



IDAHO LANDS RESOURCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

IDL Staff Office, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
Thursday, November 8, 2012

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING:

Patti Best, Energy Efficiency/Utilities
Gary Brown, National Forest System
Robert Cope, ID Association of Counties
Fred Ebel, Association of Consulting Foresters
Janet Funk, Idaho Tree Farm
Ken Knoch, ID Parks & Recreation Assoc.
Robyn Miller, Land Trust Organizations
Kevin Knauth, BLM-Fire
Kurt Mettler, Coeur d'Alene Tribe

Randy Brooks, UI Cooperative Extension
Susan Cleverley, ID Bur. of Homeland Security
Brad Cramer, American Planning Association
Margie Ewing, USDA-FS, S&PF
Frank Gariglio, USDA-NRCS
Mark Larson, Idaho State Fire Marshal
Robert Reggear, Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Gary Hess, ID Forest Owners Association (Alt.)

AGENCY STAFF & VISITORS PRESENT:

Craig Foss, IDL
Gina Davis, IDL
Mary Fritz, IDL
Robert Barkley, IDL
Rob Ethridge, Montana DNRC
Bill Dansart, Latah SWCD
Kari Schwendiman, Latah SWCD

Craig Glazier, USDA-FS
Dave Stephenson, IDL
Suzie Jude, IDL
Ken Stinson, Latah SWCD
Gerry Bates, Urban Comm. Forestry Consultant
Janet Hohle, Office of Species Conservation

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Craig welcomed council members, staff and guests.

ILRCC Charter / Bylaws / Leadership

Craig facilitated a discussion of the draft operating procedures for the council. There was general agreement that the operating procedures should be simple. Craig clarified under the Duties section that the committee will periodically update the Idaho Forest Action Plan (FAP). It was suggested shortening this section to the first and last sentences in the draft and include "duties include but are not limited to..." language. Additional duties for the council were discussed including updating the State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Discussion followed regarding council membership including broader representation to ensure council flexibility long-term. Craig will add language to the Operating Procedures reflecting membership representation may change over time. If the proposed leadership structure is approved by members, leadership nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair positions will follow this meeting. IDL will discuss all nominations internally and make recommendations to the State Forester, who will then make the appointments. In terms of the time commitment for these positions, this will become clearer following today's meeting, but it's anticipated that after IDL staff debrief the council meeting and begin internal discussion for the next meeting's agenda, the Chair will need to participate in shaping the agenda prior to the next meeting.

Discussion followed regarding the role of Chair and Vice-Chair, length of terms, and addressing vacancies. The Chair and Vice-Chair will both serve two year terms. However, the Vice-Chair will advance into the Chair position for an additional two-year term. Also, Craig clarified that council members participate during meetings by bringing their group's interests forward and then reporting back to them. However, in a leadership position, the *individual* will serve in the leadership position rather than the group they represent.

Further discussion followed regarding the leadership terms of service. The council's preference is to go with calendar year terms. Should a leadership position become vacant, the appointee will complete the original appointee's term of service. Appointments made in December 2012 will begin serving January 2013 through Fall 2014, at which time the next round of nominations will begin for 2015.

Discussion followed regarding council voting. The preference is a thumbs up, down, or neutral (sideways). If thumbs down, the group will work out what everyone can live with. The council will be voting to make recommendations in an advisory capacity. It was discussed that meetings be open to the public to observe. 'Public is welcome' language will be incorporated into the operating procedures.

IDL will incorporate the agreed upon revisions to the Council Operating Procedures and send the final approved document to members following the meeting.

ILRCC Networking – Mary Fritz

At last meeting, feedback was received from members regarding their desire for additional interaction between regular council meetings. There is a desire for subject matter expertise to bring information to the group in order to build capacity. Discussion followed regarding ways/opportunities to increase networking during and outside of council meetings.

- Council introductions could include "what I'm working on currently."
- Project specific accomplishments and status updates for FAP.
- Are completed projects incorporated into larger efforts beyond the project?
- Is there an initiative or requirement to continue a project if successful?
- During lunch break, invite conversations or small group discussions, and after report back to the larger group.
- Should IDL be the organizer in identifying opportunities for members to meet during evening hours the day of meetings? It was suggested the Chair and Vice-Chair organize gatherings and Suzie share lodging information to facilitate these opportunities.
- Once a project is completed, the council should share information/recognition to a larger audience through news releases, etc.
- Create focus within the group by posting on a group website or other pathway like ListServ or Google discussion group.
- Raise the literacy level through member presentations to the larger group.

