

**MINUTES FROM THE
NWCG WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE WORKING TEAM MEETING
Quincy, Massachusetts
September 27-29, 2004**

ATTENDANCE ROSTER

Working Team Members:

Sam Scranton, (US DOI/Bureau of Indian Affairs) - Chair
Ginny Desautels, (DHS/FEMA Federal Insurance & Mitigation Administration) – Vice-Chair
Wayne Ching (National Association of State Foresters – Western Area)
Alan Dozier (National Association of State Foresters – Southern Area)
Kelly Hawk (US DOI/Bureau of Land Management)
Brian Johnson (International Association of Fire Chiefs)
S. Olin Phillips (National Association of State Foresters – Eastern Area)
Jim Smalley (National Fire Protection Association)
Lew Southard (USDA Forest Service)

Ken Fields, Senior VP, Fleishman-Hillard, Inc.
Philip Gilmore, Acting Bureau Chief, MA DCR Bureau of Forest Fire Control
André LeDuc, Associate, ECONorthwest
Robert Parker, Planner, ECONorthwest
Amy Schneider, WUIWT Communication Program Manager, Fleishman-Hillard, Inc.
Philip Schneider, AIA, Director, Multihazard Loss Estimation Program, National Institute of Building Sciences
James Shannon, President, National Fire Protection Association
Mark Teixeira, District Forest Fire Warden, MA DCR Bureau of Forest Fire Control

Facilitator:

Barbara Kennedy, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region

Recorder:

Michele Steinberg, National Fire Protection Association

Guests:

Dennis Berry, Secretary of the Corporation, National Fire Protection Association

Opening:

Chair Sam Scranton opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. Jim Smalley welcomed the group to NFPA. Introductions included new Team member Wayne Ching, and announcement of Sam Scranton's new title as Deputy Fire Use and Fuels Specialist for BIA. Sam is also now a member of a new NWCG Publications Working Team, made up of chairs of the other NWCG Working Teams.

NFPA President Jim Shannon also welcomed the group and had a brief discussion regarding current issues and trends in wildland/urban interface, including priorities for the team and future funding sources.

Review of past meeting minutes

The group reviewed the minutes from the May 2004 meeting in Duluth, which had been edited and approved via e-mail correspondence during the summer. Sam noted that there was not a quorum at that meeting, so there were no votes on any actions. Some decisions made on new proposals will need to be discussed at the current meeting.

Review and Decision – Working Team Strategic Plan

André LeDuc and Bob Parker of ECONorthwest led a presentation and discussion of the latest draft of the 2005-2009 Strategic Plan, including the format for the report, matrix and other products. The key products to be delivered to the Working Team in the fourth quarter of 2004 include :

1. A four-page summary of the plan intended for external consumption
2. A full report including history and methodology for Working Team member reference
3. A printed and web-enabled Strategic Plan Matrix
4. A staff notebook with all of the minutes and background from the planning process

Olin Phillips commented that the four-page summary would be very useful and the focus on goals, objectives, mission and vision are critical and should be up front in the document. André noted that the matrix with goals and objectives will be at the front of the document.

Bob provided an overview of the draft 2005-2009 Strategic Plan, including a discussion of the benefits of strategic planning, which include increased effectiveness, efficiency; improved understanding and better learning; better decision-making; enhanced organizational capabilities; improved communication and public awareness; and improved ability to gain support from outside the organization. Bob reviewed the process the Team went through to develop the plan, including the environmental scan, which consisted of a survey of all Team members and members of 50 stakeholder organizations. The process helped identify program strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A scenario exercise helped frame how the strategic plan might help the Team address weaknesses and threats. These analyses and scenarios provided the context to develop goals and strategies.

André demonstrated how to use what will become a web-enabled Strategic Plan matrix. The matrix is in Microsoft Excel so that it can be easily viewed, modified and manipulated. A web-enabled version would allow the team to link current actions (on the Firewise or NWCG websites or agency sites) to the plan items.

There was discussion among Team members about the current matrix draft, including a request to eliminate the lengthy descriptions for each action. There was also discussion about the value of identifying “core programs” within the matrix and some concern that the May meeting did not finalize decisions about what constitutes a core program. Bob noted that the current matrix format does not need to include these areas.

