



Southwest Coordinating Group



November 22, 2005

Subject: **Establishment of Zone Level Fuels Collaborative Groups and Completion of Zone Smoke Coordination Plans (REPLIES REQUIRED BY FEB. 1 AND MAY 1)**

Directed to: **Chair, New Mexico Zone Coordination Groups**

From: **Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group**

The National Fire Plan, the Hazard Fuels Initiative, the Hazard Fuels Restoration Act, and various agreements signed by DOI, the USDA Forest Service, and the National Association of State Foresters have emphasized and mandated that all agencies maintain a high level of collaboration on all fuels treatment projects. To achieve this, the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) chartered the NM Interagency Coordination Group, (NMICG), among other actions. That group cannot effectively provide true collaborative planning on the many projects across the state. The most effective collaboration takes place at the local level.

The Memorandum of Understanding for the Development of a Collaborative Fuels Treatment Program, (June 2003; USFS, DOI, NASF, National Association of Counties), provides the framework for the annual selection and prioritization of fuels treatment projects for the agencies. The Southwest Area must formalize this process at the local level to insure effective interaction on future projects, and to insure our projects complement each others when possible.

The Southwest Coordinating Group hereby directs each zone to form a local fuels collaborative group to review, discuss, and prioritize zone projects each year. Each zone board will determine the make up of the zone collaborative groups. Each group needs to insure that non-federal partners engaged in fuels work are invited to be full participants in the zone process. The priorities for projects for all agencies have been established in the MOU referenced above. **By April 1 of each year, each zone will deliver an interagency list of projects for the following fiscal year to the NMICG.** The current chair is Susan Lee, 505-842-3281). The NMICG will confirm the work of the zones, put together a statewide program of work, and focus on statewide issues.

Each zone will forward a list of members of their zone collaborative fuels group, and a one page operational charter to the NMICG Chair by February 1, 2006. If you have any questions on the collaborative process, please contact NMICG chair Susan Lee, or any of the NMICG agency reps. Mail your fuels group description and charter to: Attention Susan Lee, USFS, 333 Broadway Blvd., SE, Albuquerque, NM 87102 or email snlee@fs.fed.us.

Last year the SWCG formally requested that each zone develop a Zone Smoke Coordination Plan. To date, no response has been received from any of the zones.

By May 1, 2006 each zone collaborative group will complete a Zone Smoke Coordination Plan and send it to Lisa Bye, (address below). Lisa will send copies of the plans to Christi Gordon, USFS Regional Smoke Management Coordinator. A rough draft template is attached that includes the primary elements that should be included in the plans; each zone may modify and adapt as appropriate. The zone collaborative fuels group may likely function as the zone smoke coordination group.

Lisa Bye, the New Mexico DOI smoke staffer, is available to meet in person or provide help by phone (cell 505-690-2438) or email to all zone groups in developing their plans. Christi Gordon is also available to help (505-842-3136). All final plans should be sent to Lisa at: Attention Lisa Bye, NM Smoke Management, 2044 Galisteo, Santa Fe, NM 87505, or email at lisa_bye@blm.gov. Lisa will soon be changing to a new position as the BLM state fuels specialist, but she has graciously agreed to help with this smoke plan process until a new person is established.

Thanks for your cooperation. We live in changing times and improved communication, collaboration and coordination is the best way for us to do effective business into the future.

/s/ Pamela McAlpin
Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group

Attachment: Zone Smoke Coordination Plan template