Key ILRCC Activities – Dave Stephenson

Dave reported the current responsibilities of the council. A key council activity is approving annual project rankings of the Forest Legacy Program (FLP) subcommittee. Dave sent these recommendations out earlier this year with a Doodle poll, to which 13 ILRCC members participated and indicated unanimous agreement on the rankings of the subcommittee. Both projects were submitted to the USFS as ranked for national scoring and ranking.

Dave discussed council input and how it will mesh with the FAP goals. It is the expectation and the opportunity for this group to make changes at the policy level or share information for strategic audiences to move FAP implementation forward.

The council will inform strategies during the FAP revision beginning in 2014. The council will also decide what sorts of projects IDL should move forward for competitive grant submissions, participate in developing updates to the All Hazard Mitigation Plan, and ranking projects for the Above Base Fire Funding on National Forest lands.

The group discussed FAP and the need to provide information to affected interests about what it is. The council identified the need to share information about the council, to request input, and help bring groups together that don't necessarily talk or share information. The council discussed the need to identify which policies to pursue, outreach for

policy changes being developed, and council participation by offering incentives or strategies. Some would like to see the council participate in policy changes but want to know what role IDL would serve as it relates to this effort. Craig Foss commented that any action on ILRCC policy recommendations would go through IDL's executive staff. Should ILRCC appoint a policy committee, they could pursue forest policy recommendations by preparing a white paper and advancing it to IDL executive staff and other interest groups.

Rob Ethridge shared his perspective from Montana about how their advisory group struggles with some of the same issues. Montana's group advises the state forester on use of forestry assistance resources, identifies significant issues among the group's members, and makes recommendations to the state forester, as appropriate. The Montana advisory group avoids using the word 'policy' because of potential political ramifications. In Montana, the advisory group goes to the state forester with an issue collectively important to members, along with a couple of ideas on how the issue might be approached to solve it, and requests the state forester discuss the issue along with suggested solutions with appropriate partners, and then come back to the advisory group with what the state forester wants them to do next. After considering this approach, ILRCC members suggested the council start off by addressing a few issues identified by the Idaho State Forester in order for members to figure out how their process will work. One broader issue that ILRCC will need to address is the Cohesive Strategy.

It was also suggested that IDL consider a FAP speakers bureau. FAP information could be shared with others through newsletters and at conferences to facilitate discussions. It would be helpful for this effort to have a general information sheet on FAP and talking points about why FAP is important. This information should be geared towards and relevant to particular groups, i.e. planners, family forest owners, nursery-landscape group, etc. Council members along with IDL staff can then facilitate discussions among the respective interest groups.

Cohesive Fire Strategy – Craig Glazier & Robert Cope

Craig Glazier explained the purpose of his presentation is to request ideas, strategies, goals and objectives from the council for wildland fire management projects related to the Cohesive Fire Strategy. The genesis of the Cohesive Strategy (CS) began in 2009 when Congress passed the Flame Act. The Act, which provides an additional funding source for wildland fire suppression, directs the US Department of Agriculture and US Department of Interior to join with their partners to develop a cohesive strategy managing wildland fire across the country.

There are three phases for the CS. Phase I contains the strategy and guiding principles on the national level. These are: 1) maintaining and restoring resilient landscapes, 2) creating fire-adapted communities, and 3) strengthening wildfire responses. Phase II is at the regional level (Westwide, Northeast and Southeast) where action items, goals and objectives are developed for each region. Phase III of the CS will develop a National Risk Tradeoff Analysis that provides guidance on implementation. ILRCC is fortunate to have Commissioner Cope who serves as the local government representative on the CS Western Region Strategic Committee. Craig explained that the CS is an extension of the National Fire Plan and is more specific, group-oriented, and collaboratively developed.

Cope reported that Craig Glazier actively participates on the CS Westwide Scientific Committee. Cope views the goals and strategies for ILRCC as compatible with the goals and strategies for the CS effort. The Westwide CS will remain very general in its approach, keeping in mind land ownership, especially the very large percentage of federal land. And from this perspective, the biggest challenge for the Westwide CS will be how to manage federal lands.

Under Phase II objectives, the first objective is to actively manage the land to achieve healthy forest and range land conditions. Idaho's Roadless Rule now allows CS projects to move forward following appropriate environmental assessment and approval by the Regional Forester. ILRCC has the potential to assist with accomplishing projects on federal ownership through collaborative and interactive group efforts on a multi-agency and multi-ownership basis as part of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP). Threats are largely located on federal ground in counties that need collaborative efforts. These are the groups that ILRCC can assist through technical assistance, organizational assistance, etc.

