

**Idaho County**  
**Revised Wildfire Mitigation Plan**



**Idaho County, Idaho,  
Revised Wildland-Urban  
Interface  
Wildfire Mitigation Plan**

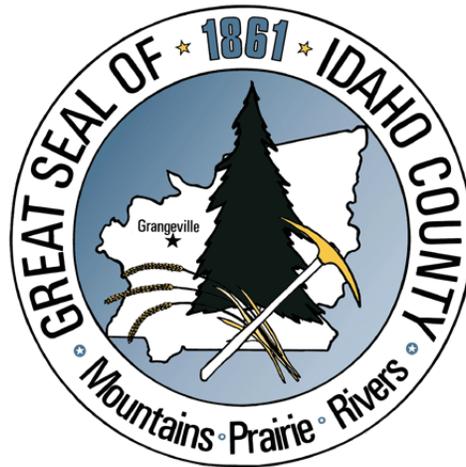
**Revised October 6, 2009**

**Volume I of II**

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*Vision: Institutionalize and promote a countywide hazard mitigation ethic through leadership, professionalism, and excellence, leading the way to a safe, sustainable Idaho County.*

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## Acknowledgments

This Wildfire Mitigation Plan represents the efforts and cooperation of a number of organizations and agencies; through the commitment of people working together to improve the preparedness for hazard events while reducing factors of risk.



Idaho County Commissioners  
and the employees of Idaho County



Clearwater Resource Conservation and  
Development Council, Inc.



USDI Bureau of Land Management



USDA Forest Service



Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security



Federal Emergency Management Agency



Idaho County Soil and Water Conservation District



Idaho Department of Lands

Syringa General Hospital  
St. Mary's Hospital  
White Bird Volunteer Fire Department  
Ferdinand Volunteer Fire Department  
Grangeville Rural Fire District  
Grangeville City Fire Department  
Idaho County Highway Districts  
Carrot Ridge Volunteer Fire Department  
Ridge Runner Rural Volunteer Fire Department  
Stites Volunteer Fire Department  
Kooskia Volunteer Fire Department  
City of Stites  
City of Ferdinand  
City of Riggins  
City of White Bird  
City of Cottonwood  
City of Grangeville  
City of Kamiah  
City of Kooskia  
Community of Pollock  
Community of Powell  
Community of Lowell  
Community of Fenn  
Community of Mount Idaho

Elk City Volunteer Fire Department  
Kamiah Rural Fire Department  
Riggins City Fire Department  
Cottonwood Volunteer Rural Fire Department  
Cottonwood City Fire Department  
Harpster Volunteer Fire Department  
Salmon River Volunteer Fire Department  
Dixie Volunteer Fire Department  
Idaho County Disaster Management  
BPC Volunteer Rural Fire Department  
Local Businesses and Citizens of Idaho County  
Community of Burgdorf  
Community of Greencreek  
Community of Dixie  
Community of Elk City  
Community of Clearwater  
Community of Harpster  
Community of Warren  
Community of Keuterville  
Community of Lucile  
Community of Slate Creek  
Community of Woodland  
Community of Syringa

To obtain copies of this plan contact:

**Idaho County Commissioners Office**  
Idaho County Courthouse  
320 West Main Street  
Grangeville, Idaho 83530

Phone: 208-983-2742  
Fax: 208-983-0667  
Website: [www.idahocounty.org](http://www.idahocounty.org)

**Resolution of Adoption and Signature Pages**

**Resolution of Adoption**

**Resolution of the Commissioners of Idaho County, Idaho**

# 109

A resolution of the Idaho County Board of Commissioners declaring county support and adoption of the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan*.

Whereas, the Idaho County Board of Commissioners supports the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan*, and

Whereas, the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan* will be used as a guide for planning as related to the National Fire Plan, the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, and other purposes as deemed appropriate.

Therefore be it resolved, that the Idaho County Board of Commissioners do hereby adopt, support, and will facilitate the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan's* implementation.

Passed and approved this 6<sup>th</sup> Day of Oct. 2009.

Board of County Commissioners

Idaho County, Idaho

  
By: Skip Brandt  
Chairperson, Idaho County Commissioner

10-06-09  
Date

  
By: James Rockwell  
Idaho County Commissioner

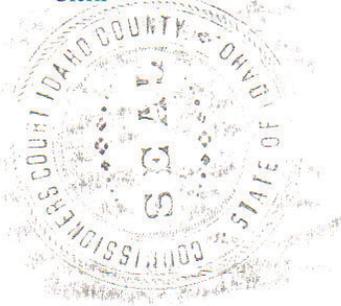
10/6/09  
Date

  
By: Jim Rehder  
Idaho County Commissioner

10-6-09  
Date

  
Attested by:  
Clerk

10-6-09  
Date



## Representatives of Idaho County Government

This *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan* and all of its components identified herein were adopted formally through a resolution of the Board of County Commissioners as of 6 October 2009, resolution number 109, recorded in the official record of the Idaho County Commissioners.