The Working Team then reviewed the draft report on the strategic plan. It was agreed that the final report should begin with the matrix content (goals, objectives and action) with the remainder (process, method, etc.) as appendices. The Team reviewed each action listed under each Strategy, as written in the matrix on pages 19-26 of the draft report. It was further agreed that the final report should eliminate the descriptions of each action.

Specific comments on actions under each strategy included:

Strategy 1.1. Provide information, educational materials, and technical assistance that promote societal and individual behavior change relative to the linkage between natural systems and the built environment.

Olin Phillips felt the three action items identified for this strategy are good ones; asked for clarification of delivery of Firewise activities. There was some discussion about Action 1.1.1. in regard to the descriptive comment about communities helping communities, with concern expressed about the long-term delivery of particular kinds of support (for example, distribution of printed materials) to communities. Kelly Hawk felt that “Firewise” was overemphasized in the action statements and asked about other mitigation efforts such as Fire Safe Councils. There was some discussion about the overall objectives focusing on behavior change and specific actions dealing with Firewise concepts.

Strategy 1.2 - Promote community specific solutions that advocate for local ownership and responsibility of WUI problems and outcomes.

There was some discussion about Action 1.2.2., with concerns expressed about the ability of the Working Team and the staff to conduct training. Olin felt training should be a broader action rather than something parenthetical in the action description. The group agreed that the wording should be strengthened to reflect the concept of training and how it will be implemented.

Strategy 2.1 – Raise community awareness and encourage effective actions during WUI events.

Action 2.1.1. was discussed in detail. The group felt that the description was too detailed and that specifics on hourly warnings were inappropriate. There was also concern that this action did not have the consensus of the group from previous discussions since the issue of local jurisdictional authority could trump advice from the national level. There was some discussion of folding this Action in with 2.1.2., but the concern was that this action focuses on residents and 2.1.2 focuses on agencies. Olin agreed with the concept of providing information to homeowners to help them understand what to expect during a WUI event. Michele Steinberg added that the advice needed to focus on what homeowners can do immediately ahead of the event. There was also some discussion of the need for consistent information going to PIOs and prevention teams. Bob Parker agreed on some rephrasing, specifically the development of a framework vs. an “advance warning system.”

Alan Dozier noted that Action 2.1.3 ties right in with the discussion about the role of Fire Safe Councils and other mitigation efforts, since any effort that helps prevent home ignitions and community destruction should be promoted and recognized. Amy Schneider agreed that other activities could be promoted and recognized, with our promotions noting “firewise” principles in a descriptive fashion.

Strategy 2.2 Advocate policy and practices of fire management and suppression activities to reduce risk to lives and property in the WUI.

Brian Johnson suggested that the actions under this strategy incorporate information about the importance of fuel management in communications to local officials.

Strategy 3.1 – Pursue active participation and encourage support of WUI Working Team goals and strategies among Working Team organizations.

The group asked about clarifying “benefits” in Action 3.1.3, particularly defining which audiences receive benefits.

Strategy 3.2 – Strengthen communication and coordination among WUI Working Team agencies, other NWCG working teams, non-profit organizations, and private sector partners to effectively deliver wildland/urban interface programs and messages.

The group felt that the inclusion of “NWCG agencies” in Action 3.2.3 was redundant.

Strategy 3.3 – Develop and support partnerships among non-member agencies, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector that assist NWCG member agencies and organizations in addressing WUI issues.

The group noted that they are starting to work on Action 3.3.2 (Define stakeholders and their role) now. Olin asked if this action was related to stakeholder meetings. Sam Scranton noted that we are no longer hosting meetings to bring together stakeholders. This action is directed at strategic relationships with key stakeholders and targeted communications.

Under Action 3.3.3, Brian asked for the words “career and volunteer” to be stricken. The group also asked for “communication channels” rather than “email listserve” so as not to restrict the ways of reaching out to the fire service.

Bob Parker described the next steps for the documents, including revisions to put the goals, strategies and actions up front and revisions to the four-page summary. The group felt that the information about process was not important to provide to others. They did want the agencies involved described or shown in the four-page summary. Jim Smalley felt that the “how the plan works” part of the report should be in Working Team members’ notebooks. Bob and André described the plan report information on performance measures and benchmarking techniques that can be used by the Team as the plan evolves.

