

**MINUTES FROM THE
NWCG WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE WORKING TEAM MEETING**
Prescott, Arizona
February 24-25, 2003

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NWCG WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE WORKING TEAM

Prescott, Arizona
February 24-25, 2003

Working Team Members and Alternates:

Dave Halstead (National Emergency Managers Association) - Chair

Sam Scranton (US DOI/Bureau of Indian Affairs) – Vice-Chair

John Cochran (FEMA/US Fire Administration)

Jack Cohen (USDA Forest Service)

Dennis Dupuis (DOI/Bureau of Indian Affairs – alternate)

Pat Durland (US DOI/Bureau of Land Management)

Brian Johnson (International Association of Fire Chiefs)

S. Olin Phillips (National Association of State Foresters – Alternate for Mike Carroll)

Jim Shell (USDA Forest Service – Alternate for Janet Anderson-Tyler)

Jim Smalley (National Fire Protection Association)

Joe Stam (National Association of State Foresters)

Guests:

Dan Bailey – USDA Forest Service- Coordinator, National WUI Fire Program

Ken Fields - Fleishman-Hillard, Inc.

Mike Hart - Arizona Forestry

Frank Fischer - Deep Image Production

Kelly Hawk - US DOI/Bureau of Land Management

Amy Schneider - Fleishman-Hillard, Inc.

Gary Tokle – National Fire Protection Association

Steve Vittoria - Deep Image Production

Joan O'Hara Wehner - National Association of State Foresters

Keith Worley - Perry Park Metro District, Perry Park, CO

Recorder:

Michele Steinberg - National Fire Protection Association

Opening

Chairman Dave Halstead called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mike Hart with the state of Arizona (former state forester) welcomed the Working Team to Prescott and provided some information about Prescott's successful activities using fire assistance funds.

Review of past meeting minutes

The Working Team reviewed the minutes from the October 2002 meeting and accepted them unanimously.

Update – Old Business

Keeper of the Flame Film and Interactive DVD

Discussion: Deep Image filmmakers Frank Fischer and Steve Vittoria, along with Dan Bailey, presented the near-final film to the Working Team. They introduced the film as a documentary that was unscripted and evolved from research and interviews.

After viewing the film, Working Team members and guests provided comments. Among the issues addressed was the film's focus on the western part of the country and large fires (Yellowstone) versus a possible focus on the wildland/urban interface nationwide. There were questions about the timeframe for the release of the film and the target audience. There was some concern that the film was overly critical of Smokey Bear (and used the name incorrectly in one instance). A quote about Firewise saving \$20 million was questioned. Some Working Team members expressed concern about the length of the film and the potential loss of viewers because of the length. Others commented that Firewise concepts were not covered fully and that success stories were not shown. Other issues of concern that were expressed included a lack of definition; lack of discussion about natural resource

losses (timber); fire management constraints; no state government presence; need for explanation of terms (crown, canopy, regimes); lack of native American representation during discussion of native practices; lack of information about smoke impacts; a lack of sequence to the film. Some Working Team members noted that this could be the first step in awareness of the wildland/urban interface fire problem for viewers and that the film did not need to carry the entire message. Others noted that the information on fire ecology was very thorough and that the message that fire is (and always has been) part of the natural environment was very clear. There was a suggestion to use each of the four segments separately for education applications. There was general concern expressed that the Working Team had not had the opportunity for prior input and review of the film.

Keith Worley, a local representative and guest of the Working Team, indicated the film should have examples of “good fire” and how a fire-restored ecosystem would look. Others agreed that the “home ignition zone” concept should be illustrated, versus showing homes on fire throughout the film.

During the discussion about the film, Steve Vittoria presented the concept of a companion interactive DVD that would be available to the public. This piece would be designed to help viewers understand what to do to their homes to make them Firewise. The DVD would allow more information to be transmitted than would be possible in the film. The DVD will include 3 hours worth of information, including how to become Firewise. Interviews with federal and state agency staff and elected officials would be included.

Working Team members asked how film viewers would find out about the DVD, and questioned whether the audience would be motivated to use this product. The Working Team indicated a task group led by Sam Scranton should work with Deep Image and Dan Bailey to develop this product further and garner Working Team input. There was further concern from Working Team members that this product was not approved as now presented (the October 2002 minutes discuss only a “music CD”). Task Group members in addition to Sam were suggested (NASF southern region representative, Matt Weaver from Alaska, Jack Cohen).

