

NWCG WUI Working Team Meeting Minutes

May 1-3, 2007

This meeting of the NWCG Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Working Team was held in St. Louis, Missouri, on May 1-3, 2007.

Members Attending: Kelly Hawk, US DOI/BLM, Vice Chair
Wayne Ching, Hawaii Division of Forestry
Jack Cohen, USDA Forest Service – Research
Dr. Pamela Jakes – USDA Forest Service – Research
Pam Leschak, USDA Forest Service – Fire & Aviation/Firewise
Sam Scranton, US DOI/BIA
Jim Smalley, NFPA

Guests Attending: Amy Bollinger, Fleishman-Hillard
Jim Erickson, Intertribal Timber Council – NWCG Liaison
Maureen Rootz, Fleishman-Hillard
Michele Steinberg, NFPA (recorder)
Tony Zagora, Fleishman-Hillard

Not Present: Alan Dozier, Georgia Forestry Commission (chair-elect)
Will May, IAFC/Alachua County Fire Department
Frank Richardson, US Fire Administration
Kim Zagaris, NEMA/California FIRESCOPE
Representative, National Association of State Fire Marshals
Representative, National Association of State Foresters (Northeast)

Welcome and Agenda Review/Introductions and Attendance:

Kelly Hawk called the meeting to order at 8:57 a.m. on May 1, 2007. She thanked Fleishman-Hillard staff for hosting the meeting. Amy Bollinger welcomed the group. Group members introduced themselves to one another.

Reading and Approval of Minutes of past meeting

The group reviewed the minutes from the September 2006 meeting. Jack Cohen moved to approve the minutes; Sam Scranton seconded. Minutes were approved.

Report of Officers and Committees:

Chair Report: Kelly Hawk reviewed a brief report that Alan Dozier had sent along. Key points included

- Need to communicate better with the funding agencies and internally within member organizations about what is happening within the program
- Springboard Workshop conducted in March was very productive
- Need to think more about best ways to deliver the Firewise Communities/USA program
- Must work on how we measure results and communicate results
- More emphasis on publishing articles in agency organization/trade publications

Discussion around these issues included asking for quick executive summaries after meetings to be reinstated for easy distribution to agency partners. Amy pointed out that we have a simple 2-page fact

sheet that we have updated for 2007 as well as the updated 4-pager on the strategic plan. Kelly noted that reports are helpful but that Working Team members need to make an effort to speak one-on-one with their internal staff. She stated she would present program information to the NFAEB and discuss accomplishments. Pam Leschak indicated that the information should be put in a form that could be presented to Congress. There was some discussion about how to measure results in a way that is useful and comprehensible to the agencies. It was pointed out that the issue of fire on private lands was a difficult one for the agencies as it is outside their scope of direct influence.

Vice-Chair Report: Kelly reported on her work with the Rural Fire Training initiatives over the last six months that have emerged from the “changing roles”¹ report. The initiatives involve a crosswalk training effort for structural firefighters and wildland firefighters, exploring their parallel skills and competencies and trying to eliminate roadblocks in accepting each other’s qualifications. The idea is to help create skills, make better use of local resources, and help firefighters be more effective on the ground. Keith Harrap from New South Wales (AUS) met with Nina Hatfield and Tim Murphy at USDOJ about the Australian system of recognition of prior learning² which is used throughout Australia but is specific to the fire service. This system allows individuals to use experience from the professional world to apply to fire service experience. It creates a framework to recognize skills and fill in the gaps. The initiative is exploring this concept as a way to augment the NFPA-NWCG crosswalk being developed with the US Fire Administration. At this point, the group has identified competency gaps and is developing training to address those gaps. Kelly also noted that the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) is working well with other entities on wildfire and rural fire department issues.

NWCG Liaison Report: Jim Erickson reported on activities happening with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). There is currently restructuring occurring to streamline its structure; the NWCG is also being re-authorized. The reorganization is with an eye to making things more efficient, organizing NFAEB and NWCG into one, and organizing by functional area. Jim also said that the WUI Working Team has a clear focus and has been able to get a lot done, without as many issues around coordination. He noted that in October there will be a joint meeting of NWCG and WFLC (Wildfire Leadership Council). It is also likely that NFPA will not be an associate member after October.

Task Group Reports

1. **Communications Task Group:** Amy Bollinger along with Fleishman-Hillard co-workers Maureen Rootz and Tony Zagora presented a brief overview of communications plan activity during the 1st quarter of 2007. There were numerous program press releases issued, covering the year-end information for the Firewise Communities/USA program; announcement of the HIZ Workshop Series; announcement of Alan Dozier as the new WUIWT chair; and the announcement of the 2007 Firewise Leadership Awards call for entries. These releases were picked up in numerous national and local media outlets. The *Asheville Citizen-Times* followed up a WUI fire story with an interview with Firewise staff. The weekly news summaries for the quarter showed 75 Firewise mentions, 268 stories on wildfire preparation, and 300 other wildfire news stories.