Old Business

2004 National WUI Education Conference Update

Jim Smalley introduced staff member Cheryl Blake to the team. Cheryl reported that we have over 200 people registered for the conference to date (5 weeks out). There are 84 speakers and 65 education sessions. Twenty people are currently registered for the hazard assessment/Firewise Communities/USA training track. There are six sponsors helping to fund portions of the conference. Jim noted that staff will work to gather information and evaluations to bring back to the team after the conference. Working Team members who will present include Alan Dozier and Barbara Kennedy. Ginny Desautels agreed to deliver a welcome speech in Sam Scranton’s place as he will not be able to attend. Kelly Hawk has arranged a panel on rural fire response. Jim noted Joe Stam will attend and has offered to be a moderator; Brian Johnson has also volunteered to assist.

NASF Fire Committee report

Olin Phillips recently presented information about the WUIWT at a NASF meeting, describing the strategic planning process and asking for feedback. He said they were pretty receptive to the strategic plan and asked about state strategy for more involvement with partners. They asked that Sam Scranton attend the next NASF Fire Committee meeting in January. Olin provide the Working Team members with the results of a survey (see attachment) that Don Smith distributed to NASF members earlier this year (the results were also presented at the NASF meeting he attended). The issues identified fall well within the WUIWT’s strategic planning goals and strategies. The top issues listed include training for operations and safety – state forestry staff are looking for tactical improvements in WUI response. They also stated that funding for WUI efforts needs to be improved. Olin noted that the top issues included the need to balance focus among regions (WUI fire is not just a Western problem). The states also want to focus on community involvement, and five states expressed strong interest in improved building codes. Sam asked about Don Smith’s role in NASF. Olin said that NASF is working on ways to get the attention of State Foresters on WUI activity. They decided to put fire people as state representatives instead of state foresters on the new Fire Committee. Don Smith is the liaison to NASF’s Fire Committee – the vehicle to get the WUI issues back to the state forester membership of NASF. Kelly asked

whether the training issues would be forwarded to the NWCG Training Working Team. Sam asked Olin to summarize the training needs reflected in the survey so we could provide it to the Training WT. Olin suggested that since the survey responses do not reflect consensus, perhaps each state could contact the Training WT directly. Sam and Lew suggested instead that the entire survey be sent to Don Artley as an update, with suggestion that he can pass the training issues to the Training WT. Alan said we should ask Don Smith to send the survey responses to Don Artley.

Communications Task Group update and Fleishman-Hillard presentation

Sam noted that the current task group includes Lew Southard and Alan Dozier, but will need a replacement for Dave Halstead.

Amy Schneider and Ken Fields provided an update for the group. They distributed a new CD containing materials for use by PIOs, community leaders, state forestry staff and others in talking about or presenting information on Firewise concepts and programs. These include a Powerpoint presentation geared towards communities and a discussion guide for presentations where Powerpoint isn't available or needed. A workshop planning guide and a media relations guide are also included. Some other new items include news releases for new products. Currently, F-H is assisting Los Angeles County with Firewise information for a video series they are doing on smart gardening by connecting them with subject-matter experts and reviewing their script. The producers have agreed to make it available for use on the Firewise website.

Sam asked about distributing the communications guide, including whether it can appear in the publications catalog and/or download area of the Firewise website. Amy affirmed that this version of the guide was appropriate to provide to agency external affairs staff, PIOs and others. There was extensive discussion about how to most effectively distribute this information. Several people noted that it needs to go to more than agency heads and state foresters. F-H will work with staff on a comprehensive distribution plan.

Amy reported that F-H has been drafting letters to elected officials to ask them to join us in congratulating new Firewise Communities/USA communities. Earlier this year, F-H represented the program in Arkansas when they held a ceremony to bring nine communities into the recognition program. F-H also conducted media training for NFPA staff in July and presented Firewise messages at the NFPA Annual Meeting in May.

Sam asked Team members if they were interested in getting media training. Amy noted that we've discussed doing this during meetings and asked the group for feedback. Generally, Team members think it is a good idea. Sam said we will try to work it into an upcoming meeting. Brian added that he would like to get several people in his own group into it. Sam felt we should focus on the Team members first and then look at branching out.

F-H has also been active in helping plan the 2004 National WUI Fire Education Conference, including participating in planning discussions and providing communication support. Ken and Amy will also be presenting three education sessions, including "Creating a Buzz about your Firewise efforts", a media relations session on working with news media, and a media relations session that will include a role play. F-H will also be working to get media attention on the conference as it approaches.

