



WORKING FOR A FIRE SAFE FUTURE

California Fire Alliance Leadership Meeting
July 27, 2005
McClellan Training Center, Sacramento, CA

Dale Geldert, CDF – Opening Comments
Patty Gradek, BLM-Bakersfield – Facilitator

This California Fire Alliance meeting was designed in a town-hall style to bring our California community partners together to discuss the following issues:

- Community Wildfire Protection Planning- requirements and priorities
- Hazardous fuel reduction- project implementation and priorities
- Funding- grants and opportunities for community wildfire prevention efforts
- Communities at risk- listing process and related issues

Agency Updates

Alliance Directors

Chief Dale Geldert – Blue Ribbon Commission of 2003; Governor accepted report. Fuels Mgmt issues. BRC changed to a standing permanent committee working on Fire & fuels issues.

Mike Poole, BLM State Director -- Fire Alliance website has been updated.

Bruce Turbeville, CA Fire Safe Council – 130 members

Marge Foler, FWS – San Diego, Sacramento and Bay Area. New WUI Coordinator Jessica Wade

OES – FEMA approved hazard/disaster mitigation plan for the state. Local hazard mitigation plans – 55 approved to date. 89 grants -- \$10.7M. SIMS / NIMS – federal funding available to comply with NIMS. Vendors are contacting agencies at high rates to offer training to comply with NIMS; beware. Gov approved addtl \$5M for OES. 1 FMAG grant approved out of 5.

John Jarvis, NPS Western Director – Diablo Park, Whiskeytown, & one down south – WUI projects underway. Symposium on Vision Fire (Pt. Reyes) – lessons learned and recovery will be held.

Ron Recker, BIA repr – FY05 approved 40 projects \$3M incl majority in WUI type projects. Priority are WUI over non-WUI areas. Joint efforts between tribes and fire safe council members are welcome. If projects protect areas close to Indian trust lands, they may be recognized.

Jesse Persell, LAC – 57 contract cities are in LAC jurisdiction. 3500 acre fuel reduction project by contract city. Borders LAC and OC; high RE values.

Bernie Weingardt, FS – will work together with California Fire Alliance. Focus will be on community wildfire protection plans. Our resources will be available to help communities. Fuels

treatments in WUI areas to be effective working together. 75% complete on fuels targets (50,000 ac approx). Stewardship and _____

Business Meeting Update (Miriam):

The Leadership group approved the process for Fire Alliance charter membership which will be posted on the website.

CAR Discussion

1. Mike Staley, OES - CAR topic
 - a. 1 of 4 goals / strategies (on website)...how to be added or removed from the list.
 - b. Is list of CAR on website? (Steve Brink)
 - i. Tom Hoffman, CDF – yes it's on Fire Alliance website
 - ii. Check hot topics and note procedures for getting added to the site for CAR (1283 currently)
 - iii. Let CFA know if missing communities
 - c. CDF and BLM work to keep website updated
 - d. If community is listed as CAR, any interface with Dept of Insurance? If so, after community complies with reduction plan actions, is there a reduction in insurance rates? ISO (Insurance rating forum) – portion is based on fire protection and fuels mgmt. CAR's may be viewed as a greater risk. Questions will be presented to ISO to possibly be on future CFA agenda with clear explanation of CFA role
 - e. Perhaps have CAR member on ISO board for interface. Demonstrate savings of fuels reduction.
2. Blaming property owner rather than CARs? WUI around Sierra Nev Framework? In Framework, threat zones to treat heavier fuels; advise FS if not working. Fireshed assessment model (isn't stopping at boundary). Fire models – is this a valid worry or reality? On NF lands, LMPs must be guiding documents. Other strategies within Framework, i.e. QLG is being used for analysis of effectiveness.
 - a. Healthy Forest Initiative take precedence over Sierra Nevada Framework?
 - i. Boundaries are adjusted and we can work with communities to design appropriate to fire protection. If we move it 1-2 miles, that can be defensible. Framework allows for it.
 - b. Criteria to meet as a CAR? i.e.: Forest Glen (25 people), Post Mountain (300 people)
 - i. Work with State Fire Marshall to set standards on risk. Building standards apply per CAR. Enhanced standards were not necessary. Procedures are approved by leadership group and are on the website. Submit form to BLM, they review if criteria is met.
 - c. Dave Hellman, Real Estate professionals resist CAR logic to adversely impact values. What are we doing about that?
 - i. CFA has not taken on this issue but we may do outreach to business and RE community
 - ii. Place it on next agenda

