

**MINUTES FROM THE
NWCG WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE WORKING TEAM MEETING
Tucson, Arizona
February 12, 2004**

Thursday 12 February 2004

ATTENDANCE ROSTER

Working Team Members and Alternates:

Dave Halstead (National Emergency Managers Association) - Chair

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

Janet Anderson (USDA Forest Service)

Jack Cohen (USDA Forest Service)

Mary Corso (National Association of State Fire Marshals)

Virginia Desautels (DHS/Federal Emergency Management Agency)

Alan Dozier (National Association of State Foresters – Southern Area)

Kelly Hawk (US DOI/Bureau of Land Management)

Brian Johnson (International Association of Fire Chiefs)

Rob Neale (DHS/US Fire Administration)

S. Olin Phillips (National Association of State Foresters – Eastern Area)

Jim Shell (USDA Forest Service)

Jim Smalley (National Fire Protection Association)

Joe Stam (National Association of State Foresters – Western Area)

Guests:

David Behrens, Arizona State Lands Dept, Fire Management

David Buckley, Space Imaging

Joan O’Hara Wehner, National Association of State Foresters

Facilitator:

Barbara Kennedy -- USDA Forest Service

Recorder:

Michele Steinberg - National Fire Protection Association

Executive Session – 8:00-9:30 a.m.

1. Issue: Selection of Chair

Decision: Sam Scranton (BIA), currently the Vice Chair, was elected by acclamation to the position of WT Chair for 2004-2006. The NWCG Liaison to the WUI WT will prepare a letter of the selection for NWCG approval at next NWCG meeting.

2. Issue: Selection of Vice Chair

Decision: Virginia Desautels (FEMA) was elected by acclamation to the position of WT Vice Chair for 2004-2006. The NWCG Liaison to the WUI WT will prepare a letter of the selection for NWCG approval at next NWCG meeting.

3. Issue: Strategic Planning session expectations

Decision: Concurrence that the WT expectations are for EcoNorthwest to do more to analyze [external forces and future opportunities and relationships] than to formalize [existing relationships and procedures].

4. Issue: Orientation of new members

Decision: At least two hours prior to next meeting, new members will receive orientation by NFPA staff [with assistance by WT member(s)].

5. Issue: WUI WT representation at WUI related conferences and meetings

Decision: WT members agreed to represent the Firewise Communities Program and the National WUI Program at various conferences and meetings relevant to the Firewise Communities Program and the National WUI Program, depending on available resources. NFPA staff will produce a paper calendar of the major events [provided by WT members] for the year and distribute to the WT. Coordination of participation by WT members will be done by the Team.

Opening

Chairman Dave Halstead called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m. David Behrens provided a brief welcome to Arizona. He noted that the Governor has introduced legislation to make the state forestry department a cabinet-level agency.

Review of past meeting minutes

The Working Team reviewed the minutes from the October 2003 meeting and accepted them unanimously.

Update – Old Business

Program activity status

Jim Smalley reviewed the 2003 fourth quarter program report with the group, noting the completion of the Firefighter Safety video series, the three-year series of Firewise Workshops, the Keeper of the Flame video, and the training for hazard assessment for Firewise Communities/USA liaisons. Chairman Dave Halstead asked the group to recognize the enormous accomplishment represented by the Firewise Workshops, and thanked Jack Cohen, Cheryl Blake and others for outstanding assistance in delivering the Firewise Communities/USA training sessions.

Several other projects will be completed before the end of 2004, including the “Firewise Challenge” model and the Planning Textbook being worked on by the American Planning Association. Other ongoing projects are the “Perspectives book” and the conference slated for November 4-6 in Denver, Colorado. The theme is *Backyards and Beyond: National Wildland/Urban Interface Education Conference*. The conference will be announced at the National Fire Plan meeting the week of March 1. Many more details will be available shortly.

