



**Minutes**  
**45th Meeting North American Forest Commission**  
**Fire Management Working Group**

Halifax Nova Scotia, Canada  
14-18 October 2014



**Wednesday, October 15, 2014**

Welcome by Chair, Bill de Groot

Introductions – round table

Noted that Luis Madriz's plane is arriving late and he will be unavailable for the first day.

Background: There are six (6) Working Groups under the NAFC, and most have been active since the organization was established in 1962. There are six (6) Commissions under FAO and the forum works well. Overall, there are 100 wildfire agencies with annual burning of about 5 million hectares (12.3 million acres) and approximately 85,000 fires, costing multi-million dollars. The FAO and this NAFC forum is a means to speak to the rest of the world. There is recognized leadership with the NAFC-FMWG and with Australia/New Zealand (located in the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission region, although operating primarily through the Australia Fire Authorities Council, AFAC). The International Wildfire Conference series is a premier event, as well as the successful study tours. There is confidence in our exchanges to help each other, to build stronger relationships and share resources. The Charter has three (3) main objectives – to share knowledge and information, to promote collaboration between fire agencies in the 3 North American countries, and to support enhanced international cooperation in fire management. There are also links to bilateral agreements under the group (even if not the original intent).

### **Mexico Country Report**

Fire in Mexico overview– Alfredo Nolasco Morales

Reference was made to three (3) bad fire years; 1988-89, 1998 where they lost fire fighters, and 2011 when almost 1 million ha (2.47 million acres) burned. Fire program is now improving. From 1998 to 2013, there are 8300 fires/year and 286,000 ha (706,800 acres) burned. There is now a National Development plan 2013-18 to improve the program and strengthen capacity. Mexico will move to ICS within (3) years. Improvement has been with the support of USFS, Canada/CIFFC and others. We can now share our capacity with other countries and strengthen our international cooperation.

A comment was made after the presentation that maybe this group could reach out to others about how we have worked with Mexico to involve other South American countries. Can NAFC-FMWG reach out through the FAO's Latin America and Caribbean Forestry Commission (COFLAC)? Costa Rica was mentioned as an example of reaching out with funding assistance from Mexico, understanding their need and assisting them to become more active.

Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature - Juan Manuel Frausto  
It is the FMCN's Fire Initiative XV Anniversary. His presentation focused on: the importance of the role of society in fire management, building rural capacity, strengthening local NGO's and community involvement. Several papers will be shared with the WG members.

Fire Research in Mexico – German Flores  
A summary of fire research activities in Mexico were presented

### **USA Country Report**

USA Wildland Fire Season Summary – Patti Hiram, Dale Dague

Overview of the Quadrennial Fire review and looking forward with broad levels of stakeholders. It involved invitees and social media components for an informed public, leaders, and First Nations. The emphasis is in more than just the science. We are dealing with many different opinions and expectations. Many people do not understand, but they should be involved. Within this review, a group is dedicated to human factors and community involvement. There is an effort to examine gaps in science, technology, and technology transfer.

Peter Van Lierop made a general comment that with science and education/training, we must be cautious that science doesn't dominate.

Shane Wiseman indicated that Australia is strong on operational reviews but working to improve lessons learned about human behavior.

Presentation was stopped at this point for an official visit to the Nova Scotia Legislature (House of Assembly for the Province of Nova Scotia). It is the oldest legislature in Canada established in 1758. The Minister of Natural Resources, the Honourable Zach Churchill, read an official resolution during an official sitting of the House to acknowledge each member individually from the NAFC-FMWG, and thanked them for their commitment and dedication for protecting our countries from wildfires. A brief tour and history of the Legislature followed as time allowed.

USA presentation continued – Dale Dague  
Presented an overview of USDA Forest Service International Programs

Department of the Interior – Vince Mazzier  
A verbal update was provided on the bilateral agreements. Mexico - USA agreement needs some minor review. Canada-USA agreement is in a working Draft. It was noted that CIFFC has binding language in the operating plan, but not the agreement. USA-Australia agreement requires more work – The State Department has it now for

language changes. There was an older agreement, but nothing currently in place. It is still okay in the older version which has worked since 2002 because neither party has canceled, but difficulties are foreseeable without changes. Vince is actually in a part-time retirement position to assist these agreements along.

A USFS CD was provided on strategy, fire research, summaries of slides, aviation and firewise information.

