

**Minutes from
NWCG Wildland Urban Interface Working Team Meeting
Minneapolis, MN
June 4-5, 2002**

WUI Working Team Members present:

Dave Halstead, Chair
Janet Anderson-Tyler, US Forest Service Representative
Sam Scranton, DOI-BIA Representative
Jack Cohen, US Forest Service Representative
Fred Allen, NASF Southeastern Representative
Jim Smalley, NFPA Representative and Program Manager
Brian Johnson, IAFC Representative
John Cochran, US Fire Administration Representative
Pat Durland, DOI-BLM Representative

Guests:

Jim Hull, NASF Fire Committee
Ginny Desautels, FEMA Mitigation
Anna Ferguson, Absolut Imaging
Michele Steinberg, NFPA/WUI Program Staff
Cheryl Blake, NFPA/WUI Program Staff
Ron Montague, Firewise Technical Assistance
Tom Eiber, MN DNR Representative
Judith Leraas Cook, Firewise Communities/USA
Linda Langner, Alan Zentz, Bob Haight, Rachel Hudson, John Dwyer, & Pam Jakes, US Forest Service Research
Dan Bailey, US Forest Service
Nancy Porter, US Forest Service, Notetaker

Minutes of last meeting were approved.

Working Team Update – Jim Smalley

Strategy for the Future Part I is out and Part II will be out this week for review. Team members will be sent the updated response form to fill out in a week or two. Responses are to be sent back to Jim Smalley for completion of this stage of the future planning exercise.

WT Representatives & Alternates – Dave Halstead

FEMA and USFA participation

Decision:

Motion made to add FEMA to the WT and modify the Charter accordingly made by Jim Smalley and seconded by Janet. All were in favor of adding FEMA to the charter. Jim will take the revised Charter to NWCG for signature.

Discussion:

From Smalley's report on the NWCG Meeting in Whitefish, MT, the US Fire Administration stated to the NWCG that USFA would no longer be funding the WUI Program beginning in FY03. There was some confusion about the decision, and the WT requested that USFA clarify USFA/FEMA funding of WUI program to the WT by October. Dave Halstead expressed the desire to keep USFA at the table along with adding FEMA. Jack indicated that USFA has a role at the local level in dealing with this problem. The WT encouraged John Cochran to take the message back that USFA has a unique role in the National WUI Fire Program. USFA has a training role with local communities. FEMA has a planning role with local communities.

John Cochran suggested the WT define USFA's role on the WT. What are expectations beyond meetings of USFA? Jim stated that at the NWCG meeting roles were clarified with USFA focus being on Fire Service suppression matters and FEMA focus being on mitigation matters. John indicated USFA also has a part in planning.

Roles of Representatives

Decision:

That no action be taken till next WT meeting. The charter will be drafted for review by the next meeting. WT members need to identify alternates and submit to Jim Smalley.

Discussion:

Brian representing Int'l Assoc. of Fire Chiefs on the WT suggested we identify why each rep needs to be in the group from the charter. Suggested that IAFC may not still need to be at the table. USFA could also represent structural fire interests. Explanation of each role could be in the "book" under membership. Need to get this info to Jim. Question brought up as to what coordination between IAFC and USFA. Brian indicated it was a close enough working relationship that if IAFC had a concern they would bring it to this group.

NASF Fire Committee Chair Report – Jim Hull

NASF Fire Committee met in Boise last week in conjunction with NASF Forest Health Committee.

NASF Staffing: Don Artley will be replacing Bill Baden as NASF rep in Boise as the full-time NASF representative at NIFC. National Fire Directors felt like NASF needed equal presence and Don will carry the title of NASF National Fire Director.

Legislative Issues:

The recent legislative session was successful regarding the Farm Bill. The Drought Bill was brought forward and State Foresters added pre-positioning capability tied to severity. Needed modification of Stafford Act. The possibility of getting the bill passed looks good.

Federal Funding Issues:

- Need for more emphasis on things in addition to hazardous fuels work. Need more dollars in preparedness and readiness. Emphasis on Firewise program and prevention can have a real impact.
- Regional differences emphasis will be to develop strategies for this.

