

Chapter 2: Documenting the Planning Process

2 Overview

Documentation of the planning process, including public involvement, is required to meet the policies and procedures for mitigation planning (44 CFR 201.4(c)(1) and 201.6(c)(1)). This section includes a description of the planning process used to develop this plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how all of the involved agencies participated.

2.1 Description of the Planning Process

The development of the Idaho County *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan* occurred through the collaborative process detailed in Chapter 1 of this document. The County Commissioner's Office contacted those organizations and agencies listed to invite their participation and schedule meetings of the County Working Group, hereafter referred to as the planning committee. The planning committee then consolidated and updated the previous versions of the mitigation plan and the addendum to create the revision.

The *2005 Idaho County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan* (October 2005) was the initial plan developed to address the National Fire Plan, consistent with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements, at the County level, and it describes the risks and potential treatments within the wildland-urban interface of Idaho County.

In August of 2007, an update planning committee reviewed recommended action items, fire department information, and completed projects to complete the *2007 Update Addendum*. Only a subset of the agencies and organizations that participated in the original planning process participated in preparing the addendum, although all the original members of the WUI Wildfire Mitigation planning committee were contacted to participate.

In 2009, after reviewing recent project updates, the Idaho County Commissioners decided to revise the *2005 Plan*, and incorporate the *2007 Update Addendum* and other recent information into this *2009 Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan*. This update planning committee consisted of a subset of the original planning committee, and they decided not to review the original risk analysis and statistical data, but rather to focus revision efforts on reviewing and updating the guiding principles, the recommended action items, fire department information, and completed projects.

The planning process throughout these three iterations of the mitigation plan included five distinct phases, which were in several cases sequential (Step 1 then Step 2) and in other cases intermixed (Step 4 completed throughout the process):

1. **Collection of Data** for the extent and periodicity of hazards in and around Idaho County. This data included information for an area encompassing Nez Perce, Lewis, Clearwater, Valley, Adams, and Lemhi Counties to ensure a robust dataset for making inferences about hazards in Idaho County specifically.
2. **Field Observations and Estimations** about risks, juxtaposition of structures and infrastructure to risk areas, access, and potential treatments.
3. **Mapping** of data relevant to pre-disaster mitigation control and treatments, structures, resource values, infrastructure, risk assessments, and related data.
4. **Facilitation of Public Involvement** from the formation of the planning committee, to a public mail survey, news releases, public meetings, public review of draft documents, and acknowledgement of the final plan by the signatory representatives.

5. **Analysis and Drafting of the Report** to integrate the results of the planning process, providing ample review and integration of committee and public input, followed by signature of the final document.

2.2 The Planning Committee

Originally, Northwest Management, Inc and Jerry Zumalt, Idaho County Disaster Management Coordinator, led planning efforts for the **2005 Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan**. These entities organized meetings, facilitated information management, and coordinated many activities associated with the development of the plan.

They led a team of resource professionals, the planning committee, which included Idaho County government, incorporated cities, city and rural fire protection, law enforcement, State of Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security, Idaho Department of Lands, the USDA Forest Service, the USDI Bureau of Land Management, fire mitigation specialists, resource management professionals, and hazard mitigation experts.

A subset of the agencies and organizations that participated in the original planning process participated in preparing the **2007 Update Addendum**, and this **Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan**. Northwest Management, Inc., Jerry Zumalt, Idaho County Disaster Management Coordinator, and Jim Davis, Idaho County Wildfire Mitigation Director, led planning efforts for the 2007 Update Addendum. Jerry Zumalt and Kevin Kehoe, Idaho County Fire Chief's Association, Harpster Fire Protection District led the efforts for this **Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan**.

Idaho County organized this update planning committee, which is responsible for the annual and five-year updates of the Idaho County Wildland Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan. The following is the list of designees of this committee, also known as the *Fire Mitigation Working Group*, in 2009:

- **Jerry Zumalt**, Chair - Idaho County Disaster Manager
- **Laura Barrett**, USDA Forest Service –Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests
- **Susan Jenkins**, USDA Forest Service – Nez Perce National Forest
- **Gary Phillips**, USDA Forest Service- Payette National Forest
- **Kristen Sanders**, USDI Bureau of Land Management
- **Dave Summers**, Idaho Department of Lands
- **Tim Droegmiller**, Nez Perce Tribe
- **Kevin Kehoe**, Idaho County Fire Chief's Association, Harpster Fire Protection District
- **Bob Johnson**, Idaho County Fire Chief's Association, White Bird Volunteer Fire Department
- **Dennis McCullum**, Idaho County Fire Chief's Association
- **Cris Bent**, Secesh/Warren/Burgdorf Volunteer Fire Department (Payette National Forest Fire Chief Representative)

The planning committee met with many residents of the county during the inspections of communities, infrastructure, and hazard abatement assessments. This methodology, when coupled with the other approaches in this process, worked adequately to integrate a wide spectrum of observations and interpretations about the project.