By: Skip Brandt  
Chairperson, Idaho County Commissioner

10-06-09

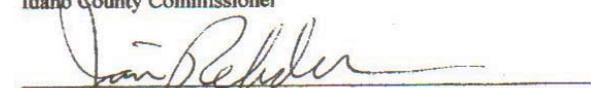
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By: James Rockwell  
Idaho County Commissioner

10/6/09

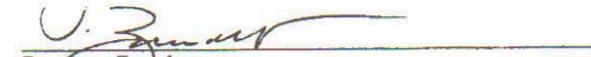
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By: Jim Rehder  
Idaho County Commissioner

10-6-09

Date



By: Jerry Zunalt  
Idaho County Disaster Management

10-6-09

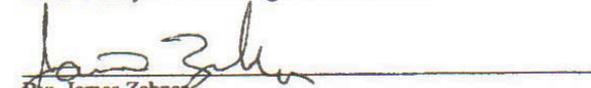
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By: Rob Lundgren  
Idaho County Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator

10/07/09

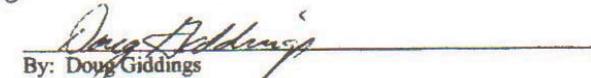
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By: James Zehner  
Idaho County Assessor

10/6/09

Date



By: Doug Giddings  
Idaho County Sheriff

10-6-09

Date



By: Gene Meinen  
Idaho County Road and Bridge

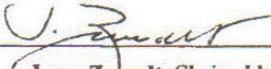
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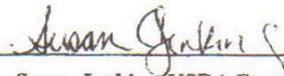
## Idaho County Fire Mitigation Working Group

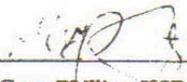
The *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan* has been developed in cooperation and collaboration with the organizations, agencies, and individuals of the Idaho County Fire Mitigation Working Group, listed in Chapter 1, as represented by the individuals below.

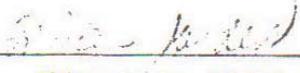
### Representatives of the Idaho County Fire Mitigation Working Group

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Jerry Zumalt, Chair - Idaho County Disaster Manager**      10/26/2009  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Laura Barrett, USDA Forest Service – Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests**      10/15/2009  
Date

  
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**Susan Jenkins, USDA Forest Service – Nez Perce National Forest**      10/16/2009  
Date

  
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**Gary Phillips, USDA Forest Service- Payette National Forest**      10/17/09  
Date

  
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**Kristen Sanders, USDI Bureau of Land Management**      10/6/09  
Date

  
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**Dave Summers, Idaho Department of Lands**      10/26/09  
Date

  
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**Tim Droegmiller, Nez Perce Tribe**      10/27/09  
Date

Kevin Kehoe  
Kevin Kehoe, Idaho County Fire Chief's Association, Harpster  
Fire Protection District

6 OCTOBER 2009  
Date

Bob Johnson  
Bob Johnson, Idaho County Fire Chief's Association, White  
Bird Volunteer Fire Department

14 OCTOBER 2009  
Date

Dennis McCallum  
Dennis McCallum, Idaho County Fire Chief's Association

21 - OCTOBER 2009  
Date

CRIS BENT  
Cris Bent, Secesh/Warren/Burgdorf Volunteer Fire Department  
(Payette National Forest Fire Chief Representative)

OCT 15 2009  
Date

# ORGANIZATION OF THE IDAHO COUNTY REVISED WILDLAND- URBAN INTERFACE WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN

## VOLUME I

### Resolution of Adoption and Signature Pages

### Table of Contents

### Lists of Tables & Figures

**CHAPTER 1 *Overview of This Plan and Its Development:*** This chapter includes information on the history and the goals of the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan*. This chapter also describes the federal and state regulations and guidelines used to develop this plan.

**CHAPTER 2 *Documenting the Planning Process:*** This chapter provides a description of the planning process, the planning committee, and the manner in which the public was involved in the planning process.