Decision: The release of the film, "Keeper of the Flame", is on hold until some significant changes and edits can be completed. Dan Bailey will coordinate this work with the production crew to make edits to the film and resubmit it to the Working Team for approval either at or before the next working team meeting in June. No further work on contracts for release of the film will be initiated or signed until this work is completed.

Other supporting work to advertise the release of the film, such as the work Anna Ferguson (Absolut Imaging) and her staff are doing, that is underway or is about to be initiated is to be halted until the film is completed and officially accepted by the Working Team.

Dan Bailey, Sam Scranton and others will begin preliminary work on the storyboard aspect of the interactive DVD. This initial concept work will be brought back to the Working Team for approval at the next meeting. If this initial concept work is acceptable then the project will continue, if not the funding will be re-directed to other projects.

Wildland/Urban Interface Definitions

Discussion: The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) had requested the Working Team to develop definitions for applicable terms. The Working Team reviewed several definitions and came up with the following three:

- 1. Wildland/urban fire** -- That situation where the fuel feeding the fire changes from wildland fuel to urban fuel. For this to happen, wildland fire must be close enough for flying brands and/or flames to make contact with flammable portion of homes/structures.
- 2. Wildland/Urban Interface** – In relation to wildland/urban fire, a set of conditions that provides the opportunity for fire to burn from wildland vegetation to the home/structure ignition zone.

3. **Home/Structure Ignition Zone** – The area that principally determines the potential for ignition of the home/structure from wildland fire. It includes the home/structure and its immediate surroundings within 100 to 200 feet.

There was some discussion of the difficulty of describing what many thing of as a geographic area in terms of meeting the criteria for ignition. The word “urban” connotes a multiple, complex set of structures and infrastructure as opposed to the “built environment or structure” that is more commonly the concept meant in such terms as “wildland/urban interface”. It was important to define “wildland/urban interface” in relation to fire, since without the relationship, there could be many other issues that surface, including habitat and environmental issues that have nothing to do with fire.

Additional discussion focused on the definitions being used by state foresters in connection with the federal “communities at risk” identification. The term “wildland/urban interface” is used in the USDA Forest Service introductory material requesting states to determine which communities are at risk. Some felt there should also be a definition of “wildland”.

Decision: Jim Smalley will provide these definitions to NWCG in response to their request. Jim Shell will provide the relevant Forest Service definitions to the Working Team.

Shelter-in-Place

Background: The Shelter-in-Place discussion began at a previous Working Team meeting. The issue had arisen during the Hayman Fire in Colorado regarding community evacuations. Keith Worley of Perry Park, CO, was one community resident and local Firewise leader who wanted officials to consider the concept of allowing residents to shelter in place during a wildfire. Jim Smalley invited him to present information about Perry Park’s activities and his point of view on this subject as part of discussion about whether the Working Team should have a stated position on this emerging issue.

Discussion: Keith Worley presented information about the community of Perry Park. The subdivision has only 1 access and egress road, about 600 homes and is about one-third built out (meaning, in future there will be many more properties and residents). The local authority, Douglas County, evacuated 1200 residents during the Hayman Fire. Perry Park residents were in the process of working on a local emergency plan at the time. The fire and subsequent evacuation has motivated more action in emergency planning, with an upcoming (March 1) workshop with the sheriff and emergency manager for a multi-hazard plan.

Because of their work on Firewise and their frustration with the evacuation process, Keith Worley and other community leaders sought to create a press release in partnership with the national Firewise program to indicate that as Firewise efforts progress, shelter-in-place could be an option. Firewise staff and members of the Working Team reacted with concern that such a press release would lead readers to believe that national leaders endorse a concept that could potentially put lives in danger. Keith developed a position paper to outline the community’s concerns and goals and to allow others to critique it and provide input. A major concern of the community is that those who live in the “Red Zone” know what to do.

Keith outlined a concept of achieving the ability to shelter in place. He defined it as: structures, properties and the surrounding environment are considered fire resistant enough to allow for a homeowner to participate in his own defense/rescue. The elements include defensible or “stand alone” structures through Firewise landscaping, design and maintenance; defensive systems; and consideration of personal or family issues. In Perry Park, this concept would only work if whole neighborhoods were treated. The concept as described includes changing the message about fire (some fire is good), focusing on the need to protect community values, and emphasizing personal responsibility.

