



IDAHO LANDS RESOURCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 29, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patti Best, Idaho Power
Randy Brooks, University of Idaho Extension
Gary Brown, Payette National Forest
Susan Cleverley, Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security (Alt.)
Brad Cramer, American Planning Assoc., ID Chap.
Elaine Clegg, Association of Idaho Cities
Robert Cope, Idaho Association of Counties
John DeGroot, Nez Perce Tribe
Fred Ebel, Association of Consulting Foresters
Margie Ewing, USDA-Forest Service (Alt.)
Janet Funk, Idaho Tree Farm Committee
Frank Gariglio, USDA-NRCS

Gary Hess, Idaho Forest Owners Assoc. (Alt.)
Steven Hollenhorst, University of Idaho, CNR
Kevin Knauth, USDI Bureau of Land Management
Ken Knoch, Idaho Parks & Recreation Assoc.
Mark Larson, Idaho State Fire Marshall
Dean Marcus, Northern Lakes Fire (Alt.)
Kurt Mettler, Coeur d'Alene Tribe
Robyn Miller, The Nature Conservancy
Gregg Servheen, Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game
Robert Reggear, Idaho Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Dee Sessions, USDA-Forest Service

AGENCY STAFF PRESENT:

David Groeschl, Idaho State Forester, IDL
Craig Foss, Chief, Bureau of Forestry Assistance, IDL
Ara Andrea, Service & Regulatory Prog. Mgr., IDL
Dave Stephenson, Urban Interface/Prog. Planning, IDL
Craig Glazier, Idaho Fire Plan Working Group
Mary Fritz, Program Planning & Development, IDL
Ken Ockfen, Chief, Bureau of Fire Management, IDL
Karen Sjoquist, Forest Legacy Program, IDL
Kurt Naccarato, Hazardous Fuels Program, IDL
Suzie Jude, Forest Stewardship Program, IDL

VISITORS PRESENT:

Mike Christianson, Montana Forest Stewardship Program
Larry Clark, Idaho State Fire Commissioners Assoc.
Rob Ethridge, Montana Dept. of Natural Resources & Cons.
Dan Rogers, Montana Dept. of Natural Resources & Cons.
Maya Solomon, USDA-Forest Service
Ken Stinson, Latah Soil & Water Conservation District

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Craig Foss welcomed everyone to the meeting. Craig provided a brief background on the genesis of this group from three previous advisory groups, namely the Idaho Fire Plan Working Group (IFPWG), the Idaho Urban & Community Forestry Advisory Council (ICFAC), and the Idaho Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee (IFSAC). The goal of today's meeting is to meet, provide information, interact, and brainstorm. Binders have been provided to members containing brief member biographical information and will be populated with additional documents during today's meeting and in the future.

Idaho State Forester David Groeschl welcomed and thanked new members for their commitment to serve on the Idaho Lands Resource Coordinating Council (ILRCC). While he doesn't want to lose sight of the good work done by the previous individual advisory groups, he believes this group will build on past successes and move toward landscape-scale benefits. David stressed that communication among the various groups will be very important. ILRCC will integrate multiple objectives in future projects. Both state and federal program budgets have experienced recent declines and the focus will be on how to best spend limited funds. David commented that the Forest Action Plan and its identified priority landscape areas (PLAs) have multiple drivers in terms of threats and benefits, both urban and rural. There is now an opportunity to take programs to a higher level by focusing and leveraging limited funds for maximum benefit on a landscape level.

David commented that IDL's new director, Tom Schultz, has led an organizational exercise to develop a new vision statement. One of the attributes of IDL's vision statement is that the agency will be a "premier" natural resource organization. The ILRCC will be part of helping IDL achieve that premier vision as an agency. IDL is very committed to helping the group achieve success and finding solutions to potential obstacles that may arise.

Craig asked members to think about the ideas presented today and to share them with their respective interests. New members provided a short summary of the experience and background they bring to the council, their initial thoughts about ILRCC, and one thing on their 'bucket list.

Craig explained that to maintain a functional size, not all of the interests previously represented on IFPWG, IFSAC and ICFAC are on ILRCC. Members of the prior committees provided input on the most critical representations for ILRCC. In some cases, ILRCC members have personal and professional experience that overlaps multiple interest areas that will benefit the council.

