



IDAHO LANDS RESOURCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 20, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Craig Westling, Utilities / Energy Efficiency (Alt.)
Gary Brown, Payette National Forest
Susan Cleverley, Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security
Brad Cramer, American Planning Assoc., Idaho Chapter
Robert Cope, Idaho Association of Counties
Ben Dyer, USDI, Bureau of Land Management (Alt.)
Jeff Handel, Nez Perce Tribe (Alt.)
Margie Ewing, Region 1, USDA-FS, S&PF
Madeline David, Idaho Tree Farm Committee (Alt.)

Kirk David, Idaho Forest Owners Assoc.
Ken Knoch, Idaho Parks & Recreation Assoc.
Mark Larson, ILRCC Chair, Idaho State Fire Marshal
Frank Gariglio, USDA-NRCS
Robyn Miller, ILRCC Vice-Chair, The Nature Conservancy
Gregg Servheen, Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game
Robert Reggear, Idaho Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Janet Valle, Regions 1 & 4, USDA-FS, S&PF

AGENCY STAFF PRESENT:

David Groeschl, Idaho State Forester, IDL
Craig Foss, Chief, Bureau of Forestry Assistance, IDL
Gina Davis, Forest Health & Stewardship Prog. Mgr., IDL
Dave Stephenson, Urban Interface/Prog. Planning, IDL
Craig Glazier, Idaho Fire Plan Working Group
Mary Fritz, Program Planning & Development, IDL
Karen Sjoquist, Forest Legacy Program, IDL
Suzie Jude, Forest Stewardship Program, IDL

VISITORS PRESENT:

Jim Hubbard, Deputy Chief State & Private Forestry, USDA-FS
Mike Dudley, Acting Director Cooperative Forestry, USDA-FS
Vicki Christiansen, Associate Deputy Chief State & Private Forestry, USDA-FS
Liz Davy, Ashton/Island Park District Ranger, USDA-FS
Rob Cruz, Region 4, USDA-FS, S&PF, FHM
Ryan Lutey, Vital Ground Foundation
Alex Diekmann, The Trust for Public Land
Jordan Reeves, The Nature Conservancy
Gerry Bates, Forty Solutions
Pam Herdrich, High Country RC&D

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Mark Larson welcomed members and guests to the meeting. The following are comments made on the Island Park tour and Cohesive Strategy (CS):

Jim Hubbard, Deputy Chief of State & Private Forestry, commented the concept of the ILRCC group is new to him and that he is pleased at the good work he sees being accomplished. Two aspects of this effort that need more attention are wood utilization and federal land treatments.

Vicki Christiansen, Associate Deputy Chief of State & Private Forestry, gave her support of the wildland CS effort and described her participation in its early development.

Mike Dudley, Acting Director of Community Forestry, would like to keep the CS momentum going even with reduced funding. However, it will take a grassroots effort for this to happen.

Mark Larson commented on ILRCC's role with implementation of Idaho's CS. ILRCC will provide guidance and direction to IDL on behalf of the groups council members represent. Mark thinks it's important for ILRCC members take insights from the Island Park CS tour back to their respective groups for discussions and then bring their collective group thoughts back to the winter meeting for the larger council. Mark appreciates that Jim and Vicki have traveled to Idaho to view the Island Park project and attend today's meeting.

David Groeschl commented that it will take the collective wisdom of council members to come up with solutions to address challenges in Idaho communities in regards to urban communities, hazardous fuels, protection, and forest health. Every CS project will be different. It will be important to take the lessons learned from pilot projects and apply them to new projects. ILRCC expertise will be critical when it comes to choosing the best project proposals to move forward.

COHESIVE FIRE STRATEGY/WESTERN REGION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – Craig Glazier & Robert Cope

Craig provided background on the three phases of the Western Region CS. Cope commented that different communities will require different tactics, but the principles of fire-adapted communities and fire resistant landscapes remain consistent among them. Communication and learning from lesser successes is the best approach. A speaker's bureau currently being developed as part of the Western CS will be a good way of sharing information with others.

Conversation on this topic followed and stressed that it's not just project work anymore, but a long-term change in management philosophy. The challenge is the mindset of full-time and seasonal residents and getting their involvement. Once it starts, momentum will grow.

The Waldo Canyon fire was an example of a community with full-time residents, good access roads, a fair number of expensive and well-maintained homes, and an active and aggressive local Firewise program for the past 10 years, yet they still lost 350 homes. However, had they not done the Firewise program, more homes would have been lost. Mark thinks that there will not necessarily be a right way or a wrong way for CS ideas. What the ILRCC is tasked with trying to change is a culture and attitudes. The firefighter's challenge will be explaining to the public why they didn't go into a particular subdivision to fight fire.