Amy noted that at the last meeting we discussed stakeholder letters and invitations for stakeholders to participate actively with us on Firewise activities. We had made a distinction between stakeholders and corporate partners. Working with staff, F-H prioritized the stakeholder list, wrote template letters and began to make contact with some stakeholders. Brian asked

whether new stakeholders are being instructed how to refer to the relationship – he was concerned about the FLASH newsletter using “Firewise” as the only way of referring to the partnership. He would like to see if we can get consistency in this kind of reference. Amy noted that the recent letters and memos on stakeholder prioritization are in the updated CD for the communications guide.

Amy also reported on the Grassroots Outreach pilot. F-H is working with state forestry liaisons in Wisconsin, Alabama and New Mexico, and the community organizers will be working closely with these state liaisons. Amy noted that progress is at all different levels due to various factors including long delays in states receiving funds via the USDA Forest Service. One community organizer (Mary Reichart in Wisconsin) has completed her work and written a report. A key learning she reported was that being local was important. She also worked very closely with Wisconsin DNR – they trained her, she worked from their office.

Amy and Ken provided an overview of the 2005 Communications Plan, showing continued progress toward objectives. They will work to ensure this aligns as closely as possible with the new Strategic Plan.

P-110 Task Group

Kelly Hawk stated that the effort to update the NWCG P-110 course (Inspecting Fire Prone Property) has died, but not through lack of interest. She felt it was important to update it and make it available for use. She stated she is willing to take the lead on this activity and to work with Jack Cohen and others to accomplish the task.

New Business

Presentation by Massachusetts Bureau of Forest Fire Control

Phil Gilmore and Mark Teixeira of the Massachusetts Bureau of Forest Fire Control welcomed the group to Massachusetts and provided a detailed overview of the WUI issues in the state.

The Bureau of Forest Fire Control is in the midst of a major reorganization. However, the Bureau wants to look at Firewise as a logical extension of prevention work they have always done. Phil noted that the Northeast Compact, of which Massachusetts is a part, is implementing “Fire Smart”. The agency currently has two grants related to Firewise in southeastern Massachusetts and on Martha’s Vineyard. They also plan to send some staff members to the 2004 National WUI Fire Education conference in Colorado in November.

Phil described the extensive WUI areas in Massachusetts and the challenge of aiding cities and communities as a major role of the Bureau. Mark provided a history of the Bureau and an overview of their activities. The largest historical WUI fire occurred in the Myles Standish State Forest in the 1950s – it destroyed 34 structures and burned all the way to the ocean. Cape Cod, the Islands and the southeastern part of the state are at highest risk, with fast-growing development and large acreages of pitch pine and scrub oak. The Bureau conducts prescribed burns for fuel reduction and site preparation for reforestation. Mechanical thinning is also being done, but vegetation grows back very quickly. Mark mentioned a number of current mitigation projects, including one along roads on Martha’s Vineyard. Phil noted that Firewise would be an effective program via the municipal fire departments.

Presentation on Trademarks

Dennis Berry, Secretary to the Corporation and Director of Licensing for NFPA, presented information on trademarks and covered the current status of Firewise items. The program currently has one registered trademark (the Firewise logo). NFPA applied for it in August 2001 and received the registration in May 2003, which is about how long it usually takes. Dennis noted that the ® symbol should be used with the logo to indicate a registered trademark. Three more applications are on file – one for the word “Firewise”; one for the title “Firewise Communities/USA”; and one for the Firewise Communities/USA logo. These were all filed in June 2004; it will probably be early 2006 by the time registration is approved.

Dennis explained that NFPA has a trademark counsel at an outside law firm that specializes in only trademarks. He noted that over the last 50 years, the whole area of intellectual property has become more important, so the point of view of the trademark holder is most prominent. The original purpose of the trademark, however, is for the consumer – so that when looking for goods, a specific brand from a specific owner can be identified. Brand identification is very critical for a trademark. The basic definition of a trademark is that it stands for something else. The trademark distinguishes the good or service from those manufactured or sold by others.

Dennis described the three general types of trademarks: a trademark represents goods; a service mark represents services; and a certification mark is specific to certification criteria. In addition, there are five types of trademarks based on how an item is named: generic marks (Xerox, sheetrock, Kleenex); descriptive marks (National Electrical Code); suggestive marks (Coppertone); fanciful marks (Sparky, Apple); and arbitrary marks (Exxon).

