

North American Fire Management Working Group

Kelvin Hirsch

Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Service

*Presentation on behalf of Mexico, USA, and Canada
to the Pan-American Conference on Wildland Fire
October 23, 2004, San Jose, Costa Rica*



Presentation Outline

1. Fire Management Working Group

- History
- Objectives
- Activities

2. Moving Forward

- Fundamental Principles
- Possible Next Steps
- Recommendations

3. Questions/Discussion

Fire Management Working Group

History

- FMWG established in 1962; one of the first working groups of the NAFC
- Has met 38 times (annually with a few exceptions) on a rotational basis
- 3-Day meetings (reports, technical field tour, business)



Fire Management Working Group

History

- **Membership includes fire leadership from operational and scientific organizations in Canada, Mexico, and USA;**
- **Represents federal and state/provincial agencies, academics, and NGOs**
- **Current Charter ratified in 1999**
- **Agreed to be an ISDR regional network in January 2004**



Fire Management Working Group

Objectives

- Exchange information, ideas, and technology aimed at advancing forest fire management policies and practices. **Communication**
- Promote mutual aid and technical exchanges among Canada, Mexico, and the United States to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of forest fire management. **Coordination**
- Actively support and participate with international agencies to conduct and promote activities that will foster world-wide cooperation and development pertaining to fire management. **Cooperation**



Fire Management Working Group

Examples of Past Achievements – Information Exchange

Major international study tours

1968 – Fire management in Canada and the US (27 people from 25 countries; 2 month tour)

1975 – Mexico and USA (40 people from 27 countries)

1980 – Prescribed fire in USA (24 specialists from 10 countries)

1960s+ – Australia/NZ study tours (biennial/on-going)

Forest Fire News Publication

1966 to late 1980s; technical magazine (20-40 pages)

Glossary of Forest Fire Management Terms

1978 - English/Spanish/French – 288 terms

Fire Management Working Group

Examples of Past Achievements – Mutual Aid/Technical Assistance



Mutual Assistance Agreements

- Border agreements, first strike agreements, emergency assistance – Every km/mile of the borders are covered under an agreement
- Adoption of ICS by all three countries



Personnel Exchanges

Frequently between Canada and the US over past decade
Major years (1998 to Mexico; 2000 to US from NA & Australia)

Training

Mexico's Technical Support and Training Program
(USAID and USFS/BLM - extensive funding)

Fire Management Working Group

Examples of Past Achievements—Foster International Cooperation



International Conferences

1989 – Boston (Wildland/Urban Interface)

1997 – Vancouver (Fire and Sustainable Development)

2003 – Sydney (Managing the Future of Global Problems)

2007 – Spain



Scientific and Technical Collaboration

Fire Equipment Testing

Mexican Fire Information System

FrostFire

International Crown Fire Modelling Experiment



ICFME Research Efforts

In-stand fire
behaviour



Involvement: 100+ participants from 14 countries representing 30 different organizations

http://fire.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/research/environment/icfme_e.htm

It has provided valuable new data and insights into:

- **Nature and characteristics of crowning forest fires**
- **Firefighter safety**
- **Wildland-urban interface structure ignition**
- **Smoke characteristics/composition**
- **Fire effects**

Fire Management Working Group

Moving Forward - Fundamental Principles

- 1. Must address underlying causes as well as the symptoms of fire-related problems**
- 2. Increased effort in non-traditional research (e.g., social and political sciences, humanities) and innovations in appropriate equipment/technology**
- 3. Integration of social, economic, environmental considerations and institutions in developing tangible policies and practices**
- 4. Fire must become an integral component of land/resource/ forest management**
- 5. Balanced approach/solutions --- mitigation (prevention), preparedness, response, and recovery**
- 6. Communities-based approaches are a necessity**
- 7. Long-term vision/plan with tangible short-term and medium-term milestones**
- 8. Effective relationships (within and beyond North America) and compatible approaches (e.g., ICS) are essential**

Fire Management Working Group

Moving Forward - Possible Next Steps

Common structure/approach to responding to emergencies



Establishes Relationships
(regional and global networks)

Address Underlying Causes (values, attitudes and behaviour)

- **Political and socio-economic**
- **Ecological and biological understanding of fire**



How

- **Community-based/ecologically sound solutions within a global context**
- **Integration across jurisdictions, disciplines, space, and time**
- **High-level to on-the-ground support**

Fire Management Working Group

Moving Forward - Recommendations

1. **Endorse the Regional and Global Wildland Fire Networks**
2. **Support further Pan-American dialogue and cooperation in wildland fire management**
3. **Support the strategic FAO / ISDR “Framework for the Development of the International Wildland Fire Accord”**
4. **Encourage the participants of the Ministerial Meeting (FAO, Rome, 14 March 2005) to consider the recommendations of the regional consultations held in 2004 in**
Northeast Asia, Eastern Mediterranean/Balkans/Near East/Central Asia, Baltic Region, Southern Africa and South America, and at this Pan-American conference,
towards proposing a global agreement to be considered and ultimately endorsed by the international community
e.g., at a General Assembly of the Global Wildland Fire community (Madrid 2007); or an international convention; or as part of a related UN General Assembly resolution

Questions/Discussion