Grassroots efforts and effective communication of council members, local organizations, and members of the community with each other, county commissioners and planning boards will depend on having a combination of common sense and science backed information.

Planning organizations can get the message out to their group about promoting planning and zoning ordinance ideas from groups like ILRCC, such as through their website. Brad Cramer invited guests and members associated with the Island Park CS project to speak at this year's Idaho Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) meeting.

The idea of creating a web-based communication portal to aid communication on CS for the general public needs to be developed. This would help individuals and groups working with local leaders to have examples, science based support, and planning tools in one location. Colorado and Texas have good examples (<http://www.coloradowildfirerisk.com/> <http://www.texaswildfirerisk.com/>) that could be modified for Idaho.

Another source of information is the wildfire section of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan at <http://www.bhs.idaho.gov/Pages/Plans/Mitigation/SHMP.aspx>. Comments and feedback on this webpage can be provided to Susan Cleverley. The Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security has requested counties send them success stories to post on the IBHS website to share with other counties. Cope provided the following web addresses for Idaho's portal: www.Firewise.org and www.fireadapted.org.

Follow-up Item: Mary will provide members with the links to the Colorado and Texas portals and solicit council feedback about an Idaho portal.

It was recognized that in many hazardous situations where there is repetitive loss, questions are raised about spending federal dollars and reinforcing bad planning. It may be wiser to spend funds on areas with moderate hazard if landowners are receptive and already actively involved in mitigating the hazard risk. Does a fire sustainable community mean protecting the economic interest and local jobs or does it mean protecting summer cabins? These are issues for the local community to consider. There's a need for consistent messages about thinning the threat vs. keeping forestland as an insect, disease and fire trap due to lack of management. It's important to get landowners proactive in the absence of an immediate threat and the best way to affect cultural change is to associate value with a new behavior. An example of this change is the reluctance by insurance companies to share company marketing secrets with their competitors. However, some of their actions are good selling points for adding value to individual property owner policies, e.g. offering incentives to policy owners in Firewise communities located in the WUI. A couple thoughts are for ILRCC to open discussion with insurance companies and real estate developers, and to encourage developers to implement Firewise practices and promote their subdivision as value-added Firewise community.

Craig Foss commented he sees opportunities to incorporate ILRCC actions related to this discussion: 1) the upcoming Forest Action Plan update and 2) regarding toolkits, a speaker's bureau, etc., ILRCC has ability to identify and target types of project proposals around these concepts and priorities. Bob Reggear commented ILRCC could solicit interest in getting value-added subdivisions around CS and Firewise strategies.

COUNCIL ROLE IN FOREST ACTION PLAN REVISION – Dave Stephenson

The Idaho Forest Action Plan (FAP) consists of two parts—a geospatial assessment of the most important issues relative to forest resources in Idaho, and a set of strategies for addressing these issues. The 2010 Resource Assessment identified 12 priority landscape areas (PLAs)—areas containing multiple high-priority issues—in which to focus resources and work. The Resource Strategy identifies how to address the issues within each PLA, and the programs and partners that can leverage resources for greater impact on a scale that makes a true difference on the landscape.

Dave S recommended using the same process for the FAP update as for its initial creation. This includes appointment of a broad stakeholder group to oversee and guide the process, and two core teams—one for the assessment and one for the strategy development—that provide more focused, technical assistance on those components. He suggested the ILRCC serve as the stakeholder group. The core teams will have ILRCC representation, but will also include others with specific knowledge of issues and broader geographic representation. The core strategy team will facilitate discussions with stakeholders in each PLA to identify specific strategies. ILRCC will be validate the issues identified, oversee and guide the process, review work of core teams and make recommendations.

The proposed FAP update timeline coincides with scheduled ILRCC meetings beginning at the winter 2014 meeting and wrapping up at the summer 2015 meeting. See attached timeline for more detail.

One member suggested the core assessment team review geospatial data carefully as the first iteration resulted in some concern among some stakeholders on certain areas not being high enough priority. This may change with better data, but it's also important to emphasize that the assessment is a relative, not an absolute prioritization methodology. Better and higher resolution data is available, and the core assessment team will adapt these data into the current model.