STATE & PRIVATE FORESTRY / FOREST ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW – Dave Stephenson

Dave Stephenson provided an overview of State & Private Forestry programs and Idaho's Forest Action Plan. State & Private Forestry (S&PF) is the Forest Service's engagement of management on non-federal (state and private) forestlands, from Main Street to mountaintop. These programs are administered through state forestry agencies. In Idaho, the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) oversees S&PF program delivery. Dee Sessions and Margie Ewing serve as resources to states in our region for S&PF programs.

Dave reviewed background information on S&PF programs and the Idaho Forest Action Plan (FAP). FAP identifies seven key forest related issues that threaten forests, or for which forests provide benefit. It identifies Priority Landscape Areas (PLAs) in which multiple high-priority issues exist. Pages 7-26 of FAP and his PowerPoint presentation (provided as a separate document) contain the information Dave covered.

Questions from Council Members:

Q: If FAP is going to do anything on a landscape scale, the Forest Service will have to be involved. There is also a new Forest Service planning rule coming out—will it meld national forest plans with Idaho's FAP?

A: Margie Ewing reported that within Region 1 the combined Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests will be one of the first to coordinate their forest plan with FAP. They have hired a person to oversee the process and have already talked to the FS Regional Office and forest planning group about how important it is to include the state assessment National Forest System (NFS) plans. The Forest Service and ILRCC members representing constituencies within the boundaries of these forests can help make them aware of FAP and its value.

Q: Was Landfire data used in developing FAP maps, and was it ground-truthed? Is the state assessment set in stone or can it be changed?

A: Craig Glazier responded that the assessment used the best available statewide data, and this included Landfire data to partially inform prioritization for uncharacteristic wildland fire risk. Ground-truthing of data was beyond the scope of the assessment team. Through the assessment process, gaps in data availability and quality were identified. IDL is obligated to update the assessment at least every 5 years and, with partners, will continue to seek and use the best available statewide during each subsequent update.

Ken Stinson – FAP is currently being used to get funding from the Snake River Basin Adjudication (SRBA) fund to address water quality and Endangered Species Act (ESA) issues with funded projects on state and private grounds in both Clearwater and Latah counties.

Q: More areas identified within PLAs in north Idaho (Region 1) than south Idaho (Region 4). How does it affect funding?

A: Dave reported that this does not affect funding for base level programs. Dee noted that forest health issues may affect regional funding to a certain extent.

Q: Will this group (ILRCC) be part of the 5-year updates?

A: Craig Foss reported that ILRCC will be involved but the extent of their involvement will be a topic of discussion for this group.

Gregg Servheen suggested IRLCC members consider the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition [Threats to Western Forests](#) report as a supplemental source for information.

ILRCC WHITE PAPER/PURPOSE OF COUNCIL/COUNCIL OBLIGATIONS – Craig Foss

Craig Foss provided background on the ILRCC White Paper developed by the multi-council representatives. With the exception of the Idaho Forest Practices Advisory Committee (FPAAC), ILRCC members represent all primary committees advisory to IDL. FPAAC is not represented on ILRCC and remains a separate committee as it has a statutory requirement to promulgate Forest Practices rules for review by the Idaho Land Board with ultimate passage by the Idaho legislature.

Council members discussed the challenges of including the roles and missions of the three prior advisory groups in ILRCC, especially across the urban to rural continuum. There is concern that one program may be sacrificed for another. Craig explained that each S&PF program will continue to receive program-specific funding from the Forest Service to address the specific goals and work of each. The goal and opportunity of ILRCC is, in part, to understand how each program can compliment and leverage the others in addressing FAP issues on a landscape scale within priority areas. This requires a focus on outcomes rather than outputs.

Members discussed their perception of IRLCC roles, purpose and directions as follows:

IRLCC Purpose:

- Serve the public and make recommendations to the State Forester. Must follow standards and guidelines ...
- Expand the circle of influence for IDL
- Advise on an all lands context across all ownerships for the good of the resource
- Two-way communication between members and their represented constituency

IRLCC Roles:

- Education/Communication:
 - Education for elected officials, community leaders, landowners, other constituents
 - Capitalize on opportunities to partner on education efforts with Idaho Association of Counties and Association of Idaho Cities for land use planning and other projects
 - Share IRLCC activities/information with others through newsletters
 - Develop a strategic message and deliver it consistently
 - Clarify the mixed messages regarding responsible forest management from economic and environmental perspective. Do a better job delivering the message about being good land stewards and take back the word “environmentalist.” Put the message in the context of economics for environmental services vs. highest and best use.
 - Look for opportunities to share understanding of the benefits and value of urban and rural forests
- Funding:
 - Leverage money and fund collaboration
 - Look for funding sources outside of S&PF programs; Leverage funding from various sources to maximize limited resources

- Provide direction to NRCS on forestry issues and expand opportunities for landowners to receive NRCS technical and financial assistance
- Collaboration:
 - Put together groups within PLAs to do projects across ownerships. Look at geographic impacts in working circles to expand the reach of these efforts. ILRCC can work to bring these parties together. There are collaborative efforts around federal lands but none for private land.
 - Focus on the cooperative nature of work being done so it will result in positive resource impacts addressing multiple high priority issues (water quality, fish & wildlife, etc)
 - Include multiple stakeholder participation within ILRCC, not just those interests present today
 - Look past ownership to address landscape level issues and provide for local community input on projects outside the wildland urban interface (WUI)
 - Strengthen and broaden the county wildfire working groups
 - Focus on things that help communities address forest resources issues where need is greatest
 - Identify different approaches to tying together resource issues, public education, and identifying available funding depending upon geographic location in Idaho, i.e. north vs. south; urban & rural
 - Expand/integrate federal lands and private/state lands in terms of active management to address forest threats (fuels reduction, etc)

ILRCC Directions (Identification of needs):

- Management
 - Conduct research/modeling on peak flows in upper watersheds and determine lower watershed effects/impacts
 - Work toward efficient and effective use of limited funding on urban issues including storm water mitigation and legislative solutions
 - Get projects done on federal ownership
 - Address challenges of private forest management adjacent to federal lands (i.e. difficulty of obtaining easements, etc.)
- Education
 - Utilize UI Extension for forest landowner education and determine what resource education needs are not currently being served throughout Idaho
 - Focus on longevity in forest ownership. Older generation of private forest landowners understand forest issues and thinking about long-term planning and succession.
- Forest Markets
 - Expand knowledge/technology of bio-fuel uses on smaller scale applications (European model)
 - Focus on new markets (ex: biofuels) and maintaining logging infrastructure to provide economic incentives to private landowners to manage and increase forest health. Otherwise, when traditional forest products markets recover, there may not be sufficient infrastructure to accommodate
 - Develop alternative lumber markets for Idaho's superior quality of forest products
- Policy
 - Look for opportunities to effect natural resource policy in urban communities
 - Urbanization in Idaho is largest threat to conservation of ranch and forest lands. Pay attention to policy (regulation) recommendations at the local level. Education, incentives, regulation and enforcement are all important elements for conservation work and easements

- Educate city councils, decision makers and local governments about the need to fund community parks, forests, and other resource issues. Make it a perpetual practice for new members on city councils, etc
- Help communities recognize that values have shifted away from timber board feet to environmental services; Idaho counties should receive federal funding for environmental services in the absence of receiving funds from historical timber receipts on federal lands (Craig-Wyden bill)

LUNCH

ONGOING OBLIGATIONS:

“ABOVE-BASE” BUDGETING PROCESS—Craig Glazier

Craig Glazier explained USFS Region 4’s Above-Base hazard fuels mitigation budgeting process. After discussion, Council members suggested the next ILRCC meeting take place the day prior to the Above-Base project review meeting so that interested ILRCC members can participate. Additional information on the Above-Base program will be sent to Council members to provide a better understanding of the program and selection process.

FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM—Ara Andrea

Ara Andrea provided information on the Forest Legacy Program (FLP), a federal initiative that purchases conservation easements to protect high value forestlands at risk of conversion to other uses. She discussed the funding stream, collaboration with land trusts, and the role of the FLP committee (formerly a subcommittee of the Idaho Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee). Ara also introduced Karen Sjoquist, IDL’s FLP Coordinator.

The FLP committee annually tours proposed FLP projects, then evaluates and ranks applications within Idaho. IDL’s intention is to have interested ILRCC members participate in this committee starting in 2013. After discussion, Council members expressed their desire to become more familiar with the program as soon as possible, and suggested interested members participate in the committee this year. It was agreed that Ara will send an overview of the duties, timeline and time commitment of the committee, and interested Council members will participate as observers to the process in 2012, increasing their familiarity with the program before becoming active members in 2013.

