



## IDAHO LANDS RESOURCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, July 17, 2012

### MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patti Best, Energy Efficiency/Utilities  
Gary Brown, National Forest System  
Susan Cleverly, Idaho Homeland Security  
Kirk David, ID Forest Owners Association  
Fred Ebel, Association of Consulting Foresters  
Janet Funk, Idaho Tree Farm  
Ken Knoch, City Foresters  
Robyn Miller, Land Trust Organizations  
Gregg Servheen, Idaho Fish & Game

Randy Brooks, UI Cooperative Extension  
Elaine Clegg, Association of Idaho Cities  
Brad Cramer, American Planning Association  
Jeff Handel, Nez Perce Tribe (Alt.)  
Margie Ewing, USDA-FS, S&PF  
Frank Gariglio, USDA-NRCS  
Mark Larson, Idaho State Fire Marshal  
Robert Reggear, Nursery & Landscape Assoc.

### AGENCY STAFF PRESENT:

Craig Foss (IDL)  
Ken Ockfen (IDL)  
Ara Andrea (IDL)  
Gina Davis (IDL)  
Dave Stephenson (IDL)  
Mary Fritz (IDL)  
Suzie Jude (IDL)  
Karen Sjoquist (IDL)  
Gerry Bates (IDL)

### VISITORS PRESENT:

Lance Davisson, The Keystone Concept, LLC  
Randy Doman, Idaho County  
Andy Brunelle, USFS Capital City Coordinator

### WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Craig Foss welcomed members, staff and guests.

### ILRCC ROLES, PURPOSE & DIRECTIONS

Craig facilitated a review and discussion of the last meeting's work product (council roles, purpose and direction), and cross-walked it with a summary of the ILRCC White Paper's focus areas. Craig's PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded at [www.ilrcc.terrasummit.com](http://www.ilrcc.terrasummit.com).

Council members reinforced their role in communicating problems and letting local leaders take action; Examples included the value of ecosystem services as a way to pay for management needs, the importance of including management costs when either accepting land donations or purchasing lands, and matching public expectations in terms of fire suppression and the reality of paying costs of mitigation/suppression.

### TREASURE VALLEY CANOPY ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Dave Stephenson provided a summary of canopy assessment projects. Dave's PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded at [www.ilrcc.terrasummit.com](http://www.ilrcc.terrasummit.com).

Additional comments from Council members: Boise is in the process of revising parking lot design plans by including canopy minimums and maximums. Also suggested were changing parking lot designs to utilize structural soils— increasing rooting space for trees without having to make bigger tree wells (i.e maintain number of parking spaces). There's a need to educate developers on the value of parking lot design. It was suggested that combining the concepts of Firewise and i-Tree would provide the ability to plant trees more strategically around homes and businesses to provide more energy savings, while removing others in order to reduce fire risk.

**Action/Follow-up Item:** Patti Best will send council members a link to an Idaho Power mailing regarding tree placement values/annual savings. (Go to <http://www.idahopower.com/pdfs/EnergyEfficiency/FSISpring2012.pdf> -- pages 4-5. Document can also be downloaded at [www.ilrcc.terrasummit.com](http://www.ilrcc.terrasummit.com))

### **FEDERAL FUNDING 101**

Craig Foss provided an outline and an example of how State & Private Forestry (S&PF) grant funds are received and spent by IDL. Craig's PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded at [www.ilrcc.terrasummit.com](http://www.ilrcc.terrasummit.com).

Competitive grant funds are matched dollar-for-dollar with non-federal funds—typically through IDL's Fire program suppression activities. No state funds are provided for the Urban & Community Forestry (UCF) program. However, state funds are available to the Forest Health program, and the Forest Stewardship program receives funding for field office staffing through positions that have combined Forest Stewardship and Forest Practices (regulatory) responsibilities.

Question: Is there or will there be increased spending flexibility of S&PF "base level" funds across program areas?

Answer: Currently, a "base level" of funding is allocated for each S&PF program when awarded by the Forest Service to states. Each program has its own "authorities." That is, certain activities on which funding can be spent. Some state foresters would like the flexibility to spend S&PF funds as they see best. The risk is that a state may favor one program over another resulting in possible elimination or diminishment of one or more programs in that state. This isn't what Congress intended when appropriating S&PF funding by program area.

However, the purpose of competitive grant funds is to give states greater flexibility to implement projects that cross program boundaries and address multiple resource needs (i.e. clean air/water, improve forest health, increase fire resistance, possible new forest products markets). Congress made the decision to begin funding competitive projects, and they have expressed confidence in the accomplishments being reported.

