

Minutes

WUI Mitigation Committee

Date: October 6 & 7, 2009
Idaho

Location: NIFC, Boise,

Members Present:

Will May	Pam Leschak
Pam Jakes	Sam Scranton
Alan Dozier	Phyllis Krietz
Sid Beckman	Kelly Hawk

Guests present for all or part of the meeting:

Elaine Waterbury, Branch Coordinator	Tim Melchert
Ruta Glinski, BLM	Dave Peters
Curt Varone, NFPA	Michele Steinberg

1. Approve/amend/edit minutes (May, June). Attach Jim Smalley's amendment to May minutes.
May 2009 minutes with Smalley's amendment were approved by committee (moved by Pam Leschak and seconded by Sam Scranton.)
June (2009) minutes were approved by committee (moved by Sam Scranton and seconded by Alan Dozier.) **Action: Minutes need to be approved then posted on website.**
2. Discussion of new WUI-MC Charter: All
 - Will May advised the new Charter was signed on July 30, 2009.
 - Committee must now determine what issues impacting the WUI will be identified for Committee assignment and work, and will be included in a Committee Work Plan
 - Following the discussion at the EB when the Charter was presented we anticipate a tasking from the EB to define the "fire-adapted community".
 - Following a discussion the new Charter's rules for Committee membership the Committee requested the Chair seek some clarification from the Board on rotation of membership. The agencies may not want to change their representatives every 2 years. We also do not want the entire committee turning over at one time. There is concern that 2 years is too short of a time period to learn about the NWCG, particularly for anyone who would like to be Committee chair. However, we want to be sensitive that some people need a break from being on the committee.

Action: Chair May will seek clarification as to the Board's thinking about membership through discussion with Branch Coordinator Elaine Waterbury.

3. NFPA Report (given Tuesday morning by Curt Varone and Michele Steinberg)
 - Jim Smalley has retired. NFPA is advertising to fill behind Jim. Depending on who is selected for Jim's position, NFPA may have additional positions to fill (modifying the organizational structure within the Firewise Program).
 - The NFPA Board is focusing more on the problem of the WUI, but they are still defining the problem.
 - Firewise Report:
 - Firewise has been in place since 1986 and continues to focus on having wildfires without the loss of lives or homes.
 - Visits with state liaisons has been tremendous and Michelle is looking to expand these visits. The Committee supports the state visits, and gives kudos to Firewise for expanding their efforts in this area. Additional effort is needed to include tribes in state visits.
 - The multi-tier recognition program is moving forward. Right now there is no real criteria for selecting a program for recognition, but the program would like to recognize any groups that do projects that help develop fire-adapted communities. One focus has been on CWPPs that encourage neighborhood activity.
 - The website will be moving to NFPA.
 - There is a new consultant for communication and outreach (Oglivy Public Relations Worldwide – the lead contact is Danielle Mackey).
 - There is a new publication, "Safer from the Start" for new developments. The intended audience is developers and community associations.
 - Another new publication "Conducting Community Assessments in the WUI" is meant to help homeowners do their own assessments.
 - The draft 2010 work plan is being considered by the Firewise Subcommittee.
4. Firewise Sub-Committee Charter: Pam L.
 - The subcommittee charter has been approved by the branch chief and committee chair
 - The budget development process hasn't changed, it will just be centered in the subcommittee rather than committee
 - With the current funding process NFPA must match the federal contributions to the Firewise program, which could limit total program funding. It's not clear whether NFPA has to match the total federal funding or just Forest Service funding (requires the match, DOI does not). Pam L. indicated that the FS grants people are checking on this.
 - Firewise Subcommittee charter was approved by the committee (moved by Pam Leschak and seconded by Sam Scranton)
5. Report on Ready, Set, Go national implementation (FS, USFA, IAFC, DOI). Pam L., Will and Phyllis
 - The program has expanded from a pilot test in Ventura County, California to a nationwide program

