

Catalina-Rincon FireScape Local IDT Meeting Notes

Thursday, August 4, 2011

9:30am to 12:00pm

Catalina Ranger District Office – Sabino Canyon Visitor Center (5700 N. Sabino Canyon Rd)

In attendance: Tim Connor, Cori Dolan, Brooke Gebow, Perry Grissom, Stan Helin, Kathy Makansi, Stephanie Rayburn, Jennier Ruyle, Chris Stetson, Josh Taiz, Craig Wilcox (notes by Cori Dolan and Brooke Gebow)

Update on July 28th TEAMS conference call

Brooke, Stephanie and Janel conducted a conference call with Catalina TEAMS specialists on July 28th. Janel asked the group to be mindful of meeting definitions: IDT meetings by definition include TEAMS personnel. Meetings that do not include TEAMS personnel will be called Local IDT meetings. Stephanie would like to hold an official IDT meeting with TEAMS in Tucson in early November. **Cori will send a Doodle poll to the group to set a date.** The TEAMS specialists reported that they felt they were on hold until the departure analysis and vegetation reports were finished. Brooke and Stephanie let them know that the project is going forward and they should begin gathering background information for their reports. **Janel will work on getting TEAMS specialists hooked up with Forest Service counterparts and field trips.** The group discussed trying to accomplish the trips before or in conjunction with the November IDT meeting. Jennifer Morrissey has started on the MRDG. Cori and Brooke have sent her some example documents. Once we get the departure analysis and FSIM (combines fuels with risk overlay to get high priority treatment areas) we can produce an updated timeline. Jennifer confirmed that we will be using the list of management indicator species in the old Forest Plan because the new plan is not final.

Update on Fuels and Vegetation Specialist reports

Don H. will be ready by next week with analysis, maps, and tables. Steph has been using the Galiuros vegetation report as a template for Catalina. The vegetation report includes GIS with PTUs (potential treatment units), EUs (ecological units), and acreages, and she is about half way done. Stephanie emailed this information to TEAMS so they would have something to start with.

Update on MRDG

Stephanie started the MRDG with Jennifer M. Jennifer is taking it over with support from Stephanie. The MRDG includes specifics about treatments in Wilderness. We will be comparing alternatives in the MRGD. Possible alternatives include 1) no action; 2) Prescribed burning only in wilderness; 3) buffer thinning with chainsaws as a pretreatment for burning. Craig reported that he received approvals to use chainsaws in Chiricahua and Galiuros wilderness. We need to demonstrate that the treatments are needed for safety and to maintain the character of the wilderness. We will lay out each alternative in one MRDG and present a draft at the November meeting for TEAMS review. The group discussed the idea of Brooke and Stephanie going to Albuquerque to meet with regional wilderness personnel. Jennifer suggested we use the reference document on how treatments saved Eager.

ILAP

Cori reported on the upcoming ILAP meeting at NAFRI on Monday, August 15th. ILAP (Integrated Landscape Assessment Project) has stimulus funds to develop vegetation maps for WA-OR and AZ-NM. State and transition models are being built to enable projecting climate change outcomes. The modeling allows jumps between types (like from ponderosa pine to desert grassland). The group is working on having a “No Management” scenario to present for the Sky Islands. The No Management and Climate change models could be useful for FireScape, but the tools might be most powerful applied at larger scale (across the entire forest or jurisdictions). There is a wide variety of federal representatives coming to the meeting as well as some NGO’s and a couple homeowners from the Firewise group.

Biological Assessment Needs

Josh will contact Janet Moser to get her started and see what information she needs. Vicki Eubanks has GIS layers that can help. The goal is to get design criteria for treatments. We may be able to use Spencer Bigelow as an example.

Effects analysis methodology/Design criteria

The departure analysis will provide the basis for the effects analysis by defining the affected environment (existing conditions) for vegetation. We can model treatments to see how well they nudge vegetation towards reference conditions. Jennifer proposed that the No Action alternative means not treating at all, and the ILAP work could help with that analysis. We do analyze the primary and secondary treatments. We will also keep a list of alternatives that have been considered but discarded.

Update on Scoping Notice

Stephanie reported that there are about 8 comments so far. Janel has the comments and will have TEAMS summarize them. She reminded the group that substantive scoping comments must be considered in specialist reports. Next steps in outreach include the ILAP meeting, linking our website to InciWeb, National Public Lands Day, and the BioBlitz. **Cori will make changes to the website and make inquiries into Public Lands Day (Heidi Schewel) and the BioBlitz. Cori will also send brochures to Stephanie.** The group also discussed holding an annual mapping update to add treatments and fires in late November, perhaps wrapping it in with the November IDT meeting to take advantage of Don H’s presence. **Cori and Chris will work on setting up the meeting.** Stephanie asked about the issue of roads in the scoping notice. Tim reported that the analysis boundary was delineated using existing features. Therefore, the EA will include implementation for each PTU (eg, “this PTU includes a road that needs to be bladed”). Jennifer Morrissey is doing roads as part of her report. **Josh will talk to Jen Morrissey about roads.**

Discuss new budget plan

Forest specialists like Kathi and Josh need to find other dollars after Oct 1 to pay for their time on the FireScape project. Stephanie will lay out our needs/time to cover report writing and meeting attendance. They will get together by Aug 12th to lay out how many days are needed and what they cost.

Potential LiDar available

Stephanie reported that she gave Tyson a wish list of LiDar products including carbon, canopy cover, trails, topography, and tree species layer. The group discussed whether the **LiDar data covers the whole district and Stephanie will ask Tyson**. If the data covers the whole district, there may be other products we could use. Tyson is funded through December at present. **A LiDar workshop is scheduled for August 30-September 1—contact Craig if you're interested.**

Next meeting

Stephanie would like to conduct a monthly conference call with TEAMS. **Cori and Stephanie will work on setting up the next one in late August**. The next FireScape meeting will be a general meeting (as opposed to IDT—allows UA partners to be there) on Thursday, Sept 8th at 9:30 at District Office Visitor Center.