**CHAPTER 3 *Idaho County Characteristics:*** This chapter provides descriptions of Idaho County characteristics, including demographics, socioeconomics, cultural resources, transportation and infrastructure, vegetation and climate, ecosystems, soils, hydrology, air quality, and the wildland urban interface

**CHAPTER 4 *Risk and Preparedness Assessments:*** This chapter provides countywide risk evaluations, by first introducing wildland fire characteristics and wildfire hazards, summarizing the hazard in Idaho County, and then discussing Communities at Risk. Following this general overview, risk evaluations for each rangeland and forestland community in Idaho County are presented. Then, an overview of firefighting resources and capabilities for the County's fire departments, and wildland fire districts are discussed (actual data is contained in Appendix 2009). In conclusion, the issues facing Idaho County fire protection, success stories, and lessons learned are presented.

**CHAPTER 5 *Treatment Recommendations:*** This chapter discusses Idaho County's administration, implementation strategy, and prioritization method for proposed treatments. An overview of high-risk areas and potential projects, and wildfire mitigation activities applicable to all communities is then provided. Subsequently, an introduction to WUI safety and policy improvement, people and structure protection, and resource and capability enhancement activities, and regional land management recommendations is also provided (actual data is contained in Appendix 2009).

**CHAPTER 6 *Supporting Information:*** This chapter provides a list of people who prepared the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan*, the glossary, and the literature cited.

**APPENDIX 2009:** Appendix 2009 is a new section of the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan*. The purpose of this appendix is to contain the information that periodically changes in an appendix, so to facilitate updating the Mitigation Plan with relative ease. In this appendix, you will find firefighting resources and capabilities for fire departments and wildland fire districts, and treatment recommendations. The Idaho County Working Group anticipates updates for subsequent years to be contained in subsequent appendices numbered by year.

## VOLUME II

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# Chapter I: Overview of this Plan and its Development

## 1 Overview

In this Chapter, you will find an overview, and the goals and guiding principles of the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan*.

### 1.1.1 Overview

This **Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan** for Idaho County, Idaho, is an update of the **October 11, 2005 Wildland Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan for Idaho County**, and incorporates the **2007 Update Addendum** (August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007) and recent information provided by agencies and organizations involved in the original development of this plan.

This **Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan** is the result of analyses, professional cooperation and collaboration, assessments of wildfire risks and other factors considered with the intent to reduce the potential for wildfires to threaten people, structures, infrastructure, and unique ecosystems in Idaho County, Idaho. The Idaho County Commissioners led the *Idaho County Fire Mitigation Working Group*, also known as the planning committee, responsible for implementing this project. Agencies and organizations that participated in the planning process included:

- Idaho County Commissioners and County Departments
- City of Cottonwood
- City of Grangeville
- City of Kamiah
- City of Kooskia
- City of Stites
- City of Riggins
- City of Ferdinand
- City of White Bird
- Community of Lowell
- Community of Clearwater
- Community of Mount Idaho
- Community of Syringa
- Community of Pollock
- Community of Warren
- Community of Woodland
- Community of Powell
- Community of Fenn
- Community of Greencreek
- Community of Burgdorf
- Community of Dixie
- Community of Elk City
- Community of Harpster
- Community of Keuterville
- Community of Lucile
- Community of Slate Creek
- Idaho Department of Lands
- Nez Perce Tribe
- USDI Bureau of Land Management, (also providing funding through the National Fire Plan)
- Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security
- Clearwater Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc.
- Idaho County Soil and Water Conservation District
- USDA Forest Service
- Syringa General Hospital
- Idaho County Highway Districts
- Idaho County Disaster Management

- Ridge Runner Fire Department
- Kooskia Volunteer Fire Department
- Elk City Volunteer Fire Department
- Riggins City Fire Department
- BPC Volunteer Rural Fire Department
- Carrot Ridge Volunteer Fire Department
- Cottonwood Volunteer Fire Department
- Dixie Volunteer Fire Department
- Ferdinand Rural Fire Department
- Grangeville Rural Fire District
- Harpster Fire Protection District
- Salmon River Volunteer Fire Department
- White Bird Volunteer Fire Department
- Secesh Volunteer Fire Department
- Stites Volunteer Fire Department
- Kamiah Rural Fire Department
- Northwest Management, Inc.

This preceding list represents groups and individuals that actively participated in the planning committee. The planning committee contacted other groups and individuals to participate, but they chose not to actively participate.

All committee meetings were conducted under the Idaho Open Public Meeting Laws. The planning committee announced meetings through local media outlets and the public was encouraged to participate.

### **1.1.2 2005 Idaho County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan**

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. The Clearwater Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc. selected Northwest Management, Inc. of Moscow, Idaho to provide the service of leading the assessment and the writing of the *October 11, 2005 Idaho County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan*.

### **1.1.3 2007 Update Addendum**

In August of 2007, an update planning committee, the *Fire Mitigation Working Group*, 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. Again, Northwest Management, Inc. of Moscow, Idaho provided this service.