Community Wildfire Protection Planning

1. Pat Kidder, Community Fire Protection Plans – Are all fire agencies committed to projects out of CFPP? When will we start doing that?

- a. RQ When Fire Alliance was set up, it wasn't focused on what to do with insurance companies but what could support grant monies. FY06 language will be to award grant money to those communities who have established CWPP standards vs. those who haven't. Western State Gov Assoc – only 6 communities have been approved so far. When grant money is allocated, will use CAR lists and approved plans, we need to move quickly with Fire Safe Councils.
2. CWPP is a coordinated plan designed across multiple ownerships. It's an at risk community or a smaller version uniquely defined.
 - a. 49 CWPP in CA; many are quite broad. 7 of these have been agreed upon by local govt, FD's and CDF. Sampled some plans and found omissions: List of these is on the website. Elements include lack of formal agreement, not generous borders; failure to include revenue generating projects, treatment types, methods, etc. How to implement?
 - b. Is there consensus to work with CWPP criteria by all agencies?
 - i. BW – we haven't been creative enough to even use funds appropriated to (i.e. FS) lands. S&PF funds appropriated by Congress – less support than we'd like. Want to keep it alive. Alliance \$5M – FS would like to see that continued. Not stop with grant \$ but leverage what's done on Forests to support communities too.
 - ii. N. NE Calif. – consider looking at a county wide plan. May allow more strategic planning, finances and County Bd. of Supvsrs acceptance. FS is needed to do GIS maps; rather than grant money going to contractors to do this work. BW commended to extend this capacity.
 - iii. County and local levels: agency commitment would be further shown by including all collaborators on application. Add this to webpage.
 - d. Roles of state parks? In CA all landowners need to participate (state parks would be included). Only 3 must agree to the plan by law. State, local, and citizens represented by officials – it's key to have state parks support.
 - e. Watershed area – no incorporated towns, N CA coastal towns are CAR but need county designation to be included / covered.
 - f. CWPP's haven't been forthcoming (i.e. S CA – SBF). Retirement or urban commuters – non-employed or employed – small group of volunteers gets a large job to do. A layman should not be writing the report. Reticence of agency personnel to make a commitment; reality is coming to meetings and then referring people to a website. Agency personnel have their plates full but need to know from the top, staff and line, what will fit with the plan. CWPP help in writing the plan would be appreciated. Strategizing all the issues to be considered requires professional agency employees.
 - i. Fire Safe Council restraints – a community with CC&R's might be a more effective approach.
 - ii. San Bernardino County communities - Collaboration by 80 people, multi-agencies, etc. formed steering committees to accomplish plan. Worked through problems jointly via meetings. 11 CWPP's are in process, 1 signed off, 1 near completion, several in draft – all since February. This is a 'community' plan.
 - g. What are the 7 plans approved? Are there minimum requirements for each plan that can be identified?
 - i. 4 in Lake Tahoe FLFD, LFV, MFPD, NTFD; Eldorado-CFPP; Tuolumne County H-108 Corridor; Wrightwood, SBF; Plumas County.