Regarding the evolution of FAP national strategy approaches, Vicki Christiansen reported state foresters don't want a one-size-fits-all approach, but do want some consistency in addressing national themes and priorities. This will help S&PF roll-up issues nationally while at the same time allowing each state to develop their plan independently. A national resource committee will finalize suggested formats by this fall.

Dave indicated staff will prepare an Idaho report card for the current FAP that looks at accomplishments relative to current FAP strategies, and how the landscape has changed over the last five years. Craig reiterated that the intent of FAP is to help IDL focus resources in areas and on efforts that will provide maximum benefit, rather than to limit assistance. That is, if people located outside PLAs request assistance, IDL will provide it to them.

Responding to a question, Dave noted that since the assessment utilizes statewide datasets, Community Wildfire Protection Program (CWPP) data is not used; however, CWPP *strategies* are included in FAP. Elements of the Cohesive Strategy will also be incorporated into the update.

Poll of members interested in serving on the core assessment team: Robyn Miller, Idaho Fish & Game representative, and NRCS representative. Poll of members interested in serving on the core strategy team: Susan Cleverly, Gary Brown, Margie Ewing, and Frank Gariglio. Members were asked to think about groups not represented on ILRCC that might be included in the FAP update process.

LAST MEETING ACTION ITEMS – Gina Davis

Ensure effective member communication between meetings: There was a minor issue opening Forest Legacy attachments and it was noted that large files take additional time to download and open. Regarding ways to improve communication, the council is currently using Dave Stephenson's personal webpage at www.ilrcc.terrasummit.com. Previously members discussed using the Google docs website but this requires members to either sign-up for a Gmail account or use their own email account to access. It was requested in future communications that IDL be clear what the expectations are for members to review materials, especially Forest Legacy applications and where members should focus their attention if they're limited on time.

Follow-up item: IDL will continue to explore using a Google docs webpage for ILRCC communications.

Share (ILRCC) successes with the public effectively. Ken Knoch, Gerry Bates, Kirk David, and Mary Fritz reported they've shared information about IDL and ILRCC at various presentations and in newsletters and articles. It was suggested IDL prepare a newsletter summary following each meeting to incorporate into constituency communications.

Follow-up item: IDL will write a short (300 words) recap of the meeting highlights for members to print in their newsletters.

LUNCH

FOREST LEGACY PROJECT PROPOSALS FOR 2015— Land Trust/Landowner Representatives

Karen Sjoquist provided an update on the 10 current Forest Legacy Program (FLP) projects. The FY2015 process and timeline were discussed and proposals presented today. ILRCC sub-committee members (Kirk David, Frank Gariglio, Ken Knoch, Carol Ann Wassmuth, Gordon Harnasch, Gregg Servheen, Greg Johnson, and Janet Funk) will review project applications and make recommendations to full ILRCC committee by email during the summer of 2013. Thereafter, project rankings will be submitted for national project ranking in spring of 2014. The following FY2015 projects were presented:

- 1) Clagstone Meadows, Alex Diekman, Trust for Public Land
- 2) Hall Mountain, Robyn Miller, The Nature Conservancy
- 3) North Idaho Timber Communities-Phase II, Ryan Lutey, Vital Ground Foundation

Discussion followed regarding the FLP project ranking process. The decision was made by IDL at the last ILRCC meeting that no project tours would take place this year as part of the review process due to budget limitations. Since then, the subcommittee has discussed the importance of having a tour of the properties and talking with landowners and managers. Craig asked Kirk to put his comments in writing to the State Forester. Frank commented on the need for a protocol for the subcommittee.

Janet Valle reported that she, as the western program manager representative, and Karen, as the state coordinator representative, will be participating in the national FLP project ranking this fall. The program received some additional funding to cover Karen's travel expenses. Janet will be conducting a tour of all state properties this summer and invited anyone that wanted to come along to contact Karen for details. Karen will let subcommittee members know when she and Janet will be going out to visit Idaho properties.

PROJECT TYPES TO PURSUE FOR 2015 COMPETITIVE GRANTS & WESTERN STATES FIRE GRANTS – Dave Stephenson & Gina Davis

The purpose of this agenda item is to identify the types of projects to pursue for the FY2015 grant cycle for both the Western Fire Managers (WFMG) and Western Competitive grant (WCG) programs. IDL will develop a request for pre-proposals based upon the input of the ILRCC.

Dave reviewed the State Forester's direction to council members and IDL staff regarding project proposal responsibilities and the annual timeline of ILRCC meetings and proposals.

