

Section 4: Public Participation

The *key to successful implementation* of the Fire Mitigation Program is involvement from the private property owners in Bonneville County and the public who participate in the recreation and tourism within the confines of the county. The public participation process is being assured in four specific ways.

- ❑ Ensure ongoing involvement of private homeowners and/or representatives from the communities served by this process on the planning committees.
- ❑ Increase availability of the Bonneville County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan and associated information by placing it on the Internet.
- ❑ Correspond with non-resident property owners announcing the development of a wildland/urban interface program and requesting them to complete a brief questionnaire.
- ❑ Facilitation of scheduled public meetings for residents living in the wildland/urban interface areas.

Public Involvement:

The Bonneville County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Interagency Planning group has actively announced planning meetings during the development of this Plan. The Group has welcomed individual homeowners and representatives from homeowners associations to all of its meetings, and has asked for input of issues facing the homeowners in the interface areas. The Group will continue to work with homeowners during the implementation of mitigation alternatives and in the annual review and assessment of the Plan.

Information developed during the planning process, such as meeting minutes, drafts of the Plan, hazard maps, and other information will be placed on the ERS website for review by the general public as it is completed. Once the Plan is completed, it will be placed on the Bonneville County homepage.

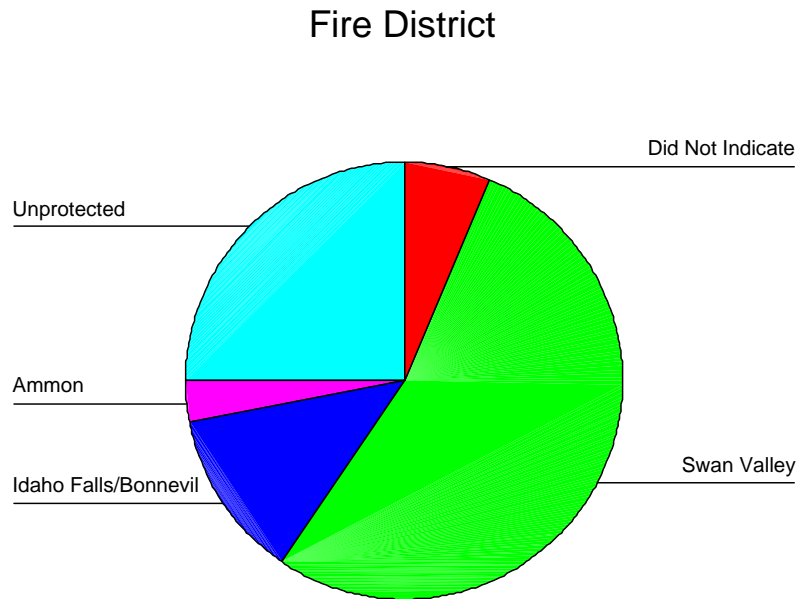
Homeowner Questionnaire

The results from the questionnaire are provided in detail in Appendix 4. There were 80 questionnaires mailed out. Roughly 25% of the questionnaires were returned. In addition, 12 questionnaires were completed at the public meeting held in Swan Valley on August 31, 2004. The following are highlights of the responses:

- ❑ 53% of the respondents owned property in Swan Valley.
- ❑ 63% responded that they had not participated in hazard reduction activities.
- ❑ 47% responded that they knew what to do if a wildfire affected their community.
- ❑ Only 44% indicated that if they weren't currently in a fire protection district that they would be in favor of being included in a new district.
- ❑ 40% of the respondents who lived outside of a fire protection district supported an increase in taxes to improve fire protection.
- ❑ 91% indicated that a Wildfire Public Education Program would be beneficial.
- ❑ 66% indicated that they would be willing to participate in wildland/urban interface mitigation activities.
- ❑ 53% indicated that a Web Page would be beneficial in providing information to them regarding Wildland/Urban Interface Mitigation.

Questionnaire results indicate that there is an appreciation and support of the need to reduce fuel loading in the summer home area. One of the largest concerns appears to be response times for properties located on the south side of the Snake River below the Palisades Dam.

The chart below illustrates the response by fire district.



Public Meetings/Input

A public meeting for residents of the Swan Valley Area was held on July 4, 2004 in conjunction with the Swan Valley Fire District's open house. The meeting was lightly attended. Those who attended were given general information on the status of the identification of hazards and vulnerabilities in the wildland/urban interface areas in Swan Valley and then given the opportunity to comment on the planning process. In addition, each attendee was asked to fill out the questionnaire found in Appendix 5.

A public meeting was held on August 31, 2004 in Swan Valley with homeowners who reside in Vulnerability Zones 1-5. Several homeowners were able to attend and provide comments. Swan Valley Fire personnel were able to provide information about the location of fire districts. In addition, information regarding defensible space planning, appropriate construction materials, and available fire fighting resources was presented.

Results from the public meetings and the questionnaire will be included in this section of the plan, and issues identified will be analyzed and documented in the Section 3 Hazard Assessment.