### **1.1.4 2009 Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan**

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*. The 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 recommended action items, fire department information, and completed projects. The County contracted Elkhorn Environmental of Grangeville, Idaho to complete this task.

## **1.2 Goals**

This section describes the planning effort and philosophy, mission and vision statements, and goals of the *Idaho County Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan*.

### **1.2.1 Idaho County Fire Mitigation Planning Effort and Philosophy**

This planning process includes the integration of the National Fire Plan, the Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy, the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, and the requirements of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a countywide Wildfire Mitigation Plan, a component of the County's Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan. This effort utilizes the best and most appropriate science from all partners, and integrates local and regional knowledge about wildfire risks and fire behavior, while meeting the needs of local citizens, the regional economy, and acknowledging the significance of this region to the rest of Idaho and the Inland West.

### **1.2.2 Mission Statement**

The mission of the *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan* is to make Idaho County residents, communities, state agencies, local governments, and businesses less vulnerable to the negative effects of wildland fires through the effective administration of wildfire hazard mitigation grant programs, hazard risk assessments, wise and efficient fuels treatments, and a coordinated approach to mitigation policy through federal, state, regional, and local planning efforts. Our prioritization is the protection of people, structures, infrastructure, and unique ecosystems that contribute to our way of life and the sustainability of the local and regional economy.

### **1.2.3 Vision Statement**

The vision of the *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan* is to institutionalize and promote a countywide wildfire hazard mitigation concept through leadership, professionalism, and excellence, leading the way to a safe, sustainable Idaho County.

### **1.2.4 Goals**

The goals of the *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan* are to:

- Reduce the area of wildland-urban interface (WUI) land burned and losses experienced because of wildfires where these fires threaten communities in the wildland-urban interface;
- Prioritize the protection of people, structures, infrastructure, and unique ecosystems that contribute to our way of life and the sustainability of the local and regional economy;
- Provide a revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan that will not diminish the private property rights of landowners in Idaho County;
- Educate communities about the unique challenges of wildfire in the wildland-urban interface (WUI);
- Establish mitigation priorities and develop mitigation strategies in Idaho County;
- Strategically locate and plan fuel reduction projects;
- Provide recommendations for alternative treatment methods, such as brush density, herbicide treatments, fuel reduction techniques, and disposal or removal of treated fuels; and
- Meet or exceed the requirements of the National Fire Plan and FEMA for a County level Fire Mitigation Plan.

### 1.3 Guiding Principles

This section describes the underlying guiding principles found in federal and state regulations and guidelines used to develop the *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan*.

The *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan* adheres to the guidelines proposed in the National Fire Plan, the Idaho Statewide Implementation Plan, and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (2004), and is compatible with FEMA requirements, as described below. This Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan has been prepared in compliance with:

- The National Fire Plan; A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan–May 2002;
- The Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan–July 2002;
- Healthy Forests Restoration Act (2004); and
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Region 10 guidelines for a Local Wildfire Mitigation Plan as defined in 44 CFR parts 201 and 206, and as related to a fire mitigation plan chapter of a Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan.

***“When implemented, the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy will contribute to reducing the risks of wildfire to communities and the environment by building collaboration at all levels of government.”***

**- The National Fire Plan 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy August 2001**

The objective of combining these four complimentary guidelines is to facilitate an integrated wildland fire risk assessment, identify pre-hazard mitigation activities, and prioritize activities and efforts to achieve the protection of people, structures, the environment, and significant infrastructure in Idaho County while facilitating new opportunities for pre-disaster mitigation funding and cooperation.

#### 1.3.1 National Fire Plan

During the last few decades, wildfires have increased in size and intensity within the United States. In 2000, in response to a direction from President Clinton, the Secretaries of the United States Departments of Agriculture and the Interior developed an interagency approach to respond to severe wildland fires, reduce their impacts on rural communities, and assure sufficient firefighting capacity in the future (USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management 2000). This report outlined a strategy to reduce wildland fire threats and restore forest ecosystem health in the interior West.

The National Fire Plan (NFP) was developed in August 2000, following a landmark wildland fire season, with the intent of actively responding to severe wildland fires and their impacts to communities while ensuring sufficient firefighting capacity for the future. The NFP addresses five key points: Firefighting, Rehabilitation, Hazardous Fuels Reduction, Community Assistance, and Accountability.