In the coming months, the communications staff will promote the Firewise Leadership awards and follow the 2007 media plan for trade outreach, national/regional media news coverage and op-eds, and engaging PIOs and state Firewise liaisons. Tony discussed the work that has been done to track

¹ Full title of report is “The Changing Role and Needs of Local, Rural, and Volunteer Fire Departments In The Wildland-Urban Interface: Recommended Actions For Implementing The 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy,” An Assessment and Report to Congress, June 30, 2003. There is also a report from NWCG “Advancing Wildland Fire Training for Fire Departments Implementation Plan”, May 2006, available upon request.

² Brief paper available upon request.

Firewise success stories in locations including Florida, Arizona and Texas. Each location has been able to estimate a dollar value of saved property due to Firewise activity. Maureen presented the results of an e-mail survey conducted with 204 existing Firewise Communities/USA sites. There was a response rate of more than 30%, with all of the original 11 pilot site areas responding. Results from the survey are available and will be used in future communications.

Discussion included mention of Jim Smalley's discussion with Brad Heath of USA Today for possible future coverage; Pam Jakes' thoughts on having someone conduct content analysis of the news stories captured in the weekly summaries; and how to pitch to trade magazines and regional media. Jim Erickson suggested the Firewise success/save information be put together to provide to Congressional staff. It was further suggested that more encouragement be provided to recognized communities to contact their legislators to talk about their Firewise successes.

2. **Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program**: Michele Steinberg reported on the latest statistics – 222 communities in 33 states; a 92% retention rate of communities renewing status year-to-year; nearly \$6 million invested by communities in their own projects during 2006 – over \$14 million invested between 2003 and 2006. The 2006 year-end report was provided to meeting participants and is being mailed to all Working Team members. Michele also noted that we now had 45 states with assigned liaisons, including replacements in Minnesota and South Dakota, as well as new liaisons in Maine, Vermont and Nebraska. Discussion included how to better integrate with Fire Safe Councils, and observing that at least in some areas, Firewise Communities/USA sites seem to be in areas not at the highest fire risk.
3. **Firewise Leadership Awards**: Michele provided a brief history of the awards and how they have been administered (see www.firewise.org/awards for detailed criteria and application form). Amy noted that this year's June 30 deadline required an earlier announcement and that more promotion would occur during May and June. Because there will not be a national conference this year, the awards will be presented at local venues. Amy will ask for WT members to come to those events to give them national recognition.
4. **Conferences and Meetings**
 - 4.1. **Backyards and Beyond 2006 and 2008** Jim Smalley noted that the basic conference evaluation had been included in the program's 4th quarter report. He noted that many comments were addressed in planning for the 2008 conference in Tampa. For this conference, there will be two pre-conference workshops – one on media training and effective writing, the other on GIS applications for wildfire issues. 2008 will also feature a new track on environmental concerns. Program planners are working on making the life safety/evacuation issue more central so that people can and will attend, since the 2006 panel was held late on the last day. Planners also intend to eliminate the keynote/opening session and will try to get Arthur Miller to do a panel on the life safety issue. Jim Smalley is writing a paper on Firewise as a choice for fire protection – engineering decisions, which may be part of the panel discussion. There will also be opportunities for individual sessions on planning for evacuation and shelter and impacts on fire operations. Staff is about to finish up and release the Call for Presentations so we can get them by year end and make decisions. This will be available as an online submission.
 - 4.2. **2007 Conferences and Meetings** – Michele passed a master calendar around showing key meetings that either staff or WT members were attending. This calendar is currently available on the ftp site. Staff decisions on exhibiting at meetings are based on getting good traffic and interest. There was some discussion of the Pacific Northwest Fire Prevention meeting request and the WUI 2007 sponsored by the IAFC.

5. Stakeholders Task Group

- 5.1. **Strategies and priorities** - Michele passed out a fact sheet prepared with assistance from Fleishman-Hillard staff and explained how it was organized in tiers based on the request from WT members at the last meeting. These rankings are very general and somewhat subjective; the basis for the list is the original set of stakeholders that assisted the program with Firewise workshop promotion, though it has been added to and trimmed in some places. Jim Smalley described in more detail the current relationship with the Congressional Fire Services Institute and the recent action pushed by another organization for a “Blue Ribbon panel” in Congress. He also discussed upcoming discussions between NFPA and NIST about wildfire research, and about his own invitation to participate in a new group called Plant Wise that is dealing with invasive species. It is cosponsored by the Garden Clubs of America, Master Gardeners, National Park Service, Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center (TX) and others. There is some common ground between the invasive species issue and Firewise. We are offering them some of our publications and have discussed how we might elaborate on the issue via the plant lists and making local garden clubs more of a carrier of the Firewise message. We have also connected NFPA’s RiskWatch program with Firewise. They have a new “Safe Communities” element to their program structured on the Firewise Communities/USA program. They have also used Firewise messages in the “Get Ready” package for disaster preparedness, and are distributing the Firewise science teacher kits and Challenge Houses to communities in the program.