### **Country Report – Canada**

CIFFC Operational Report and 2014 fire season summary was provided by Kim Connors (see separate powerpoint)

NRCan report on Fire Research was provided by Bill de Groot (see separate powerpoint)

### **Business Meeting**

2013 minutes reviewed and approved

Charter did not require updating

FMWG Workplan and action items:

Intend to put workplan on the web.

Membership was updated for each Country

Bill and Alfredo spoke about a proposal with Mexico. Mexico is looking for a five (5) year plan for a Mexican Fire Management System including fire information and fire fuels. It is supported under the Canada-Mexico Partnership and FMWG workplan.

For development of bilateral agreements, the date was removed.

Bilateral agreement templates exist, but it is difficult with different international laws. USA/Mexico/Canadian law practitioners can discuss, but it is more difficult among developing countries. There are options for technical issues however. Trilateral agreements are too difficult. Pieter van Lierop asked about a list of bilateral agreements and how they had been done.

2009 study tour recommendations were completed.

2012 study tour recommendations are being worked on. One improvement has been the awareness of the participants on the involvement of the NAFC-FMWG. Our involvement was not widely known.

Discussion are underway for an Australia-New Zealand study tour in 2016 – Kim/Dale/Alfredo

### International Liaison Committee report – Dale Dague

The International Liaison Committee (ILC) met in Freiburg, Germany during June 2014 at the same time as the Wildland Fire Advisory Group meeting, the International Fire Aviation Working Group meeting. The South Korea Conference Organizing Committee (SKCOC) advised the group of the current progress of planning as they prepare to host the 5th International Wildland Fire Conference (IWFC) in October 2015. At the meeting in Freiburg recommendations for the 5th IWFC Scientific Committee members were discussed and the committee membership was finalized.

During the 2014 IUFRO conference in Salt Lake City, Utah the SKCOC staffed a booth to promote the 5th IWFC. The US Forest Service and the Canadian Forest Service supported the effort. Additionally, Gary Morgan and Murray Dudfield staffed a booth at the AFAC conference in September 2014.

Promotional materials from the SKCOC for the 5th IWFC were distributed to the FMWG members.

#### **Thursday, October 16, 2014**

Field tour of historical sites in South Shore area, Nova Scotia. Peggy's Cove, Mahone Bay, Lunenburg Field Office, and Lunenburg UNESCO Townsite. Nova Scotia fire management presentation made in Lunenburg Field Office.

#### **Friday, October 17, 2014**

### FAO Fire Program Report – Pieter Van Lierop

Pieter has been involved with the FAO Fire Program for 8 years. His presentation included the FAO mandate and how the Working Groups fit in. The first meeting occurred in Quebec City in 1945 and the NAFC is only region of the FAO with a Fire Working Group. There is a strong link with our Governments, so support is better and the work easier to initiate. Other regions include: European, Near East, South America, African, Asia Pacific (see attached diagram in appendix). A great accomplishment has been the Wildland Fire Management Handbook for Trainers (FAO). FAO Forestry has 2 Divisions. Overall, the program is to support implementation of Integrated Fire Management at the country level, provide access to fire data, encourage capacity development, increase stakeholder participation, and review emerging issues of Climate change.

Peter indicated that North America wants to share with South America, but we should carefully examine what is going on. What experiences are there and how can they be shared? After this work, then the NAFC- FMWG can help. An example is trying to use

Firewise in other countries without first understanding their own experiences. It cannot be used as an exact blueprint. They may need fire management, but how should it be best applied. There will be budget issues and international guidelines may be needed. New countries are not clear on things like ICS training expectations. How do we utilize aerial and ground components?

There was a general group discussion about Forest Commission technicians who understand fire management and how science can be involved. The issue may be more about the lack of political decision making. They do not understand and they change regularly. Sometimes the political leaders do get it right and the program advances. There must be good connections with related issues such as health and economics. Overall, we need better data. Fire is a cross cutting issue involving the safety of communities. Good management benefits society and we need simple clear messages. We have to think into the future. Lastly, there was a comment about why the FAO hasn't asked members for data.

Kim thanked Peter for his insight on FAO and role of FMWG expanding carefully in South America.

#### Fire Management in Latin America - Luis Diego (Costa Rica)

A summary of fire management in latin America was presented. There were approximately 55,000 hectares (135,900 acres) burned in 2013.

