues to evolve.
- An orientation process/program should be developed.
 - Prevent rehashing and interrupting the flow of the group by revisiting previously addressed issues.
- Avoid duplication when implementing the National Fire Plan
 - Many agencies/organizations have a fire mitigation message. Coordination of the implementation of this message necessary to prevent redundancy and stretch dollars.
- ISFPWG needs to coordinate national issues (e.g. Healthy Forest Restoration Act) in conjunction with the National Fire Plan.

Litz – Peg Polichio is leaving her position as the National Fire Plan Coordinator for Idaho and taking the position as Deputy Director of State & Private Forestry for the US Forest Service Regions 1 and 4. ISFPWG and Idaho Department of Lands owe a debt of gratitude to Peg for a job well done.

- Dr. Cope presents award to Peg on behalf of the ISFPWG and the Citizens of Idaho for a job well done. Thanks Peg on behalf of the group.

Litz – IDL will be working with the Forest Service and BLM as well as the other agency members of the ISFPWG to try to fill the National Fire Plan Coordinator position. Absolute credibility is vital. The candidate must be able to work in collaboration with agencies at all levels. The NFP Coordinator will work to coach and mentor and break down agency barriers; however, will not be the person responsible for running the Working Group. IDL will provide staff support, and hope that other agencies will provide support as well, as this is a collaborative effort for the entire State of Idaho. Please feel free to communicate any other needs or attributes you see necessary to the success of the NFP Coordinator position.

Polichio – We have come a long way in four years. Ron has been a great coach and mentor. Working closely with Brian Shiplett, a plan was developed to begin to do business and structure National Fire Plan programs in Idaho. Learning curve was steep the first year. IDL is greatly appreciated for their collaborative efforts and openness. This has been a great process for me and for the Forest Service, and I hope to bring all we have learned and accomplished to my State & Private Forestry position. We have had a few bumps in trying to merge programs and now need to refine our course and strategy, both nationally and in Idaho. The ISFPWG needs to continue to look beyond our current focus and determine how to implement all components of the National Fire Plan in Idaho including restoration. We must continue to model for the counties that we are not about the grant funding, our focus is on durable working groups and collaboration. Our role is to continue to enhance delivery of the National Fire Plan and be an example of “good government.” My thanks to all of you. I appreciate the opportunity to work with you and believe you are the reason for my success.

Shiplett – Many accomplishments by the group in the past year. The ISFPWG has shifted focus from being primarily a grants committee to implementing other goals of the National Fire Plan. We have the responsibility to provide leadership and direction to counties and citizens of Idaho so that the local people on the ground have their needs met to mitigate fire.

Discussion by all of various definitions of “Wildland Urban Interface” (WUI)

- When two-thirds of the state is federally managed, how do we coordinate work when we are in the realm of judicial review? This causes frustration when everything that can be done has been done to implement a project and it is still stopped by judicial process. If an appeal is upheld and WUI has to be redefined, what then?
- This is the 800 lb. gorilla in the room. We can't let the fact that this exists keep us from doing the good work that we can. We coordinate information and bring to the lowest common denominator.
- Is the purpose of the National Fire Plan (NFP) and the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) to bring some of the control back to the local level?
- Stress importance of development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP – In Idaho, this is the County Wildfire Protection Plan) that allows the county to develop their own definition of WUI that can hold up under HFRA and be defensible.
- The ISFPWG can provide clear direction on collaboration. What Lemhi County is doing is a great example. Bringing people to the table and building trust will be the factor that will get the job done. The Working Group can guide the process. Revision of the National Strategy will give more clear direction on collaboration that can be adopted in the Idaho Strategy.

2007 Western States Fire Managers Wildland Urban Interface Grant Application Update

Naccarato gives status update of 2007 WSFM grant applications submitted to Idaho Department of Lands.

- Overview of prioritization process
 - All grant applications were sent forward to Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC)
 - Prioritized in order of strength to compete under WFLC criteria
 - Funding level projected to remain stable
 - Emphasis on strong collaboration at county level

Report on Multi-County Meeting in Southern Idaho – August 14-18, 2006

Ingles – Meeting came about after ISFPWG members spoke at Idaho Association of Counties meeting in Coeur d’Alene in June 2006.