Throughout the planning process, the philosophy employed in this project included the open and free sharing of information with interested parties. The planning committee integrated information from

federal and state agencies into the database of knowledge used in this project. Meetings with the planning committee were held throughout the planning process to facilitate a sharing of information between cooperators.

When the public meetings were held, many of the committee members attended and shared their support and experiences with the planning process and their interpretations of the results.

2.2.1 Committee Meetings

The following list of people who participated in the planning committee meetings, volunteered time, or responded to elements of the *Idaho County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan's* preparation.

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Cocoa Anderson.....	Elk City Volunteer Fire Department
Loren Anderson	Elk City Volunteer Fire Department
Mark Anderson	Kooskia & Stites Volunteer Fire Departments
Dale Anderson	USDI Bureau of Land Management
Laura Barrett.....	USDA Forest Service
David Bearman	Ridge Runner Fire Department
Rod Behler	Cottonwood Fire Department
Kevin Benton	Idaho Department of Lands
Vaiden Bloch	Northwest Management, Inc.
Troy Bouchard	Harpster
Toby Brown	Northwest Management, Inc.
Susie Borowicz	North Central Idaho Resource Advisory Committee
Kevin Chafee	USDA Forest Service
Chuck Cohen.....	Idaho County Mapping Department
Jim Colla	Northwest Management, Inc.
Vincent Corrao.....	Northwest Management, Inc.
Holly Cotton	Idaho Soil & Water Conservation District
Mark Craig.....	USDI Bureau of Land Management
Jim Davis	Idaho County Fire Mitigation
Larry Dawson	USDA Forest Service
Randy Doman	Idaho County Commissioner
Chuck Doty	Kamiah Rural Fire Department
Denis Duman	Mayor, City of Cottonwood
Mardell Edwards.....	Self
Jake Eimers	Idaho County Light and Power
Rose Gehring	Idaho County Clerk

Jim Gray..... USDA Forest Service
 Liza Hammond USDA Forest Service
 Clyde Hanson..... Clearwater RC&D
 Brett Ingles..... Boise State University
 Keith Jepson..... BPC Rural Fire Department
 Tera King Northwest Management, Inc.
 Pete Lane..... Idaho Soil & Water Conservation District
 Jill Marolf USDA Forest Service
 Alice Mattson..... Idaho County Commissioner
 Cliff McCulley Idaho County Light and Power
 Dennis McCollum..... Salmon River Rural Fire Department
 Ihor Mereszczak..... USDA Forest Service
 Jim Meyer Ridge Runner Fire Department
 Danyel Morrow Harpster Fire Protection District
 Robert Olive..... Mayor, City of Kamiah
 Gene Pennington..... Salmon River Rural Fire Department
 Ed Perrine Grangeville Rural Fire District
 Dan Pierce..... Clearwater RC&D
 Phil Puckett..... Carrot Ridge Volunteer Fire Department
 Keith Ray Mayor, City of White Bird
 Jim Rehder Idaho County Commissioner
 Barry Ruklic..... USDA Forest Service
 Kristen Sanders USDI Bureau of Land Management
 William E. Schlosser..... Northwest Management, Inc., Project Manager
 Paul Schmidt..... Mayor, City of Ferdinand
 John Schurbon..... City of Kooskia
 Laura Smith..... USDA Forest Service
 Bill Spencer..... Grangeville Rural Fire District
 Wyatt Strahm Ridge Runner Fire Department
 Dave Summers Idaho Department of Lands
 Dennis Thomas Northwest Management, Inc.
 Mike Vanderpass USDI Bureau of Land Management
 Terry Vanderwall Mayor, City of Grangeville
 Debra Vopat..... Mayor, City of Stites
 Ann Wilson..... Riggins Emergency Medical Service

Jill Wilson..... Red River R.D. USFS
 Dave Woods..... Glenwood Rural Fire Department
 Greg Yuncevich USDI Bureau of Land Management
 James Zehner Idaho County Mapping Department
 Bob Zimmerman Mayor, City of Riggins
 Jerry Zumalt Idaho County Disaster Management

2.2.1.1 Committee Meeting Minutes

The Committee scheduled and conducted meetings from March 2005 through September 2009. These meetings led to the developments and changes found in this *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan*. Minutes of these meetings are on file at the Idaho County Courthouse.