Cope answered member questions and clarified:

- CWPPs should be developed as part of a collaborative process, but are not always due to the difficulty of keeping community groups engaged during and after the CWPP is developed.
- CS project work in the Westwide region is extensive and funding will be an issue.
- Stewardship contracting as part of the CS is a means to an end—they must fully utilize existing policies and procedures to provide the management flexibility needed in a mix of landscape treatments.
- The National Fire Plan is not a national authority formally enacted but is a general concept with no funding associated with it. The intent is to keep the CS budget neutral.
- Developing fuel breaks is accomplished through vegetative manipulation and prescribed fire in order to knock down wildland fire to the ground.
- The CS won't dictate to locals how to protect their community, but it will work through local knowledge and expertise, especially through cooperatives, to identify areas for on-the-ground treatments consistent with the CS.
- Communities can't ignore any of the three guidelines of the CS, but can identify where they want to put more emphasis or effort.
- To utilize forest materials for biomass, 20-year guaranteed wood supply contracts are needed so investors can justify large capital outlay for bio-char plants and other large facilities. Such guaranteed contracts are extremely difficult on federal lands.

Craig summarized how the outcomes of the CS are tied to the FAP. The CS doesn't dictate how things will be done on the ground, but outlines the desired outcomes. ILRCC will need to incorporate CS desired outcomes in the FAP and CWPPs.

During the lunch break, Patti will discuss the Idaho Power shade tree program. Robyn requested members record ideas about key outreach opportunities and issues on the white board provided.

Lunch Break

The following list of key outreach opportunities was suggested by ILRCC members:

- Develop newsletter(s)
- ILRCC present at conferences
 - Family Forest Owners & Managers Conference, Moscow, ID, March 25-26, 2013
 - Idaho Forest Restoration Partnerships (Forest Collaboratives in Idaho), Boise, ID, January 23-24, 2013
- Develop news releases with ILRCC and FAP talking points

Forest Stewardship: Summary of Big Bear Competitive Grant Project

Mary Fritz and Ken Stinson provided background information on the development of the Big Bear Creek project. Others involved with the project and present today are Bill Dansart and Kari Schwendiman, Latah SWCD, Janet Hohle, Idaho Office of Species Conservation, and Gary Hess, IDL and the Idaho Forest Owners Association.

The Big Bear project was one of the projects submitted by Idaho for West-wide competition for FY2011 funding. The project connects existing restoration efforts with multiple partnerships and addresses ecological issues. The project is located within the (FAP) Palouse Priority Landscape Area in the Potlatch River watershed, north and east of Moscow, Idaho. Project outcomes are landscape level accomplishments that combine forest health and stewardship practices into watershed practices. The project area is approximately 700 acres representing between 12 and 15 private land ownerships.

Ken explained how Latah SWCD has partnered on past projects with IDL to address small and large scale projects. Based on this relationship, Latah SWCD began working more with private landowners. In addition to the Big Bear competitive grant project proposal, Latah SWCD has also submitted additional project proposals to IDL for treatments through the Snake River Basin Adjudication (SRBA). Both IDL and Latah SWCD have gained from this experience and now know how to successfully collaborate on project work.

Gary Hess summarized how the Big Bear proposal came about. Gary has familiarity with the entire Potlatch River watershed and the Big Bear sub-watershed through his work at IDL. The upland reach of Big Bear is in good condition in terms of water quality, but the middle and lower reach have problems adjacent to county and state roads in terms of their proximity to the ordinary high water mark and stream crossing structure maintenance, as well as historical cattle grazing. Gary identified the likely partner for this project as the Latah SWCD. Latah SWCD has the ability to access funds for stream treatments in the Potlatch River watershed that will complement the Big Bear competitive grant proposal. There is both state and industrial ownership in the uplands, but 12-15 private forest landowners in the lower reach are not actively involved in forest management. The opportunity exists to educate these landowners on how to better manage their ground as riparian areas are over-grazed, under-stocked (with trees) and lack shade due to years of managing for cattle. As an incentive to get the landowners to become Forest Stewardship landowners, they were asked to participate in the project. These new plans will bring over 800 acres of forest and riparian areas into the Forest Stewardship Program.

Ken explained how other project work by Latah SWCD will realign the stream channel and reconnect the original streambed and floodplain to approximately 10 miles of stream. The Potlatch River is the strongest hold for wild steelhead in the Lower Clearwater and within the Potlatch River system, and Big Bear Creek is the strongest fisheries system. Density dependency is the main fisheries problem for steelhead in the Potlatch system as fish are too jammed up.

Mary explained that the outcome of these complementary projects will be partnerships developed between multiple agencies and landowner groups resulting in increased steelhead populations. This is a unique project for IDL as it combines forest health, forest stewardship and riparian practices. Discussion followed regarding forestry's limited activities in riparian areas and agricultural grazing management. Cope provided his perspective on overgrazing—sometimes what appears to be overgrazing is not. However, some problems are the result of historical stream channelization in order to grow wheat and subsequent transition to cattle grazing.