Kelly asked about the status of the interagency MOU with the American Red Cross. Michele and Jim Smalley indicated there had not been substantial interaction to date but that we occasionally had discussions with DC staff from the organization. Jim Erickson said that it would be good for the group to provide feedback on priorities for stakeholder relationships. Pam Leschak noted that Firewise success depends on everyone else doing the work on the ground and said that the Forest Service is being asked to show the correlation between what Firewise does and what gets done on the ground. She felt that the program should invest the time in building relationships.

- 5.2. **Report on conversations with Wilderness Society and others:** During the September 2006 WT meeting, Jack Cohen committed to discuss the stakeholder relationship with the Wilderness Society. He said that one reason he suggested exploring a relationship with environmental organizations is because they are already involved in wildfire and land management. He indicated there have been some stumbling blocks over “making landscape safer for houses.” He felt that the message to these groups should focus on the premise of compatible houses with wildfire. Jack spoke with Greg Aplet, a scientist with the Wilderness Society. This organization has been somewhat involved in litigation around fire issues. Jack talked to Greg about his notions of linking wildfire-compatible houses with the Wilderness Society’s principle mission of sustaining wilderness as an ecosystem, focusing on cases of WUI development that jeopardizes wilderness and ecosystem sustainability. He said Greg was receptive to idea of using Firewise principles, fire-compatible housing and to try to promote that within the Wilderness Society and their scientific analysis. Jack thinks we have the leverage with the membership of the Wilderness Society. Jack asked Greg about the chances of getting a “Firewise compatible” article into the Wilderness Society magazine. Greg indicated it may be problematic as the organization tends to divide between policy and analysis. Jack felt that the good news is that we have opportunities with some environmental organizations to send the message that we can begin to get more ecologically compatible with our landscapes if we’re not interfering with ecology by dealing with life/property issues around fire. This helps meet the goals of several organizations. He indicated that we should not lump all environmental organizations together and should focus on the ones that are genuinely concerned about sustaining ecosystems. Kelly suggested we create a list of environmental groups that we want to communicate with. The Nature Conservancy was

cited as a model; the Yellowstone Coalition was mentioned. Jim Erickson suggested we think about not only who to communicate with but when. Jack felt that we have the opportunity to use some of these groups that we may have categorized as obstacles to pull in the same direction and felt that we need to build the trust relationship and show the common missions we have. He expressed concern that not only would Firewise have to be involved, but also the agencies would have to be on board. Jim Smalley suggested coming up with good examples of ecosystem compatibility and Firewise and start circulating them, have them on hand for presentations. We need to find examples of how Firewise plays into sustainability. Pam Jakes mentioned a paper on this topic coming out of the proceedings of the recent wildfire conference in Destin, Florida. later point in meeting.

Old Business

2007 Workplan and Budget Update

Jim Smalley distributed the 2007 workplan which was approved in December 2006 and describe all the areas where staff are working on projects. The program has been operating on carryover funds since January 1 due to the delay in obtaining final funding from the Forest Service and DOI (Forest Service fund instrument formally signed on April 27). We are now ready to start some of the projects we had on hold due to concern over timeliness of funding. One of the more important projects is an online course to help people conduct community assessments of wildfire risk with the goal of getting more communities ready to participate in the Firewise Communities/USA recognition program. This will be heavily promoted to fire departments via such organizations as the NVFC and IAFC. Another project that has been on hold and has been in demand is the final report/video on the life safety panel conducted in Denver in November 2006 as part of the Backyards & Beyond conference. Part of the report will be on the web and it will also be created as a CD with the full report and an edited version of the panel video.

Report on Springboard Innovations Workshop

Amy Bollinger provided a brief presentation on the Springboard workshop. The question posed to participants was, "How might we sustain momentum and further the success of the Firewise Communities/USA program?" The objectives were to increase the renewal rate of Firewise Communities/USA sites and to increase support for communities among state and local agencies. The criteria for ideas to consider were:

- Does it speak to residents and/or community leaders?
- Does it promote community responsibility?
- Is there a clear call to action?
- Is it sustainable?
- Can it have a measurable impact?

There were 24 participants – 4 federal, 6 state, 5 local, 3 program staff and 6 program contractors. The group considered audiences including residents, community leaders/planners/developers, agency representatives and the fire service. There were many ideas forwarded but some common themes included expanding the levels of Firewise recognition; exploring relationships between Firewise and other programs with a similar mission; refining and expanding materials to package by profession; and to offer additional training for Firewise liaisons focused on the central message and guidance on community outreach. Umbrella concepts for ideas included Tiered Recognition; Reinforce Firewise Organization; Build Program Capacity; Stakeholder Education; and Firewise Fame. A major exercise conducted ahead of the workshop was to have each participant ask 5 other people about how Firewise was excellent. Among the comments included the program's ability to facilitate collaboration; the quality of the information and materials and their grounding in science; easy access to resources; adaptability to local needs; and responsive, experienced and strong spokespersons.

Discussion included the need to get the federal agencies on board with the problem and to make Firewise a priority. Given the large amount of report material to digest, Kelly appointed a Task Group to work on the results and make recommendations for action to the team. The group includes Amy Bollinger, Michele Steinberg, Sam Scranton, Alan Dozier and Pam Leschak.

