

Arizona Interagency Coordinating Group Meeting

January 5, 2012 - Phoenix, AZ

Attendance

Pam Bostwick, USFS (Chair); Dale Glenmore, Vice Chair, BIA Navajo Region (Member); Leon Ben (SWCG Liaison); Jeff Hickerson, NPS (Member); Judy Palmer, FS (Member); Rod Lopez, FWS (Member); Glen Buettner, AZSF; David Geyer, AZSF (Member); Keith Burnette, BIA Western Region (Member); Dominic Chicharello, BIA; Dolores Garcia, BLM; Ron Sherron, FS Smoke Coordinator; Doreen Gatewood, BIA Smoke Coordinator; Scott Hunt, AZ State Forester

Review and Approval of the last AICG Meeting Notes

Changes were made to the October 12, 2011 meeting notes. The final version will be posted on the Committee's website.

BIA Smoke Coordinator

Doreen Gatewood is now officially hired and working in this position. Ron Sherron is helping to get her familiar with the duties and responsibilities of the job.

Doreen will be attending the Southwest Fire Ecology Conference in February.

FY 2012 AOP Discussion

Keith Burnette and Ron Sherron will be able to have this ready for review by the AICG by January 13th.

Dolores will obtain the BLM signature.

There is no need to identify additional support needs in this AOP for Ron's position or otherwise for the FS including travel, services and maintenance.

AZ Interagency Smoke Management Program Update – Ron Sherron

Monitoring research over the last several months has been useful to determine 3 major drainages that flow into Sedona. This information will change how prescribed burns are approved.

Ron attended a town council meeting where there were many complaints about smoke. This provided a good opportunity for public education. Ron is working with Punky Moore to develop a Wildland Fire series to be presented at town meetings and broadcast over the internet. This will be a 4-part series.

Ron is concerned about the program workload as it relates to overall air quality, not just smoke. Dolores will find out if the BLM is still contributing funds to support air quality support needs. The BLM may need a position to address air quality issues and planning efforts.

There was much discussion about roles and responsibilities of the BIA and FS Smoke Coordinator positions and human resources issues. At this point, the employees and supervisors need to discuss how it is working if there are issues both individually and across agencies (BIA-FS).

Ron will need AICG input on wildfire reporting thresholds once ADEQ provides what they are proposing.

Communities at Risk/CWPP/WWRA Update – Glen Buettner

The Western Allocation Grant application scored high enough to receive funding when the FS budget is approved. Glen will coordinate with Ron, Brad, Theresa and Doreen in early February so that they are ready to implement the project when the funds do come in. If awarded, the funds be available until 2014 or 2015.

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Each agency needs to provide Glen with the name and contact information for those who will be looking at the data associated with the Western WUI Assessment. It will be important to have other eyes on the product when it is finalized.

Glen presented the Arizona Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy. These were developed collaboratively with federal and state agencies as well as non-government organizations. Glen asked the AICG to consider reviewing the Air section to ensure that it is accurate and complete. These are documents that can be updated when necessary.

Scott Hunt emphasized the need to know what the fire restrictions are in all jurisdictions. He needs a place where all of the information is compiled. He was unable to find all of the information he needed last year when questioned by the Governor's office. The State website did not have the information that he needed. Dolores indicated that she has access to a shared statewide website on which this information could be posted. PLIA is also a good source to provide that information through implementing a website matrix.

Scott also provided the following information about the Governor's Office:

- The Governor supports restoration
- The Governor knows that prescribed fire is a part of restoration
- The Governor understands that when a wildfire is extremely active such as during high wind events and plume dominated conditions, there is nothing that can be done to change the nature of the smoke
- There is support from above

Agency Updates

AZ State – Glen Buettner

Vacancies: Deputy Forester position

BIA Navajo Region – Dale Glenmore

Vacancies: Fuels, AFMO and possibly a 9/11 GIS position – the cert is now in for the Fuels Specialist

NPS

Vacancies: FMO South Rim, Grand Canyon FMO, Saguaro FMO (closed), El Malpais FMO

RX Fire: Jeff is encouraging the Grand Canyon to burn early rather than later in the spring before the winds get too strong in the dry conditions.

Retirements: Dan Oltrogge's retirement party will be on January 21st in Flagstaff. Contact Jeff for details.

FWS – Rod Lopez

Vacancies/Position Updates: FMO for FWS State of AZ closes on January 10th

Training: On January 24th and 25th there will be a class with live fire simulation.

BIA Western Region – Keith Burnette

Vacancies: Ft. Apache FMO

RX Fire: Haven't seen any burn plans yet but there are plans for spring burning. Around 4,000 acres of prescribed fire and roughly 23,000 acres of wildfire accomplishment have been reported in this FY.

Other: Fuel treatment effectiveness report was prepared by Ft. Apache for the Wallow Fire and here is the link: <http://www.bia.gov/nifc/library/FireArticles/index.htm>

BLM - Dolores Garcia

- Fire awareness week is coming up.
- Firewise classes will be taking place in southern Arizona.

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- There are 10 communities in Maricopa County that are pending Firewise classification.
- There are maintenance issues in Firewise communities of Prescott. Despite this situation, the communities are still able to maintain the Firewise classification.

Smoke Program – Ron Sherron

- A new portable trailer was built with end of year funding.
- The annual smoke meeting dates will be available soon. They will probably be in the third week of March. Ron will check on the possibility of conducting this in webinar format.

FS – Pam Bostwick/Judy Palmer

Positions: Dana Carter has been hired in the Coop Forestry position in FAM

RX Fire: Many burns planned across AZ forests

Next Meeting/Adjournment

There will be a conference call on February 24th.