Jim Smalley noted that a project that started as update of a wildfire statistics book that the Insurance Services Organization (ISO) had begun was going to be developed this year as a WUI resource book, but that it is not a high priority among the other projects the program is working on. Jim Shell asked if it still has value and whether it should be dropped. Extensive discussion ensued regarding the need for statistical information and insurance data about loss. Concerns included the proprietary nature of much insurance data, including that from individual companies and ISO and the lack of consistent and complete data through national incident reporting systems.

Sam Scranton moved to form a task group to address the data needs for this document. Olin seconded the motion. The group agreed to assign Jim Shell, Mary Corso and Rob Neale to the task group, and directed them to work with NFPA staff. Motion passed unanimously.

NASF asked for information about those states that do not have liaisons appointed for the Firewise Communities/USA program. They intend to write a letter to those states to encourage them to appoint a staff person or an outside cooperator.

Jim reviewed information about the national distribution of a Firewise article using NAPS (North American Precipitation Syndicate) and the usage statistics from the Firewise website. Staff are developing a library of PDF files that will enable users to obtain Firewise materials in a printer-ready electronic format.

Working Team members reviewed new and revised materials, including an updated roster and biographies of team members and an updated Communications Plan from Fleishman-Hillard including a timeline for 2004. The members on the Communications Task Group working directly with Fleishman-Hillard praised their work and responsiveness to requests. Sam Scranton asked that Dave Halstead replace him on this task group starting immediately.

Update on Forest Service Community Organizer Request For Proposals

Jim Shell provided an update on this item. He sent a copy of the proposal out at the end of December. This activity was developed in response to a proposal by Fleishman-Hillard to develop a grassroots Firewise outreach project in three states. The Working Team decided at the October meeting to instead have the Forest Service use State Fire Assistance funds directly and to make it a competitive proposal among the states. The Forest Service Region staff and NASF were asked to get the proposal out to the field. The deadline for the request for proposals was set for February 16; to date, Jim Shell has received only one proposal from the state of Hawaii. Sam Scranton expressed concern that the tribal organizations around the country had not seen the proposal, although they are eligible. The group agreed to extend the deadline by 30 days (March 15) and to individually promote it within their agencies/constituencies. Once there are proposals received, Jim Shell asked for assistance from the Working Team in helping to identify and select the projects to be funded (ideally one per region – West, Southeast, Northeast). A Task Group was identified for this purpose, to include Olin Phillips, Alan Dozier, Jim Shell and the NFPA staff.

New Business

Review of proposal development and submission guidelines

Jim Smalley distributed a draft proposal submission guide to the group. The Working Team typically begins to develop the following year's work plan at its June meeting. This form would be for use by Working Team members in bringing proposals to the rest of the Team. It is not intended for use outside the Working Team membership. Members indicated it would be helpful to be able to bring proposals forward to the Team at any meetings, not just the June meeting, in order to allow for flexibility in taking advantage of opportunities. Jim agreed this would not be a problem, and emphasized that the use of the form would be to help the Team members with their decision making by providing more information about a given proposal than we typically get. Jack Cohen felt it would be useful in helping the Team to evaluate proposals in terms of how they link to our goals of preventing residential fire disasters. Suggested changes to the draft guide included adding an estimated timeline for the proposal; adding a place to indicate the duration of the proposed project (single year or multi-year); adding a line at the top of the page indicating that the document is internal to the Working Team; and retitling the document to read "Annual Work

Plan Activity Proposal for National or Regional Project”. The group discussed whether regional projects would be considered. The consensus was that regional projects would have to have demonstration value or the ability to be applied as a model for other places. NFPA staff agreed to edit the guide as directed and distribute the revised version back to Working Team members.

Firewise Kiosk recommendations

Jim Smalley provided an update on the Firewise Kiosk development. Several have been placed around the country and there have been requests to make additional kiosks available. Jim’s recommendation is that the program continue to offer the software free of charge, but to direct requesters to the vendor to purchase the kiosk at cost. The basic cost is about \$3,000 for the kiosk structure, CPU, touchscreen monitor and keyboard. (Decision?)