STATE HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN—Susan Cleverley

Susan Cleverley reported on the Bureau of Homeland Security’s (BHS) process for developing Idaho’s All Threats Hazard Mitigation Plan. Formerly, the Idaho Fire Plan Working Group provided technical advisory assistance for the wildland fire hazard portion of the plan. BHS would like a committee of five to six members from the ILRCC to continue providing technical advice to inform this plan. Susan will prepare a short description of the purpose of the plan and the role of the advisory committee and time commitments which will be sent to Council members. Members should let IDL know if they are interested in serving on this committee.

WILDLAND FIRE GRANTS—Craig Glazier

Craig Glazier discussed two different Wildland Fire grant programs. The Western Fire Managers Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) grants are a result of the National Fire Plan, a program passed by Congress in response to the 2000 fire year. These grants fund priority projects identified in County Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). These plans identify collaborative approaches locally, prioritize projects and describe how this work increases the survivability of structures within the area. Eligible projects include reducing hazard fuels and restoring fire-adapted ecosystems, providing education within the WUI, and planning. Approximately \$12-\$15 million has been allocated annually to the “Western” region. Historically, Idaho has done well, averaging about \$1.5 million per year.

Community Protection grants comes through Regions 1&4, and fund projects on ownerships adjacent to federal lands hazard fuel reduction projects. The purpose is to protect private property from fires coming off federal lands. Funding within this grant program is much smaller.

Craig would like to see ILRCC be involved with project prioritization for both these programs in the future. For 2012, members will be invited to attend these meetings to learn more about the program, CWPPs and their review, and the ranking process. Craig's PowerPoint presentation provides additional information— provided as a separate document.

S&PF COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM—Dave Stephenson

The S&PF Competitive Grants are funded through a 15% reduction of all S&PF program dollars going to states (excepting Legacy and Volunteer Fire Assistance). The creation of this competitive allocation process is part of the 2008 Farm Bill. Its purpose is to complete high priority landscape-scale projects identified in state forest action plans. In this context, a 'landscape-scale' project will yield meaningful outcomes to address the issue or issues that constitute the reason for the effort.

Applications for CY2013 competitive grants will be due in September 2012. The maximum amount for each grant application is \$300,000. The only eligible applicants are states. Each state is limited to four single state applications per year and one multistate application as the lead state. They can be a partner on any number of other multistate applications where another state is the lead applicant. The competition is regional (Northeast, South and West), so Idaho competes with 17 other Western states and 5 Pacific island territories for a western pot of money. Over the last 5 years, there has been roughly \$7.2M available annually in the west. Note that no state can receive more than 15% of the available money or a little over a \$1million per year. Dave also discussed review criteria, projects for which Idaho has received funding and a summary of successful Forest Legacy projects funded through that program. Additional information is within the PowerPoint presentation—provided as a separate document.

IDL is already working on project proposals for 2012, but would like ILRCC, utilizing FAP, to help guide development of projects that integrate programs, strategically address FAP issues, work across ownerships and compliment/leverage other efforts.

COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE STATE—Mary Fritz

Mary Fritz presented on a landscape-scale, collaborative effort in the North Idaho's Silver Valley to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, restore forest health, improve water quality and enhance economic development. This is an excellent example of the strategies identified in FAP and the types of efforts that address multiple high-priority issues in a Priority Landscape Area integrating many different programs. Mary's presentation is provided in a separate document.

FACILITATED DISCUSSION—Ara Andrea

This discussion focused on project-instigating models for implementing FAP where the "seed" of the wider project begins at a local level. Ara discussed the importance of local-level project impetus, utilizing local working groups like CWPPs or Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), developing local plans and submitting applications to IDL for assistance with funding. Conceptually, these local groups will design meaningful scale projects on the ground—based on FAP strategies, across program boundaries with integrated involvement—and submit to ILRCC. Over the next two years IDL expects to work with and solicit projects for competitive funding submission. Beyond this, a local-level model for project development is desired. Ara requested ideas from members about the local level model idea, how it works on the ground, any experience with the model, and how ILRCC can build this structure.

In general, Council members liked the concept of a local infrastructure for FAP implementation.

