



Southwest Coordinating Group



November 22, 2005

Subject: **Establishment of Zone Level Fuels Collaborative Groups (REPLY REQUIRED BY FEB. 1)**

Directed to: **Chair, Arizona 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 AZ Interagency Coordination Group, (AICG), 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 their zone collaborative group. Each group needs to insure that non-federal partners engaged in fuels work are invited to be full participants in the zone process; local smoke coordination can also be done by this group. 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 AICG.** The current chair is Curtis Heaton, USFWS, Tucson Ecological Services Office, 201 N. Bonita Ave., Suite 141, Tucson, AZ 85745 / phone, 520-670-6150 X243 / email, Curtis_Heaton@fws.gov. The AICG 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 AICG Chair by February 1, 2006. If you have any questions on the collaborative process, please contact AICG chair Curtis Heaton, or any of the AICG agency reps. Mail your fuels group description and charter to Curtis at the above address.

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