- Request made by County Commissioners.
- Coordination started and grew with Forest Supervisor input.
- Meetings took place with Counties, LEPCs, local BLM and FS, and ISFPWG member involvement.

Generally well received. Somewhat disappointed with lack of response following meeting. Oneida and Clark Counties requested follow-up meeting, but have been unwilling to commit to a firm date as yet. Camas County would like the same type of meeting in their area of the state. Do we want to have something like this again?

- Message?
- Suggestion to go to meeting with county-level problem and ask the county working group how they will solve problem and let them know how the Working Group can help.
- Suggestion to send smaller number of Working Group members.

Above Base Criteria Revision

Kiser – At June Working Group meeting it was determined that the Above Base criteria needed to be revised, and the prioritization process was outdated.

- Projects ranking out at same level
 - Need a standard prioritization process across the region
 - Move prioritization to sub-group as with Western States, Community Fire Protection, VFA, etc.
 - Would like to see members from each state come together to develop consistent process
 - Support continues nationally for Above Base
 - Incentive for forests – allows for a budget increase if projects successful
 - Builds collaboration between forests and local communities
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Break for Lunch

Idaho Implementation Strategy Revision

Ingles – How do we want the process to develop?

- Signatures needed
 - Date to sign should be set
 - Because it is tiered off the National Strategy, should we wait until that revision is in place?
 - Governor has been briefed on Strategy by Caswell
 - Template for county prioritization of projects will be part of document
 - Sign off sheet with “prepared by” for signature to be part of template
 - Ingles, Caswell, Brunelle to coordinate signing date and arrangements
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Group breaks for photo opportunity.

HFRA – Differing Perspectives

Behrens – See PowerPoint Presentation

Meeting adjourns for the day at 4:45 p.m.

Day 2

Meeting begins at 8:10 a.m.

Polichio – Overview of morning agenda.

LEPCs and Emergency Managers would like to participate in ISFPWG. On the table for approval by group. Emergency managers work on behalf of the county commissioners.

Larson – Insurance industry may need to be represented on the ISFPWG as well. Northwest council representative Brad Weekly on the table for group membership.

Wehking – Reads message from the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* on cost of wildland fire in Montana reaching \$60 million. Will scan and send to group.

Jackson – Walks group through benefits-cost analysis worksheet tool used by FEMA whenever wildland urban interface fire mitigation project takes place. Also passes out and discusses LEPC handbook.

Group discusses status of tasks identified at June 2006 meeting.

Task 1 – *Brief Ryan White (Governor's natural resource advisor) suggested by Caswell* – Caswell advised to do because thought would be leaving. But has remained strong in administration. Ryan white was given a very thorough briefing by IDL that included components of the ISFPWG. Future task as governors change. Will need to be built into the communication strategy. Maintain continuing awareness of staff changes.

Task 2 – *Survey fire districts on adoption of the International Wildland Urban Interface Code* – Larson sent out e-mail to fire chiefs' list (approx 240 departments). Bannock has adopted, Kootenai is working on it. The rest use as guidelines in some instances. 216 jurisdictions nationwide have adopted, most just use for guidance. Rare at this point that entire document is embraced.

- Brown – regularly refer to it as guidance and customize it to the need without making a statute. This allows for flexibility.
- Cope – Overall opinion is that total adoption is too restrictive when trying to enforce, better to adopt parts and customize to need. Don't want to become chimney-cap cops.
- Ingles – Anything further to do with this?
- Larson – Just informational only, but want to pass along that it is being utilized as guidance.
- Cope – Best use would be guide when fire district is signing off on planning & zoning issues. Gives the county something to lean on and not just arbitrary code.

Task 3 – *Review draft revision of Western Governors' 10-Year Strategy and Implementation Plan - Incorporate all new suggestions into revision* – Nearly complete, but still in draft stage. Want to make sure that state aligns with national and need final input from Working Group. Signing of Idaho Implement Strategy - If done by 2nd week in December, Working Group members need to be in attendance. Need date and let all know. Have to get on Governor's schedule. Incumbent on us to make sure we have appropriate representation. Ask if Brunelle could take lead. Working Group members can invite executives to attend.