- We will need to come to terms with communities at risk and need to prioritize (how are they defined, measured, & evaluated). NASF feels prioritization should be on a state by state basis.
- Doing a lot of work on Implementation Plan for 10 Year Strategy. Four goals set forward and performance measures tied to goals on all lands not just Federal lands. Under each goal are implementation tasks. NASF will be looking at how they can accomplish tasks and deliver. May have to prioritize these and it will be a big challenge.
- Lots of folks want to be part of NFP, like Coop Foresters, Red Cross, and Nature Conservancy, and are looking at how they can help implement.
- NASF was asked by USFS to participate in review of WO FAM.
- Hopeful that NASF will be given a seat on the Wildland Leadership Council.
- Smokey's message has changed from Prevent Forest Fires to Prevent Wildfires. NWCG had not defined what wildfire is. Wildfire as defined by NASF is "Unwanted and unplanned fire burning in forest, shrub, or grass fuels".
- No work is being done to see historically why we are where we are. We should look at long-term weather patterns and population.
- State Foresters are committed to coming up with a National Fire Report. Looking at basic simple report on 8 to 12 items. If we could even get number of fires and acres burned it would be good.
- NASF Fire Committee endorsed Firewise Communities USA program and took it to NASF and it was enthusiastically endorsed. They are looking at ways to integrate this into other programs. Developing an MOU that will pull everything together.
- Possibility of White House recognition of Firewise USA Program.
- Looked at 30 Mile Fire and NASF appreciates Jerry Williams communicating with NASF throughout.
- Cost containment of fires is concern -- State Foresters put out report. Lots of thoughts on if we can really contain costs.
- Federal Fire Policy covered federal lands. Need a policy that covers all of the rest of the land. Need a genuine National Fire Policy that covers everything in one plan. It is being worked on now.
- Good success story model is GOAL (Greater Okefenokee Assoc. of Landowners) in the Swamp.
- NASF will be holding strategic planning this summer.
- At next NASF Fire Committee meeting in January 2003 they are bringing all 50 fire mangers together to hold a National meeting of that group. It will be a 3-day meeting.
- Jim Hull thanked WUI WT for the high quality of their work.

Discussion:

In regard to several of the points Jim Hull raised, Dave Halstead suggested WT may want Jim Brenner from Florida to come to a meeting and take WT through the Risk Assessment process Florida has used. He agreed that historical information on the national fire problem is important, as it has been for other hazards such as hurricanes. Jack indicated there is historical research going on particularly at U of AZ. He noted that as a nation we have populated & suppressed fires and built up in the moistest years on record. Jim Smalley spoke for the WT when he said we owe Jim Hull thanks for his support.

NFPA Designated Rep to NWCG – Jim

The new President at NFPA, Jim Shannon, has expressed interest in working with NWCG himself, but Jim Smalley will remain as his representative. Shannon would like to attend some meetings of WT & NWCG.

Old Business

Annual Report of Program - John Cochran/Mary Corso Report

Decision:

Jim will compile a draft of a WT “Book” or Annual Report for review before the next meeting. Each WT member is to provide a short bio for inclusion in the document.

Discussion:

WT wanted an overview document of the program. John submitted an outline for annual report of WUI WT. It would be revised on a bi-annual basis. Jim would like to add the year by year history of project. Could include minutes of meetings.

Program Effectiveness & Performance Assessment

Decision:

At the next meeting, facilitate WT through this to clarify objectives. Look at this in work plan and funding for project. May want this as a periodic check. Don’t want to duplicate what is being done in the National Fire Plan.

Discussion:

John Cochran brought proposal forward. If WT should choose to assess it should not be internal but have a third party look at program. Outside assessment could find weaknesses and identify successes. Whatever metrics used there will be assumptions. Criteria may need to be refined before we bring a third party in. John suggested the areas to review include education, mitigation and action. Difficult to track but if this is a successful program we will see change in communities. What information is needed?

Janet is struggling with how to talk to Congress to continue funding. May just need documentation. Hoping Firewise gets integrated throughout planning process so may be hard to see all the results. It takes a number of years sometimes to see results. If we start tracking now we have a point of reference. Assessment proposal is asking 3 different questions:

- Are Firewise workshops effective?
- Did we change people’s behavior?
- Does Firewise work on the ground?

May need to set up criteria for each separately. IBHS did a questionnaire and may be able to use this as a model. Should we have contractor in or should this group look at it first. Think it’s of value to do assessment. Need to be clear on objective. There is a problem in understanding what a success is. Does this reduce the large fire costs?

