

NRCG Prevention Committee Spring Meeting

Wednesday and Thursday, April 30th & May 1st, 2008

In Attendance

Cathy Scofield, Marianne Baumberger, Karly Krausz, Sandy Groth, Harry Steele, Pat Cross, Janette Turk, Tom Paulson, Traci Weaver, Lisa Osborn, Allison, and Mike Dannenberg and Pat McKelvey (via telephone)

Restrictions Changes

On Wednesday afternoon, the group began discussing wording of additions to the fire restrictions guidelines that were proposed by the restrictions sub-committee. Changes and additions included: the patrol time period from 2 hours to 1 hour; a clear definition to 'patrol'; and to allow all generators and lpg devices including propane campfires, with mitigation under Stage 2. See attachment for details.

Introductions

There have been a few changes to our group including Allison Kolbe who is the new SW Montana Zone rep, Karly Krausz the new Eastern Montana Zone rep and we now have a NPS agency rep, Traci Weaver. We'll miss you both Jamie Kirby, and Dena Lang and welcome the Park Service to the committee.

Updates

SC Zone : Marianne--is busy with her detail as a PAO. She has been going over the strategy and vision for this prevention group, but has tabled it for a later discussion.

State of Idaho: Harry--Idaho is revitalizing Keep Idaho Green and putting on Living On The Edge workshops. Harry wants to see an increase in Firewise Communities in Idaho. ID State Fireplan Working Group in Boise at Wildland Fire Conference October 8-9. The conference is to develop a message for public to help support prescribed fire.

N. Idaho: Sandy--is working on a debris burning brochure, mitigation grants and the same usual stuff.

NW Zone: Janette—the hot air balloon event brought her NW Zone together. They may create their own "type 3" prevention team. Janette's been working on articles for local newspaper on several topics with PSAs related to those topics, and she offered her media plan to everyone. Terina has designed coffee sleeves that say "Don't Let This Fire Season Become Hotter Than You Can Handle". They are available for any of the zones to purchase and use at coffee stands and cafes where to go hot beverages are sold.

Action Item: Ask Terina about cost info.

State of Idaho: Pat—is working with those rewriting the SB51 guidelines for Montana. The Department of Labor and Industry is working on building codes, Montana County Association, insurance and realtors have gotten involved. The hope is to have legislation adopted by fall, although they will be best management practices with out enforcement teeth. Folks are trying to make it more politically palatable to become state law at the next legislative session. Granite and Yellowstone counties are requesting more Firewise workshops than he can accommodate. There is a new contact for the prison sign program and they have corrugated cardboard signs. The billboard and radio campaign for the state of Montana (that was going to also be adapted by N. Idaho) message was changed by the

add company. The tag line “All This For One Careless Moment” was changed to “You Had to Light That Match” after the add company did the design. Some where there was a miss understanding. There are 6 billboards across the state of Keep Montana Green poster contest winning entries in their localized areas. Billboards are hard to come by this year, because it is an election year. PSAs associated with “You Had To Light That Match” will be on Keep Montana Green webpage. He has more campaign posters if anyone needs them. Steve Zachary, Terina Mullen and Jamie Kirby are helping Pat with Smokey Bobblehead night at the Missoula Osprey in August.

Park Service: Traci--has been busy getting ready for the workshop in Jackson. This fall will be the Yellowstone and Beyond conference and she is developing talking points and field trips for the fall.

Eastern Zone: Karly—has been busy getting ready to have the hot air balloon visit Lewistown. She is expecting 540+ kids

Eastern Zone –Billings Area: Babbette—there are concerns regarding the Billings area Smokey balloon visit and organization.

SW Zone: Allison—has been working with SW Zone preparing for the hot air balloon and associated event. Susan Jenkins will be coming to Seeley Lake Wednesday, May 28th to present her compelling Firewise story.

Action Item: Sandy suggests that we compile synopsis of the hot air balloon events and to do an AAR in the fall. Also, suggestion for FS News success stories and a press release “Balloon Visits 5 Cities” which Janette volunteered to write.

Idea: Susan Jenkins should be a presenter at next prevention conference.

Forest Service: Cathy—The FS and BLM have put money toward a mitigation video which is tentatively named “Are We Safe From Fire?”. It is a high quality educational video based on the Susan Jenkins story. This story has been used on capital hill as a success story—we need to tell success stories! If we don’t have the time, Cathy has a FS helper who can help write success stories. We need to work on getting more of our communities as recognized Firewise communities. The FS and BLM have given money to help make the balloon visits a success. There has been lots of talk about structure protection and agency response. We have a responsibility to prevent wildfire and educate homeowners, we already have good efforts going on, so how do we pull it all together? We have the expertise and financial support. **We need talking points for a 5 state area**, what are the basic tools that people are using and what are our commonalities?

Action Item: Have Susan Jenkins come present at our next meeting. Let’s put together talking points.

BLM: Mike—“Living With Wildfire”, that was produced several years ago in the NR, was a good brochure. Mike is working and FireSafe MT are working on bringing it back. It will cost \$50,000 for a mass printing. Hopefully others are willing to contribute.

Action Item: Each person brings back products of all kinds from their zones to decide what to incorporate into the new brochure.

Mike and Karly are preparing a presentation for an outdoor writers association meeting in Bismarck, ND. They are also putting together a fire display, and bringing 2 displays from NIFC. Mike is also compiling a list of story topics for the outdoors writers

association to write about. He also suggests we broach the subject of how FireSafe Montana ties into NRCG.