Task 4 – *Draft county plan prioritization template and letter of explanation for county working groups – have ready for next meeting* – Letter is only in outline form to date. Would like to have them in hand along with Implementation Strategy.

Task 5 – *Develop communications strategy* – Goal to have something by Jan. Talk about plan to engage counties at meeting in Jan. Larson, Miller, Jackson to assist Ingles. Keep Kelci Karl-Robinson IAC in loop.

Task 6 – *Divide counties and make direct contact with named county representative: This task and assignment are not entirely clear* – Ingles made a first pass by calling county contacts. Not really sustainable. May be part of communication strategy to develop personal level communication. Need to improve connection between local agency people. Save until January meeting when have first run of communication strategy in place. Discuss at fire chiefs board meeting.

Task 7 – *Newsletter* – Three times a year, right after each meeting. Intent is to highlight Working Group members. Alternate counties – county spotlight for Working Group and county projects. County needs to write.

Task 8 – *Document to give instruction to new county commissioners* – Brochure. Ingles and Schedler to comprise.

Task 9 – *Region 4 Above Base criteria revision* – Should be available by January meeting if meeting occurs prior to. Have to have final in place before April meeting. Miller – look at how to handle projects that cross state boundaries. Kiser – would facilitate discussion.

Task 10 – *Service visit requested by Bingham, Oneida, Minidoka, and Latah County* – Latah only county not covered in August multi-county meeting. We have made a number of efforts, and will make more attempts. Sandy Rollins (Latah County) told Ingles no time to do it. Some options with BLM to fund coordinator, also title 3. Dave Summers will assist. Trying to help put together a program – have need and interest but county is not geared up to assist. Manwaring – Dan Pierce may assist to convene group. Dick Hodge expressed interest in assisting.

Additional Tasks – Signing of Statewide Implementation Strategy. Brunelle/Ingles to take lead. Working Group members will attend and invite executives from agencies to sign.

Agency Updates

Larson – Idaho State Fire Marshal – Would like to invite Brad Weekly from the Northwest Insurance Council to the January meeting. Have asked for \$250,000 for prevention and education grant program and would like Working Group to prioritize and review with management guidance from IDL and staff support from Fire Marshal's office. This would have to be reappropriated each year. Even if not funded, won't affect staffing. Proposal up to \$250,000 for FY08. There is support from insurance industry as this proposal won't cost them any more money because funds would come out of fees already paid. Fire Marshal is cautiously optimistic; this plan could work with help from the Working Group. Proposals that have more than a local impact would receive a higher priority. This provides incentive to collaborate. We anticipate primary applicants would be fire agencies, but not limited to those groups. Proposal in the works for next fiscal year. Not intended to fund laptops or PowerPoint projectors; Firefighters License Plate Fund is the fund for that. Would like this to fund what is not being funded elsewhere. Not for safety training in house, more like public awareness, could be wildland or structural.

Fire Marshal hearing insurance company HIPPA privacy concerns. We are encouraging all 44 counties in Idaho to show us where their greatest risk is, so insurance companies are looking at risk maps and deliberating on whether or not to insure "high risk." How many concerned citizens will it take to pressure county commissioners to adjust risk map to please constituents, yet would not be accurate map of risk. This could affect the accuracy of CWPPs. If we have a bad fire year and loss in identified WUI areas, it may affect how insurance is written.

- Jackson – unless nationally we get our hands around this and demonstrate we can reduce loss, it may go down the same road as flood insurance, and even earthquake insurance.
- Ingles – the scale of fire loss isn't as large as earthquake and flood.
- Jarvis – same concern occurred when CAR was identified and it did not materialize. This may, however. Katrina changed the insurance industry in the Southeast.
- Cope – people are building homes where they did not before. That is the difference.
- Larson – some communities are working on changing this by meeting the Idaho Survey and Rating criteria for fire protection. Not always accurate fire protection.