An important part of the trademark is classification. The Firewise logo is classified as a mark representing the conduct of seminars and workshops on wildfire mitigation and safety. You can argue about infringement if you think characteristics of other names could cause confusion or deception. A trademark is created by use, not by registration. The touchstone of all trademark infringement is that it causes confusion, because the purpose of a trademark is to be distinctive.

Lew Southard asked whether the Firewise Communities/USA trademark would be a certification and if we are implying that communities are certified by allowing them to use the logo. Dennis replied that we aren't filing certification marks, so the mark would not allow this interpretation. A certification mark would require the development of a set of program criteria that Firewise does not get into.

Sam noted that at the NWCG chairs meeting he recently attended, Kirk Rowdabaugh was concerned about communities calling themselves “Firewise” with no connection to the program. This is one reason NWCG has asked us to trademark the terms and logos.

Presentation on HAZUS Wildfire Module Concept

Philip Schneider, AIA, is the director of the HAZUS program at the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS). He has worked on model development for 12 years. NIBS is a 501(c)(3) and serves as a contractor to FEMA on HAZUS projects. He is interested in pursuing the possibility of development of a wildfire module for HAZUS, which is a natural disaster loss estimation modeling system.

Philip provided an overview of HAZUS, a loss estimation model being used by FEMA for earthquake, flood and hurricane hazards. The hurricane model is still being developed; flood and earthquake are completed and in maintenance mode. HAZUS allows FEMA to model the hazard, related events, the inventory of value and buildings (vulnerability), lifelines, and social and

economic losses. The hurricane model was used by FEMA in conjunction with Presidential declarations for the last 4 hurricanes this year, as well as directly by the state of Florida. HAZUS is also being used currently to estimate losses as part of Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant application background. FEMA is training 250 communities to use HAZUS, and has distributed 3,500 copies of the software package to date. There are 20 HAZUS User Groups that include local governments, private companies and other levels of government. If a wildfire module is developed, it is in the context of all of the current activity, including exposure at the highest levels of government and involvement by existing user groups.

The elements within HAZUS now that could be used as part of a wildfire module include an inventory of database resources; GIS and mapping capabilities; data import and export; data collection support tools; third-party model integration; economic modeling resources; and software programming resources. Third-party modeling capability to date includes the ALOHA model for plume hazards (hazardous materials); and FLDWAV which models dam break hazards. The plume model can be combined with HAZUS inventory and demographic data to estimate the population and facilities affected by toxic fumes or smoke.

A conceptual approach to modeling the WUI fire hazard would include the hazards of fire spread and smoke generation as well as secondary hazards like mudslides. Inventory would need to include buildings, essential facilities, infrastructure, and population. Direct damage considerations would apply to general building stock, essential facilities, transportation lifelines, and utility lifelines. Induced damage considerations include hazardous materials and debris. Direct losses include the cost of repairs/replacement of property, income loss, forest and crop damage, vehicle damage, shelters and casualties. The hazard characterization would include ignitions, spread and secondary hazards.

A damage analysis would include structures, roofs and cladding; contents and inventory; fire resistance of structure and components. A second level of damage analysis might include population exposure; functionality of essential facilities and lifelines; induced damage analysis; and direct loss analysis. Analysis would also include social impact and business interruption, covering casualties (account for time of day); shelter requirements; business interruption (wage, income, rents and relocation); decontamination, indirect economic loss.

The benefits to such a model would include the ability to identify priorities and choices for mitigation. HAZUS would allow the user to model the cost effectiveness of specific mitigation activities. Other benefits include a boost for response and recovery in post-disaster damage assessment and ground-truthing, response planning for critical transportation outages, etc. It would also help emergency managers to develop response plans and organize response exercises.

Philip explained that funds for development of a wildfire module would have to come from outside of FEMA, although FEMA would be a primary cooperator. He suggested as a first step that a state-of-the-art assessment be done to look at cost-effectiveness.

Sam suggested a review of existing models at the Fire Modeling Institute. Jim noted that a wildfire module for HAZUS would put interface fire at the same level as other natural hazards in terms of predicting losses and strategic response. He explained staff has been working with FEMA in the past year to get some of the communities using ArcView to start using HAZUS on a pilot basis. In terms of costs, Philip stated the HAZUS flood module cost approximately \$9 million. He estimated that a study to develop the wildfire module would require about \$250,000. A full-blown module would take three to four years to complete.