2.2.2 Multi-Jurisdictional Participation

CFR requirement 44 CFR 201.6(a)(4) states that multi-jurisdictional mitigation plans may be accepted as long as each jurisdiction has participated in the process and has officially adopted the plan. This Wildfire Mitigation Plan is applicable to the following jurisdictions:

- Idaho County, Idaho
- City of Grangeville
- City of Kooskia
- City of Kamiah
- City of Cottonwood
- City of Ferdinand
- City of Riggins
- City of Stites
- City of White Bird

All of these jurisdictions were represented on the planning committee, in public meetings, and participated in the development of hazard profiles, risk assessments, and mitigation measures. The monthly planning committee meetings were the primary venue for authenticating the planning record. However, additional input was gathered from each jurisdiction in a combination of the following ways:

- Planning committee leadership visits to municipality public meetings (e.g., County Commission meetings, City Hall meetings) where planning updates were provided and information was exchanged.
- One-on-one visits between the planning committee leadership and the representatives of the municipality (e.g., meetings with County Commissioners, or City Councils in chambers).
- Special meetings at each jurisdiction by the planning committee leadership requested by the municipality involving elected officials (mayors and County Commissioners), appointed officials (e.g., County Assessor, Sheriff, City Police), municipality employees, local volunteers (e.g., fire district volunteers), business community representatives, and local citizenry.

- Monthly written correspondence between the planning committee leadership and each municipality updating the cooperators in the planning process, making requests for information, and facilitating feedback.

Planning committee leadership (referenced above) included: Jerry Zumalt, Idaho County Disaster Management Coordinator, Dr. William E. Schlosser, Vincent P. Corrao, Toby Brown, Tera King, Dennis Thomas, Vaiden Bloch, and Jim Colla all of Northwest Management, Inc., and Dan Pierce, Clearwater Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc., Coordinator.

Like other rural areas of Idaho and the USA, Idaho County's human resources have many demands put on them in terms of time and availability. None of the elected officials (County Commissioners and City Mayors) serves in a full-time capacity; and all of them generally have other employment and serve the community through a convention of community service. Recognizing this fact, many of the jurisdictions decided to identify a representative from the jurisdiction to cooperate on the planning committee and then report back to the remainder of their organization on the process and serve as a conduit between the planning committee and the jurisdiction. In the case of the Idaho County Commissioners, all of the Commissioners attended the planning committee meetings as regular attendees.

At the city level, all of the City Mayor offices were represented in a variety of ways. In a few instances the Mayor personally attended the meetings (e.g., City of Cottonwood). More commonly, the Mayor of a municipality appointed a representative from the municipality to provide this representation on the committee meetings. For example, the Chief of the Kooskia Fire Department represented the Mayor of the City of Kooskia. When the Mayors were unable to attend, the planning committee leadership provided communications and feedback with the municipality directly to ensure the multi-jurisdictional planning necessitated by this process.

2.3 Public Involvement

The planning committee prioritized public involvement in this plan from the inception of the project. There were a number of ways that the planning committee sought and facilitated public involvement. In a few cases, this led to members of the public providing information and seeking an active role in protecting their own homes and businesses. In other cases, it led to the public becoming more aware of the process without becoming directly involved in the planning process.

2.3.1 News Releases

Under the auspices of the Idaho County *Fire Mitigation Working Group*, the planning committee submitted news releases to numerous local newspapers including the Idaho County Free Press, Clearwater Progress, Lewiston Tribune, Moscow Daily News, Central Idaho Post, Salmon River Current, Clearwater Tribune, and the Latah Eagle. The planning committee also distributed informative flyers around town and to local offices through the committee. Copies of these news releases are on file at the Idaho County Courthouse.

2.3.2 Press Coverage

Committee and public meeting announcements were published in the local newspapers prior to each meeting. During the development of the Wildfire Mitigation Plan, the planning committee submitted editorials to local newspapers. There was also local press coverage of the public meetings. Copies of the press coverage are on file at the Idaho County Courthouse.

2.3.3 Public Mail Survey

In order to collect a broad base of perceptions about wildland fire and individual risk factors of homeowners in Idaho County, the planning committee conducted a mail survey. Approximately 246 residents of Idaho County were randomly selected to receive this mail survey.

The public mail survey developed for this project has been used in the past by Northwest Management, Inc., during the development of other Wildfire Mitigation Plans. The survey used *The Total Design Method* (Dillman 1978) as a model to schedule the timing and content of letters sent to the selected recipients. Copies of each cover letter, mail survey, and communication are included in Appendix III.