In 2001, the U.S. Congress funded the National Fire Plan to reduce hazardous fuel and restore forests and rangeland. In response, the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior, along with Western Governors and other interested parties, developed in May of 2002 *A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment: 10-Year Strategy* (10-Year Strategy, updated in 2006), and the subsequent *Implementation Plan for the 10-Year Strategy* as a framework to guide completion of collaborative, community-based plans to address wildland fire issues. Each county would bring together all groups and agencies responsible for wildland fire suppression to develop a community-based wildland fire mitigation plan.

The National Fire Plan identified a three-tiered organization structure including 1) the local level, 2) state/regional and tribal level, and 3) the national level. This plan adheres to the collaboration and outcomes consistent with a local level plan as defined by the National Association of Counties in the “*Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan*” (NACO 2004) and its supplement *Community Guide to Preparing and Implementing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan* (NACO 2008). Local level collaboration involves participants with direct responsibility for management decisions affecting public and private land and resources, fire protection responsibilities, or good working knowledge and interest in local resources. Participants in this planning process include Tribal representatives, local representatives from Federal and State agencies, local governments, landowners and other stakeholders, and community-based groups with a demonstrated commitment to achieving the strategy’s four goals. Existing resource advisory committees, watershed councils, or other collaborative entities may serve to achieve coordination at this level. Local involvement, expected to be broadly representative, is a primary source of planning, project prioritization, and resource allocation and coordination at the local level. The role of the private citizen is not to be underestimated, as their input and contribution to all phases of risk assessments, mitigation activities, and project implementation is highly valuable.

This *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan* fulfills the National Fire Plan’s 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy and the Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan, and will guide implementation in Idaho County. The *2005 Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan* was completed in April of 2005 through a collaborative effort with a diverse group of interested parties. This *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan* is an adaptive document; one that will continue to be updated annually or as needed to reflect accomplishments and newly emerging needs, issues, and opportunities surrounding wildland fire management in Idaho County. This revised plan reflects consensus among those who participated in its development and supported the approaches outlined within.

The projects and activities recommended under this plan are in addition to other Federal, state, and private/corporate forest and rangeland management activities. The *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan* does not alter, diminish, or expand the existing jurisdiction, statutory and regulatory responsibilities and authorities or budget processes of participating Federal, State, and tribal agencies.

By endorsing this *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan*, all signed parties agree that reducing the threat of wildland fire to people, communities, and ecosystems will require:

- Firefighter and public safety continuing as the highest priority.
- A sustained, long-term and cost-effective investment of resources by all public and private parties, recognizing overall budget parameters affecting Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments.
- A unified effort to implement the collaborative framework called for in the Strategy in a manner that ensures timely decisions at each level.
- Accountability for measuring and monitoring performance and outcomes, and a commitment to factoring findings into future decision making activities.
- The achievement of national goals through action at the local level with particular attention on the unique needs of cross-boundary efforts and the importance of funding on-the-ground activities.
- Communities and individuals in the wildland-urban interface to initiate personal stewardship and volunteer actions that will reduce wildland fire risks.
- Management activities, both in the wildland-urban interface and in at-risk areas across the broader landscape.

- Active forestland and rangeland management, including thinning that produces commercial or pre-commercial products, biomass removal and utilization, prescribed fire and other fuels reduction tools to simultaneously meet long-term ecological, economic, and community objectives.

### 1.3.2 Healthy Forests Restoration Act

In December of 2003, Congress passed the *Healthy Forests Restoration Act* (HFRA) (PL 108-148). This legislation addresses many issues relevant and complementary to the National Fire Plan including expediting projects designed to reduce hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface (WUI). The Healthy Forests Restoration Act also allows local entities to create Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) if they so choose. CWPPs are documents created by local entities (usually communities, cities, or counties) that compel federal agencies to give consideration to community priorities when developing fire management plans or when conducting hazardous fuels treatments. The State of Idaho has chosen to use the term County Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) to emphasize that these plans are developed and implemented at the county level rather than at the community level.

The *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan* was developed to adhere to the principles of the HFRA while providing recommendations consistent with the policy documents which should assist the federal land management agencies (USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management) with implementing wildfire mitigation projects in Idaho County that incorporate public involvement and input from a wide spectrum of fire and emergency services providers in the region.

### 1.3.3 Federal Emergency Management Agency Mitigation Planning (44 CFR 201 & 206)

As required by the Stafford Act (42 USC 5165 Section 322), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) developed policies and procedures for mitigation planning (44 CFR 201). The purpose of mitigation planning is for State, local, and Indian tribal governments to identify the natural hazards that impact them, to identify actions and activities to reduce any losses from those hazards, and to establish a coordinated process to implement the plan, taking advantage of a wide range of resources.