Assessing Wildfire Hazards in the Home Ignition Zone course:

At the September meeting, the group discussed developing a description of the ideal instructor-trainer and a short list of candidates for a core team of instructor-trainers. Since that time, the program has launched the course via the Firewise program using fire protection instructors Jon Jones (who will teach at all five sessions), Hank Blackwell, Pat Durland and Randy Bradley. The first course will be delivered on May 15-16 in Portland, Oregon. Jim Smalley indicated that the instructor guides are very robust; he feels a good instructor will be able to pick it up and use it readily. Sam indicated that we need to provide a letter to close the loop with the NWCG Training Working Team and the Wildland Fire Education Working Team, as this was initially a Training WT project (to update NWCG course P-110). Kelly further suggested having a WUI WT member visit the Training WT to present information and answer questions.

Kelly said there are a group of folks at BLM that would make good instructors and asked about the future use of the course. Jim Smalley said right now there are five workshops planned for 2007 and the instructor materials will be publicly available this summer. He noted that participants are coming from different sectors including private contractors and insurers. Jack felt that agency fire staff needed to get this training. Kelly indicated BLM would do a lot of outreach to local fire departments. Sam said that he will talk to his training person who serves on Training Working Team to see if they will consider using the course as part of the training for structure protection. He would also like to provide it to the Intertribal Timber Council meeting next June. Jim Erickson said he would need the material by September to make that happen.

There was some discussion of tracking who is providing/taking the course. For the 5 courses offered this year, Firewise staff will easily be able to track them. Once the materials are available publicly, tracking becomes more difficult. Jim Smalley said we could track who orders the material. Jack expressed concern about monitoring the quality of instruction. Jim Smalley noted we could design a way to track users if they want CEUs, but reminded the group that this kind of reporting would be voluntary. There was discussion about certification, with several people noting it would take a long time for NWCG to ever require this course. It was generally felt that the course would likely end up as a recommended course, however. Jim Smalley noted that future changes to NFPA 1051 *Standard for Wildland Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications* could go a long way toward integrating this course into qualifications.

There was some discussion of how the course was advertised; members agreed to promote it via email and will ask Dan Smith at NASF to get the word out. There was some discussion about having NFPA continue to offer the courses in 2008. Jim Smalley indicated he would need more lead time if we were to agree to do them, as it involves booking hotels and advertising as well as budgeting and planning staffing levels for delivery. Jim will provide a plan in July to see if the Team wants to do it. Sam asked about the cost of putting one on if he wanted to do it himself. Jim said it is about \$5,500 - \$7,500, depending on a number of conditions.

Increasing participation of states in Firewise Communities/USA:

Michele reported that there are now all but one of the six New England states with a liaison due to assistance from Maureen Brooks with contacts for Maine and Vermont. The new liaisons in those states both indicated they work via the Northeast Forest Fire Compact and that they had been exposed to Firewise Communities work that is going in New Hampshire. A Nebraska liaison has also been added,

along with replacements for liaisons in Minnesota and South Dakota, bringing the total up to 45 states with assigned liaisons. States without liaisons include Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Nevada and Rhode Island.

Conducting a Community Assessment online course:

Michele described this course, which will be on the online Firewise Learning Center by midsummer. Jack Cohen's home ignition zone work is presented, along with learning objectives to help users address community wide wildfire risks and communicate with residents about how to work to reduce risks at the home and neighborhood level. The course is specifically designed to help move more communities towards Firewise Communities/USA status. Jack Cohen will be reviewing the course prior to launch.

Update on Evacuation/Shelter-in-Place discussions:

There was discussion about this topic in addition to what Jim Smalley reported was taking place in regard to documenting the panel from November 2006 and planning a new panel and sessions for the conference in November 2008. Pam Jakes noted that Matt Carroll at Washington State University is working on a study with a group regarding applications of shelter-in-place for different kinds of events/disasters. The manuscript is drafted but not yet ready for review. It should be published in the *Journal of Forestry*. Discussion indicated that evacuation plans are poor or infrequently updated for wildfire in many places. Jim Smalley indicated a State Forester wanted the group to address this issue. Pam Jakes noted that although CWPPs are not required to address evacuation issues, a number of communities are doing so.

Status of economic model proposal:

There was discussion of this idea that had been brought up at two prior meetings. Jim Smalley explained the group is looking for some kind of model that would show the economic relationship between wildfire mitigation costs and benefits as well as comparisons to response and other kinds of costs. Jack Cohen noted that USFS researcher Greg Jones (Missoula) presented work at the Destin conference recently that would be useful to explore. He suggested that someone look at who is impacted financially and at what level, to put the problem in context. Jim Smalley noted a study from the 1980s³ on the economic cost of residential fires that estimated indirect costs. Jack believes the numbers (less than 1000 home losses per year) mean that the economic issue is nonexistent for homeowners, realtors, builders and insurers, and that the issue is political. Jim Smalley felt it would be important to give audiences such as planners and elected officials information on the impact that large wildfires have on local economies. Pam Jakes contended that research on the impacts on communities show that macro impacts on the local economy are often a wash; the long-term impacts are psychological and social. There have been findings of distributional impacts on seasonal workers, businesses, and the elderly. Kelly Hawk shared some insurance data about losses that shows that fire is not on the radar screen. She noted that the group's original discussion on this issue had to do with creating more analysis around this problem and trying to understand how to measure impacts. Sam concurred – the discussion started with the DOI fuels group asking what the economic impact of eliminating home losses would be. Kelly asked that Jack follow up on the progress of Greg Jones's research and asked Jim Smalley to provide the group with the Munson and Ohls study and NFPA large loss statistics. Kelly also indicated we should have Greg Jones come to one of our meetings next year. Jim Smalley added that he would invite him to present at the 2008 Backyards & Beyond Conference.