- The I-Chiefs will do a rollout at their meeting in March. Prior to that meeting, people at DOI, USFA and FS will hear about the program.
 - The roll out will focus on local fire chiefs
 - There may need to be more work to reach Indian Country fire services.
 - The “Stay and Defend” part of the program that was originally being discussed has been dropped at this time.
 - Part of “Go” is to develop nationwide evacuation standards which will include procedures and recommendations on when to allow people back into their communities. The idea is to let them return early enough that they can put out fires from embers and be there to discourage looters.
 - Firewise has been identified as an important part of “Ready”.
 - After rollout some communities will be identified as pilots and targeted for assistance and for monitoring and evaluation.
 - Information will be available on the I-Chief’s website beginning April 1.
6. Branch Coordinator report/comments: Elaine Waterbury
- Bonnie Wood will be Elaine Waterbury’s new boss.
 - For FY2010 the Board received project funding requests totaling \$3 million, and will award \$1 million.
 - The Board will identify themes for future funding which will help committees better focus their project requests.
 - The committee will receiving a tasking for terminology.
 - The Board wants to feature committees on the website so this committee needs to be prepared to provide information on who we are and what we do so that people can see what we’re all about.
 - NWCG has adopted the “Corporate U” program to help with employee development and career planning (directed to employees of the Federal Forest Management and Wildfire Management Agencies).
 - Some Committees have executive secretaries that are not paid for by NWCG. It’s a need, but hasn’t been addressed.
 - Discussion of “Intent” document template:
 - The charter has enough information to “stand a group up” and is signed by the chair of the NWCG, but the intent document is a living document that reflects what we’re doing. The intent document differentiates us from other committees.
 - Much of what is asked for in the Intent template has been done before in the charter and strategic plan.
 - SOPs will come down later, but we will need to develop SOPs to specify how we operate as a committee.
7. WUI grant tracking project: Tim Melchart, FS
- Several of federal agencies give grants for fire management in the WUI and they are all looking for a way to improve coordination.

- The proposal is to have a page at the NWCG site where someone could find available mitigation grants. These would focus on federal grants as each state is different. The list on the site would include: grant title, agency and a link to the website with more information.

Action: Committee passed the motion: “The WUI Mitigation Committee will provide a synopsis of WUI mitigation grants available from federal agencies and links to follow for more information. This information will be provided on the NWCG webpage.” (moved by Pam Jakes and seconded by Sid Beckman)

Tasked: Kelly Hawk and Tim Melchert

8. Development of WUIMC Work Plan: All

Priority projects:

- Explore opportunities for cooperating with the Joint Fire Science Program—what are their ground rules for selecting funding topics? How might they use our expertise? How can the Committee affect the process?

Lead: Pam Jakes

- Review NWCG training courses—we need to review and evaluate the existing NWCG training courses to see how we can fully integrate information on mitigation in the WUI into all the courses. As a result of this review, we may decide that NWCG should develop a new course to cover mitigation in the WUI.

Lead: Kelly Hawk and Phyllis Krietz

- Public Information Officer focus—we need to look for opportunities to use the PIO’s to spread the WUI mitigation message. To do this, we need to develop talking points the PIO’s can use in briefings and other meetings during a fire.

Leads: Alan Dozier, Pam Leschak and Sid Beckman

- Support research on population trends—population trends will have a major impact on the extent of the WUI. In some places the WUI is expanding, but further development means that WUI communities eventually become urban communities. What insights can we draw from the research done in this area? Are there additional research questions that need to be addressed?

Lead: Pam Jakes

- Further communicate with the field—we want to keep the communication channels open to our stakeholders (whom we represent). If the committee needs specific information from the field, we will develop questions that will insure we get comparable information from all stakeholders and locations.

Lead: Not assigned at this time.

- Determine information needs of field folk—needs assessment.

Lead: Mark Gray and Maris Gabliks

Other potential projects:

- Develop SOPs

Lead: Steve Smith (Sam Scranton’s replacement)

- Develop NWCG webpage on federal mitigation grants (discussed above)

Lead: Kelly Hawk and Tim Melchert
iii. Develop Committee's Intent Document

Lead: Will May

iv. Developing definition of "fire adapted community"—waiting for tasking
Monitoring and evaluating the adoption and implementation of Ready-Set-Go

Lead: Pre-tasking Assignment to Mark Gray and Maris Gabliks

9. Status of NASF Firewise Information Template that describes the communities on the way to adopting Firewise Communities and similar CWPP information Template. Alan Dozier

- Mark Gray has taken the lead on this.
- This effort ties into the Firewise multi-tiered recognition program.
- A template has been developed.
- The Southern fire chiefs said they could complete the template and we are waiting to hear from the other regions.

Action: Alan Dozier will follow up with Mark Gray and Maris Gabliks on how other states responded to filling out the template.

- We must make sure that the tribes are covered. (Assignment?)

10. Develop a template for what is required to be a fire hardened community And develop a concept for developing an informational template/input to support fire service decisions for land use planning/design principles to create fire adapted communities.

These ideas came from Kate to develop a guide for developers on what they can do to contributed to the creation of a fire adapted community. We will table this discussion until Kate re-engages in the Committee.

Meeting adjourned