Effective November 1, 2004, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires a Local Wildfire Mitigation Plan approved by the FEMA for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM) eligibility (44 CFR 201 & 206). The HMGP and PDM program provide funding, through state emergency management agencies, to support local mitigation planning and projects to reduce potential disaster damages.

The local Wildfire Mitigation Plan requirements for HMGP and PDM eligibility are based on the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, which amended the Stafford Disaster Relief Act to promote and integrated, cost effective approach to mitigation. Local Wildfire Mitigation Plans must meet the minimum requirements of the Stafford Act-Section 322, as outlined in the criteria contained in 44 CFR 201.6. The plan criteria cover the planning process, risk assessment, mitigation strategy, plan maintenance, and adoption requirements.

FEMA will only review a local Wildfire Mitigation Plan submitted through the appropriate State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO). Draft versions of local Wildfire Mitigation Plans will not be reviewed by FEMA. FEMA will review the final version of a plan prior to local adoption to determine if the plan meets the criteria, but FEMA will be unable to approve it prior to adoption. In Idaho the SHMO is:

Mr. David Jackson  
Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security  
4040 Guard Street, Bldg 600  
Boise, ID 83705  
[djackson@bhs.idaho.gov](mailto:djackson@bhs.idaho.gov)

A FEMA designed plan will be evaluated on its adherence to a variety of criteria.

- Adoption by the Local Governing Body
- Multi-jurisdictional Plan Adoption
- Multi-jurisdictional Planning Participation
- Documentation of Planning Process
- Identifying Hazards
- Profiling Hazard Events
- Assessing Vulnerability: Identifying Assets
- Assessing Vulnerability: Estimating Potential Losses
- Assessing Vulnerability: Analyzing Development Trends
- Multi-jurisdictional Risk Assessment
- Local Hazard Mitigation Goals
- Identification and Analysis of Mitigation Measures
- Implementation of Mitigation Measures
- Multi-jurisdictional Mitigation Strategy
- Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Plan
- Implementation Through Existing Programs
- Continued Public Involvement

The *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan* is consistent with 44 CFR Sections 201 and 206, and follows the requirements therein, including incorporation of the plan criteria which cover the planning process, risk assessment, mitigation strategy, plan maintenance, and adoption requirements.

### 1.3.4 Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan

In 2006, the State of Idaho adopted the *Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan* to provide an updated collaborative framework for the organized and coordinated approach to the implementation of the National Fire Plan in Idaho. This strategy accomplishes these goals through the maintenance of viable working groups at both state and county levels that meet the intent of the National Fire Plan, the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003.

As described in the *Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy*, the relationship between county and state levels is that of a partnership. While it is necessary for the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group to conduct certain administrative functions, County Wildland Fire Interagency Groups (County Working Groups) will act autonomously within their designated areas of impact, pursuant to State and Federal laws. The respective collaborative responsibilities at the county level described in the *Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy* include:

1. Counties are responsible for implementation and maintenance of their County Wildfire Protection Plans through their County Working Groups (with leadership provided by County Commissioners and assistance provided by state, federal, and tribal agencies and local expert advice), including:
  - a. Maintenance of a diverse membership of stakeholders striving to achieve collaborative program delivery which, at a minimum, includes local, state, and federal officials.

- b. Regularly scheduled meetings of County Working Groups, with proper public notification.
2. County Working Groups will maintain correspondence with a representative of the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group through their County Contact.
  3. It is requested that County Working Groups annually submit a list of priority needs for hazardous fuels treatments (on both federal and non federal lands) and firefighting assistance funds to the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group in order to receive highest priority for assistance funding.
  4. County Working Groups are encouraged to take the steps necessary to ensure that their CWPPs meet the standards set forth by the Healthy Forests Restoration Act.
  5. Counties will be responsible for providing updates made to their CWPPs to the Idaho Department of Lands.

Additionally, the ***Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy*** addresses the description and role of the County Wildland Fire Interagency Groups. These groups are collaborative, countywide working groups tasked with the responsibility of implementing their County Wildfire Protection Plans. They are autonomous bodies that may provide recommendations to state and federal land management agencies regarding management of lands in order to reduce wildland fire risks to communities and the environment. The minimum composition includes representatives from each of the following interests:

- (a). County Commissioner, Emergency Management Coordinator, Planning and Zoning representative, or other county employee (lead convener);
- (b). Local Fire Chief (preferably a member of a Local Emergency Planning Committee);
- (c). Idaho Department of Lands representative, as appropriate;
- (d). Appropriate Federal Fire Management Representatives—includes the dominant federal land managers in a particular county. This may include individuals from one or several federal agencies; and
- (e). Tribal Representative, as appropriate (NOTE: Several areas may not have state or tribal representation.)