Operation Water task group update

Brian Johnson serves on the Task Group that is updating the “Operation Water” video and book. The Task Group will provide recommendations to the Working Team at the May meeting for next steps. It is likely to be a project for 2005.

Presentation – David Buckley, Space Imaging

At the October 2003 meeting, Working Team members asked to hear from Space Imaging about the project they are working on with the Southern foresters regarding community risk assessment. David Buckley is the director of Domain and GIS Solutions for Space Imaging. Related staff include Julie Coen, Sr. Project Manager, and local consultant Don Carlton with Fire Program Solutions. Jim Brenner and Sue McLellan with the Florida Division of Forestry have been involved as the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment project (SWRA) was developed. The project has a steering committee and is also supported by the Texas State Forest Service.

David provided an overview of the project approach for assessment and categorization of wildfire risk. Space Imaging is the prime contractor for the SWRA project (they were also the prime contractor for the Florida Fire Risk Assessment). The company is a leading geospatial data and services provider, focused on providing value-added services that utilize remotely sensed imagery data for specific domains. Services include imagery capacity and classification and GIS solutions, and cover domains including Forestry, Fire, Ecosystem Management, Homeland Security, Emergency Management, Defense/Intelligence, and Regional and Local government.

The SWRA project is sponsored by the Southern Group of State Foresters, mainly with funding through the USDA Forest Service and US Department of the Interior. It is a risk assessment for 13 southern states that is consistent, repeatable, and comparable. The project will enable people to have data and tools to keep up with changes on the landscape. Detailed project information is available at <http://corp.spaceimaging.com/swra>.

The SWRA project is comprised of several tasks. Components include Fire in the South Publications (before and after assessment); Data Acquisition, Creation, Conversion; Wildland Fire Risk Analysis; Implementation & Technology Transfer (so states can use it); Initial Attack Dispatching Tool; Change Detection and Updating of Data. The project will help rapidly identify areas that need additional tactical planning; allow agencies to work together to better define priorities and improve emergency response; develop data and performance measures; and identify resource needs.

David provided an overview of the project’s Wildland Fire Risk Assessment Approach. The process includes these steps: assess current situation; formulate and analyze alternatives; implement; monitor and evaluate. The assessment deals primarily with the wildland scale. The

model includes component inputs to create a wildland fire susceptibility index, and an environmental effects rating and suppression rating to get a fire effects index. The combination provides a measurement that is called a “level of concern”. The model can also provide an analysis of resource locations to review fire response accessibility. The Wildland Fire Susceptibility Index (WFSI) is the primary output of the risk model. It integrates probability of an acre igniting and the expected final fire size based on rate of spread in weather percentile categories into a single measure of susceptibility.

David provided a status report on the SWRA project. The first “Fire in the South” publication is under revision; fire occurrence data is nearing completion for draft delivery; weather influence zones and historical weather data is being compiled; initial fuel sources have been defined and are being compiled; initial dispatch locations have been compiled and are nearing draft delivery. Project leaders are working with others, including The Nature Conservancy, to get fuels data and reliability.

David described how the project is categorizing communities at risk. NASF guidelines use communities to identify WUI areas; communities should not be ranked, but rather categorized into High, Medium and Low so states can use this information consistently. The SWRA project mapping includes buffering areas to create zones around communities, in the absence of data on WUI boundaries. The project is using communities as a starting point for looking at specific areas. Community zones do not match community boundaries and this can be an issue.

In summary, David noted that communities can be categorized using either approach; that a combination of methods may be required based on the availability of boundary data; and that using community boundary polygons will define a more accurate delineation of urban interface areas for communities.

Members of the Working Team thanked David and noted that this will help states with consistency of risk assessment. This is a foundation for identifying communities at risk for project prioritization. David indicated that the completion date for the project is estimated for December 2004. Risk assessment results should be available sometime in August. The project cost per state (over 13 states) is just under \$200,000. The full project cost is \$1.6 million, but it is funded at only \$1.2 million.