Working Team members pointed out that at least two issues were being addressed in Keith’s paper and presentation. One was the concept of a homeowner being able to stay and defend the home; the other was the concept of an ignition-resistant home becoming a “last-resort” shelter in the case of a fast-moving fire in a

community with poor access and egress and little information about the location and movement of the fire. Recommendations for Perry Park included: continuing to make homes and neighborhoods ignition-resistant; continuing to work with local authorities to consider evacuation, shelter and “safe zones” in an emergency plan; finding out exactly what the local laws and ordinances are pertaining to evacuation orders; formalizing a volunteer fire department so that community residents have standards and appropriate training.

Decision: The Working Team did not make a definitive decision about whether it should take a stance on this issue. The general tenor of the discussion was that the shelter-in-place issue was a local concern. However, some discussion indicated that the Working Team could recommend that communities consider such an alternative in their local plan if their situation (poor egress/fast moving fire potential) called for it. The Working Team members were less supportive of the concept of homeowners staying with their homes to defend them. Chairman Dave Halstead directed that a Task Group be formed to further discuss the issues and provide brief descriptions of the discussion points to the Working Team, to be addressed at the next meeting. He indicated that either Jim Smalley or Michele Steinberg should lead the discussion, working with John Cochran, Jack Cohen and Olin Phillips.

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New Business:

Communications and Media

Fleishman-Hillard presentation

Background: The growth and momentum of the Firewise program has resulted in many positive developments, but has also highlighted some challenges. One of these challenges is the need for a consistent message for a diverse and flexible program. Communications firm Fleishman-Hillard, Inc. (F-H) was contracted by the program to help meet this challenge and further Firewise goals. Ken Fields and Amy Schneider of F-H presented information about the firm to the Working Team and provided concepts for input. Their complete Powerpoint presentation is attached. (*Note for reviewers of this draft: we'll include this when the minutes are approved and sent back to you.*)

Discussion: F-H is an approved GSA vendor and a full-service communications agency with offices in 21 US cities and grassroots organizers in 47 states. The firm has experience in communicating about fire issues, including handling NFPA’s code awareness activities and Fire Prevention Week. Its capabilities include media relations, outreach to government agencies, grassroots mobilization and research. Their goal for Firewise is to focus positive media attention on Firewise messages and help motivate people to change their behavior. Their objectives include: galvanizing public awareness regarding the risks wildfire poses to safety and property; driving public dialogue about this issue; motivating homeowners to take preventive actions to protect their homes against fires; persuading community leaders, elected officials, and other influentials to support Firewise initiatives; and surrounding key audiences with Firewise messages by broadening communications outreach

The approach that F-H intends to use for Firewise Communications includes such strategies as using consistent, controlled messages in all communications; mobilizing existing Firewise advocates and communities; reaching out to new Firewise advocates and communities; and maximizing trade and news media coverage

Ken and Amy presented the F-H concepts for a Firewise Communications Plan. The four main strategies included:

- ❖ *Consistent, Controlled Messages*
- ❖ *Mobilize Existing Firewise Advocates, Communities*
- ❖ *Reach Out to New Firewise Advocates and Communities*
- ❖ *Maximize trade and news media coverage*

Consistent, Controlled Messages: F-H would help develop key messages that are persuasive and consistent, for use in all proactive and reactive communications and tailored for use by spokespersons and third-party supporters.

This strategy would help ensure that people will hear and understand the need to Firewise their property and their community, remembering and acting on the messages. The key messages outlined by Ken and Amy include:

- Firewise is a proactive approach that minimizes wildfire dangers to people and property
- Firewise incorporates the efforts of federal and state agencies, tribes and local communities, as well as individual homeowners. A Firewise approach involves landscaping, home construction and design, community planning, along with forest and land management
- Wildland fires are an absolute reality. They are going to occur. It is just a matter of when
- Wildland fires can have serious effects on property, natural resources and safety in almost any area of the country
- Wildland fires may even make it impossible for members of fire protection agencies to get to your property when fire is approaching
- Firewise offers a series of practical steps that individuals and communities can take to protect themselves and their property from risk of wildland fire. Utilizing only one element of a Firewise program is not enough to protect against the many dangers of wildland fire.

The tagline that they have developed is “Firewise: Where You Live. How You Live.” This communicates that Firewise is both a noun -- an effective program close to home – as well as a verb -- action by communities and individuals.