Jim noted that Florida has just finished a statewide risk assessment and that they are already using HAZUS, wondering if their new risk data on wildfire could be added into a prototype model. Alan added that the Southern group of state foresters is working on a regional risk assessment for 13 states, which includes mapping fuels, weather zones, historical fire occurrence, and location of responders. Philip provided a written description of the wildfire module concept for future reference by the Working Team.

Review of five-year cooperative agreement

Jim Smalley asked the group to review the current document, developed from the discussions in Duluth on core programs. This is the document submitted to the USDA Forest Service and U.S. DOI for funding; annual operating plans are submitted as a supplement to this document. It provides the foundation and framework for the next five years of activity.

There was discussion on the core program information, with confusion about whether the order in which the program list appears in the agreement document is an implication of priority. Sam noted that it appears in this document that they seem to all have equal weight. He added that in Duluth we did not resolve the issue of priorities because it was implied things would get cut. Alan stated we should prioritize the items, but that it doesn't matter for this agreement. Sam pointed out that everything we do falls into one of these five programs and asked the group to recall that we had ten items at the Duluth meeting but combined them into the existing five items. Lew said that although they may not be prioritized within the cooperative agreement, the order does need to be consistent within the document. Jim agreed to revise the document for consistency.

Brian added his concern that the issue of firefighter and public safety is not identified in the text. He asked that the words "and firefighters" be added to the last bullet at the top of page 3.

New Business - EXECUTIVE SESSION

Next meeting time and location

The WT agreed that they wanted to avoid traveling on Sundays and asked that future meetings run on a Tuesday-Thursday schedule. Most of the group does not plan to attend the Wildland Fire 2005 meeting in Albuquerque in February, so linking with that meeting would not be practical.

The group narrowed the dates to February 1-3 and voted to have the meeting in San Antonio, Texas. The group would like to try conducting media training for team members during this meeting. The next meeting was set for June 28-30 in Boise, Idaho. The fall meeting dates are tentative for October 4-6 in Boston.

Makeup of Working Team

The group discussed several issues regarding the makeup of the WUI Working Team, including the lack of representation from the U.S. Fire Administration¹, the National Association of State Fire Marshals, and the National Emergency Management Association. It was agreed that the Chair should write to each of the chartered members currently lacking a representative to ask for an assigned person.

There was some discussion of adding groups to the Working Team that are not currently in the charter, such as the International Fire Marshals Association. It was agreed that unless the charter

¹ Two weeks after the meeting, USFA contacted the NFPA staff with contact information for a new representative to the WUI Working Team, Frank Richardson.

members fail to provide representatives, the WT should not approach new groups. Another option discussed for future consideration was developing one or two non-voting slots for other members.

There was also discussion of finding an alternate for Jack Cohen while he is on sabbatical. Janet Anderson said she would pursue having a USFS researcher attend the next three meetings as a non-voting alternate.

Discussion – Recognition of Firewise Activities

Lew Southard requested that the Firewise Communities/USA recognition program be discussed. The two main areas of concern expressed by state forestry staff to Lew have been first, the issue of how large or small a community must be to earn recognition, and second, recognition for other kinds of activity in addition to the Firewise Communities/USA criteria.

Lew stated that many agencies working on Firewise concept are working on larger areas than the Firewise Communities/USA program indicates for recognition. They are bound by mandates including FEMA regulations and the EPA process. They are essentially ignoring the FWC/USA process because they are not working community by community. Lew said that we've denied them recognition because their areas are "too big" and said that he has heard this from Oregon to Florida to Kentucky to Arizona.

Janet asked whether the predisaster funding from FEMA is driving some of this concern. Lew said that was one factor as well as the fact that state entities work at different scales of "communities". Olin added that the CWPP plans have their own definition of communities. Alan stated that in Georgia they work with the county level and let them work with their municipalities. Lew added that he is concerned about conflict between what we are recognizing and what the insurance industry is going to do around recognizing communities – in other words, they can be Firewise yet their insurance rates can still rise. He stated his concern that we need to be connected to what insurance industry is doing and that if we focus as narrowly as we are now doing, the states will create their own recognition process and ignore us.

Alan asked for clarification on the intent of the Firewise Communities/USA recognition program. Jim stated that one of our guiding visions was getting homeowners involved. The program was designed for residential communities and developments, and citizen involvement is the key. Barbara asked why the program could not recognize a community the size of Boulder. Alan added that the concept of citizen involvement is not clearly spelled out in the criteria, and felt if it was more clearly stated, the size issue would resolve itself. Lew said that from what he is hearing from people in the field is a feeling of being disenfranchised by this program because they work on a larger scale.