Discussion followed regarding the 2014 proposal by Kootenai County to develop Firewise messages within the community. Feedback on their pre-proposal by Council members was provided to Kootenai County, and they plan to resubmit the project proposal next year (the 2015 grant cycle). Regarding proposals for fire mitigation not all projects will be a perfect fit for WFMG or WCG, but counties are still encouraged to submit proposal ideas. However, they must be in the State Mitigation Plan in order to qualify for state funding. NRCS will be endorsing collaboration and coordination with FY2014 projects. It was noted there's a lack of forest stewardship type project submissions and some ideas were suggested for potential landscape level cooperative projects and partnerships. There's a need for communication materials at a one-stop location and a decision support system with data layers and education resources that assists with land use decisions and is coherent across multiple users. The national risk rating analysis has data that goes down to the county level and far beyond fire risk analysis. It's a matter of developing tools to utilize the data.

Regarding planning, the American Planning Association (APA) has developed coursework that could be tailored to include WUI and green infrastructure, bridging two groups that don't normally talk to one another. Idaho APA could help contribute towards something like this and communities could require developers and contractors attend these programs in order to get their continuing education credits. Also, there's a need to incorporate prescribed fire (into FAP goal 1) in addition to thinning efforts.

Markets are important in order to do forest health treatments as these projects should be generating revenue. Because relatively inexpensive hydropower competes with cogeneration plants, there's a need to find alternate markets. The

Idaho Woody Biomass Utilization Partnership (WBUP) may be source of additional information, along with the Idaho Department of Commerce (IDC). Rick Brenneman is the contact person at WBUP.

Follow-up item: Mark Larson will find out specific contact information at IDC and provide this information to IDL.

Next step – IDL staff will take ILRCC’s broad directions, crosswalk them to the FAP goals, and develop and solicit statewide request(s) for FY2015 project pre-proposals for both WFMG and WCG. Gina summarized the council’s list of broad concepts/goals to pursue focusing on education and treatment. Developing economic markets was also mentioned. Developing an Idaho (information) portal falls under education. IDL and the council will look for project pre-proposals with aspects of education and treatment that address broad FAP goals 1-5. Requests will be sent statewide to S&WCDs, RC&Ds, and other stakeholders.

IDL will complete and release the request for pre-proposals in late August/early September 2013. The deadline for applicants to submit pre-proposals will be mid-January. Once ILRCC identifies the strongest pre-proposals, IDL will work with applicants to develop successful full proposals. Discussion followed regarding the past treatment-centric approach to WFMGs; now they also focus on education. Mark asked is there a way to address non-resident landowners in the education piece for the WFMG? Mark would like to encourage groups to submit proposals for this issue.

Robyn commented on her understanding of project proposals, i.e. to cast a wide net for issues both outside the council, but also within. How can the council bring the idea forward for an Idaho portal? ILRCC should be moving ideas forward for both on-the-ground treatments *and* address land use policy and decision making. Regarding how best to proceed with ILRCC bringing a project proposal forward, it’s difficult for IDL to staff projects while maintaining base level programs. Ideally, the council could feed this information to another group, and they would serve as project coordinator, and move a proposal forward. It was clarified that before project requests for pre-proposals are distributed to interested parties, they will be sent to ILRCC members for review and feedback. The intent is that members share the final request for pre-proposals with their stakeholder group.

MEETING FEEDBACK, WRAP UP, NEXT MEETING – Mark Larson

Follow-up item: A Doodle poll will be sent to members to determine the date for a February 2014 meeting in either Boise or Coeur d’Alene. The poll’s comment section will allow members to indicate their preferred meeting location.

Janet Valle reminded members that a Community Open Space (COS) project proposal notice is upcoming through the State Forester with an application due date of January 2014. Karen Sjoquist reviews these applications to determine eligibility and then forwards them to the S&PF Washington Office.

Follow-up item: IDL will send out a link with additional information regarding eligibility requirements for COS grants.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Suzie Jude

List of follow-up items:

- Mary Fritz will provide members with the links to the Colorado and Texas portals and solicit council feedback about an Idaho portal.
- IDL will continue to explore using a Google docs webpage to facilitate ILRCC communications.
- IDL will prepare a short (300 words) recap of the meeting highlights for members to print in their newsletters.
- Mark Larson will find out contact information for woody biomass utilization from the Idaho Department of Commerce and report back to IDL.
- A Doodle poll will be sent to members for a February 2014 meeting in either Boise or Coeur d’Alene. The poll’s comment section will allow members to indicate their preferred meeting location.
- IDL will send out a link with additional information regarding Community Open Space grant eligibility requirements.