

National Fire Plan State Fire Plan Working Group Idaho 2004



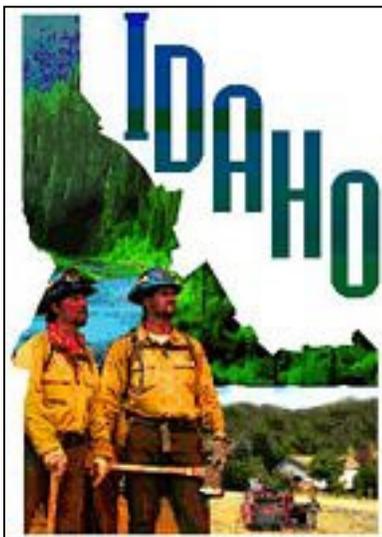
In Idaho, a State Fire Plan Working Group disseminates information, and provides oversight and prioritization for the National Fire Plan and related initiatives.

The 14-member Working Group represents all of the organizations and agencies that share responsibility for implementing the National Fire Plan in Idaho. “After lots of hard work and commitment, we have formed a true collaboration,” said Peggy Polichio, Working Group chair and Idaho Fire Plan coordinator.

But the Working Group does more than talk. At the request of the Intermountain Region, the Working Group last January and again in June of this year prioritized for funding the hazardous fuels projects developed by southern Idaho National Forests for fiscal years (FY) 2004 and 2005. In their evaluation, the Working Group gauged each project’s ability to address key emphasis items in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, including the involvement of partners and key stakeholders and protection of at-risk municipal watersheds. A similar effort is underway in Utah, and soon will be expanded to Nevada.

“Beyond the business of ranking projects, it was evident at our recent meeting that a rapport is developing between the Working Group and the National Forests,” said Polichio. “We thoroughly enjoyed the interactions with the National Forest folks. They demonstrate a high degree of professionalism and passion for their work. We are learning together what this ‘collaboration’ word actually means.”

Although membership is dynamic, the Working Group currently includes representatives from the Idaho Department of Lands (chair), Idaho Fire Chiefs Association, State Fire Marshal, Idaho Association of Counties, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Governor’s Office, Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Resource Conservation and Development Coordinators, Idaho Department of Commerce, Bureau of Indian Affairs, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service.



Local, state and federal member agencies included in the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group are represented by this one logo.

The Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy chartered the Working Group for the National Fire Plan, signed by Idaho’s Governor and agency executives in July 2002. In addition to information sharing and prioritization, the Working Group also collaborates to promote fire prevention and education, and to boost fire district capability.

Dr. Robert Cope, Lemhi County Commissioner who represents the Idaho Association of Counties on the State Working Group, notes, “The counties of Idaho have been integral participants in the State Fire Plan Committee, and have reaped significant benefits from this involvement. By having an active voice on the committee, county governments have been able to express the needs of their citizens, and also gather information to assist in the development of county fire mitigation plans.”

“By having a representative from the Idaho Association of Counties present at committee meetings, changes in fire policies and programs can be communicated quickly to counties across the state,” adds Cope. “More importantly, this information is disseminated on a personal level far superior to any mass communication generated by a faceless agency. This has allowed Idaho counties to make progress in regard to the development of fire mitigation plans at a much faster rate than previously experienced.”

“Within every one of Idaho’s 44 counties, our county commissioners or their designees are leading the local planning effort, and we understand that we will have completed county plans in every Idaho county by the end of this calendar year,” notes Cope.

More information about the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group and its guidance to Idaho counties and communities can be found at <http://www.idahofireplan.id.gov>.