#### Australia and New Zealand FFMG - Shane Wiseman.

Relationships will become even more important in our collective futures. High density populations and heavy dry fuels are challenging our services. There are differences, tensions and some conflicts. Volunteer numbers are reducing and groups are reaching out for help and assistance. Skills, capabilities, knowledge and standards to be understood and acknowledged and matched properly. Prescribed burning will play a huge part of future management. At the moment, it is not allowed on all land tenures, so the effectiveness is flawed. Referenced the FMWG and AFAC relationship. Bushfire Cooperation Research Center has expanded to a Bushfire & Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (CRC). An all risk center for floods, storms, cyclones, tsunami, earthquakes and other hazards. The adjustment also changed the work activities. The Centre is on Twitter @BNHCRC and Facebook. Last slide on Reality Check – of wildfire on the landscape. A risk based approach to be adopted. Challenges are numerous, but highlighted developing fire education and 'fire savvy' communities. We have helped by beginning to communicate that we do not have the technology to stop all fires. Some communities have taken notice. We are attempting to increase accountabilities and expectations. Fire is becoming more integrated with other disaster areas. A World trend.

An invitation will be forwarded to the NAFC-FMWG for the next meeting of the FFMG in Australia. There is potential to build on the relationship, and also attend AFAC on the following day.

CRC and USA and Canada to talk to avoid duplication of efforts. Now link with Consortium – term and future links again. (Kim)

Bilateral agreements – rethink intellectual property. Check wording to ensure language allows this. AUS inserted the language first.

FAO Committee on Forests (COFO, Rome) meeting report - Rick Scott.

NAFC-FMWG is the best example of collaboration and cooperation and not just suppression, but the efforts for restoration and ecosystems. Reports can be found on the website. New page for working group reports. Bill added comments on working forest and connection to urban forestry. A group was asked to look at Urban Forestry.

2014 Australia-new Zealand Study Tour – Jason

A report was provided and a final version will be available soon. It will have a new layout and eight recommendations. Some of the areas include relationships, engagement of stakeholders, landscape approaches, shared responsibility, future research, and common operating procedures. An example given was about ICON putting data from phone to a website for sharing in New South Wales. This was a result of the Black Friday report where 147 people died and 1200 homes burned. The Australia-New Zealand FFMG & NAFC-FMWG relationship should continue and expand since it isn't just about products, but the development of staff and their relationships with others as well as information flow, safety culture and research priorities. The Study tour is returning to North America in 2 yrs (2016) but they want to include all of NA (AUS-NZ coming over).

Shane commented on the 1939 Royal Commission report being somewhat similar to new report. What did we learn? Why do we forget so quickly? Or even long term? Study tour report highlights will be discussed in the US to see how to match FAO requirements.

Benefits of FMWG study tour were significant to Mexico many years ago. It changed minds and thoughts to motivate and change their fire program. Sometimes it can take 10 -15 years to be influential and convince higher management. We need options to continue these types of opportunities.

How do you pick future study tour participants? Objectives must be better known and understood. Detail what is impacted in a positive way, and how we integrate ideas and processes. Track this for more work.

## ILC 6th Int Wildland Fire Conference – South Korea - Dale Dague

The NAFC-FMWG sponsors this conference and the group is made up of members who have hosted the event. Support is provided to the local organizing committee. A brochure was handed out at the meeting. Promotion will be heavy over the next year leading to the conference in October 2015. The location is 2 hours east of Seoul. The local committee is very efficient and the program looks good. Calls for papers by January 2015, maybe earlier for those making plans. The next conference is in 2019 and looking for a South American host since that is the only continent that has not hosted as yet. Mexico will inquire and consider? Brazil has IUFRO in 2019, so they are not likely interested. The preference is to announce the next host during the South Korea Conference.

Also, it was suggested to use the conference to have a regional session for others who don't get together often, or at all. Attendance as varied except for the FMWG which also had others attend, not just Working Group members. There was some discussion on a good format for these Regional Meetings. Some of the past meetings have not been valuable or helpful. The representatives were not well engaged and they wanted to quickly move on to other things. They were not knowledgeable on the FMWG purpose and work. Maybe the focus could be on how the host country is collaborating, or between countries. Since Regional Sessions are already worked into the agenda, pick one topic to showcase. Dale agreed to put together some ideas for the others to discuss and consider. The proposal is to be created before the South Korean call.

Action Items reviewed by Bill and group, modified and added directly on workplan form (see Appendix for updated Workplan).

### **2015 NAFC-FMWG meeting** – Dale Dague

Next meeting is hosted by the USA, and was proposed for Arizona with field trip to the Yarnell Hill Incident. Several dates in October and November 2015 were proposed. Final decision will be made later and there will be a mid-year conference call to discuss.

Meeting concluded.