Concept paper on “defining the WUI problem”: This concept paper was discussed at previous meetings, with the idea that defining the problem was important in order to be able to offer appropriate solutions. Kelly developed a draft that she distributed to the WT meeting participants. It explores how issues around WUI fire and home loss are portrayed differently by different stakeholders/perspectives. She wanted to capture these perceptions and try to get common definitions outlined among not only

³ Munson, Michael J, and Ohls, James C., “Indirect Costs of Residential Fires,” Princeton University, NFPA Fire Journal, NFPA: Quincy MA, 1979. Available on request.

agencies but other stakeholders. Jack asked whether we can determine the actual numbers of homes (not “structures”) that have been destroyed by WUI fire. He feels that the numbers that are talked about are probably inflated. He would like to put the problem in perspective by comparing numbers of homes destroyed/lives lost in WUI fires vs. losses in residential fires from other sources. Jim Smalley asked where the Team sees this concept paper going. Kelly would like to see it published in trade journals, distributed to agencies and posted on the Firewise website. Jim Smalley said we are trying to address development issues of trying to put the brakes on developing in harm’s way. Jack added that there is no evidence to indicate that the huge national suppression effort is saving homes. Kelly suggested that she continue working on the draft and send it out to the team within two months for further consideration. Pam Leschak moved to do so. Jim Smalley seconded; decision unanimous.

NFPA Standards presentation – Jim Smalley provided a background and status update on two NFPA standards dealing with wildfire and wildland/urban interface. The 2002 edition of NFPA 1144 *Standard for Protecting Life and Property from Wildfire* contained confusing measurements/comparisons in providing guidance to users in assessing risks in WUI areas. Specifically, comparing the risks of inadequate water supplies and narrow road widths and conditions (a fire response concern) with combustible roof coverings, decks, fences, and the density, species, and location of hazardous vegetation (an ignition risk concern). In addition, the document contained specifications for (and attempted to rate) subdivision/community infrastructure elements (e.g., roads, hydrants, signage) and individual homes. Likewise, the 2003 edition of NFPA 1141 *Fire Protection in Planned Building Groups* was trying to fulfill multiple purposes for community infrastructure design which further confused users trying to employ both documents in a WUI setting.

A task group of the WUI Working Team reviewed NFPA 1144 *Standard for Protecting Life and Property from Wildfire*, 2002 edition, and NFPA 1141 *Standard for Fire Protection in Planned Building Groups*, 2003 edition. The WT (along with comments from several state and local level users of the documents in the Firewise Communities program) made several suggestions and proposals for changes. Following the NFPA cycle for revision, both documents have been revised and will become effective June 4, 2007, and will be noted as the 2008 edition.

The WT worked with the NFPA Technical Committee and the resulting changes have been made in the new 2008 editions:

NFPA 1144

- **New title to reflect specific application:** *Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition from Wildland Fire*
- **General content:** Assessment guidance is based on the Firewise Communities home ignition zone assessment protocol which is based on USFS research (i.e., Jack Cohen).
- **Specific content:** Infrastructure specifications were moved to NFPA 1141; recommended assessment form changed from numerical rating to evaluation assessment based on ignition potential of structure; specification of new construction improved based on research and study of WUI fire disasters

NFPA 1141

- **New title to reflect specific application:** *Standard for Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Suburban and Rural Areas*
- **General content:** Designing fire protection requirements for changes in land use; can serve as a planning guide for community development in all areas with specific requirements for communities in WUI settings
- **Specific content:** Roads, water supplies, fire lanes, parking lot design, new road design considerations based on recent evacuation research to apply the general approach of exiting

buildings to exiting interface subdivisions; sheltering options of exposed population within subdivision boundaries

The Working Team and represented agencies and organizations should be extremely proud of this accomplishment as these two documents establish many of the Firewise principles as standards for improved community infrastructure, creative mitigation measures, and sound land use planning in the WUI well into the future.

New Business

Overview of new Forest Service position in relation to the WUIWT:

Pam Leschak provided her background to the team. She is now the Forest Service coordinator for Firewise. Her background is in management, fire and public affairs. She started in the Forest Service doing special projects and accountability projects, and has been working in fire for about 20 years. She is on a volunteer fire department and has been in Minnesota for 30 years. She is a red-carded PIO and has worked on fire investigations. Prior to her Forest Service career, she worked for the Governor of Minnesota, and managed a public radio station. She started out her out career as a journalist.