Ad Council Campaign

Joan O’Hara Wehner and Jim Shell explained the history of the existing Ad Council campaign that focuses on getting audiences to the Firewise website. This campaign was created under the auspices of the Community Forestry and Fire Protection committee (CFFP), via the USDA Forest Service and NASF. The relationship between the CFFP and Ad Council is mandated by Congress. The ad campaign that was developed over the past year included print PSAs, a document called “Firewise in 5 Minutes” and television PSAs.

Joan indicated that Lew Southard at the USDA Forest Services wanted to know if state foresters are interested in having the campaign continue. He would need to find out in order to make a recommendation that this activity be budgeted in their program for 2005. Joan indicated that if the WUI Working Team was interested in seeing the campaign continue, they should recommend the NASF Fire Committee endorse the use of Forest Service funds by CFFP. WUI Working Team members confirmed that this is not a request for funds from the Working Team; nor would a recommendation or an endorsement be a guarantee that the CFFP would continue the campaign.

Brian Johnson made a two-part motion: first, to ask the Working Team's Communications Task Group, including the Fleishman-Hillard staff, to review the proposed campaign continuation and make a recommendation to the Working Team before the end of March; and second, if the recommendation is positive, that the Working Team endorse the concept to the NASF Fire Committee, with the understanding that Working Team members be part of the review of campaign product development. The motion passed unanimously.

The Working Team members viewed a 30-second version of one of the campaign's TV PSAs titled "Assault". Joan indicated that it will be distributed formally to each state forester, but other copies would need to be requested from the Ad Council.

P110 Course revision – Inspecting Fire Prone Property

Jim Smalley reviewed discussion from the Working Team's joint meeting with the NWCG Wildland Fire Education Working Team in October. At that time, the groups agreed that NWCG course P-110 falls under the scope of the WUI Working Team. The WFE Working Team indicated its desire to transfer responsibility for the course update to the WUI Working Team. Maureen Brooks of the WFE Working Team sent a letter to Logan Lee of the NWCG Training Working Team on November 14, 2003, requesting this transfer. The letter was acknowledged on February 3, 2004. The Training Working Team had a number of questions and asked for a response by April 30. They want to know the purpose of transferring the course and who will be revising it.

NWCG's schedule calls for a revision of P-110 in 2005-2006. The WUI Working Team does not have a budget for this task, nor a task schedule. As it fits the WUIWT mission, and since there has been a lot of recent work in hazard assessment training that could be used, Jim was hopeful that Working Team members may assist with revising the course. Jim distributed copies of the P-110 package to Working Team members, including slides, video and written material. He recommended to the Working Team that it develop small task group to address revising the course.

The first step is to respond to the Training Working Team's questions. Jim indicated that the revision can be completed in an earlier cycle (2004-2005) if desired. Jack Cohen asked if the response letter could ask how much augmentation of the existing course they are willing to accept. Jim stated he would also like to recommend to the Training Working Team that the course be available in an electronic format, as they are developing an online delivery system for NWCG courses. General discussion among Working Team members about this activity was positive; the course is seen as a good first step in upgrading curriculum and helping introduce people to Firewise concepts.

A task group was developed to address the P-110 course revision, including Rob Neale, Kelly Hawk, Olin Phillips and Jack Cohen. Brian Johnson agreed to send the proposal to a key state training director who may have some input. Dave Halstead will also have emergency managers take a look at it. The first step for this task group is to develop the response letter to the Training Working Team. When more information about timeline and budget are available, the task group will provide updates to the rest of the WUI Working Team and develop next steps from there.