F-H proposed to test the key messages by using focus groups in six markets (suggested markets were Albuquerque, NM; San Diego, CA; Macon, GA or Tallahassee, FL; Pittsburgh, PA; Spokane, WA; Salt Lake City, UT). The feedback would be incorporated into future program outreach.

Mobilize Existing Firewise Advocates, Communities: F-H would ask Firewise staff and Working Team members to help develop a database of key Firewise advocates. These would include Workshop participants, Fire service, State foresters, Agency staff and others. Ways of mobilizing these advocates would include distribution of *Wildfire News and Notes*, letters from advocates to key local officials, sample letters to the editor and op-eds for Firewise workshop participants and e-mail updates. F-H would also leverage existing materials to incorporate them into outreach to advocates.

Reach Out to New Firewise Advocates and Communities: F-H would help identify key people in order to develop a “buzz” about Firewise. These could include such audiences as state building officials; planning/zoning commissions; firefighters and fire safety officials; homeowners/neighborhood associations; architects, landscapers, home remodeling industry representatives; media; retailers; elected and government officials; labor unions; and state and national organizations. Materials to be used include media talking points; “Q&A” documents; fact sheets about the overall program, the workshop series and Firewise Communities/USA; and information kits to be used as leave-behinds for elected officials and news media.

To reach out to communities, raise awareness among their leaders and motivate other communities to become Firewise, F-H would employ grassroots outreach techniques using their network of community organizers. These individuals live and work in each target market, have in-depth knowledge of each market and have well-established relationships with people in each market.

Part of this outreach strategy includes national coalition building. F-H proposes to develop and cultivate third-party relationships that help validate, support and extend Firewise messages. Target groups at the state and local level may include the National Governors Association, the US Conference of Mayors and the League of Cities. In order to accomplish national coalition building, F-H would need to inventory existing relationships, develop a target list of organizations for additional outreach, coordinate a system to track and manage key national relationships and keep key organizations up-to-date on Firewise happenings and key messages.

Finally, the outreach strategy will also include outreach with federal government officials, to communicate Firewise messages through agencies.

Maximize trade and news media coverage: F-H proposes to help Firewise spokespersons prepare to deal with the media. Selected spokespersons should be a credible source with a wildfire safety background. Media training can help with consistent messages. A media protocol will be developed to: maintain regular contact with key reporters in target states; identify the most appropriate spokesperson for each media opportunity; ensure consistency in messages; and prioritize media opportunities as they arise.

Program elements that need immediate attention in regard to media coverage include the Firewise Communities/USA recognition program. F-H proposes to develop a “recognized communities toolkit” that would include a template local news release and op/ed for local newspapers; a media tip sheet on how other communities can become Firewise Communities; a Firewise backgrounder; a set of talking points and Q&A information; and tips for working with local media, legislators and community leaders. F-H would offer local community support based on the size of media market and potential impact; the proximity to and/or involvement of key Firewise stakeholders or VIP contacts; and the proximity to current or recent major wildfires. National and regional media outreach would be developed to leverage news hooks throughout the initiative. Some recent hooks include the training of state foresters and the May/June announcement that local communities can now submit applications.

Ken and Amy described the planned media coverage for the Keeper of the Flame film and DVD as another current project for Firewise.

News media coverage will be accomplished via newspaper inserts on homeowner action (landscaping tips, annual household checkup info, etc.) and Firewise Tips for key markets (using local safety authorities to provide local affirmation of Firewise program). F-H will also take advantage of breaking news opportunities to monitor coverage of major wildland fires and offer Firewise spokespersons and to develop “News You Can Use” in response.

Working Team members provided feedback on the presented plan. One concern is that internal communications within and among the agencies needs to occur at the same pace that Firewise is being promoted externally. It was suggested that media contacts be identified within all pertinent federal and state agencies. With regard to the planned focus groups, Working Team members strongly suggested Florida over Macon, GA, as well as a southeastern New Jersey, Long Island or southeastern Massachusetts location vs. Pennsylvania.

Regarding advocates, the Working Team suggested adding the following groups:

- Currently recognized Firewise Communities/USA
- The existing Stakeholders’ contacts
- Consultants and contractors to the Firewise program
- National Fire Prevention Teams
- Arborists
- Tribal Leaders
- Realtors
- Educators
- Service Organizations (e.g. Rotary, Kiwanis)
- Emergency Managers and mitigation specialists (local, state, federal)
- Structural/municipal fire service
- Extension services
- Sportsmen’s groups

The Working Team members noted some concurrent efforts for publicity/awareness, including outreach to USDA Forest Service forest supervisors (a group of 133 individuals), a CFFP ad being developed by NASF and the USDA Forest Service and a document for use by volunteer fire departments being created by the Ad Council, NASF, the National Volunteer Fire Council and the USDA Forest Service.

