

WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

January 23, 2019
DNR NRB EOB
1111 Washington St SE
Olympia, WA

Committee Members Present:

Gary Berndt – Wildland Fire Liaison, Chair
Cody Desautel – Tribal Nations Representative *Conference Call*
Randy Johnson – Fire Chief (Eastside)
Jim DeTro – County Commissioner (Eastside)
Reese Lolley – Statewide Environmental Representative *Conference Call*
Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt – State Land Trust Beneficiary
Melissa Gannie – Assistant Fire Marshal
J.D Marshall – Industry Landowner (Timber) *Conference Call*
Lee Hemmer – Industry Landowner (Range)

Committee Members Absent:

Tony Craven – Small Forest Landowner
Dave Johnson – Fire District Commissioner (Eastside)
Joe Gardner – County Commissioner (Westside)
Dave LaFave – Fire Chief (Westside)
Rodney Smoldon – Federal Fire Agency

Guests/Other Attendees:

Loren Torgerson - Wildfire Policy Advisor
Julie Sackett - Forest Health Division Manager
Shelly Goodwin - Wildland Fire Advisory Committee Coordinator
Howard Johnson – Assistant Chief Spokane Co. Fire District 4
James Graham – Cowlitz Fire District 2 substitute for Chief LaFave

I. Opening, Roll Call

The meeting of the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on January 23 in Olympia, WA. Roll was taken, 7 members were present and 5 members were excused. Due to travel constraints, 3 members participated in the meeting by phone, constituting a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 28, 2018 council meeting were presented in draft and reviewed. Motion to approve draft minutes as amended made by Committee member Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt, seconded by Committee member Randy Johnson. Motion carried with Aye's.

III. Chairman Report

Chairman Berndt, provided a written chair report. Attached. He also discussed Rodney Smoldon resigning to chair the Grizzly Bear Committee. Should he be replaced on the WFAC committee with a Forest Service Member?

Gary then turned it over to George Geissler. George mentioned the US Forest Service furlough. This time of year there is a lot of training and some is cancelled. The aircraft inspections are still progressing. Wildland is not an emergency so progress is slow moving. Washington State has a lot of legislative interest that is underway. Report 2561 – reminding the legislature that this committee’s function is, providing recommendations, how to address unprotected lands, what is a forest land, adjacency, grass lands, positives, negatives, costs. What are western Washington’s issues?

Think about who is missing from the committee. Committee charter – there is no “term limit” nor process for selecting replacements by the Commissioner. Being part of a group like this is a burden, but we need good representation. DNR will be looking to this group for recommendations. Are all the groups who should be here represented? Submit suggestions to Gary.

Some side questions were – Unprotected or under protected, who is responsible for the land? (Protection/response).

Does the strategic plan change WFAC responsibilities? Yes it does change the focus a bit on this group. Intent was to allow committee “oversight”, where we focus our efforts and where we put our resources regarding wildfire risks. Forest Health Assessment – Tier 1 risk, Tier 2 resources at risk.

Forest Health and Wildfire are two different types of fires that are fought two different ways.

IV. DNR/WSP Update

- a. Karen Arnold discussed 3rd party billing and IT projects. Two years ago we looked at Wildfire systems and discovered that 80 systems are not working together. The goal is for all regions and divisions to be on the same set of platforms. They are in the process of developing an on-line bill pay for Burners to be able to pay by credit, debit or ARCH or still be able to pay the way they do now. E-signatures has a March completion schedule. The project will need build money that they don’t have. It will be request in the next legislature. WFAC could help support that.
- b. Melissa Gannie from the State Fire Marshal’s office reported there is nothing new to add since the last meeting.
- c. Chuck Turley brought up Emergency Management Division and portal to portal pay. We do not have it in Washington State under WSP. Mobilization is for in state only, out of state they use the Emergency Multi Agency Coordination (EMAC) mobilization plan. Payment piece gets unclear. Going to be paid by FMAG. Within the state mobilization process if the represented plan by a mobilization region is disapproved that region reverts fall back on the existing plan. The federal government shutdown and furlough is having minimal impact on DNR –however each day gets more serious. Many trainings including the Incident team training for type 1 and 2 has been cancelled. Last year about 700 attended. This year the Federal agencies were facilitating it. Smaller trainings are

starting to get cancelled. Monthly western states have cancelled trainings/meetings. The Incident Management Teams should have rosters finalized 5 weeks ago. No rosters because the feds have control of the system. Non- fed incident commanders in state might have to be utilized. Federal aviation available in March has not been effected.

- d. Loren Torgerson, Wildfire Policy advisor gave an update on what bills in legislature effect Wildfire and what our stance is on them. Attached. Budget request by DNR is \$ 55 million – 30 seasonal to more perm positions to address fire and community protection This will provide improved training for all entities and create staff year-round. Included also were two helicopters. Original proposal attached. Governor budget came out with half of what we asked for. Fire suppression is a top subject. Fire Deficit. Cost reduction in small fires. Aviation is only part of the “dog in the fight”. There is a question about prediction on benefit of suppress resources. Possibly assume no initial attack, then run the complexity, add exposure hours, print out the footprint and predict reliability.

V. New Business

- a. WFAC – Who is missing? What is the task of the group? Focused effort to clearly articulate what WFAC is needed for.
- b. Meeting schedule was discussed. Should it stay at monthly? Depends on the business need. Check in monthly. By acclimation we will continue the monthly schedule and decide if a meeting is needed.

VI. Final Q&A – Committee roundtable

- a. RL – Wrapping up – work plan – charter – adding people
- b. JD M – Appreciate data – discuss how we interface with Forest Health
- c. RJ – 100 acres Riverside school district – project with stem education and treating lands. Community event. **Public education.**
- d. JG – Support the plan that is out there – developing partnerships – what is in it for us?
- e. RPH – California experience follow up – use as an educational resource. Final fire report – lessons learned.
- f. Shelly will order books (Between Two Fires) to hopefully distribute at the next meeting.

VII. Adjournment and Next Meeting

By consensus, the committee decided to do a “doodle pool” to schedule the next general meeting at DNR NRB EOB 1111 Washington St SE Olympia, WA. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 12:48 p.m.

At the time of adjournment the decision was to schedule the regularly set meeting of February 22 at the NRB 1000-1300 hours

Draft minutes submitted by Shelly Goodwin, approved by Chairman Gary Berndt. Formal action to be taken to approve the minutes at the February 22, 2019 meeting.