Task Group needed for Wildfire Hazard Assessment Methodology book revision

Jim Smalley asked that a Task Group be formed to revise the Wildfire WHAM based on NASF final field guidance. He would like this group to simply start the process by reviewing the current document and deciding what needs to be changed in concert with the revision of NWCG course P-110. After discussion, Jim made a motion to have the same task group handling the P-110

revision to take on the review of the WHAM book. Kelly Hawk seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Request for Participation on NFPA Technical Committees

Jim Smalley asked if the Working Team members are interested in participating on NFPA's Forest and Rural Technical Committee, that deals with standards including NFPA 1144, *Standard for Protection of Life and Property from Wildfire*. Jim made a motion that the Working team should encourage member participation on the NFPA Forest and Rural Technical Committee. Rob Neale seconded the motion. Discussion: Jim noted that while there is an application process, individuals do not have to be NFPA members to serve on the Committee. Dave Halstead felt the group should encourage similar participation on ICC committees and similar groups that are developing codes and standards. Brian Johnson suggested that this issue be raised during the strategic planning session in March. If it is a priority of the Working Team to be involved in code development, then we should pursue subject matter experts to assist in this task. It is difficult to track six different standards in two different code processes. Dave asked for a vote; Mary Corso voted in favor; the rest voted against.

Brian Johnson made a motion to consider this issue as priority discussion at the March strategic planning meeting, and in the meantime to find out more about all six documents and committees and when they are up for cycle. Sam Scranton seconded the motion. Discussion: Dave stated that if we could include ICC information, it would be helpful. Brian amended his motion to include the same information (technical committee and who serves on it) about the ICC process for relevant standards. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Protocol Discussion

Sam Scranton stated that the Working Team should move certain parts of its meetings into Executive Session and be consistent. He suggested that if the group wants presenters, they could come in at the end of the meeting. He felt the Working Team should try to structure its meetings to ensure that we have motions and seconds on action items, so we don't walk away without clear agreement. He proposed a revision of meeting structure to do more of the Working Team's business in Executive Session and that all decision items are voted upon. Others agreed on the need to formalize the meetings.

Extensive discussion ensued regarding the rationale for having "closed door" portions of the meeting and the need to conduct meetings in a more efficient and effective manner. In addition to Sam's suggestion, some Working Team members suggested a format similar to that used by NFPA and NWCG in their meetings, in which there are clear guidelines for participation in open and closed formats. Many felt that budget discussions and discussions of proposals before the Working Team should be in Executive Session. Dave Halstead asked for consensus that the Chair and Vice-Chair work with NFPA staff on meeting agendas and decide ahead of time what portions are open and closed. Sam indicated that Working Team members need to have the final agenda 30 days in advance of any meeting. Jim Smalley stated that for agendas to meet the needs of the group, the group must contribute to the agenda. He asked that Working Team members provide agenda items to improve meeting effectiveness. There was general consensus to follow Dave's suggestion.

Legislative/Congressional Issues

Brian Johnson asked if anyone on the Working Team wanted to comment on HR 1292 having to do with remote sensing. The bill is sponsored by Congressmen Udall, Weldon and Hefley. The IAFC can weigh in on it, so if Working Team members want to educate IAFC, Brian asked them to get in touch with him.

Brian Johnson asked the group if they were aware of the PART – Program Assessment Rating Tool – that was developed by the Performance Institute and is being used by OMB. The Performance Institute is holding full afternoon session March 10 on Capitol Hill about whether they are getting results from wildland fire program. Brian reviewed a list of sponsors and speakers. He intends to send staff to the meeting because it touches on so many important issues, including Fire Act Grants. Ginny Desautels indicated several staff within FEMA’s branches would attend. Brian asked that Working Team members email Ginny if they know of staff attending.

Kelly Hawk reported on her activity with the implementation group for the report on the Role and Needs of Local/Rural/Volunteer Fire Departments. She is involved in training package development and delivery. Some of the issues include development of training that is conducive to local schedule and budget limitations, as well as finding instructors in every state and providing train-the-trainer work to assist. She is also assigned with helping develop training packages so that local areas could assemble their own Type-3 management teams. Another part of the report is to explore the establishment of a reserve of wildland firefighters. Since the WUI Working Team is involved in firefighter safety, these items fit the mission in terms of training issues. Kelly noted that the implementation group can bring on anyone else that it makes sense to bring on. Mary Corso suggested contacting state training directors, as they have instructors in the field. Rob Neale noted that USFA runs a free training called the Volunteer Incentive Program. They are always looking for new courses. Jim Shell added that this group and other committees are working on related tasks, and that he is concerned that we do not duplicate efforts.