Naccarato – Idaho Department of Lands – WSFM grants. Elmore and Nez Perce counties are starting to build up program. Idaho County is doing a great job in implementing their program. We hope Clearwater County will receive funding for their 2007 project which shows excellent county maintenance. Fremont County not going ahead with their grant. Franklin County may receive funding. Adams and Valley County are cooperating. Schweitzer Sandcreek project, if funded, will be a great success story. Full time residents and recreation use. Hwy 57 Bearpaw just starting to go in Bonner County. Boundary County seems to be stalling so we are going to meet with them and help along.

Shiplett – Idaho Department of Lands – below average starts, below average acres, reduced suppression dollars. Losing our NFP Coordinator.

Kiser – US Forest Service Region 4 – Pretty good shape with SFA into 2007 - level, no real indication that it will drop. Tenny says has good support in Washington DC office. CFP and “Above Base” have support, but the issue every year is how long to continue. We have shown good results so it will go on. FEPP – every state has had a chance to rewrite agreement and Idaho has done so. Benefit to state with higher pecking order for state; this provides access to equipment more quickly so selection is not so picked over. This is my last meeting; the Working Group has been a great group to work with.

Jarvis – US Forest Service Region 4 – I will be taking over some of Ken's duties, not all. “Above Base” for 2007 and CFP are in good shape. I am looking forward to working with the Working Group. We have the same mindset.

Oppenheimer – Idaho Conservation League – Local-level collaborative groups work. Salmon, Coeur d'Alene, Myrtle Creek, Jesse Creek, and some projects on IPNF are being reviewed. Whiskey South rescoped and is on back burner – other projects moving to the forefront. We are starting to crunch numbers on this fire season; checking with agencies and looking at wildland fire use statewide, seeing more Forest cooperation. Heard concerns from county and state level about the slash buy-back program in the WUI. Timber operations put money into bond for slash and can forfeit if they don't clean up slash. Minimal financial risk for company, leave a bunch of slash for the state, feds to clean up.

- Shiplett – Provision of Idaho Code Title 38. Industry wanted to have in code in 1987. It said that if you do forfeit the cash bond, you assume liability for 5 years for fire suppression. Industry wanted provision to let them buy out of this liability. Statewide, on a long term historical basis, less than 10% are forfeited. Most reputable logging contractors will clean up their slash with or without the forfeit.
- Ingles – group did discuss buy-out issue in depth a few years ago.

Jackson – Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security – I covered the bulk of new information earlier. Would like help with state all hazard plan. I will e-mail group draft plan to review. We have a new face in North Idaho, Jay Baker is the north area field officer. I will send out an announcement when access to pre-disaster mitigation fund is available. What about invitations to Idaho Emergency Management

Association? The upside to bringing them in would be to give more hazard information as they manage plans. They do have a president – Jackie Frey, Twin Falls Emergency Management.

- Cope – Are we duplicating some efforts on part of counties? Probably, but should be ok.
- Jackson – Will invite to next meeting.

Miller – Idaho Department of Commerce & Labor – At the last Legislative Session IDOCL was allocated \$250,000 to help cities and counties. IDOCL will have an announcement in late November or early December as to who will be funded. We want to use to lever rural development funds from USDA to try and combine and fund all 34 apps. Help communities make sure that comprehensive plans are up to snuff to help withstand legal challenge and make sure area of impact agreements are up to state law. We also want to help communities develop subdivision ordinances. If we do get all the funding, we will divide into 11 clusters for support. If we don't get federal funding, we will only do 4 or 5 clusters and only able to help 1/3 of communities on the list. In the next few years, we want to reach every community in the state in need and not just those in areas of high growth. Elk City recently secured grant funds for biomass work. Bennett Mill facilities may be acquired. IDOCL is looking at other projects working with state and private funding grant opportunities. Firewood packaging business guy made rustic looking fencing and came away with 6 miles of Lodge Pole fencing orders from trade show.