## Appendices

### NAFC-FMWG WorkPlan

Updated: 17 October 2014

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Improve cooperation on wildland fire between Canada, Mexico, & USA	Downloadable Glossary of ICS Terms (FAO)	Upload pdf versions on FAO website	Jan. 1 2015	Pieter Van Lierop
	Develop NA fire science directory (web accessible)	1) Send Canadian contacts 2) Send Mexico contacts 3) Send US contacts	Jan. 31, 2015	1) Bill de Groot 2) German Flores 3) Matt Rollings
	Mexico Fire Management Information System	Include in new 5-year Fire Mgt. Plan for Mexico	Discuss during field tour in Alberta (Oct 20-24, 2015)	Yocundo Countino Gira Bill de Groot
	Developing bi-lateral agreements	Complete draft agreements and review	Report at 2015 meeting	Alfredo Nolasco, Vince Mazzier, Kim Connors Dale Dague
Undertake and/or support cooperative global fire activities	Recommendations from 2014 Study Tour of Australia and New Zealand	Finalize Study Tour Report  Review Study Tour Report and decide on advise for recommendations	Nov 1, 2014  Jan 31, 2015	Jason Steinmetz Kim Connors Dale Dague Alfredo Nolasco
	Australia/New Zealand 2016 Study Tour of North America.	Organize study tour of Mexico, USA and Canada	Update at 2015 FMWG meeting	Kim Connors Dale Dague Alfredo Nolasco
	ILC	2014 Meeting - Freiburg	Completed	Dale Dague

Undertake and/or support cooperative global fire activities (cont'd)	ILC	2015 ILC Meeting - Pyeongchang	Oct 2015 – during 6 <sup>th</sup> IWFC	Dale Dague
	Letter to COFLAC	Send letter of invitation to attend 2014 FMWG mtg	Completed	Kim Connors Bill de Groot
	FMWG-FFMG collaboration	Attend 2014 FFMG meeting	Completed - Sept 2014	Kim Connors
	Letter to COFLAC	Mexico to invite COFLAC member to attend 2015, 2016 meetings	Jan 31, 2015	Alfredo Nolasco Pieter van Lierop (advise)
	FMWG-FFMG collaboration	Attend 2015 FFMG meeting TBA	Sept 2015 (1 <sup>st</sup> week)	Tom Harbour
	6 <sup>th</sup> IWFC	ILC – to assist Korea Conf. Organizing Committee/participate in IWFC	Oct 2015	Dale Dague Bill de Groot Kim Connors
	Regional Sessions at IWFC	Solicit proposals from each country in NAFC for session content/format/topics  Set up ILC meeting/conf call to discuss Regional Sessions	Nov 30 2014  Jan 15 2015	Dale Dague Alfredo Nolasco Bill de Groot  Dale Dague
Conduct FMWG business	2014 FMWG Meeting Minutes and Workplan	Complete and distribute 2014 minutes and workplan	Jan 2015	Bill de Groot
	2015 FMWG meeting	Plan 2015 FMWG meeting – Conf call	March 2015	Dale Dague
	Develop a North American report summarizing key components of country reports	Draft template for annual summary report.	Post links to country fire statistics on FMWG website by Jan 2015; include a pop-up of new links on website	Bill de Groot
	Update FMWG website	Add/revise names of FMWG members	Nov. 30 2014	Dale Dague
	North American Fire Danger Rating map	Post on appropriate website locations (set up for daily updates)	TBD	Kim Connors

## Attendees list

NAFC-FMWG Halifax Meeting (14-18 Oct. 2014)

Bill de Groot	NAFC-FMWG Chair, Canadian Forest Service
Kim Connors	Executive Director, Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre
Walter Fanning	Executive Director, Regional Services Branch, NS Dept. of Natural Resources
Rick Scott	North American Forest Commission Secretariat
Pieter Van Lierop	United Nations-Food and Agriculture Organization (UN-FAO Rome)
Alfredo Nolasco Morales	Mexico National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR)
German Flores	Mexico National Institute of Forestry, Agriculture and Livestock (INIFAP)
Juan Manuel Frausto Leyva	Mexican Nature Conservation Fund
Dale Dague	US Forest Service
Patti Hiram	US Forest Service
Vince Mazzier	US Dept. of Interior
Jason Steinmetz	US Forest Service
Luis Diego Madriz	Manager of Forest Protection, Costa Rica
Shane Wiseman	Australia - Forest Fire Management Group
John Ross	Acting Director - Forest Protection, NSDNR

## The six FAO Forestry Commission Regions



**MODIS Rapid Response System Global Fire Maps**

Latest fire map available: 12/27/10 - 12/31/10 (2010361-2010365)