Budget Discussion

The Working Team reviewed a cost-share worksheet showing the breakdown of budget for the program. The USDA Forest Service contribution this year is down by \$500,000 from the previous year. Jim Shell noted that the Forest Service contribution to the cooperating agreement is State Fire Assistance funds. Beginning in 2001, the intent was to further the efforts of the Working Team and money came out of the State Fire Assistance funds for this purpose. There was \$2.8 million in 2001, with the amount dropping each year. Jim noted that now and in future, state foresters have more say in how these funds are distributed. We’re working on how we’re describing activities and expenditures; it is important to have a strategy to use the funds.

Jim Smalley noted that the worksheet shows a FEMA share - this is the USFA share, and this year USFA has not contributed. Ginny Desautels stated that there is FEMA funding in a separate agreement with NFPA to support the work of the program as well as FEMA’s mitigation mission. Jim Shell asked if this separate funding could be shown anywhere on reports. Sam Scranton asked whether the Forest Service is considering using fuels funding to contribute to this cooperative agreement rather than State Fire Assistance funds. Jim Shell indicated that the Forest Service has indeed been considering it, and will need to see the program proposal and what it will cost. He said there is a need to look at other ways to cover the program costs and to find out if other partners can contribute funds, or whether others besides NFPA can accomplish specific projects or tasks. The Forest Service may be looking for a maintenance level of funding to continue projects. Kelly Hawk stated that next year’s contribution from DOI will likely be less, and that a strategic plan is important to show to DOI directors.

Olin Phillips said that NASF representatives are being asked to identify sustaining budget for Firewise, then to consider off-the-top projects to work on WUI projects. Brian Johnson asked about the schedule for budgeting, now that we are through the current budget cycle. Jim Smalley stated that we will develop a new 5-year cooperative agreement that sets the program framework,

identifies funding partners, and provides a workplan. This agreement is multiyear, but the budget is annual. Funding does not have to be spent in single year, however. Dave Halstead noted that we need to look at what we can do to sustain activity – a base amount to maintain the program.

NWCG Update

Jim Smalley is the Working Team's liaison to the NWCG. He attended their meeting at the end of January. The new NWCG chair is Kirk Rowdabaugh, Arizona state forester. The new Vice-chair is Alice Forbes from the USDA Forest Service. The NWCG created a new working group known as DAWG – Data Assessment Working Group. The Working Team should connect with them on statistics and data needs.

Jim also attended the North American Forestry Commission Meeting, specifically its Fire Management Study Group meeting. He is a member at the direction of BLM and USDA Forest Service. He gave a report on the WUI Working Team to this group. A delegation from Portugal was very interested in what we are doing with Firewise Communities. The Study Group began planning the 4th International Wildland Fire for sometime in 2007. Its next meeting is in March or April in Costa Rica. Following Jim's participation in the 3rd International Conference in Sydney, there has been continued interest in Firewise from Australia and New Zealand. Jim has been asked to go to New Zealand in a month or so to help transfer Firewise concepts. When in Sydney, Jim also met with the Forest Fire Management Group – there was explanation of how crews from Australia and New Zealand came to help fight the Biscuit Fire and others in the US. Jim asked about how the Incident Commanders verified their qualifications. Apparently, they have an international crosswalk already completed with signoffs. Jim Hubbard and Kirk Rowdabaugh are working on this for the US.

Jim reminded the Working Team to bring him issues for presentation or discussion at NWCG meetings.

Other Business

Team members presented Dave Halstead with recognition for his tenure as Chairman of the group from 2002-2004.

Sam Scranton noted that NFPA nominated the WUI Working Team for a National Fire Plan award based on the Firewise Communities/USA recognition program. Sam also noted that for the next meeting in May, he will work with Jim Smalley on creating a field trip to the first tribal organization receiving Firewise Communities/USA recognition (Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa). The field trip will be optional.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.