A specific strategy proposed by F-H to mobilize existing advocates was to identify known “influentials” – that is, individuals known by Firewise staff and Working Team members to have some influence on Firewise messages and activities. By creating a database of such strategic allies, Firewise could systematically make contact with these important individuals. Working Team members were asked to provide their list of such individuals using a form.

Working Team members expressed some concern about aspects of the plan that focused on outreach to federal government officials. The expressed desire was to follow any existing NWCG protocols for communicating with

congressional representatives and to ensure that any communication could not be mistaken for lobbying. It was suggested that Governors' Associations might be appropriate conduits for communicating with congresspeople.

Decision: A small task group was initiated to help provide feedback and data for the Firewise Communication Plan as proposed. This group would pull others in as needed for information. Task group includes Michele Steinberg, Jim Smalley, Sam Scranton, Jim Shell and Fred Allen. For any specific news releases on the Firewise Communities/USA program, Joan O'Hara Wehner will be included in the review.. The issue of internal agency communication strategies will be addressed.

Firewise messages – homes vs. environment

Background: Discussion at the last Working Team meeting touched on the issue of groups such as the Sierra Club using Firewise messages to try to convince others that federal land managers should not be conducting fuel reduction on public lands that don't border communities. The rationale appears to be that if every home/community becomes Firewise through landscaping and construction changes, that ignition potential would be so drastically reduced that fuel treatment in forests would be unnecessary. The Working Team was asked if a position paper or op/ed piece to counteract this message would be a recommended course of action.

Discussion: Team members discussed how to put the Firewise concept of preventing residential disasters in context or relationship to all of the other issues related to wildfire, ecology and land management. Is Firewise all solutions based on locale? Or is it residential safety only? While Firewise may be focused on the residential safety aspect of wildland fire, there are many other community values or reasons why people live in the wildland/urban interface, including forest health and wildlife. These are properly addressed by land managers and other groups.

Decision: Chairman Dave Halstead asked for a small group to work via conference call on a paper or article that would address this issue. The group includes Jim Smalley, Jack Cohen, Pat Durland, Joe Stam and Keith Worley.

National Fire Plan Update

Discussion: Jim Shell provided an update only on tasks within the National Fire Plan relating to this Working Team. Three of the Plan's goals are directly related to the Team's work. "Goal G-4E" has to do with development of definitions for communities-at-risk and process for prioritizing communities within states. A group led by Jim Hubbard (State Forester for Colorado) developed a draft with definitions dated December 2, 2002 (this was distributed to the group – see attached copy). That group adopted the definition of "wildland/urban interface" WUI as published in Federal Register. This draft was shared with Wildland Fire Leadership group. Each state with its partners will develop specific criteria to sort communities into one of 3 categories (high, medium, low). Working Team members expressed concern about trying to develop a standard operating procedure for something that is not "standard" across the country.

Jim Shell continued with the update, including the signing of an MOU with Firewise Communities/USA (NFPA and NASF were other signatories); the continuation of the Firewise Communities Workshop series, the development of Firewise Communities self-study (for 2003 plan); the launch of the formal Firewise Communities/USA program; the Firewise Communities Technology Awards; Firewise Communities Support, Firewise Communities Public Education; the Interagency Fire Prevention Plan; and the formation and activation of National Fire Prevention teams. Current topics of interest at the national level include a cohesive strategy for fuels management and assessing rural fire service capability to deal with wildfire. The newly released FEMA/NFPA fire service assessment is to be used as the starting place for assessing the rural fire service.

Decision: Working Team will review the "Final Draft Concept Paper – Communities At Risk" dated December 2, 2002 (distributed at the meeting) and provide comments.

Publication Management Service and On-line Firewise Catalog

Background: The Publication Management System or PMS is located at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, designed to serve internal (agency) audiences. Documents and videos available are through PMS for purchase by agencies and others. The Firewise website currently features some of these items, with instructions to order through the PMS system. Firewise also provides dozens of different print and video items for free. The questions for the Working Team include whether to continue providing certain materials through PMS and whether to approve a decision to fully automate the distribution system for Firewise materials via its website.