Discussion followed regarding federal guidelines for past advisory groups and their role in advising the State Forester on base level program spending. Craig explained that at some point the ILRCC may advise the State Forester on base level program spending, but for now their focus will be implementation of the Idaho Forest Action Plan, and related collaborative activities, including competitive and other grant opportunities. This emphasis is now outlined in the Idaho Forest Action Plan (FAP) detailing the replacement of three prior advisory groups (Urban & Community Forestry, Forest Stewardship and National Fire Plan) with the single ILRCC.

Craig discussed the S&PF Redesign and the move by Congress to incorporate a competitive grants process utilizing a portion of the base level funding. When Redesign competitive grants were originally rolled-out, S&PF's intent was to reduce base level funding by 15% *each year until more than 50% of S&PF funds would be competitive*. States responded they could not provide ongoing base level program activities without a consistent base level of federal funds. Annual performance determines how much base level funding a state receives for each program. The percentage of program funds going toward competitive grants remains at 15% of the total for each S&PF program.

A question was asked on the status of congressional action on the 2012 Farm Bill. The Senate has passed their version but the House is still working on theirs. Margie Ewing explained that S&PF programs were authorized in 1978. Each program has guidelines with requirements states must follow in order to receive program funding. These guidelines are currently being updated to better address State Forest Action Plans. Some members expressed concern about violating S&PF program guidelines by going to a single advisory group. Craig clarified this issue was discussed in detail with regional and national S&PF Forest Service staff, and within the ILRCC White Paper. Idaho's proposed process for moving forward with Redesign has been approved by the Forest Service, and IDL communicates regularly with federal managers regarding their progress. Ara commented that subtle changes have already been incorporated into baseline programming for the Forest Stewardship Program. Craig reported on changes in base-level Forest Health Program activities that are consistent with the FAP.

## **FOREST ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

Dave Stephenson provided a summary of the Forest Action Plan (FAP), focusing on the goals and strategies, how these are laid out in the plan, and challenges for ILRCC implementation. Dave's PowerPoint presentation is located at [www.ilrcc.terrasummit.com](http://www.ilrcc.terrasummit.com). Dave provided a proposed calendar for the ILRCC with respect to the Western Fire Managers, Western Competitive, and Forest Legacy grants programs. He also suggested using a "request for pre-proposals" process for the first two. This calendar is also available on the website noted above.

Discussion followed regarding the "subcommittees" identified in Dave's presentation. These were Forest Legacy, Region 4 Above-base grants, and Bureau of Homeland Security's All Hazard Mitigation Plan. It was agreed that the Forest Legacy subcommittee was the only one of the three with a required role by the ILRCC. The Forest Legacy Program (FLP) subcommittee/working group reviews, ranks and provides recommendations to the larger ILRCC group. The larger ILRCC group then approves project submissions, which are then advanced to the next level (S&PF regional office) for consideration.

ILRCC members have also expressed interest in supporting the Above-Base funding ranking process and the All Hazard Mitigation Plan. Susan Cleverly explained ILRCC has been invited to participate and BHS will cover member expenses, if needed. Both of these were activities the previous Fire Plan Working Group engaged in, but are not requirements for IDL. Once ILRCC has been through these two working groups/processes for a year, they will re-evaluate involvement.

ILRCC involvement on other committees was also discussed. Frank Gariglio reiterated a need for ILRCC representation on the NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC). Frank proposed Gina Davis represent IDL (in place of Ara Andrea), Kirk David continue as the ILRCC representative, John DeGroot continue to represent the Nez Perce tribe, and Tom Davis continue to represent consulting foresters. Randy Brooks indicated there's also a need for ILRCC representation to UI Extension to recommend education/outreach programming and where offerings will be held.

Discussion followed regarding the entire ILRCC council being a lot of people for a little process (i.e. grant project focus). Would it be better to have a smaller group handle a pre-proposal process first and then submit these to the larger group for further development? Is ILRCC missing an opportunity to develop partnerships with other large groups like universities (for research)? Should ILRCC pursue partnerships on a one-to-one basis with identified groups? (Note: S&PF program grant funds can't be used for research, but they can be used for studies.)

**Action Item:** How the council operates and makes decisions is important and it was proposed this be an agenda item at the fall meeting.

It was clarified that Idaho's FAP is amended on a 5-year cycle. ILRCC's engagement is desired on the FAP updates, but this activity has not been included on the proposed timeline due to the importance of initially focusing on competitive grant proposals and other annual activities (Forest Legacy, Above-Base, All Hazard Plan). Discussion followed regarding a broader role for ILRCC beyond grant applications and ranking. The Council should consider other strategic actions for what it wants to see on the land—grants are just one way to get there.

## **SUMMARY OF WORK: 2012 COMPETITIVE GRANTS AND FIRE PLAN GRANTS**

Mary Fritz provided a summary of competitive grant development for 2012. Coordination with project partners includes IDL, USFS, S&PF and NFS, local partners, a community collaborative, and UCF partners.

