

**Manell-Geus Habitat Focus Area
FOCUS GROUP GUIDE
Residents Impacted by Wildfire**

Date: _____ Interview Completed by: _____

Focus group participants: _____

Hafa adai! Thank you for agreeing to join a focus group discussion tonight. My name is _____. I am part of a team that is collecting data on behalf of the National Marine Fisheries Service for the Habitat Blueprint. You have been selected to participate in this focus group because you live in an area of Merizo that has been affected by wildfires. Our discussion will focus on fires in Merizo and its impacts on the community, the reef and fishery. We will also discuss effective ways to prevent fire and mitigate its impacts. The discussion will last about two hours. The information will help us understand fire impacts on the community and the environment so that we can work with the broader community and government agencies to minimize the impacts of fire on both the community and the reefs.

Your opinions on the issues affecting the village are very important to us. There are no wrong answers in this discussion, but there will likely be differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. Keep in mind that we're just as interested in negative comments as positive comments and at times the negative comments are the most helpful.

Your participation in this focus group is totally voluntary. Are you willing to answer our questions?

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 minutes for completing the survey, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other suggestions for reducing this burden to Valerie Brown, NFMS (Valerie.Brown@noaa.gov).

Notwithstanding any other provisions of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subjected to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

You've probably noticed the voice recorder. We are recording the session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. People often say very helpful things in these discussions and we can't write fast enough to get them all down. We will be on a first name basis tonight and nothing you tell me will be personally attributed to you in any written documents that result from this session. The recording and all raw data will be destroyed at the end of this project.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Well, let's begin. Let's find out some more about each other by going around the table. Tell us your name and how long you've lived in Merizo.

- 1.) How often do wildfires occur in Merizo?
- 2.) How are these fires started?
- 3.) What should people do when they see a fire? Is this widely understood by the community? If not, what should be done?
- 4.) How has fire affected the people in your village? (Probe: health, property damage, smoke, any positive effects?) What are the most severe impacts?
- 5.) Has the community observed any links between fires and changes on the reef and fishing? (probe: sedimentation, habitat, fishery) How have these changes affected people? Who are being impacted? If people don't understand the impacts and all these linkages, what should be done?

- 6.) How do people in Merizo deal with these fires? What is currently being done to prevent the fires? What would be the most effective way for the community to prevent fires? Who should be involved?
- 7.) What would be the best way to address the impacts from wildfire on the reef?
- 8.) How could we engage the people in Merizo to participate in activities that mitigate wildfire? Would residents be willing to participate in a village fire watch program? Do you think, residents would volunteer for a community wildfire fighting team?
- 9.) What type of assistance to mitigate fire and its impact is most needed by the government?

Thank you for your time!