Pam stated that her primary responsibility is to get more Firewise activity happening on the ground and be able to show it. She stated that there is a high level of dedication to the Firewise project in her branch of the Forest Service. Kelly agreed that the program needs to quantify its successes more and communicate in agency language. She asked what Pam's thoughts were on "Firewise on the ground". Pam said the program needs to show reduced risk in high risk areas in the WUI that Firewise is responsible for.

There was lengthy discussion about measurement of activity. Pam Leschak expressed interest in measuring beyond the Firewise Communities/USA program, including projects and other activities at the community level that do not necessarily call themselves "Firewise." Jack questioned whether listing community activity was meaningful to how the agencies do business and asked what it would change about our approach. Kelly added that the definitions of risk have been esoteric and varied – we are trying to measure something we can't define. She added that without a definition about what it is we are trying to accomplish, we set ourselves up for shifting standard for accomplishments. Pam Leschak said that the NFPORS system defines reduced risk, but that we do not have to measure using that system. She stated that Firewise needs to show it is having an effect on reduced risk; otherwise the program should be closed. She added that we need to come up with tangible measures to connect Firewise with its mission.

Jim Smalley passed out a list he developed showing items we already collect or measure in the program that might suit the needs of the Forest Service (see attached list). We could also add things like sales of NFPA 1144 as a measurement. He felt that for the long-term, we should be describing the success of program in changing social norms and actions on the ground. There was discussion about whether these items matched what the Forest Service was looking for. There was also discussion around needing information from beyond program staff, namely from state forestry offices. Wayne noted that states have struggled with the issues of reporting and measurement for a long time. Jack added that the new course, Assessing Wildfire Hazards in the Home Ignition Zone, would be one criterion for recognizing results on the ground. He sees it as a bridge from an "administrative list" or report to actual results on the ground. There was also discussion about the time element involved in showing results – if the expectation is that a long-standing problem will be solved in the short-term, then it is unrealistic. We need to think about how we can measure looking back to show the social and cultural changes that have taken place due to program efforts. Pam Jakes added that to show value in the program, talking to the communities is a good way to do it. They will talk about the value of taking action, networking, enforcing codes and covenants,

and how awareness has helped people become safer. What resonates with them is the way they have used Firewise to help create more sustainable communities and increase social capital. Measuring this through counting widgets doesn't work – you capture the value by telling stories and testimonials.

Jim Erickson pointed out that the Forest Service needs hard numbers to defend the program and that legislators need to know about it. Others in the group expressed frustration that what was being reviewed or asked are not the critical questions and that program results are not easily expressed in simple terms. Pam Leschak suggested we select a minimum number of measures and focus on investments in communities.

Discussion with Tim Melchert on measurements:

Tim Melchert with USFS joined the group via conference call. Pam Leschak was looking for consensus on measurements of outcomes “on the ground.” Pam said it would be what Firewise/NFPA does to facilitate or increase the number of communities every year that become Firewise Communities/USA and other activities. She indicated the program could look to the states for more information.

Tim indicated that the 10-year plan has a goal of community assistance and one of the performance measures is Firewise Communities/USA recognition or equivalent. Kelly asked how we would count non-recognized communities. Pam Jakes reiterated that we can count recognized communities or other items if that is the information needed to keep the program funded, but this is different from measuring the social impact of Firewise. Kelly said that it is the agency staff's responsibility to advocate for the program to their managers – to bring the data to them. The qualitative information should be communicated to management along with the numbers. Wayne said that it means that states are going to have to do the work of capturing this information, so the program should get the states' buy-in via NASF or their Fire Committee. Pam Leschak emphasized the need for numbers to quickly explain results to OMB – there is not the opportunity to have lengthy discussions with them about the program.

Tim said that FS staff are getting pointed questions from the Hill and that they need more information to defend the program. Several in the group asked what the questions or concerns were. They also said that if the Forest Service was getting questions, they need to communicate with DOI and NASF and let the Working Team help respond to concerns. Tim said it was difficult to quantify the specific impacts the program is having on the ground in communities. Kelly said that a sticking point the group was encountering is the question of what constitutes reduced risk. There was discussion about using NFPORS, a federal system of reporting on project accomplishments. Kelly pointed out the difficulty in establishing baselines for measuring risk reduction, since every state has its own criteria for establishing risk rating. They also do not have an incentive to reduce risk since it could mean losing funding or assistance for fuels reduction.

There was further discussion of budget cuts; DOI took funding “off the top” for all programs. Pam Leschak said there was a mandate to cut Forest Service budgets by 25% by 2009. She wants to be proactive to measure results to be able to be in a stronger position in budget talks. She said the reporting would not put any burden on state foresters (putting Firewise question(s) into NFPORS). Jack asked whether the reports from OIG about suppression costs and GAO about reducing home ignition zone vulnerability as the key to reducing WUI risk are being used by Forest Service management to respond to congressional questions. Tim said the questions don't seem to have a direct link to those reports.