Brian stated that if the foundation of the recognition program is personal responsibility, then it has to be the foundation no matter what the size of the community is. If the emphasis changes to money flowing from federal agencies to states to cities, we won't succeed. The program has to go beyond the fire chief and mayor. It has to have the feeling of town cleanup day. He suggested if the team wants a different result, do a different award.

Michele suggested the WT could look at some kind of large entity planning award or recognition that would be different from the USA recognition. Brian felt that if a large city met the current criteria, it could get recognition. Sam added that getting citizens engaged at ground level is really the critical element. Kelly felt the community size and citizen engagement were not mutually exclusive. Olin noted that the current recognition program is a tool, which states can choose to use or not.

Overall, WT members expressed some confusion among those they interact within the field of what a Firewise Communities/USA recognition area is supposed to be. There was some discussion of creating criteria for cities and counties as well as the small neighborhoods. There could also be a Firewise leadership award that could help recognize the efforts of individuals and groups working at larger-scale efforts.

The WT decided to form a Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program Task Group to flesh issues out and provide recommendations and options on the issues back to the WT. As a first step, Barbara suggested the task group work with the staff and the original team (Jack Cohen, Judith Leraas Cook and Pat Durland) to review the deliberative process in developing the program and figure out what questions to ask. She felt it was important for the WT and staff to be able to consistently communicate what the Firewise Communities/USA program was about.

Lew offered to chair this task group and asked Sam if he could appoint the three NASF reps on the WT as the remainder of the task group. Lew said he was willing to review comments he received on the program and work with those who had been in touch with him.

Alan further suggested that a regional Firewise award be developed to recognize the efforts of states such as Arkansas. This award could be provided to state agency or federal agency people, perhaps two or three awards annually. Alan stated he would investigate the Smokey Bear award process for a model and bring information back to the WT.

Discussion – 2005 Workplan and New Proposals

The WT reviewed the 2005 workplan, including the Annual Operating Plan and a set of new proposals. The team decided to first review the Annual Operating Plan, which represents a baseline of activity and funding without “new” items. Some team members expressed concern about the lack of information on projected budget and some of the specific line items. Jim Smalley asked that the WT take into account that the items under the Communications Plan and Website elements each come as a package and should not be broken out. There was also concern expressed about the short time to review all of the information and make decisions.

Barbara Kennedy asked the group to review the Annual Operating Plan draft for existing programs and to prepare any questions for more information or clarification. She suggested we then vote on priorities for the new proposals separately. The new proposals decisions could include timeframes to postpone some activities to future years. Brian Johnson suggested HAZUS also be discussed to keep it as an item we address.

Review of 2005 Workplan – Annual Operating Plan (existing items)

The team had a brief discussion of each item. Sam noted that the website plan is good but pointed out that activity 2.2.2. would be contingent on acceptance of the new proposal on Firewise information for the disabled (proposal 4.2.3). Sam asked that the Communications Plan element be left as is. Discussion included clarification on item 3.1.1. – Brian wanted to know if the comment on “stakeholders’ meetings” meant we are planning more meetings to bring stakeholders together. Michele clarified that the intent was for staff and WT members to attend the meetings of various stakeholders. Lew moved to accept the Communications Plan element as is. Alan seconded; motion carried unanimously.

The group reviewed items under WUI Information Resources. Discussion ensued on item 4.1.2 – the Firewise Exhibit Display. Brian asked how much overlap there was with item 1.4.2, which talks about staffing/exhibiting for Firewise Communities/USA outreach. Michele clarified that

1.4.2 was intended to support specific outreach on the recognition program, while 4.1.2 covers the activity and cost of shipping the large exhibit as well as sending staff to cover key meetings for general Firewise representation. Jim noted there are 20 tabletop displays out in the field with various states as well as two single-curve stand-alone displays and a new double-curve unit. Brian suggested additional venues for 4.1.2, including the National Association of Counties and ICMA, as well as other elected officials' conferences.

There was also discussion on item 4.1.3 - Printing and maintenance of materials. Jim explained that while we are getting some complaints about quantity limits and postage charges, we are limiting quantities to try to keep adequate inventory in stock, as our current budget for reprinting will not keep up with demand. Olin noted that he hears a lot from states about wanting to get items in bulk. An idea is to give states an annual opportunity to order items in bulk, timed for when the program is reprinting materials anyway.

