



Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group

www.idahofireplan.org

3780 Industrial Avenue, South
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815

208.666.8649
skimball@idl.idaho.gov

January 6, 2009

Dear County Commissioners:

Greetings! More and more new homes are rising in Idaho's wildland urban interface (WUI). Regardless of the national economic downturn, this growth is expected to continue, as is the trend of larger, longer wildfires in Idaho. Idaho's counties have made excellent progress in preparing communities for wildfires, but there is more to be done. It is particularly important now to have a dialogue at the county level about mitigating the wildfire risk of new construction in the WUI. The Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group (ISFPWG) would like you to be aware of tools produced at national and state levels that can support development of local standards for new construction in these areas.

- The **National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)** has recently adopted new standards for land development, structural ignitability, and water supplies. These are:
 - **NFPA 1141 – Standard for Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Suburban and Rural Areas (2008)**. This provides recommended standards for developing access, water, warnings, and other systems for mitigating risk from rapid growth.
 - **NFPA 1144 – Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland Fire (2008)**. This provides recommended standards for structure assessments and structural mitigation such as building construction and landscaping.
 - **NFPA 1142 – Standard on Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting (2007)**. This provides recommended standards for water storage and delivery systems.

The ISFPWG has ordered copies of the NFPA Standards and will send a set to counties upon request. Send request to the address (either regular mail or e-mail) listed above. The standards can also be purchased at the NFPA website:

www.nfpa.org/catalog/category.asp?category%5Fname=Codes+and+Standards&Page=1&src=catalog.

- The **International Code Council (ICC)** has published a **Wildland Urban Interface Code** that also provides standards for structure construction, access, water, vegetation, structure assessment, and other components of community fire protection.

The ISFPWG has ordered copies of the ICC WUI Code as well, and will send a set to counties upon request. The code can also be purchased at the ICC website: www.iccsafe.org/dyn/prod/3850S06.html.

- **Examples of Codes and Ordinances in Idaho.** The ISFPWG has examples of codes and ordinances that have been adopted or are being developed within Idaho's counties. These range from ordinances that require wildfire mitigation plans with new construction permits (Valley, Kootenai), to expansive codes with an array of included standards (Bannock, Teton, Fremont). All of these, to varying extents, address structure materials, fuels and clearing, roads and access, utilities, water sources, and other important aspects of wildfire preparation; and they all focus on new development. Another important feature of the codes and ordinances in Idaho is that they are tailored to the specific needs of a county. No uniform approach will work throughout the state. Instead, those portions of code that are applicable to a particular county or fire protection district can be adopted in a way that meet the needs of each jurisdiction.

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 ♦ Idaho Emergency Management Association

We encourage you to have the dialogue within your county about proactively managing for growth and wildfire risk. This is an issue that is best addressed through collaborative discussion by county commissioners, emergency coordinators, planning and zoning staff, fire chiefs, fire district commissioners, law enforcement, and others with an interest in protecting communities. We feel that the adoption and enforcement of WUI codes is the least expensive and among the most effective options available to safeguard lives and property. They provide a foundation of standards to ensure that individuals meet their responsibilities as homeowners without jeopardizing their neighbors through poor choices in building materials and inadequate maintenance of their property.

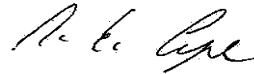
Wildfire is a way of life in Idaho. As more homes are built in the WUI, there is greater potential for lives and homes to be lost—as they were in Boise during the Oregon Trail Fire last summer. The Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group can be a resource for you. Our members include the State Fire Marshal, the President of the Idaho Fire Chiefs Association, and others who could assist you with contacts, templates, other information or advice. Please let us know how we can help.



Mark Larson
State Fire Marshal



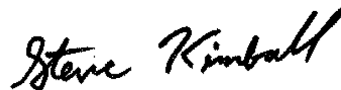
Dean Ellis
Idaho Fire Chief's Association



Robert Cope
Idaho Association of Counties



David Jackson
Bureau of Homeland Security



Steve Kimball
Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group