Robyn Miller explained the goal of Clearwater Collaborative work in the Clearwater Basin. The collaborative has already received federal funding for restoration work on federal lands. This funding on the front end for restoration efforts to improve forest health helps reduce costs on the back end for fire suppression. Mary explained Clearwater County, which is interested in funding for this work on private lands, does not have the capacity to manage a competitive grant and is planning to partner with the local Soil & Water Conservation District for grant administration services. This is a common problem for counties and not unique to Clearwater County.

Ken Knoch reported on SE Idaho Urban Forestry Canopy Assessment project development, and indicated Three Rivers RC&D will write the grant application and, if successful, manage the project.

Mary reported on the status of the project tying into the Payette NF Collaborative. She and Craig G met with Valley and Adams County commissioners to determine interest in a competitive project on private lands. Adams County doesn't currently have the capacity for this work, but Valley County is expected to submit a proposal.

Both Mark Larson and Susan Cleverly are involved with the Island Park Cohesive Strategy Special Project. As background, S&PF's Deputy Chief, James Hubbard, contacted State Foresters in Idaho, Montana and Oregon and offered funding for projects which took a different approach to achieving National Fire Plan goals. Local, state and federal project partners and stakeholders in the Island Park area have drafted project goals, identified specific objectives and actions based on the Cohesive Strategy to achieve these.

Mary reported the funding status for the Big Bear Competitive Grant project in Latah County remains unknown at this time.

### **FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM: 2012 PROJECT DISCUSSION**

Karen Sjoquist provided a summary of the Forest Legacy Program (FLP), project application process, tours, 2012 applications, and ILRCC's role in FLP. Current FLP Subcommittee members include Gordon Harnash, Sister Carol Ann Wassmuth, and Greg Johnson, and ILRCC members Frank Gariglio and Kirk David. In addition, Ken Knoch, Gregg Servheen, and Bob Reggear from ILRCC will participate on the FLP Subcommittee activities in 2012.

North Idaho Timber Communities and McArthur Lake East proposals were summarized. Karen explained that public access to FLP application parcels is not a requirement, but it can increase the ranking score for an application. Mineral rights are retained by the deed owner and are not transferred to the grantee (State of Idaho). However, if a third party owns the mineral rights, the property does not qualify for FLP.

FLP conservation easement (CE) funding is appropriated by Congress and administered by the US Forest Service (USFS). The landowner or sponsoring land trust pays closing costs up front which are then reimbursable up to 75%. CE values generally include the difference between the current land use/value and the highest and best use/value (which is most often development). The program enables landowners to receive compensation for keeping their land in timber production but still capture a percentage of the value they would have received had they sold it for commercial/residential development. Most FLP CEs to date have been located in north Idaho due to the value of threatened and endangered species in project ranking, except for one CE in the Kilgore area of eastern Idaho.

Each state can submit up to three FLP projects in a single year. The FLP Subcommittee looks at the submissions and makes recommendations to ILRCC on which projects to submit and their (state) ranking order. Karen is responsible for tracking submissions for federal ranking and S&PF notifications regarding funding. Karen also tracks annual monitoring of CEs to ensure parcels are managed in accordance with the terms of the CEs.

ILRCC will need to approve the subcommittee's recommendations for this year. This will take place by e-mail in September. The FLP tour of proposed projects will take place on August 13<sup>th</sup>. Council members Fred Ebel and Janet Funk expressed interest in attending the tour in August.

Dave Stephenson reported that the Forest Legacy Program Assessment of Need (AON) has been incorporated into the amended FAP through coordination with S&PF staff.

Council member Robyn Miller has recused herself from any future discussion about 2012 Idaho Forest Legacy applications, as The Nature Conservancy is a sponsor for one of the proposed projects

## **MEETING FEEDBACK, WRAP UP, NEXT MEETING**

ILRCC members shared insights on the value of today's discussions. Comments included:

- Desire for additional interaction and networking between meetings to discuss council activities
- Members have a clearer understanding about ILRCC activities and funding opportunities
- Tours are beneficial to members and help understanding of various forestry, fire, urban, and conservation interests
- There's an appreciation that each member's role is to exchange individual subject matter expert knowledge rather than becoming experts in another subject area
- It's important to bring information and capacity to the group in order to achieve goals
- Acknowledgement that some members will have limited time to spend on ILRCC business outside of bi-annual meetings

**Action Item:** The agenda for the next ILRCC meeting will include discussion of how the council will operate and roles of members and subcommittees. A Doodle poll will be sent out to determine availability dates for the next meeting.

There was discussion regarding the location of the next meeting. Possible locations include eastern Idaho (Idaho Falls or Salmon), north Idaho, and south Idaho. There was acknowledgement that some locations are more difficult and costly to get to and, at a minimum, meetings should rotate between north and south.

**Action Item:** The Council agreed on an email poll for FLP recommendations in September. A presentation on the Cohesive Strategy was recommended for the next meeting.

Adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Suzie Jude