The group reviewed items under WUI Program Support. Item 5.5.2 – Explore joint social research projects – was discussed. Janet said that she would like to get the researchers USFS is supporting to work with the WT and staff more closely.

Brian noted that item 5.3.1.3 helped address the HAZUS discussion. He recommended that if the staff has funding or time under this element to begin to broker the conversation with FEMA and other organizations, then we should not pursue the formal proposal regarding a HAZUS wildfire module at this time. He suggested we could begin the process of working with others to do the initial assessment using staff time and travel. He suggested re-wording this item or create a separate item to specifically address the task of beginning an assessment for a wildfire module.

Lew moved to accept the WUI Program Support items as discussed. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The group discussed the items under the National Firewise Communities/USA Program area. The group agreed to add an item (now 1.3.3.) regarding the work of the newly formed Task Group to develop a Firewise Leadership Award directed at state/regional/federal agency personnel. Item 1.4.2 – exhibits in selected venues - was also discussed. A suggestion was made that the International Society of Arboriculture be one of the venues. Sam further suggested that WT members provide the staff with a list of places they would like to see them exhibit.

The Annual Operating Plan was approved with the above amendments and notes.

Discussion on 2005 Workplan - New Proposals

The group agreed to take a straw ballot on the new proposals using a “dot voting” system. Each voting member received 10 dots to vote with and could use up to 3 per proposal.

Discussion focused on getting more specific budget numbers for several of the projects. Staff provided the following estimates per proposal:

- 1.A. Hazard Assessment training in selected states- \$21,000-\$37,000
- 1.B. Train the Trainer Community Assistance Workshops -\$186,000 for first year; \$258,355 for both years.
- 1.C. P-110 “Inspecting Fire Prone Property” course revision- \$35,000
- 1.D. Home Inspection training with State Farm Insurance-\$9,500
- 2.A. Video B-Roll - \$50,000
- 3.A. –National Outreach/Firewise Communities/USA presentations- \$35,000

- 3.B –Preparing Interface residents for WUI Events – \$10,000
- 3.C. – Firewise safety for disabled residents- \$100,000
- 3.D. – Grassroots Outreach program in selected states- \$205,000

TOTAL ESTIMATE - \$667,500

Sam discussed the P-110 course revision, asking that the WT consider it as a “must-do” for 2005 as we had already committed to doing it and had formally taken on the project from the NWCG Training WT. There was discussion about the cost-estimate and concern about a specific proposal identifying the costs and products. The item was left in the new proposal list for voting.

The prioritization in the Straw Vote resulted in the following priority list:

1. P-110 Course revision
2. National Outreach Presentations on USA and Grassroots Outreach (tie)
3. FWC/USA Hazard Assessment Training and Train the Trainer Community Workshops (tie)
4. Preparing for WUI events
5. Video B-roll
6. Firewise Safety for Disabled Residents

The WT felt that the State Farm training session would be valuable but felt that State Farm should cover the costs.

Because of concerns about details of some items as well as the need for more information about costs and budget, the WT agreed to the following process: staff will provide details and cost information to the WT by the end of October, and the WT will reconvene by conference call on Thursday, November 18 at 11 a.m. EST to make a final decision on the prioritized new proposals.

Discussion: February 2005 Meeting Agenda

The following new Task Groups were formed and will report at the February 2005 meeting:

- Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Review Task Group – Kelly Hawk, Brian Johnson and Janet Anderson. Discussion for this task group centered on how CWPPs connect or don’t connect to Firewise concepts, as well as determining whether the WUIWT has a role in providing advice and direction for agencies and communities on the basic planning concepts.
- Firewise Leadership Awards Task Group – Olin Phillips, Lew Southard, Alan Dozier, Wayne Ching. This group is tasked to review similar award programs to develop something to recognize agency leadership (federal, state, local).

In addition, Kelly Hawk indicated she would research activity by insurance companies in relation to WUI hazards, ratings and the issue of Firewise Communities/USA recognition. She will work with the WT chair and staff to develop this information for the February meeting agenda, including a possible presentation by Dennis Gage from the Insurance Services Office.

Janet Anderson indicated she would like to invite Jonathan Taylor or another USFS researcher to present at the February meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 1 p.m., Wednesday, September 29.