Manwaring – Idaho Resource Conservation & Development Councils – RC&Ds are governed by local councils and priorities all over the charts. Very active programs. Not as much in North Idaho related to fire because of active county programs. Need to get those in Upper Snake more involved. Central Idaho has been very active and increased community interest. RC&D State Association meeting is Nov. 5 in Twin Falls. Several counties have completed all hazard mitigation plans.

G. Brown – US Forest Service Payette National Forest – Busy fire season for the Payette NF – 50,000 acres burned. August 13 helicopter crash tragedy killed four people.

Wehking – Bureau of Land Management – Third biggest year in southern Idaho, 480,000 to 500,000 acres burned. Four homes lost due to wind event blowing down fire lines. How little effort it would take to make homes safe by reducing vegetation. Bad season for accidents – hospitalization, vehicle related accidents. Arrested firefighters for arson association in Lemhi county. BLM cooperated completely with officials. Northern Idaho working on interagency agreement for interagency FMO – Mark Grant and Bruce Martinek involved. BLM Partnership Funds put more money into funding HFT projects - \$267,000. Reallocated funds to fully fund Buckskin project. BLM has a new Idaho State Director - Tom Dyer. I will invite to next meeting. Oregon got a new state director as well.

Droegmiller – Nez Perce Tribe - Len Diaz of the BIA NW Regional Office would like to come to the ISFPWG meetings beginning in January to represent BIA. Next week will be interviewing Nez Perce fire prevention position for work across the reservation. We received many calls regarding the delay in RFA grant dollar disbursement. Nez Perce Tribe received funding from regional office to get dollars for interim. We are continually setting up fuels projects and working with other agencies (IDL) to set up fuels projects.

Summers – Idaho Department of Lands Maggie Creek Area Office - Many projects in the works. Idaho County fire chief taking lead on Red Zone Software utilization. Clearwater County has departments using the software, and has completed assessments on just over 500 homes. Idaho County and IDL purchased software and PalmPilots. Clearwater County and Idaho County Emergency Managers agreed to be holders of that information and make available to fire departments. Red Zone ties in with ARC GIS and has other applications like flood, etc. No plans right now for a statewide database at this time. This comes down to cost. GIS information is great, but is costly. I would recommend to the State Working Group the need to tie in with local working groups; the link sometimes is not working very well. Let's talk to groups and see what we can do for

them. Idaho County did fund grant coordinator position with grants, and this was a great move and is working very well. Local folks on the ground need to be reached by group, beyond leadership.

D. Brown – Idaho Fire Chiefs Association – Fire Chiefs busy on multiple fronts. A Strategic Plan and organizational rewrite of by laws is in process to make them more fluid and allow for quicker, more responsive action. IFCA is reorganizing districts to dovetail with BHS for purposes of unified command. FFLP program (see handout) highest amount given out to date, this information is posted on IFCA website. We are working to expand membership. There is a noted absence of IDL and other state and federal people in membership. Annual conference is first week in May which is beginning of fire season. This sometimes precludes attendance. IFCA can go to legislature to push efforts on behalf of firefighting. Fireworks bill did not make it through committee. We came back pretty strong however and got four or five other items through - great grass roots participation. Legislators gave thanks to IFCA for participation. IFCA learned a lot from that and are making progress. We encourage everyone to visit our website – a work in progress and always improving. We can post documents and notices. Corporate partnership program starting to go out to private sector to have them participate as a corporate sponsor to help departments and districts with dues, etc. We will do a better job of conveying information to IFCA about the ISFPWG. We are interrelated and have a true network, need to keep information flowing. Conference was wonderful and would like to see continue - nothing but praise for Jon Skinner and conference. Speakers, all were really good.

Cope – Idaho Association of Counties – Ken Kiser and Peg Polichio will be missed. Main topic of importance is how to reach the guy on the ground – how to get up to speed and stay involved.

Polichio – IDL/US Forest Service National Fire Plan Coordinator – We hit our stride this week, this is good news and bad. We need to dig deeper into our organizations to get things done. Thanks to all for a great four years.

Ingles – Where and when for next meeting?

- Twin Falls –
- BLM to host, may use conference room at IDOC&L
- January 17-18, 2007 (Wednesday/Thursday)

Meeting adjourned at Noon