Pam Leschak asked if we could agree that program staff will provide a yearly report on the measures discussed in the draft paper. Sam asked that the reporting be shared with the rest of the Team; this should be a team-wide effort and not just between NFPA and the Forest Service. The group will work out some possible ways of getting state input/reporting on some of the questions. FS will explore whether NFPORS would be a venue for adding Firewise questions.

Status review of 2007 Annual Work Plan:

Pam Leschak said that she has talked with Jim Smalley in general about delivery systems to further the Firewise message, including the National Association of Counties and Fire Safe Councils. Jim noted that we are in the process of training and empowering fire departments to conduct community assessments via live training and online courses. Jim added that we should look at the results of the Springboard workshop to see what potential there is for working with NACo and Fire Safe Councils and others.

Jim Smalley provided an update of where we are with the 2007 workplan. Because of the extended delay in receiving the year's funding, he has put many items on hold. He is also planning for the 2008 conference with an eye to the potential for budget cuts next year – we need to stretch the funds to be sure we can support the conference. Projects on hold include the update of the Operation Water piece; the guidance on Firewise and codes, covenants and restrictions (CC&Rs); the evacuation/life safety web/print/video piece. While we did hold the Springboard Workshop, we have not been able to get to the PSAs or b-roll footage, nor extensive community research.

Items we have continued to do as ongoing activities include supporting the Firewise Communities/USA program and maintaining the website with such features as 508 compliance, Spanish language pages and a new photo gallery. We have not done much in the way of new partnerships nor have we committed a lot of time to new products.

There was more discussion about how to capture progress at the community level outside of Firewise Communities/USA, as was touched on in the discussion during the Springboard workshop of different levels of recognition. Jim Smalley said that the recognition program is our goal; we have given communities tools to get to the goal. The ultimate goal is that there can be wildland fires in residential areas without the loss of homes and lives. Right now we recognize communities and we also have the Firewise Leadership Awards for individuals and organizations. He proposed that if a community is doing something that looks like Firewise, we can give them some kind of award that indicates they are on the first step to becoming Firewise and brings them awareness about the recognition program. Jack said that others (such as Fire Safe Councils) are doing this already – they don't need the word Firewise to do it. He felt we are reinforcing a general effort and providing a model with the recognition program, and many other tools via the website and products for those who don't necessarily want to follow the recognition program. Pam Leschak emphasized that we want to try to reach out to those doing the work who are not yet recognized communities. Jim Smalley said we could send a letter of commendation along with a packet of information telling them how to become recognized. This could complement our efforts to educate and empower fire departments around community assessment.

Other items from the Springboard included using Firewise Councils as a regional organizing tool, and creating audience-specific materials (info for builders, info for planners, etc.). Pam Leschak stated she did not support the idea of establishing Firewise Councils. She also felt the program would not have sufficient funds to print materials developed for many separate audiences. She felt we could get our partners to do this kind of thing in cooperation with us.

There was discussion about modifying the 2007 workplan to include issuing letters of commendation after collecting information from state liaisons and other sources. There was also discussion of modifying the NFPORS system to allow reporting by states about Firewise activities. It was pointed out that the NFPORS system would be useful for reporting, but would not provide us with enough detail on its own (i.e., will not collect the contact info for locals to whom letter of commendation would be sent) to help us accomplish task of sending letters and increasing awareness about Firewise and recognition program. Sam moved that both NFPORS data collection and issuance of letters of commendation be considered for the

2008 workplan. Jack seconded the motion. In discussion, Pam Leschak asked if the motion could be amended to say that the program is authorized to do work in preparation for this 2008 task. Sam said it depends on what the impact is to program staff. Michele suggested we could prepare liaisons with communications. Jim Smalley agreed that we could prepare the letter format and information packet with no real impact for us during 2007. Kelly said the question is for Jim and Pam to refine the concept of letters of commendation on Firewise projects during or before the September meeting with collaboration of our state partners. Sam accepted the modification and Jack seconded. The main motion passed unanimously. Sam moved to accept the 2007 workplan as is. Wayne seconded. Discussion ensued.

Jim Smalley asked Pam Leschak to explain what was happening with the National Association of Counties (NACo). Pam explained that the Forest Service has been approached by NACo with some ideas, including a proposal to develop and deliver workshops about how to teach people become fire safe. The proposal reviewers found a lot of it duplicative of Firewise program efforts, but found other elements intriguing, including ways to reach out to county officials, planners, and others. The Forest Service asked them for a revised proposal to help specifically deliver Firewise to county governments and track it as it is disseminated. Pam said that DOI has committed funding to this effort. It would help counties make Firewise principles into ordinances and would require a partnership with the Firewise program. Kelly and Sam both had concerns that the proposal was not going through the Working Team if it related to Firewise, but instead was going to selected agencies. The vice-chair called for a vote on the motion on the table. Motion to accept 2007 Workplan as is was accepted unanimously.