Discussion: Jim Smalley described the demand for Firewise products, including distribution of thousands of print and video materials in the past 1 to 4 years. Cheryl Blake of the Firewise staff is responsible for product management and has been working with Jim and with Pat Durland to make decisions on whether or not to reprint items and whether to drop outdated items from PMS. Many products are being updated (Firefighter Safety video series; Everyone's Responsibility booklet). Firewise staff are exploring how to catalog all current items and move distribution to a web-based system supported by vendors who can store, produce and ship these items.

Pat Durland described the processes used with the PMS system – Cindy Wolf in Boise is responsible for maintaining the system and getting feedback from the agencies responsible for particular publications in terms of updates or discards. Currently, PMS has about 40,000 “risk meters”. Pat asked for feedback from Working Team members on whether this product could be used or should be discarded.

There was some discussion on how decisions should be made on whether a particular product should be offered from the Firewise website or via PMS. The updated Firefighter Safety video series and the updated Firewise landscaping/construction checklist were two items in question. One suggestion was to run the items on the Firewise website for a year and decide then whether to include it on PMS. Brian Johnson asked if there was a way to have PMS direct users to the Firewise website for additional materials. There was also discussion about two tapes featuring Jack Cohen's research – “Protecting Your Home from Wildfire” and “Wildfire! Preventing Home Ignitions”. Currently, Jack is distributing them on his own, and Firewise uses the latter to distribute to Firewise Communities Workshop participants and to other requesters on a limited basis. There is also a DVD version of “Wildfire! Preventing Home Ignitions”.

Jim Smalley described the status of how Firewise staff is distributing materials. Demand for print and video materials has skyrocketed in the past year or two, to the point where the staff based at NFPA spend significant time taking orders over the phone, locating materials and shipping. Very often, requests are made that require overnight or 2-day shipping, which is increasing the cost of doing business. Firewise staff propose to create a web-based catalog to allow users to order materials directly. Two vendors (one for print items, one for video) would provide the ordering and shipping services and would have the capability to print on demand. Items would be shipped for free using ground shipping or similar service; users would have the option to have faster shipping if they want to pay for it. This system would improve customer service and meet the goal of disseminating information to the public.

Decision: Working Team members will provide feedback to Pat Durland regarding the disposition of the risk meters. PMS and Firewise staff will work to provide the Team with a proposed method of ensuring that items are available to the agency and general public audiences in the most appropriate venue. Firewise will become the primary distributor/reproducer of Jack Cohen's videos, while Jack will maintain a small inventory for the requests he receives directly. The Team voted to approve the proposal to create a web-based catalog and distribution method on the Firewise website. Fleishman-Hillard will help Firewise staff draft a letter to go to agencies and states regarding the new website catalog.

Update of “Everyone's Responsibility”

Discussion: Michele Steinberg of the Firewise staff is responsible for updating the print document *Fire Protection in the Wildland/Urban Interface: Everyone's Responsibility*. The new document working title is *Firewise Communities: Local Solutions to a National Problem*. An outline was distributed to Working Team

members several months ago. Several communities will be interviewed to document how they have worked with partners to make their locales safer from wildfire. Jack Cohen indicated he would like to review the document.

Proposed Update/Revisions of “Operation Water”

Discussion: Jim Smalley had sent the Working Team a copy of *Operation Water: Planning for Water Supply and Distribution in the Wildland/Urban Interface*, a 1994 publication of the WUI program created for use by small rural volunteer fire departments, and asked for comments on whether it should be updated. John Cochran noted that the Insurance Services Office (ISO) is currently working on something similar. Jack Cohen and others expressed concern about the message that the document implies regarding equipment remaining at fixed stationery points to fight fire. While this may work as standard operating procedure in low-to-moderate hazard areas, this method will be less effective and more dangerous in extreme high hazard cases.

Decision: The Working Team agreed to add the update of this document in the 2004 Workplan.

Presentation – BLM Community Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan

Discussion: Pat Durland and Kelly Hawk described a draft document they prepared for state BLM staff to help with community risk assessment and mitigation for wildfire. The state BLM staffs are assigned workshops, assessments and plans, and are seeking guidance. Pat asked the Working Team to review this draft guidance document.

John Cochran noted that USFA has in place a master planning model for community fire defenses that is now being revised. He would like to incorporate wildland/urban interface considerations into this revision. There were questions about how the draft BLM document would interact (or not) with the Firewise Communities/USA assessments, FEMA mitigation plan requirements, and the communities-at-risk identification/prioritization process that each state is tasked to undertake.