- h. Plans may be posted on website PDF format (or communities have their websites and CFA website could link) Preparers after setting up plan, complete form and submit.
 - i. 4 requirement categories:
 - 1. agreed to by 3 entities (CDF, LFD, local govt)
 - 2. collaborated and consulted with federal agencies
 - 3. prioritize fuel reduction and designate types & methods of treatment
 - 4. Treatment of structural liability
- i. Mendocino County – LMP to work into a CWPP but what is the status? It’s difficult to combine CDF unit plan with CWPP. Is there a deadline for unit plan?
 - i. Fire mgmt plans by CDF – became apparent that collaboration requirements in some situations became a huge effort to reach agreement. Reassessed situation; new memo supercedes and gives ‘option’ to obtain collaboration. Due dates extended. Turnover of fire planners.
- j. Lassen County – CWPP signed off since 2003, plus 3 county area that’s a NEPA document (may be only one in the state). Getting counties involved opens door for Title 3 funds. Countywide involvement gets supervisors engaged! Without county engaged, it’s impossible to get such money.
- k. Title 2 (\$400K) and Title 3 outspend. Statewide: infrastructure to do the work – one strategy; another where infrastructure doesn’t exist. Agencies aren’t stepping up to cover these and infrastructure is then potentially lost.
 - l. What does a CWPP need to have in it (or not)?
- m. Why do you want a CWPP?
 - i. Grant program available
 - ii. Federal agencies (creates alternative to NEPA)
- n. Napa County
 - i. Local govt starting up fire protection planning process and general planning process – dovetails with CWPP.
- o. San Diego – Formed an alliance through CWPP
 - i. helped community stakeholders
 - ii. Community education
- p. Monterey – has excellent coordination with BLM and FS. CDF initial attack fire policy; also a paradigm shift.

Fuels Reduction / Project Implementation

- 1. How do federal agencies prioritize fuel treatment projects?
 - a. BLM – DOI direction specifies areas for direction of WUI \$\$
 - i. Projects that associate to CWPP; biomass being utilized; stewardship.
 - ii. Grants criteria – some are similar; type of treatments, planning, risk assessments. Balance planning / implementation.
 - b. National / state / local targets
 - c. FS - Congressional earmarks (QLG, LTB, S CA, S&PF)
 - i. what remains?
 - 1. 50% WUI
 - 2. Partnerships
 - ii. Effort toward seamless allocation
 - d. BIA – determine by joint decision of tribes

- i. No mandates for accomplishment reports or goals
 - ii. Tribe(s) determine importance
 - e. NPS – same issues as FS and DOI/BLM
 - i. Targeted 28K acres for 2005
 - 1. broad objectives (ecological, restoration, exotic species)
 - 2. similar to NFP with other agencies
 - f. FWS – same issues / priorities
 - i. Natural resource benefits
 - ii. Less restrictive boundaries
- 2. Clearinghouse process
- 3. National Forest finance process in ASC
 - a. Slowed down to 6 weeks for Fire Safe Council process
- 4. BLM – National FAM repr
 - a. Budget strategies and allocation for DOI agencies
 - i. Prioritization; top-down/bottom-up NFP designed to be bottom-up. Goal: protect community. Start: at local level. ID risk and actions to mitigate risk.
 - ii. Outlines priorities to respond to NFP goals and Congress for funding. Best to work with CWPP's to set expectations.

Open Forum

1. (BLM speaker) CWPP through CFA; 501c3 status? Educate communities of complexities. It's a lot of work. If everything isn't organized (and maintained), congress and supervisors are critical contacts. Get help from FMO's if resources aren't evident.
2. (Steve Brink) Biomass utilization: issue for CFA and CDF is the extreme increase in population/development with manzanita, digger pine, etc.
3. (State Fire Safe Council) SBF with 13 FSC's working with CDF and FS. Much of the Forest Plan, BLM unit, county plan, etc. will be available for reference and use. Projects can be pulled together with cut/paste from other documents.
4. Recommend pursuing state legislature to create incentives for fuel reduction bond – lands adjacent to a WUI area. Problem is flatline budget without increase though increased investment is necessary to address risk / hazardous fuels.
5. State Forests Advisory Council: needs updating/new members/more science. CDF will review issue of state forests/properties needing fuels reduction/cleanup.
6. Put someone from the Fire Safe Council on the Bd of Supervisors.
7. Firewise Communities USA program was modeled after CFA. Have CFA adopt to recognize this program and complement fuel reduction initiative. Emphasizes homeowner responsibility. (www.firewise.org)