

## **WGA Forest Health Advisory Committee Meeting Notes– March 29 & 30, 2010**

### Day One

WGA Executive Director, Pam Inmann welcomed members of the public and the FHAC back together in Reno, Nevada for their second meeting. Nevada Governor Gibbons recognized the work of the FHAC, and members of the Nevada Fire Safe Council members in attendance. He reflected on fire history and negative impacts to the State of Nevada. Approximately half of the FHAC members were not able to attend due to other obligations and some were called upon for national efforts on developing the new Forest Planning Rule.

Chief Jeff Johnson, President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs welcomed our attendance and expressed appreciation for scheduling the FHAC meeting in conjunction with the IAFC Wildland Urban Interface Conference. Chief Bob Roper, Ventura County and Mike Carrier spoke of the successful partnerships and accomplishments of the FHAC. Emphasis was on the need to continue our high level of collaboration throughout future activities of the FHAC.

### FHAC Subcommittee Reports:

Attendees' folders contained current copies of the FHAC Subcommittee status reports and they are available on the [www.westgov.org](http://www.westgov.org) website. Please feel free to contact co-chairs for additional information on activities of our subcommittees. FHAC member contact information can be found on the WGA website or contact Ann.

Because the subcommittee report presentations went so quickly, several FHAC members spoke about the successful collaborative efforts occurring in their states. Great information!!

### Next Steps – Closing:

The next steps session was an open discussion centered on uncertainty and clarification of the role and expected outcome of FHAC members and our subcommittees. Questions and comments covered additional topics such as development of the Cohesive Strategy, along with past history of previous FHAC activities, such as writing the 10 Year Strategy and the 2006 revision. A few members identified how different the re-formed FHAC is structured compared to the previous FHAC. This discussion was a great precursor for the next day's session on the analysis of the questionnaire developed by the Large Scale Treatments – Public and Private Lands Subcommittee and the presentation by Al Hyde and Mark Beighley on the Cohesive Wildfire Management Strategy.

The WGA Annual Meeting in Whitefish, Montana was discussed briefly. Some FHAC members plan to attend only one plenary or a portion of the meeting. The WGA will work on developing an alternative to paying full registration. The majority of the agenda is not forestry/fire focused. However, we are still making attempts to highlight the 100 year anniversary of the 1910 fires.

### Networking Reception:

The networking reception with the International Association of Fire Chiefs Executive Committee was well attended and an unexpected visit by USFS Chief Tom Tidwell was a very pleasant surprise!

### Day Two

#### Large Scale Treatments – Public and Private Lands Subcommittee Survey:

Cheryl Renner, Renner Associates, presented during both days on information generated by the survey of Large Scale Forest Treatment Projects and Collaborative Groups, which was undertaken on behalf of the Large-Scale Treatments - Public and Private Lands Subcommittee. A three page paper on what is working and areas needing improvement was presented. Generally, the collaboratives are doing well in the following areas: coming together as a group and identifying shared mission/values, creating rules of engagement and Memorandums of Understanding, visiting the land for inspiration, integrating science into decision-making, and taking a landscape view while initiating doable projects. Areas

needing improvement include: federal commitment to the process, difficulty with personnel changes in the Forest Service, time issues, recognizing new thinking on landscape scale and collaboratives, funding, local support, and cost to individuals to be involved in collaboratives. Cheryl presented more in-depth information on the questionnaire/analysis on how collaboratives are finding zones of agreement and what kinds of information can be found in the MOU's and shared values statements. Throughout the presentation attendees asked very detailed questions regarding the interviewee responses. Since the survey study was conducted in a very limited time frame, Cheryl will complete the analysis of the survey responses in the next few weeks.

Arizona State Forester, Vicki Christiansen shared a copy of a letter from Arizona Governor Brewer sent to the WGA, which reflects supporting involvement in the development of Cohesive Strategy and requesting the WGA take a leadership role in convening a workshop to "rewrite the playbook" on landscape scale restoration. FHAC members agreed the workshop was a good idea and will be incorporated into the Large Scale Treatments Subcommittee work plan, along with continued work on the analysis of Collaborative Groups and Large Scale Treatments.

#### Role and Activities of the FHAC:

Questions arose about the role of the FHAC. Mike Carrier explained how the Governors go to the WGA to develop policy resolutions and how the Governors initiate and enact policy for specific programs in their states. The WGA should add capacity, knowledge, and coordination. Hosting a workshop as requested by Governor Brewer is a good example of how the WGA can provide assistance to states. Policy recommendations to the Governors are the first order of business for the FHAC. Focus must first be on core business, which is making sure the WGA has the right policies in place in regards to the forest and rangeland health program. We should distinguish between the things we do as policy for the Governors and the supportive actions required to meet the policy objectives.

The FHAC has a secondary role of accomplishing identified priorities and action items as determined by the WGA policy resolutions and as identified by our subcommittees. Subcommittee actions should focus on deliverables. The bullet points in the sub-committee reports are good priorities, actions and strategies for advocating for what we wish to achieve. Mike continued to task the FHAC to review our subcommittees. We may have bitten off a lot in terms of both scope and scale. We need to identify if it is possible to integrate some of the subcommittees. Discussions will continue during the next FHAC Executive Committee meeting. to focus and streamline the activities of the FHAC; however it was noted that perhaps more full FHAC meetings or conference calls would be beneficial as well.

#### Cohesive Wildfire Management Strategy:

Presenters, Mark Beighley and Al Hyde are contractors working on the Cohesive Wildfire Management Strategy. They outlined the process for developing the Cohesive Wildfire Management Strategy. Discussions were lively and informative. The contractors explained that this was the first presentation given regarding the process, which is just now being developed and will be approved by the WFLC. FHAC members voiced a high expectation of being physically involved in the process and voiced a strong intent to actively participate in the entire process, including the regional sessions that will shape our future actions on community preparedness, wildland fire and fuels management across the nation. Ann will attend the planning meeting for the CWMS on April 6 & 7 in DC, and will continually communicate actions of the Cohesive Strategy Oversight Committee to the FHAC.

Because of the high level of interest and questions about the CWMS, the group agreed to extend this session. The co-chair session did not occur.

#### Wrap-Up and Close:

Open discussion occurred covering recommendations for the FHAC. Members agreed there is a need to work together to accomplish the tasks outlined by Mike earlier in the morning. The Executive Committee will identify any policy needs and review current subcommittee deliverables and structure.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 on March 30, 2010.