

# SSGIC – Meeting of Principal Investigators

USFS Mather Field Office – Sacramento, CA

May 16, 2002

Items in *Italics* are action items.

## Review of Program Objectives and Deliverables

The group reviewed the objectives and deliverables stated in the Joint Fire Sciences Program (JFSP) grant proposal and evaluated how they are being met and the degree of completion. The objectives are:

- 1) **Select an optimal management and technical process for interagency landscape scale, wildland fuels management planning, coordination, and analysis.** Status – While this has not been formally documented, the thought process used to reach decisions made in implementing the SSGIC were deemed acceptable. We need to review and capture those decisions in the final document. Jeff Manley noted that we could use discretionary funds to review other initiatives and compare and evaluate these efforts with the SSGIC program.
- 2) **Compile, collect, and integrate the necessary spatial and attribute data based on ecosystems rather the jurisdictional boundaries; generate detailed and accurate historic fire regime and fuels information within the project area, develop a plan for joint management and sharing of research, fuels, and fire effects plots.** Status – We have successfully integrated “best available” ecosystem level data for most themes identified in the action plan. The several remaining are being developed currently. The lack of adequate fuels and other fire related data (e.g. canopy cover, tree height, height to live crown) remains a significant issue for all analyses.

Deliverable # 7 addresses the development of a business process plan to provide stakeholder agencies with the information needed to permanently maintain a fire GIS framework. There was extensive discussion related to this topic. SSGIC recently (April 30 and May 31, 2002) held a 2 day fuels workshop facilitated by Business Genetics to look at how agencies might develop compatible business processes to improve joint fire management and planning. Jeff Manley suggested that since several larger initiatives are currently addressing these issues, such as FireMAP and LandFire, perhaps our role might be to document these other efforts. However, scale is often an issue for work developed at large scales and local needs are often not met by state or national efforts. For example, fuels data derived from imagery needs local validation. Topics discussed included whether SSGIC should put significant additional effort in this area or just identify that it is a national issue and beyond SSGIC capability. What would it take to establish a process to permanently maintain SSGIC? Do we look at SSGIC as continuing as a local province in the long term, or as a contributor to a larger system? How do we take the lessons learned here and extend them to larger areas, additional functional areas such as exotic weeds or larger efforts? Our commitment to JFSP includes benefiting others from our experiences. We should paint a conceptual picture of where this program could go. Possibilities include additional functional areas, geographic expansion,

organizational expansions, and technical improvements to IT architecture. The goal is to show that cooperation works. *Pat Lineback and Dorothy will take the lead in writing several paragraphs to contribute to the final document.*

- 3) **Produce comprehensive planning maps and analyses that rank areas prioritized for treatment based on value, hazard, and risk criteria.** Status – Value, hazard, and risk analyses will be completed before Oct. 1, 2002 in anticipation of the Oct. 2, 2002 meeting of fire managers. This data will be normalized for possible use in the Asset Analyzer.
- 4) **Write a multi-year fuels treatment plan, based on analyses, that establishes coordinated schedules for treatment areas among agencies within a large geographic area.** Status – Priority treatment areas, based on completed value, risk, and hazard analyses, will be “flagged” at the Oct. 2, 2002 meeting of fire managers. Additional discussion focused on fulfilling our JFSP grant obligation and meeting our local needs. Do we actually need to produce a final burn plan for JFSP, or just a prototype establishing that the analyses are complete and mechanisms available to collaborate on burn plans? Aaron Gelobter noted that we will be successful if we show analysis outputs and prepare a plan based on them. Bill Kaage mentioned our inability to establish linkages to FirePRO and NFMAS to capture the budget process. Jeff Manley noted the value of having managers evaluate the outputs to provide validation and feedback on their utility.
- 5) **Assess spatial data and analysis effectiveness, including cost effectiveness and the ability to meet ecological and fuel hazard reduction goals.** Status – No discussion
- 6) **Automate and standardize the technical procedures and guidelines used for integrated value, hazard, and risk analysis.** Status – Informal documentation has taken place as the analyses were developed. This will need to be incorporated into the final document.
- 7) **Produce a report describing implementation strategies and provide a GIS framework usable by other interagency fuels management and fire use groups.** Status – Much of the documentation required for this final report exists in a variety of formal and informal documents. Integrating these into one cohesive document will be a substantial job. There was considerable discussion on how to best facilitate this. It was decided to begin writing the report as soon as possible. This will allow SSGIC time to respond to any deficiencies or issues identified during document preparation. It was also decided to contract a technical writer/editor to assist with writing the document. Task assignments to prepare the document include:
  - *Anne Birkholz - Prepare an outline for the document as a starting point and have it reviewed by the PI's. The outline/organization of the document will be based on the list of deliverables.*
  - *AnneBirkholz – Follow up on several leads to identify and secure a contractor. Louise Larson is a subject matter expert as well as a writer who can be reached through North Tree Fire. Judy Forbes on the Sierra NF will have Louise's phone number. Jerry Mitchell from Yosemite, who is available through the Denver Service Center, or Jones*

*and Stokes are other possibilities. Bill Kaage indicated that we can reach Jones and Stokes through an existing task order with We Staff.*

- *Anne Birkholz – Provide existing documentation to the contractor and work with him/her in the development of a draft document.*
- *All – Review the draft document and provide feedback. Add review of this document to Oct. 3, 2002 meeting agenda*
- *Anne Birkholz – Work with the contractor to prepare the final document.*