The first in the series of mailings was sent May 17, 2005, and included a cover letter, a survey, and an offer of receiving a custom GIS map of the area of their selection in Idaho County if they would complete and return the survey. The free map incentive was tied into assisting their community and helping their interests by participating in this process. Each letter also informed residents about the planning process. A return self-addressed envelope was included in each packet. A postcard reminder was sent to the non-respondents on May 26, 2005, encouraging their response. A final mailing, with a revised cover letter entreating them to participate, was sent to non-respondents on June 3, 2005.

Surveys were returned during the months of May, June, and July. 116 residents responded to the survey as of July 11, 2005. The effective response rate for this survey was 47%. Statistically, this response rate allows the interpretation of all of the response variables significantly at the 99% confidence level.

SURVEY RESULTS

A summary of the survey's results will be presented here and referred to during the ensuing discussions on the need for various treatments, education, and other information.

Of the 116 respondents in the survey, approximately 34% were from the Grangeville area, 13% from Cottonwood, 13% were from Kamiah, 10% from Kooskia, 7% from Riggins, with the remaining respondents from other areas in the county.

The vast majority of the respondents (96%) correctly identified that they have emergency telephone 911 services in their area. 62% of residents indicated that their address was clearly visible from the nearest public road, and 74% responded that their homes were within a taxing fire district. 19% said that their home was within a non-taxing or voluntary payment type fire district.

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of roofing material covering the main structure of their home. Approximately 45% of respondents living in a rural area indicated their homes were covered with a composite material (asphalt shingles). About 48% of these residents indicated their homes were covered with a metal (e.g., aluminum, tin) roofing material. Roughly 6% of the rural respondents indicated they have a wooden roofing material such as shakes or shingles.

When asked how many trees were within 75 feet of their homes, 59% indicated less than 10, 26% said between 10 and 20, and 8% said more than 25. When asked how many were within 250 feet, 46% responded less than 10, 30% said between 10 and 20, and 21% said more than 25.

The average driveway length of respondents to the survey was 676 feet long (0.12 miles). The longest reported was 11,616 feet (2.2 miles). Of those respondents (18%) with a driveway over ¼ mile long, approximately 54% do not have turnouts allowing two vehicles to pass. 69% of all respondents indicated that a 25 foot long vehicle could turn around in their driveway. Survey recipients were also asked how wide the running surface was and what type of material it was covered with. Average driveway width of respondents is 26.5 feet, with 69% saying their drive was a gravel or rock surface, 22% saying it was paved, and 9% saying it was dirt. Approximately 72% of the respondents indicated an alternate escape route was available in an emergency which cuts off their primary driveway access.

Survey recipients were asked to report emergency services training received by members of the household. Their responses are summarized in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1. Emergency Services Training Received by Household.

Type of Training	Percent of Households (%)	If yes, was it within the last 5 years? (%)
Wildland Firefighting	31	52
City or Rural Firefighting	24	50
EMT (Emergency Medical Technician)	18	50
Basic First Aid/CPR	73	52
Search and Rescue	20	38

Nearly all respondents (99%) indicated they have some type of tools to use against a wildfire that threatens their home. Table 2-2 summarizes these responses.

Table 2-2. Percent of Homes with Indicated Firefighting Tools in Idaho County.

Firefighting Tool	Percent of Homes Indicating Ownership (%)
Hand tools (shovel, Pulaski, etc.)	96
Portable water tank	16
Stationery water tank	23
Pond, lake, or stream water supply close	34
Water pump and fire hose	22
Equipment suitable for creating fuel breaks (bulldozer, cat, skidder, etc.)	25

Respondents were asked to complete a hazard rating worksheet to assess their home’s fire risk rating. Results are summarized in the following table showing the percent of respondents circling each rating.

Table 2-3. Hazard Rating Worksheet Results.

Hazard	Rating	Results (%)
Fuel Hazard		
Small, light fuels (grasses, forbs, weeds, shrubs)	1	60
Medium size fuels (brush, large shrubs, small trees)	2	27
Heavy, large fuels (woodlands, timber, heavy brush)	3	13
Slope Hazard		
Mild slopes (0-5%)	1	57
Moderate slope (6-20%)	2	33
Steep Slopes (21-40%)	3	7
Extreme slopes (41% and greater)	4	2
Structure Hazard		
Noncombustible roof and noncombustible siding materials	1	25
Noncombustible roof and combustible siding material	3	46
Combustible roof and noncombustible siding material	7	10
Combustible roof and combustible siding materials	10	19

Hazard	Rating	Results (%)
Additional Factors		
Rough topography that contains several steep canyons or ridges	+2	Average 1.9 points
Areas having history of higher than average fire occurrence	+3	
Areas exposed to severe fire weather and strong winds	+4	
Areas with existing fuel modifications or usable fuel breaks	-3	
Areas with local facilities (water systems, rural fire districts, dozers)	-3	

Table 2-4 depicts the percentage of respondents in each risk category, as calculated from the hazard rating assessments.