Action Item: Provide Mike with ideas for outdoors writers to write about.

Mike reports that Eastern Montana and North Dakota are experiencing very early fire seasons this year, and the conditions are lining up similarly to 1988 and 2000.

Central Zone: Pat McKelvey—Helena area has had several fires this year already. There is a lack of prevention in Helena and there is no assigned prevention tech. The Tri-County working group may be able to have a prevention focus. FireSafe Montana is starting to take off. Local folks need to know that agencies support them.

The distribution of information in the within the NR was discussed. It was decided to edit any existing email lists of prevention contacts in the Northern Rockies.

Action Item: Lisa will create the list. Cathy, Pat and Mike should send their email lists to Lisa.

DOI and CWPPs

Traci was wondering if everybody who is involved with community wildfire protection plans is willing to sign them, because sometimes state foresters don't want to sign them. It is a grassroots, local government effort to create them, not an agency creation. Some agency folks are reluctant to sign them because they feel that it is taking on unnecessary risk and responsibility and may require NEPA. Mike thinks that it would be an honor to sign, and that others are too worried and won't sign. The DOI has funded lots of CWPPs. The Forest Service in many areas have also signed the documents as supporters. It doesn't seem to be an issue in Montana.

WUI Reno and Prevention Workshop?

Mike has been thinking big about our next prevention workshop and made the suggestion to have our prevention workshop become a part of the annual WUI conference held in Reno, Nevada the last week of March. By helping host a national convention, rather than a regional one, would provide a higher level of exposure to fire prevention and also the NR Prevention Committee. It would provide the benefit of attention from manager type folks who attend the WUI conference. Mike has been talking with Don Artlee about Prevention, Mitigation and Education being the primary theme for the annual WUI conference in Reno. The WUI conference is put on by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (who are partners with Firewise). Sunday and Monday are training session days and the main conference begins Wednesday. There would be some general breakout sessions of prevention, mitigation and education. Some possible speakers would be Dr. Steve Running who is known for his work on climate change, Rocky Barker who wrote Scorched Earth, Steve Payne who is an educational speaker with Nature Conservancy and Lou Southerd may be a good speaker on the future of fire prevention. States who have firesafe councils could present what they do, and CWPP contractors could present writing them from start to finish. Mike plans to go ahead with this idea whether the committee supports in or not.

Discussion regarding WUI Reno and Prevention Workshop

There was much discussion about doing this. There were concerns that many folks would not be able to attend from the region because of budget shortfalls and travel issues.

Would we be missing an audience that would not be allowed to attend? It was discussed that if a training element were included that might help the attendance. Mike will be teaching in S215. Mike brought out the point there would be less logistics for the committee to have to handle since Don Artlee is the conference organizer and our NRCG group would still get recognition. The cost of attendance is \$350, not to mention the travel costs.

The group decided that this is a good idea as it would give us good exposure, however we would still like to sponsor training of some sort in the NR next year, possible in Lewistown, MT. It will be discussed further at the GB Preconference in Jackson Hole. *After the Jackson Conference discussion it was decided by NR to support Mike and also plan a condensed training in the NR Rockies. The greater group agreed with the increased exposure at the Reno conference, but felt many would not be able to attend because of the cost.*

GB also discussed at great length and agreed to support the NR training, but not the Reno conference.

Suggestions for training to be held at a local workshop

Possible trainings that we could put on at a workshop are P-101, S-203, FI-110, or Home Assessments Training. We picked the week of April 27th, 2009 or May 4th, 2009 as the date for our regional workshop and we were thinking of Lewistown, Montana as the location.

Action Item: Bring ideas for discussing to the fall meeting, ask your zones if anyone wants prevention team member or team leader training.

Prevention Teams

Cathy and Sandy have been working hard to put together a Northern Rockies prevention team. All geographic areas are to have a prevention team and make them available on a schedule. NR struggles to put together a team during our scheduled period of time and we may disassemble if we can't get it together this year. We only have one qualified team leader in our area who is an AD, although Sandy is getting close to being qualified as a team leader. October and December are our next 2 rotations and we need people to commit by July 1st. We also need team leaders and should recruit non-prevention folks also.

Talking Points

We decided to meet in the lobby on Monday night of the Jackson conference to discuss our ideas for talking points.

Action Item: Bring these talking points forward to NRCG so they can talk about them during their conference calls.

FAQs

The FAQs about fire restrictions are almost done. Harry had a few changes for Idaho, and Lisa suggested that #43 needs to be consistent with our new exemptions wording. We also should write a preamble to the FAQs to explain the fact that there may be differences between states and agencies.

Action Item: Give FAQs to Cathy when complete.

Restrictions and Media Coordinators Meeting

The Billings area restrictions coordinators will facilitate this meeting to be held in Red Lodge, Montana September 30th. There may also be an AAR regarding the first year of using the restrictions website in addition or before the Sept. meeting

Verbage for Restrictions Website

We decided to write “worst case scenario punishments” to add to the restrictions public website to hopefully deter would be restrictions offenders.

You could be fined up to \$5000 and sentenced up to 6 months in jail for violating fire restrictions.

You can be held liable for all suppression costs and damages if you start a fire.

Fall NRCG Prev. and Interface Meeting

Red Lodge, MT Oct. 1-2

Notes submitted by Allison Kolbe