In addition, County Working Groups are encouraged to include individuals who are committed to the goals of the National Fire Plan in order to ensure that a number of stakeholder interests are represented.

With respect to the County Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs), the ***Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy*** identifies the County Working Group as the entity responsible for ensuring that their CWPP meets the following minimum standards as outlined in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act:

1. Collaboration: A CWPP must be collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties.
2. Prioritized Fuel Reduction: A CWPP must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuels reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure.
3. Treatment of Structural Ignitability: A CWPP must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.
4. Additionally, County Working Groups are encouraged to define and geographically delineate wildland urban interface (WUI) areas within their county. If County Working Groups do not choose to define and geographically delineate their WUI areas, the WUI will be defined as “.5

miles from structures on flat ground and 1.5 miles from structures on hillsides or slopes” as set forth in §101(16) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

The *Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy* also provides guidance regarding CWPP Updates, as follows:

1. It is the responsibility of the County Commissioners and/or the County Working Group to ensure that a current copy of a County’s CWPP is on file with Idaho Department of Lands.
2. It is also the responsibility of the County Commissioners/County Working Group to ensure that appropriate signature pages (for CWPPs) have been sent to Idaho Department of Lands.

The *Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy* also provides guidance regarding project prioritization, and requests that each County Working Group annually submit the following prioritized project lists to the State Working Group:

1. Hazardous fuels projects to be conducted on non federal lands.
2. Hazardous fuels projects/restoration projects to be conducted by federal agencies on federal lands.
3. Firefighting equipment or other firefighting resources.
4. Other prioritization needs.

Each list will be considered an addendum to a county’s CWPP.

This *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan* fulfills the *Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy* requirements, and is consistent with the above recommendations.

### **1.3.5 National Association of State Foresters’ Field Guidance: Identifying and Prioritizing Communities at Risk 2003**

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) led an interagency effort to develop consistent guidelines for collaboratively identifying and prioritizing communities at risk from wildland fire resulting in *Field Guidance: Identifying and Prioritizing Communities at Risk* (June 27, 2003). This Field Guidance satisfies requirement Goal Four of the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan. The Field Guidance also provides a process for meeting the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Development of a Collaborative Fuels Treatment Program, agreed to by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, State Foresters and the National Association of Counties in January 2003.

The Field Guidance defined “communities at risk” and a process for prioritizing them, and stated:

1. NASF fully supports the definition of the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) previously published in the Federal Register. Further, proximity to federal lands should not be a consideration. The WUI is a set of conditions that exists on, or near, areas of wildland fuels nation-wide, regardless of land ownership.
2. Communities at risk (or, alternately, landscapes of similar risk) should be identified on a state-by-state basis with the involvement of all agencies with wildland fire protection responsibilities: state, local, tribal, and federal.
3. It is neither reasonable nor feasible to attempt to prioritize communities on a rank order basis. Rather, communities (or landscapes) should be sorted into three, broad categories or zones of risk: high, medium, and low. Each state, in collaboration with its local partners, will develop the specific criteria it will use to sort communities or landscapes into the three categories. NASF recommends using the publication “Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Hazard Assessment

Methodology” developed by the National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Program (circa 1998) as a reference guide. (This program, which has since evolved into the Firewise Program, is under the oversight of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)). At minimum, states should consider the following factors when assessing the relative degree of exposure each community (landscape) faces.

- **Risk:** Using historic fire occurrence records and other factors, assess the anticipated probability of a wildfire ignition.
  - **Hazard:** Assess the fuel conditions surrounding the community using a methodology such as fire condition class, or [other] process.
  - **Values Protected:** Evaluate the human values associated with the community or landscape, such as homes, businesses, and community infrastructure (e.g. water systems, utilities, transportation systems, critical care facilities, schools, manufacturing and industrial sites, and high value commercial timber lands).
  - **Protection Capabilities:** Assess the wildland fire protection capabilities of the agencies and local fire departments with jurisdiction.
4. Prioritize by project not by community. Annually prioritize projects within each state using the collaborative process defined in the national, interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) “For the Development of a Collaborative Fuels Treatment Program”. Assign the highest priorities to projects that will provide the greatest benefits either on the landscape or to communities. Attempt to properly sequence treatments on the landscape by working first around and within communities, and then moving further out into the surrounding landscape. This will require:
- First, focus on the zone of highest overall risk but consider projects in all zones. Identify a set of projects that will effectively reduce the level of risk to communities within the zone.
  - Second, determining the community’s willingness and readiness to actively participate in an identified project.
  - Third, determining the willingness and ability of the owner of the surrounding land to undertake, and maintain, a complementary project.
  - Last, set priorities by looking for projects that best meet the three criteria above. It is important to note that projects with the greatest potential to reduce risk to communities and the landscape may not be those in the highest risk zone, particularly if either the community or the surrounding landowner is not willing or able to actively participate.
5. It is important, and necessary, that we be able to demonstrate a level of accomplishment that justifies to Congress the value of continuing the current level of appropriations for the National Fire Plan. Although appealing to appropriators and others, it is not likely that many communities (if any) will ever be removed from the list of communities at risk. Even after treatment, all communities will remain at some, albeit reduced, level of risk. However, by using a science-based system for measuring relative risk, we can likely show that, after treatment (or a series of treatments) communities are at “*reduced risk*”.