Table 2-4. Percent of Respondents in Each Risk Category.

Risk Category	Percent of Respondents (%)
Extreme Risk = 26 + points	0
High Risk = 16–25 points	2
Moderate Risk = 7–15 points	26
Low Risk = 6 or less points	72

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding mitigation activities they had recently done or are currently doing on their property. The first question posed whether their property had been professionally assessed for wildfire danger in the last seven years. Only 8% said that their property had been assessed. The second question inquired if they conducted a periodic fuels reduction program near their home. A majority of 54% said that they did. Respondents were also asked if livestock were grazed around their home, and 41% indicated that they were.

Finally, respondents were asked, “If offered in your area, would members of your household attend a free or low cost, one-day training seminar designed to share with homeowners how to reduce the potential for casualty loss surrounding your home?” 49% of respondents indicated a desire to participate in this type of training.

Homeowners were also asked, “How Hazard Mitigation projects should be funded in the areas surrounding homes, communities, and infrastructure such as power lines and major roads?” Responses are summarized in Table 2-5.

Table 2-5. Public Opinion of Hazard Mitigation Funding Preferences.

Projects	100% Public Funding	Cost-Share (Public & Private)	Privately Funded (Owner or Company)
Home Defensibility Projects	30%	38%	33%
Community Defensibility Projects	38%	37%	16%
Infrastructure Projects Roads, Bridges, Power Lines, Etc.	33%	6%	14%

We wish to thank all Idaho County residents completing and returning these surveys.

2.3.4 Public Meetings

Public meetings were scheduled in a variety of communities in Idaho County during the hazard assessment phase of the planning process. Public meetings were scheduled to share information on the planning process, inform details of the hazard assessments, and discuss potential mitigation treatments.

Attendees at the public meetings were asked to give their impressions of the accuracy of the information generated, and provide their opinions of potential treatments.

The initial schedule of public meetings included four locations in the county that were attended by a number of individuals on the committee and from the general public. The public meeting announcement and minutes of these meetings are on file at the Idaho County Courthouse.

2.3.5 Documenting the Review Process

Review and comment on these plans has been provided through a number of venues for the committee members and members of the general public.

During regularly scheduled committee meetings in 2005, the committee met to discuss findings, review mapping and analysis, and provide written comments on draft sections of the document. During the public meetings, attendees observed map analyses, photographic collections, and discussed general findings within the *2005 Idaho County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan*.

The first draft of the document was prepared after the public meetings and presented to the committee on July 14th, 2005, for a full committee review. The public review draft was released on August 18th, 2005 for a one month public review period. The final committee meeting to discuss public comments was held on October 3rd, 2005. The final adoption meeting for the *2005 Idaho County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan* by the County Commissioners took place on October 11th, 2005.

The review process for the *2007 Update Addendum* occurred similarly, with the update planning committee reviewing the draft addendum on June 19th, 2007 and the public reviewing it from July 6th through July 20th, 2007.

The update planning committee for the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan* reviewed the document on May 15 through October 1, 2009, and the public reviewed it on October 6, 2009.

2.3.6 Continued Public Involvement

Idaho County is dedicated to involving the public directly in review and updates of the Wildfire Mitigation Plan. The Idaho County Commissioners, through the County Disaster Manager, are responsible for the annual review and update of the plan as recommended in the Chapter 5 “*Administration and Implementation Strategy*” section of this document.

The public will have the opportunity to provide feedback about the Plan annually on the anniversary of the adoption of this plan, at the meeting of the County Commissioners. Copies of the Plan will be catalogued and kept at all of the appropriate agencies in the county. The existence and location of these copies will be publicized. Instructions on how to obtain copies of the plan will be made available on the County’s Internet web site. The Plan also includes the electronic and mail address, and phone number of the County Emergency Management Coordinator, responsible for keeping track of public comments on the Plan.

A public meeting will also be held as part of each annual evaluation or when deemed necessary by the *Fire Mitigation Working Group*. The meetings will provide the public a forum for which they can express concerns, opinions, or ideas about the Plan. The County Public Information Officer will be responsible for using county resources to publicize the annual public meetings and maintain public involvement through the public access channel, webpage, and newspapers.