Firewise Communities Program Update

Report from Minnesota

Tom Eiber, Project Coordinator for Firewise Minnesota, representing Michael Carroll, State Forester provided a presentation on Firewise activities through his office and the WUI program. Currently the WUI program is focused on fire but is looking at broadening this. Minnesota DNR has a Firewise Team of four people: WUI Protection Consultant who serves as Team Leader; Fuels Assessment Specialist; and two Regional Specialists. Much of the work is involved in reaching communities and people.

Firewise Communities Workshops - Dan Bailey

The program has just completed Workshop #15 in Spearfish, South Dakota -- the largest workshop to date. The program has added six workshops in California, with CA providing funding for the workshops. This is a big breakthrough in CA with Fire Safe. Celebrity Mini Workshop is scheduled during the period 8/16-22nd in conjunction with the Malibu Film Festival and the 1st CA Workshop in Malibu area on 8/28-29th. Nov. 2003 will be the last of the Workshops. There have been 1,100 participants to date. We are getting information slowly on 1-day Regional Workshops being held around the country.

Firewise Communities Public Information - Dan Bailey

- A Congressional briefing took place on Firewise on May 28. Staffers wanted one place to send constituents for information and thought State Foresters would be the best place. Will work on email to go out to State Foresters.
- Letter coming out from each Congressman & Senator in geographic area where workshop is being held.
- Key staffers would like to know more about fires & Firewise. Bill Webb will put a list together of what they would be interested in and we can match staffers with WT members.
- Joint Communications Plan being finalized between AGR. & DOI. Plan to get out key messages.

Decision:

Pat & Don will work with Dan on marketing and public information.

Firewise Communities Support – Michele Steinberg

Michele described the purpose of Firewise program activities as ways to get a specific outcome - that individuals and communities take action to become Firewise. The workshops are the basis for the first experience many have with Firewise. She described the current status of other activities, including at least 11 states that are conducting regional workshops, 13 Firewise Communities/USA pilots, 8 jurisdictions with ArcView award, and at least 6 states with ordinances at State, regional, or county level. Firewise Community support includes publications, videos, workbooks, website, a planned toll-free number, and a searchable resource library. Support in the works will allow communities to work more closely together, including message boards and access to success stories, funding sources, etc. Firewise is further developing its ability to provide technology support, and is ramping up the Firewise Communities/USA recognition program. It will be important to have WT members tied into this support network.

Firewise Communities Marketing - Keeper of the Flame – Dan Bailey

The documentary “Keeper of the Flame” will be released next spring to allow time to market. National Geographic will be primary organization to air and may be CBS Special. Currently, the film crew is finishing Act IV. A special movie poster is being done by Monte Dolack and will be tied to Malibu Film Festival. Working on getting celebrities to do music soundtrack for video. Also working with Blockbuster to provide free copies.

Decision:

Dan will send out script of KOF to WT for review.

Firewise Communities/USA – Judith

Judith described the objectives of the program: to create a community recognition program that will improve wildfire readiness in the WUI, and to coordinate Firewise Communities/USA with other state, local & federal outreach efforts. The program has a flexible template that can be applied in many different communities, and is a logical followup to the Workshop series. She presented the program standards and strengths. 13 community pilots are underway, and Judith has heard from at least 14 more communities interested in the program.

The program will be transferred in large part to state foresters this fall. The Firewise program plans to:

- Provide training for state forestry staff.
- Publicize newly-recognized communities
- Produce & distribute promotional/informational material & signage.
- Supply in-person technical expertise
- Maintain web-based community support

This will require that state forestry agencies identify a State Firewise contact, provide that Firewise contact with training, and ready local fire agencies and/or urban forestry contact to organize, develop and implement the Firewise Communities/USA concept.

Currently, program staff are pursuing a Presidential Proclamation about the program, and are developing signage, publicity materials & web area for the community recognition.

Decision:

- Firewise Team will make sure a basic training package is available before rollout.
- Regional training programs should be back to back.
- Jim & staff will develop a list of ideas that can be offered to all communities on green waste issue (or biomass/WUI byproduct).
- Jim & staff will come up with definition of Green Waste.

Discussion:

- Firewise Communities “mini-conference” like the San Diego meeting should be continued so communities can get together and share information.
- NASF has agreed to take on role as State contact for Firewise.
- Important to keep program in focus so that we achieve our purposes and have a lasting program.