Characteristics of effective local groups:

- Identify the area, the need, and get the right people representing the necessary stakeholders to the table
- Get interests from inside and outside the communities. If others outside the community don't see what you're trying to do, they will oppose projects.
- Have clear state and regional goals to which the initiative is responding
- Get people interested early
- Use grant programs to innovate
- Local framework helps gain program support when first starting

Challenges identified were:

- Getting the right players to the table
- Some organizations may be restrained by fairness in working with localized groups—actions must be tied to state or regional needs to ensure participation
- Local models need to focus place-based problems and solutions, and this takes maturity and time. Solutions may be non-linear.
- May wish to focus on non-industrial private forest owners (NIPFs) rather than a model. Collaboratives focused on federal lands management, for example, may not be interested in work on other lands.
- Integration [collaboration] of local landowners, cities and counties may be challenging
- Understand barriers to local involvement in grant programs
- Keeping the interest and “fire” going—ILRCC should have “ready fertilizer to sprinkle on the local spark.”
- Expanding beyond narrower missions (federal lands focus, fuels reduction, etc.)

Additional Thoughts:

- ILRCC can coach and mentor on some type of local [county] level with commitment to local entities represented so they know what's happening around them
- UI Extension is based on community model
- ILRCC may wish to think about projects strategically and accept/link project applications proactively. That is, identify the ILRCC's role before deciding on a model
- ILRCC may be overwhelmed by projects once they are up and functioning. Important to maintain enthusiasm.
- Don't let small educational efforts be lost
- Locally developed projects will need prioritization at state level
- Good potential to link projects together at a statewide scale

Examples of Local Coordinating Groups that work:

- Existing collaboratives— Clearwater Collaborative, the Upper North Fork, Payette and others
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Tribal departments work collaboratively through tribal government
- McCall group—fire protection/park/interpretive education
- Valley and Adams Counties have good fuels coordination groups
- Resource Conservation and Development Councils
- Idaho Community Forestry Partners in SE Idaho
- County Wildfire Working Groups

Grant programs/projects discussion

- FAP is the operational document
- Define opportunities first—what is most at risk or where is benefit greatest?
 - FAP maps show specific risks/benefits in PLAs—are local issues the same?
 - CWPPs prioritize projects locally [currently, these focus only on fire risk—can they be expanded to include all FAP issues?]
 - Consider and utilize local plans (FAP identifies many of these plans within PLAs and statewide)
 - Projects need to address *multiple* high-priority issues
- IRLCC can use FAP to identify landscape level issues—what else can we add?
 - Do we want to solicit project proposals broadly, or target strategically?
 - Should ILRCC identify priorities [annually?] and solicit one-page project proposals within sideboards, then decide which to develop?
 - Assess readiness of an organization to apply for and implement projects vs. those that need additional assistance
 - Find those interest in developing projects
 - Good communication on grants/applications may be a role of ILRCC
 - Model needs to understand/fit national ranking criteria
 - See the big picture—connect the dots. Issues transcend ownerships, programs.
- Breaking away from specific interest or program priorities is necessary—think outside your box. What is the bigger picture?
- Don't develop a project to chase grant dollars; develop a good project first, then find the best funding opportunities
- Project follow-through and maintenance important—no teeth to require maintenance of defensible space in fuels mitigation projects
 - No more grants if work doesn't get completed
- Educational components within projects important
- Develop model forest health language for county comprehensive plans
- Can IDL prepare a Grants fact sheet with answers to the five most likely questions? [Yes]

MEETING FEEDBACK, WRAP UP, NEXT MEETING—Craig Foss

Discussion on the role of ILRCC continued, and members asked if IDL could draft additional information on the purpose and roles of ILRCC. Craig Foss noted that the white paper provides this, and is a framework within which the Council has flexibility to refine further. Should members find that there is need for greater clarification when discussing ILRCC with their constituencies, we should discuss how best to address.

With respect to when and where to meet next, Council members felt a summer and fall meeting this year is important. IDL will send out a Doodle Poll to set a date—targeting sometime in July. The meeting will be held in Boise and staff will attempt to tie it in with the Above-Base Fire project review meeting in Boise so those interested can participate in that process.

A tour was also suggested for the next meeting as a way to visit and learn more about on-the-ground projects. IDL Staff will pursue.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Suzie Jude.