- 8) **Conduct at least one comprehensive training workshop to guide other partner agencies in developing a comparable framework in other geographic areas. Provide training to other agency groups as needed.** Status – This objective will be accomplished at the Dec. 2-5, 2002 conference of CAFE (California Association of Fire Ecologists) in San Diego. The group discussed several presentation alternatives including an all day or ½ day workshop, making several independent presentations, or getting a 2-hour block session. *Dorothy Albright will determine whether we can have a 2 hour block session of time.* Advantages include more cohesiveness over independent presentations without requiring attendees to commit a large portion of their time to one topic. We will publish a schedule that will allow attendees to identify the specific time slot of interest to them. Bill Kaage and Aaron Gelobter suggested getting an additional hour after the 2-hour session as an interactive session to solicit feedback and look towards the future. *Dorothy Albright will see if she can get this additional hour. Dorothy will facilitate the session and find out when abstracts are due.* Task assignments for this workshop follow:

1. Program Management (1 hour)
  - a) *Pat Lineback – SSGIC overview*
  - b) *Jeff Manley – Management perspective on collaboration*
2. Technical Implementation (1 hour)
  - a) *Brent Skaggs – Fuels data and data collection*
  - b) *Pat Lineback – ArcIMS implementation/Web delivery*
  - c) *Anne Birkholz – Analysis framework*
3. Feedback/Futuring (1 hour)
  - a) *Bill Kaage and Aaron Gelobter – “Do your own SSGIC”, potential SSGIC/FireMAP relationship, conceptual model for extending SSGIC*

### **Bernie Bahro – Reducing Hazard in the Pacific Southwest Region Workshop 2002**

Bernie Bahro presented an overview of a workshop he is coordinating on June 11-13, 2002. This US Forest Service conference will provide regional direction to forests and districts in planning hazard reduction treatments. The analyses he described are similar to SSGIC analyses. *Dorothy Albright and Pat Lineback will attend this workshop on June 12 between 12:30 and 1:30 and present a case study on the SSGIC program. They will present information about data, tools, and systems from a conceptual/strategic perspective.*

Dorothy Albright noted that SSGIC is effectively a case study for USFS future direction and, with limited additional effort, we could implement Bernie’s analyses. Doing this would demonstrate how ArcIMS technology and collaboration could be used to meet National Fire Plan

direction at the local level. The SSGIC analysis will be completed long before Bernie's analyses and our outputs will be useful to him. In any case, don't lose touch with this USFS initiative.

### **SSGIC presentation to FireMAP in Boise**

*Bill Kaage and Aaron Gelobter will coordinate a meeting with the FireMAP group in Boise to present the SSGIC program. They will focus on a potential relationship with FireMAP and the future of the SSGIC.*

### **SSGIC Project Evaluation, Successes and Shortcomings**

Robin Marose noted that a program like SSGIC should be viewed as a planning organization and not as a data collection program. He felt that local organizations should be responsible for data collection and to provide data to the SSGIC. SSGIC should not have had to spend as much time as we did on data collection and integration, but rather focused on planning and management.

Deliverable # 6 requires establishing benchmarks to evaluate the project's success. Much of the information needed to do this is in the action plan. We will also need to evaluate projected versus actual costs and the original budget proposal.

### **Options for utilizing remaining funds**

Pat Lineback anticipates that SSGIC has approximately \$35,000 to \$40,000 in non-obligated funds and presented a list of options for its use. The list follows with approximate costs and group consensus priorities.

- Contract a writer/editor to assist with SSGIC final project documentation (approx. \$5,000) - *This is a high priority and will be implemented.*
- Continue development of the Asset Analyzer (approx. \$5,000) – Since this is a deliverable, we need to develop it to the point where it is a functional application. *We will contract Space Imaging to continue its development.*
- Assess Web server security and develop a security plan – (approx. \$10,000) – *This is a high priority as well as a previously identified need.*
- Extend SSGIC to another functional area (e.g. weeds) – This is a possibility we might begin to pursue. The investment would be more time than dollars.
- Develop a Web interface to look at cumulative burns and smoke emissions - Lloyd Queen of the Univ. of Montana has significant funding to work on this. We might consider pursuing working with him, but not until 2003.
- Study barriers to interagency cooperation and recommend solutions (approx. \$25,000) – This is a costly alternative and would not solve the issues, merely document them. We will not pursue this option.
- Pursue collaborative data collection and management (approx. \$25,000) – This would require hiring a contractor to develop strategic plans and processes to collect and validate fuels data. This is not a high priority item.
- Develop an improved Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) coverage. (approx. \$10,000) – The consensus was that the existing WUI coverage is insufficient to meet local needs. Bill Kaage

cautioned combining the WUI as politically defined with the identification of life, safety, and infrastructure information. SSGIC could develop additional data layers and maintain the politically defined WUI as is. Additional layers to the WUI might include further development of the current CDF census data with local validation, adding information on structures that are not housing units, adding seasonal populations such as campgrounds, building a layer of other infrastructure information, and developing a defensibility layer for operational triage. This is not a high priority, but important and we would like to be able to move this direction.

- Improve fuels data – Improving fuels data is an important need, but also very expensive. We will monitor current research efforts.
- Explore closer connections with other existing initiatives such as FireMAP, etc. – No further discussion.

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