- Two Issues came up in communities over and over: Green waste disposal (high degree of frustration with this) and Evacuation (what to do if a fire happens). This committee should be thinking about these things. These issues are local in solution but this committee is going to have to force evacuation issue. Analysis on educating people to the reality of the situation when they are on their own. Is this something research could look at?
- Need to tie in with Fire OPS.
- Should have PowerPoint program on FW Communities on website + photos from communities.
- Timeline on train the trainer – 1st course Feb/Mar
- Important in development process to include State Foresters so they can deliver program.
- Need to make sure Firewise is not a replacement for Smokey.
- Presentation of the recognition program at NASF meeting in San Antonio would be a good idea with Fire Managers there.
- Need to have everything in place by rollout so State Foresters can respond to requests.
- Need to get community boards through mini workshops.

Firewise Website Redesign – Anna Ferguson

- May hits were 217,679; website growth registration for May was 3,863. These people self-select and want to hear from us.
- Right now response to questions is ad hoc and it's working for now. May have to readdress this later.
- New Firewise splash page will be the portal to all Firewise programs. Need for folks to send information to Anna.
- New website will be up in the next two months. Get any comments to Anna.
- Adding foreign language capabilities in Spanish.
- Adding feature of Most Frequently Asked Firewise Questions.
- Creating Firewise media center.
- All existing modules & publications will be developed into downloadable modules.
- New features on Firewise Communities Workshop Series website being done and include:
 - On-line registration
 - Multimedia Firewise workshop presentation
 - Chat session follow-up on line
 - Private area for geographic coordinators
- Firewise Communities USA will have same features.
- Firewise TV being launched this summer – video only. www.firewise.tv
- If states have videos they could be put up on this website.
- Firewise resource database has about 250 documents currently.

Firewise Publications/Videos – Cheryl Blake

- Producing 10-15 “mini” Firewise videos documenting what communities are doing. This footage will be used to make one 10-min. video that State Foresters can use to promote Firewise.
- Firewise Coffee table book will be completed by March 2003.
- Everyone’s Responsibility is being redone – WT will have opportunity to review.
- Viewpoints of Stakeholders book is planned for 2003.

- Redoing 3 training videos and would like WT involved:
 - Fire behavior
 - Firefighter safety
 - Incident Command

Discussion:

- Need to look at incorporating new ideas and tactics in videos, not just update. May be an opportunity to look forward at things that may not be formalized. Need to look at new Fire policy.
- How does NWCG see this WT in relation to firefighter safety, etc. There is a turf issue here and needs to be worked on carefully.
- Task group needs to be inclusive of others. Could be a good opportunities for IOS, IC's, etc.
- There should be someone from this WT sitting at the table with other Working Teams.

Firewise Public Education – Nancy Porter

Goal is to collaborate, coordinate and communicate, not reinvent. External Public Education Components & Opportunities include:

- NSTA Science poster/article
- Risk Watch Wildfire module
- Firewise Kiosks
- Firewise Mobile Unit
- Firewise Kids Magazine
- Displays
- Event participation
- Firewise products in cache
- National Fire Prevention Week
- MOSI
- Firewise Kids website
- Stakeholder coordination/collaboration
- SCA Teams
- Firewise Challenge

Internal Firewise Public Education Components

- Displays in WO and Regional Offices
- Letter from Fire Directors to all employees with history document
- Joint AG & DOI Communication Plan
- Secretaries Briefing
- Coop Fire Briefing
- National Fire Prevention/Education briefing
- National Fire Directors briefing

Firewise ArcView Communities & Technology – Ron Montague

Communities who have received ArcView software are working within existing planning structures. Four states (CO,UT,CA,SD) have a commitment for Statewide planning teams to support Firewise Communities. ArcView communities will be absorbed into Communities USA

program with help through the community support mechanism and application by communities. Any in-depth technical assistance we give to a community will result in a Firewise Community. The goal for all communities is to achieve the Firewise Community designation.

ArcView communities are using a Yahoo Chat to communicate – we plan to move this mechanism over to the Firewise page. Some of the issues we are discovering with these communities include:

- Making sure homeowners are involved, not just planning officials & fire officials.
- Fire agency needs to be out of the habit of making all the contingencies for a community.
- Community involvement is critical for master planning efforts.
- Needs to be both top down & bottom up.

WUI & the National Fire Plan – Janet Anderson-Tyler

The National Fire Plan has four major elements. We need to determine whether WT has a role in the implementation plan. These four goals are:

- Goal 1 – Improve Fire Prevention & Suppression
- Goal 2 – Reduce hazardous fuels
- Goal 3 – Restore fire adapted ecosystems
- Goal 4 – Promote community assistance

WT should determine roles it can take on. State Foresters won't be able to accomplish their goals within NFP without the coordination and cooperation with groups like WUI WT.