2012 Competitive and Western States Fire Grants Outcome

Mary explained how IDL organized competitive grant projects for 2012. In 2011, IDL met with Regions 1&4 US Forest Service - State and Private Forestry staff and Idaho's National Forest Supervisors to identify how National Forests could leverage resources at the landscape level. From that meeting, IDL came up with projects in Valley, Idaho and Fremont counties that will dovetail work with collaborative groups, County Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs), and projects taking place on National Forest ground.

Craig Glazier explained 2012 was a year of change for how they approached the Western States Fire Managers Grants. In prior years, they would invite all counties to submit applications. But this year following the all lands meeting Mary described, they continued to accept county applications but identified three project applications that were very strong from Valley, Idaho and Fremont Counties. The three strong applications went forward to the Western Fire Managers meeting and the Fremont County application was the only one awarded funding. In the past, applications have focused on fuels reduction. This year, the Fremont County application focused on creating a truly fire-adapted community. The Valley and Idaho County projects, while strong, were viewed as more of the same by the scoring committee.

In the competitive grant project arena, Mary reported the following ranking of project proposals:

- Valley County WUI Development proposal (ranked #1 West-wide)
- Clear Creek Integrated Restoration proposal in Idaho County (ranked #2 West-wide)
- SE Idaho Community Canopy Assessment proposal (ranked #8 West-wide)
- Island Park Sustainable Fire Community proposal in Fremont County (ranked #11 West-wide)

Craig Glazier explained the community of Island Park is unique in that it is scattered pockets of private land and homes along a 25-mile long corridor of Highway 20. Most of the ownership in the area is federal and the community jumped out as a unique study area for CS funding that was received through a special grant to Idaho. This is the first CS funding

in Idaho and the Island Park project will address multiple issues, include multiple partners (subdivisions, county and state transportation), and development of a new collaborative. ILRCC members that participate on the Island Park collaborative are Susan Cleverley and Mark Larson. In Montana, Rob reported that some of their CS funding will be used to address a similar project area and issues just over the state boundary from Island Park.

Project Types to Pursue for 2013 Competitive Grants and Western States Fire Grants

Mary requested the council help decide which projects to pursue for 2013. Mary opened floor to discuss potential shelf ready projects. Four key points to consider are geographic location (PLA), partners, key issue, and goals to meet the issue. The potential project list follows:

- Green Industry - Japanese beetles detected in Boise and Coeur d'Alene
- Idaho Power – Shade tree project in Treasure Valley Canopy Analysis-Phase II
- Idaho Forest Owners Association (IFOA) - Forest Landowner Field Days funding
- CDA Tribe – Shade and fuel break project in St. Maries
- Boundary County— Kootenai Valley Restoration Initiative Collaborative project on Clear Creek in the Twenty Mile area
- Joint state fire rehabilitation – Island Park-type project
- CDA Basin Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) – watershed restoration, conservation, forest management, education/outreach to improve forest health
- Demonstration site to show non-industrial private forest owners (NIPFs) how to improve forest stands from forest health perspective, dovetailed with prescribed burn treatment, and timber revenues for cost/benefit analysis of this approach to forest management
- Small scale utilization of biomass for NIPFs through a study of small stove to heat small buildings/homes
- “Protect Your Home from Wildfire Act”—Concept would allow NIPFs to treat adjacent federal lands
- Wildfire education for 2012 burned areas
- Develop markets for landowners by providing access to lumber graders
- Advocacy of landowner forest benefits and interests/offsets for not harvesting riparian zone, etc.

Mary will summarize this list and forward to members for voting.

Meeting Feedback, Wrap Up, Next Meeting

Craig summarized follow-up items from the meeting today:

Revised operating procedures; request for officer nominations; ListServ vs. Google discussion group; State Forester input on issues for council to pursue; education/outreach on Forest Action Plan (FAP) and ILRCC; revise FAP summary materials through IDL information officer; IDL-ILRCC speakers bureau; regarding the Cohesive Strategy and County Wildfire Protection Plans (CWFP), the council needs to decide how to use the Cohesive Strategy on the ground and incorporate in FAP update; 2013 project proposal voting.

It was suggested the council would benefit from a summary or list of funding sources ILRCC might access describing types of projects and annual application due dates.

Fred likes that pursuing policy issues is not off the table for ILRCC.

ILRCC members were invited to attend the Family Forest Landowners & Managers conference and exposition to view equipment and learn about forestry issues. The conference will be held March 25-26, 2013 at the University Inn, in Moscow. Gary will provide a draft agenda for the conference to members.

The next ILRCC meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 27, 2013, at the University Inn in Moscow. The summer meeting will be held in Idaho Falls for two days in late June, one day of which will be a field trip.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Suzie Jude