

Interagency Wildfire Management Team
Meeting Notes
December 18, 2002

Note: The IWMT wishes all a very Merry Christmas.

Note: The first meeting in 2003 will be held on January 15. The meetings will continue to be held at 9:30 in the RRES-ECO Conference Room.

Diana Webb (Office of the Associate Director for Operations, LANL) has assumed a position as the Senior Staff Assistant for the Associate Director of Operations at the Lab. She was formerly assigned to the Directors Office of the Risk Reduction and Environmental Stewardship Division. In her new position, Diana will serve as an external point of contact for site management issues pertaining to natural and cultural resources management, and assist in the development of strategic and tactical plans, among other duties. Diana will continue to serve as the Chair of the IWMT.

Gene Darling (Emergency Management and Response, LANL) announced that the construction of the new Emergency Operations Center is on schedule. The projected date for the EOC to be open for business is June 30. Gene also announced that the next Zone Board Meeting will be held on January 9 at the Santa Fe Supervisor's Office.

Doug Tucker (Los Alamos County Fire Department) reported that the mitigation project in Bayo Canyon is proceeding as planned. The County will be issuing contracts for similar work in other open-space areas on County land. Defensible space thinning will also be conducted in residential areas. Doug pointed out that clearing around buildings for 30 to 100 feet significantly improves the probability that these structures can survive a wildfire.

Dean Clark (Fire Management Officer, Bandelier National Monument) announced that approximately 50 acres have been cut in the Highway 4 fuelbreak. Since the ground has recently frozen, concerns for damage to soils during burning of slash piles have decreased. Dean also suggested that Bandelier National Monument, the Española Ranger District of the Santa Fe National Forest and Los Alamos National Lab identify contiguous regions where new projects related to wildfire hazard reduction would be mutually discussed and reviewed.

Darrell Abeyta (Española Ranger District, Santa Fe National Forest) reported that the Forest Service has continued its support of the Los Alamos County thinning activities. Darrell also reported that the hiring of the District Fire Management Officer is in process.

John Stetson (Los Alamos Site Office, DOE) announced organizational changes within the Department of Energy. The Los Alamos Area Organization is now the Los Alamos Site Office. The Site Manager is Ralph Erickson, and Dennis Martinez is the Deputy Site Manager. The Albuquerque Operations Office is formally disestablished effective December 20 and will continue operation as a NNSA Service Center.

Rob Farris (FWO-Fire, LANL) has been reviewing the status of defensible space and powerline corridors at the Lab. He reported

that there has been good progress toward reducing wildfire hazards in these areas.

Randy Balice (Ecology Group, LANL), Craig Allen, Brian Paul and others attended a workshop on the implementation of the Nature Conservancy's Fire Learning Network in the Jemez Mountains. The Fire Learning Network supports and accelerates collaborative, innovative community-based, landscape-scale fire management planning in multi-partner landscapes. Specific goals for the Jemez Mountains include the gathering and organizing baseline fire hazard information and integrating fire risk reduction strategies.

Amanda Kuenzi (Fire Effects Team, Bandelier National Monument) learned that the abstract for a poster presentation at the 2003 National Fire Plan Conference was accepted. The conference will be held in New Orleans during January 13-15. The poster is entitled "Effects of Drought and Insect Infestation on Ponderosa Pine Forests and Pinyon and Juniper Woodlands in Bandelier National Monument and Los Alamos National Laboratory, New Mexico."

The next IWMT meeting will be at 9:30 AM on Wednesday, January 15, at TA-21, Building 210 in the Conference Room (142). The IWMT meets every other week and these meetings are open to the public. Contact Randy Balice (balice@lanl.gov, 665-1270) for further information, or to get on the distribution list for these meeting notes.