Similarly, scattered, individual homes that complete projects to create defensible space could be “counted” as “households at reduced risk”. This would be a way to report progress in reducing risk to scattered homes in areas of low priority for large-scale fuels treatment projects.

Using the concept described above, the NASF believes it is possible to accurately assess the relative risk that communities face from wildland fire. Recognizing that the condition of the vegetation (fuel) on the landscape is dynamic, assessments and re-assessments must be done on a state-by-state basis, using a

process that allows for the integration of local knowledge, conditions, and circumstances, with science-based national guidelines. We must remember that it is not only important to lower the risk to communities, but once the risk has been reduced, to maintain those communities at a reduced risk.

Further, it is essential that both the assessment process and the prioritization of projects be done collaboratively, with all local agencies with fire protection jurisdiction – federal, state, local, and tribal – taking an active role.

The *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan* was developed consistent with the *Field Guidance: Identifying and Prioritizing Communities at Risk*.

### **1.3.6 United States Government Accounting Office’s “Protecting Structures and Improving Communications during Wildland Fires”**

In April of 2005, the United States Government Accounting Office (GAO) prepared the *Technology Assessment - “Protecting Structures and Improving Communications during Wildland Fires”* to assess (1) measures that can help protect structures from wildland fires, (2) factors affecting use of protective measures, and (3) the role technology plays in improving firefighting agencies’ ability to communicate during wildland fires.

Since 1984, wildland fires have burned an average of more than 850 homes each year in the United States, and because more people are moving into fire-prone areas bordering wildlands, the number of homes at risk is likely to grow. The primary responsibility for ensuring that preventative steps are taken to protect homes lies with homeowners and state and local governments, not the federal government. Although losses from wildland fires made up only two percent of all insured catastrophic losses from 1983 to 2002, fires can result in billions of dollars in damages.

Once a wildland fire starts, various parties can be mobilized to fight it, including federal, state, local, and tribal firefighting agencies and, in a few cases, the military. The ability to communicate among all parties - known as interoperability - is essential but, as GAO reported previously, is hampered because different public safety agencies operate on different radio frequencies or use incompatible communications equipment.

Through this assessment, the GAO found the two most effective measures for protecting structures from wildland fires are: (1) creating and maintaining a buffer, called defensible space, from 30 to 100 feet wide around a structure, where vegetation and other flammable objects are reduced or eliminated; and (2) using fire-resistant roofs and vents. In addition to roofs and vents, other technologies, such as fire-resistant windows and building materials, chemical agents, sprinklers, and geographic information systems mapping, can help in protecting structures and communities, but they play a secondary role.

Although protective measures are available, many property owners have not adopted them because of the time or expense involved, competing concerns such as aesthetics or privacy, misperceptions about wildland fire risks, and lack of awareness of their shared responsibility for fire protection. Federal, state, and local governments, as well as other organizations, are attempting to increase property owners’ use of protective measures through education, direct monetary assistance, and laws requiring such measures. In addition, several insurance companies have begun to direct property owners in high risk areas to take protective steps.

Existing technologies, such as audio switches, can help link incompatible communication systems, and new technologies, such as software-defined radios, are being developed to overcome incompatibility barriers. Technology alone, however, cannot solve communications problems for those responding to wildland fires. Rather, planning and coordination among federal, state, and local public safety agencies is needed to resolve issues such as which technologies to adopt, cost sharing, operating procedures, training, and maintenance. The Department of Homeland Security is leading federal efforts to improve

communications interoperability across all levels of government. In addition to federal efforts, several states and local jurisdictions are pursuing initiatives to improve communications interoperability.

The *Revised Wildland-Urban Interface Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan* addresses the GAO's *Technology Assessment* by assessing current and desired conditions and identifying potential projects to address needs within Idaho County related to the Wildland-Urban Interface, including defensible space, structure protection, communications, and coordination.