Decision: Jim Shell will provide information to the Working Team members on how the communities-at-risk work is being conducted and will identify the chair of the committee working on that issue so that Pat Durland can contact him or her. Working Team members from NASF and USFA were asked to provide feedback on the document to Pat Durland and Kelly Hawk by (date?). Pat Durland will communicate with Working Team member Ginny Desautels (FEMA) about this document.

Proposal – Formation of a Task Group for Firewise Communities/USA

Discussion: Dave Halstead described the first training session that was held for state foresters to be able to implement the new national Firewise Communities/USA recognition program that was created via MOU in fall 2002 among NASF, NFPA and the Forest Service. The training session took place in Daytona, Florida, in January and included information about the program, lectures on fire science, and field assessments of homes in the wildland/urban interface. The training is intended to give participants the ability and confidence to conduct community assessments on a case-by-case basis. All 50 states are eligible to participate by sending up to three representatives per state to the training sessions.¹

Following the Daytona session, the instructors who are members of the Working Team (Dave Halstead, Jack Cohen and Pat Durland) felt that a team approach would be needed to provide active support, not just oversight, to make the recognition program work. They proposed to the Working Team that a Task Group be formed to serve this purpose and to interact with the Working Team on a formal basis.

Decision: The Working Team voted to approve the formation of a Firewise Communities/USA Task Group consisting of Dave Halstead, Pat Durland, Jack Cohen, Joe Stam, Jim Smalley, Michele Steinberg and Judith

¹ See attached summary of the program and participation to date. (Note: will include with final minutes).

Leraas Cook. Michele Steinberg will provide detailed information on the Daytona and Prescott training sessions to the Working Team and to Joan Wehner and will improve information for registrants to better describe the purpose and agenda of the training sessions.

Firewise Landscapers

Discussion: Jim Smalley asked the Working Team if there was interest in having a national certification for “Firewise Landscapers”, based on feedback from some communities. Working Team members indicated Jim should direct his staff to work with appropriate associations to explore how they might provide such a designation.

Decision: Jim Smalley and staff will communicate with the ASLA and the Arborist Association to determine if there is interest in a Firewise Landscaper certification program.

Opportunities for Collaboration with Fire Education Working Team

Discussion: Dennis Dupuis serves on the NWCG Fire Education Working Team and feels there would be a benefit to both that team and the WUI Working Team if they met together in the fall. He indicated that some of their projects cross over into what we are working on and that information sharing would be important. The Fire Education team is working on a national communications plan that includes the themes of fire ecology, personal responsibility of folks living in fire ecosystems. They are establishing a coordinator for national wildland fire prevention teams for task guidance and training needs.

Decision: The Working Team agreed that a meeting of both teams would be productive. Jim Smalley will work with Dennis Dupuis and Sam Scranton on schedules and locations.

Review of Firefighter Video Series

Discussion: The Working Team viewed the unmixed version of the three updated videos – *Fire Behavior in the Wildland/Urban Interface*, *Structural Protection Strategies in the Wildland/Urban Interface* and *Firefighter Safety in the Wildland/Urban Interface*. The general response was very positive. The video series is part of an overall information package that will include an instructor guide and slide presentations (Powerpoint and overhead transparencies) corresponding with each of the three videos. The package will also be available in DVD format (videos and computer presentation) with a print copy of the instructor guide.

Jim Smalley described the distribution strategy. In addition to the normal distribution methods, Brian Johnson indicated that the IChiefs could distribute 6,000 copies to their members. Team members recommended that National Fire Directors and State Fire Marshals also receive a package. BLM has requested packages to distribute to small community fire departments through their regional offices. The National Volunteer Fire Council is sending a list of approx. 2000 fire departments who will receive them. Additionally, the fire departments responding to the FEMA needs assessment survey that their personnel lacked training in wui situations will also receive a copy. We will be making every effort to crosscheck lists to make sure that multiple copies aren't shipped to the same fire department.

Decision: The Working Team voted unanimously to accept the series update. Jim Smalley will work with Brian Johnson and others to address the additional distribution needs. Jim thanked the task group responsible for the work, including Brian Johnson, John Cochran, Jack Cohen, Cheryl Blake, Alan Kightlinger representing the National Volunteer Fire Council, John Owens of BLM, Dennis Childers of Orange County (CA) Fire and Lee Schmunk of BIA.