Dates and Locations of Upcoming Meetings:

The Team decided to leave the planned September dates as is and have the meeting at the NFPA offices in Quincy. There was a desire to have an additional meeting in winter 2008 as it would allow us to meet with the Wildland Fire Education Working Team (Jim Erickson has also arranged to have the WUI WT featured at the concurrent NWCG meeting for a presentation on January 30). For Spring 2008, it was recommended that the agenda focus on 2009 workplan items, as a Fall 2008 will run close to the Backyards and Beyond Conference (November 4-5 for preconference workshops, Nov 6-8 for main conference). The dates and intended location for the meetings were voted on through Fall 2008.

Meeting / Dates	Host State/Region	Location	Agenda
Fall 2007 Sept 18-20, 2007	Quincy, Massachusetts	NFPA Offices	Finalize workplan for 2008
Winter 2008 January 29-31, 2008	Boise, Idaho	TBD	Meet with Wildland Fire Education Working Team; featured presenter at NWCG meeting on January 30.
Spring 2008 May 6-8, 2008	Portland, Oregon	TBD	Start workplan for 2009
Fall 2008 Sept 16-18, 2008	Tucson, Arizona	TBD	Finalize workplan for 2009; visit Wildfire Lessons Learned Center

Online information sharing and virtual meetings:

The group discussed using a web area to facilitate information sharing and virtual meetings. Jim Erickson suggested the Wildfire Lessons Learned Center’s “My Community” pages as an option. Michele will explore and make recommendations to the group on using this venue.

Pam Leschak asked for a conference call date for the Springboard Task Group. The conference call will take place at 10 a.m. EDT on June 21.

Agenda for Next Meeting and “To-Do” Items

Wayne agreed to contact Dan Smith with NASF prior to the next meeting to secure a Northeast Area state forestry representative for the WUI Working Team.

Agenda items for the September meeting will include:

- Follow up on Springboard and any 2008 workplan recommendations
- Follow up on tiered approach to community tracking/recognition
- Follow up on Kelly/Jack issue paper
- Pam Jakes research follow up
- 2008 Workplan and Budget
- Plan discussion points for WFEWT meeting in January (plan with Maureen Brooks)
- Decide on content of presentation and who will present to NWCG on January 30 (plan with Jim Erickson)
- Develop plan for getting Prevention Team folks trained for HIZ workshops
- How to deliver HIZ course in the future.

Other Items

Jim Smalley noted that the program sent plaques to Olin Philips and Lew Southard for their service on the Team and to Sam Scranton for service as the chair. We also sent one to Don Artley on his retirement. Jim told the group about Florida’s planned statewide Firewise conference this fall.

Pam Leschak would like to discuss the possibility of Firewise training and messaging for PIOs. Michele noted this is part of what we did with the NWCG Communications Guide. This would be a good topic to discuss when we meet with the Wildland Fire Education Working Team in January.

Jim Smalley will send his presentation on NFPA codes out to the group as well as a copy of his article on insurance as it appeared in *NFPA Journal*. Team members were interested in promoting the new standards and their Firewise applications on the website, tied to HIZ courses, and in publications including *NFPA Journal*, *Wildland Firefighter*, and others.

Data and facts about the Firewise Program – Items Being Measured/Possible to Measure Now

Firewise Communities/USA

1. # of communities in # of states
2. # of state liaisons (level of acceptance by state foresters)
3. Protected population
4. \$ invested in local mitigation by communities through non-federal and volunteer hours and donations
5. Rate of growth of program
6. Retention rate of communities renewing each year
7. lots of anecdotal examples of volunteer involvement and mitigation
8. list of increasing # of success stories, esp. “saves”
9. # of community residents requesting assistance via the Firewise website
10. Letters to Congressional staff for each FWC/USA site

Firewise Website

1. # of hits, unique users, subscribers to newsletters, seasonal alerts
2. Time spent per page
3. # of users enrolled in the online learning center courses
4. Referrals (which sites are linking to Firewise)
5. Outclicks (where people are going from the main page)
6. Most popular pages
7. Search engine success (how people find us)
8. Use of community stories pages to send email to community representatives

Communications Plan

1. Press releases into print (magazines, organization newsletters, etc.)
2. NAPS statistics - circulation of Firewise pieces throughout North America
3. News summaries that can yield FW activities, frequency of use of term (branding and identity)
4. Partnership networking
 - a. NFPA Risk Watch Communities receiving Firewise education materials and reprint of added *wildfire safety* module into nationally recognized and adopted all-risk school curriculum)
 - b. PlantWise (Garden Clubs of America, NPS, Johnson Wildflower Center, others)
 - c. APA Planning for Wildfires book (# distributed and sold to professional planners)
 - d. American Perspectives in the WUI (utilized many key partner disciplines in the WUI)
5. WT support –
 - a. how many agencies are utilizing prepared presentations and messages
 - b. WFEWT Communications and coordination with WUI messages
 - c.

Information Resources

1. Publication orders (title and number) and shipping addresses
2. *Fire Fighter Safety in the WUI* training program (incorporated into NWCG training and mandatory in California)
3. Popularity of items (frequency and magnitude of reprints)
4. Circulation/distribution of partners’ materials that include or reference Firewise (NADF, IBHS, FLASH, APA)