Implementation will take revised commitment on part of State Foresters – may have to redirect some staff. Some states have no budget to do this. The time frames are due in 2003. The Western Governors and Southern Governors have all endorsed the 10-year plan.

Decision:

Task Group (Janet, Jim, Dave, Jack) will meet tonight and pull together a white paper. WT will ask Jim Hull to take it to the Leadership Council

Discussion:

- What role does this WT need to take?
- This WT isn't being utilized as a clearing house. This group needs to be represented at the table when preparing something like this.
- Options: Offer assistance directly to NASF or to Leadership Council
- Do we go direct or through NWCG?
- Something we could do from the Firewise side is to put together everything we have done that is in support of 10-yr plan and give to NASF or Leadership Council.

Presentation of White Paper

Goal #1

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- ✓ Our Charter is to address firefighter safety & public safety in the WUI and we need to work with NASF Fire Committee.

- ✓ Fire Prevention Planning is our role and we are doing that through Firewise Communities Workshops. It is more disaster prevention than fire prevention. We will continue to work through NWCG Working Teams & NASF through Firewise.

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- ✓ 1st Land Use Plans – WUI role through Firewise outreach. We will maintain a database on web for sharing.
- ✓ 2nd WUI role is to open a dialogue and work with NASF Fire Committee & Inter Tribal Council to share WT position that interface is not a geographic location but a set of conditions that exist. Work with both groups on definition.
- ✓ 3rd WIU WT will not maintain list because NASF wants State priority. Definition will lead into prioritization. No role.
- ✓ 5th Work with NASF, NACO to broaden wording in MOU to include other related FW Programs.

Decision:

Task Group (Jack/Pat/Janet/Don/Jim Hull/Joe Stam/Fred Allen/Dave/Jim Smalley) to write up draft for 10-year Strategy by the end of June. NASF will present to NWCG.

MOSI Task Group – Pat Durland

- Task Group established and things are on track.
- MOSI put in for a National Science Foundation Grant and they won't hear for almost 1yr.
- Setting up a prescribed burn on MOSI property.
- Looking at all perils. – Have not gotten to display development yet.
- Contract is in NFPA for review.

Work Plan for 2003 - Jim

Decision:

Jim Smalley will prepare a detailed work plan for 2003 and present it to the WT for final decision at the October meeting.

Discussion:

National WT needs to coordinate funding sources and how do we serve rural firefighter better.

PRESENTATIONS AND INFORMATION

SIAM – Jack Cohen

Jack described SIAM as a performance-based assessment model – via task order, presently under contract to develop this model, which looks at communities as spatial entities and the rules of ignitability.

Jack held a May 1-2nd workshop/course on how homes ignite, to test the concept of such a course in future. The course focused on the homeowner as a key element, since they must condition the home to prevent ignition. The SIAM project will be completed 14 months after it gets started.

Fire Plan & Joint Fire Services Research – Linda Langner, Bob Haight, Pamela Jakes, John Dwyer

Social Science research is going on in all research stations. Linda Langner provided an overview of research topics, including a handout listing all current topics being explored. Bob Haight, Pamela Jakes and John Dwyer presented their current work on the following topics:

1. Mapping the WUI and projecting its growth to 2030.
2. Community partnerships: Landscape level strategies to reduce the risk & loss from catastrophic fires.
3. Assessing risk of wildfire & vulnerability of human populations & development in the North Central Region.

EXECUTIVE SESSION DECISIONS

1. A recommendation to the USFA that it reconsider its participation in the WT and that it remain a member.
2. A recommendation to the IAFC that it reconsider its participation in the WT and that it remain a member.
3. Alternates to WT members do not a vote when the actual WT member is present.
4. Program Manager is to hold conference calls when programmatic/funding/purchases may cause concerns or are not within the annual work plan.
5. Meeting presentations will be carefully planned to yield decisions rather than just information sharing.
6. WT wishes to utilize the Program staff (NFPA) to support the WT and its program.

AGENDA ITEMS for Oct.2-4th in Burlington, VT

1. Work Plan Review & Approval
2. Strategy report
3. Firewise/USA handoff MOU
4. Jim Brenner, FL DOF
5. Charter review & approval
6. WT “book”
7. Report on WUI program 2002

Future WUIWT meetings

- ❖ Feb 26-27, 2003 in Tucson, AZ
- ❖ June 4-5, 2003 in Charleston, SC