Update of National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Program Workplan for 2002-3

Jim Smalley provided the update, listing 31 separate program items for this year and 4 or 5 carry-overs. The tasks are described fully in the 2003 Annual Report that each Working Team member received.

Due to the combination of uncertainty about the level of funding for 2003 and the current staff workload, Jim indicated that several of the 2003 tasks in the Workplan were being put on hold until further notice. Under Task 1 (Public/Professional Information and Education), the following tasks are being put on hold:

- Preventing WUI Disasters
- Firewise Challenge Exhibits
- Roles and Responsibilities for Rural and Small Community Fire Departments in the WUI
- Firewise Communities Planning textbook
- Firewise and WUI Perspectives book
- Statistics of the Wildland/Urban Interface (with ISO)
- Firewise Landscape Plant Lists
- Reprints from magazines with Firewise orientation
- Firewise Distance Learning Project
- Firewise Messages for Youth

Under Task 2 (Training, Support and Participation) the following tasks are being put on hold:

- Firewise Communities/USA Introductory Video for Volunteer Fire Departments
- 2004 National Firewise Conference Planning
- One-day Firewise Communities Refreshers
- EMI Firewise Course (for planners and emergency managers)
- Development of Firewise Web-based/CD-Rom Training
- Firewise University design and development
- Geospatial Landscape Analysis Center
- Translation of Selected Materials to Spanish
- Performance measures for Firewise

The last item is being held off until after the outcome of the current evaluation being conducted on the Workshop series, though there are funds earmarked to continue to evaluate program performance.

In regards to the EMI course, Michele Steinberg mentioned that FEMA Mitigation staff invited Firewise staff to develop presentations for a week-long course being provided for state hazard mitigation personnel and FEMA staff, slated for June 9-13. Jack Cohen noted that FEMA mitigation staff in Region 8 (Denver) are working on a book about wildfire mitigation and have also been talking about Firewise training for their staff.

Joan Wehner asked about the availability of the Firewise Challenge Exhibits to other groups and suggested the Working Team publicize its availability to such groups as the Girl Scouts of America. This will be undertaken later in 2003 according to the workplan.

Jim noted that several projects have carried over from 2002 into 2003, including the Firewise Workshop performance evaluation; the update of "Everyone's Responsibility" and the Firefighter Safety Video Series; and the Firewise Landscape photo book.

Working Team members reviewed the 2003 Annual Report binder that Jim had distributed. John Cochran requested that an actual organizational chart of the Working Team itself be substituted for the flowchart showing a breakdown of projects and programs. Major tasks and assignments could be shown on another chart and updated yearly. Under the Budget area, two things should be added: 1) a multi-year breakdown of all the funds in the program by task; and 2) a breakdown of funding per agency to the Program.

Jim Shell added that the Forest Service and NASF want to be able to review the Firewise program and to understand how the funds are being spent. Forest Service is obligated to analyze this information because of its funding of the program.

There was also discussion of procedural issues and structure in how activities are approved and undertaken. Jim Smalley suggested drafting up a "How we do business" description for the Annual Report document, to be

included at Tab 1.3 under “Working Agreements”. Better communication is needed among the Working Team members and their respective agencies as to how the program is run and what it is accomplishing.

Decision: Chairman Dave Halstead asked that Jim Smalley create the suggested organizational and budget information and send it to Working Team members via email with a request for comments. Pat Durland and Joe Stam will draft a “How we do business” description and provide to Jim for the annual report. Michele Steinberg will work with Dave Halstead to get the Working Team charter, roster and minutes on the NWCG website. Minutes will be posted on that site after approval. Michele Steinberg will send a draft of the minutes to Working Team members by email with a deadline for approval.

Next Meeting Date, Location, Agenda

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, June 4 through Friday, June 6, 2003 in Charleston, South Carolina. It was suggested that the meeting would run from 9-5 for the first two days and 9-12 on Friday to allow for travel home.

The June meeting will include the development of the 2004 workplan; a presentation by Florida’s Jim Brenner on the state’s risk assessment model; a report on the Firewise Workshop performance evaluation; a review of the revision of the *Keeper of the Flame* film and DVD outline; and consideration of new products such as a video on residential sprinklers.

The fall meeting is currently slated for October 21-23, 2003 in Oklahoma City, but may change due to the desire to collaborate with the NWCG Fire Education Working Team (meeting is at the same time in Lexington, Kentucky). Sam Scranton and Dennis Dupuis will work out an agenda.