

**WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

July 21, 2021

Putnam Centennial Center

719 E 3rd St

Cle Elum WA 98922

Zoom Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Allen Lebovitz – Wildland Fire Liaison, Chair
Tony Craven – Small Forest Landowner
Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt – State Land Trust Beneficiary
J.D. Marshall – Industry Landowner (Timber)
Melissa Gannie – Assistant Fire Marshal
KC Whitehouse - Washington State Council of Fire Fighters
Reese Lolley – Statewide Environmental Representative
Lee Hemmer – Industry Landowner (Range)
Leonard Johnson – Fire Chief (Westside)
Jim DeTro – County Commissioner (Eastside)

Committee Members Absent:

Vacant – Cowlitz County Commissioner
Cody Desautel – Tribal Nations Representative
Vacant – Fire District Commissioner
Erick Walker – USFS Deputy Forest Supervisor
Randy Johnson – Fire Chief (Eastside)

Guests/Other Attendees:

Shelly Goodwin – WFAC Coordinator
Paul Jewell
Marc Daudon
Roger Ferris
George Geissler – Deputy Supervisor for Wildfire and State Forester
Mary Catherine McAleer – Weyerhaeuser
Loren Torgerson – Wildfire Policy Advisor
Roger Ferris

I. Opening, Roll Call

The meeting of the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee was called to order at 1:08 p.m. on July 21, was taken, 10 members were present by Zoom or in person and 5 members were excused, constituting a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the June 17, 2021 council meeting were presented in draft and reviewed. Motion to approve draft minutes made by Committee member Tony Craven, seconded by Committee member Jim Detro. Motion carried unanimously.

- III. **Chairman's Report** – Report attached. Held Fire Chief Town Hall yesterday, share what we are doing for planning for 1168 and ask for input. Planning for more. Provided data from our HB 1784 directed PODs for dual benefits analysis for Cedar and Cub Creek Fires in the Methow. Ana Barros mapped potential containment areas with the PODs data for the IMT managing the fire. Wildfire Ready Neighbors pilot after action reviews and survey of users completed. Will be present what was learned with data on numbers of people reached along with other marketing data in a final report that will be available soon. Initial observations suggest that the program did play an important role in getting people prepared for fires. Easier and more approachable way of encouraging people to become prepared and continue to engage more with existing preparedness programs like Fire Adapted Communities and Firewise. DNR is participating in DFW led shrubsteppe proviso project for restoration after fire and improving resiliency to fire in arid lands.

IV. Agency Updates

- a. George Geissler – Deputy Supervisor for Wildfire and State Forester – Department level reorganization occurring within the Wildland Fire, Forest Health, and Forest Practices Divisions. Forest Health (now Resiliency) will be managed by a new Deputy Supervisor and will be merged with Forest Practices. I will remain State Forester and Wildfire Deputy. Alex Smith, Deputy for the Aquatics Division, will be the acting Deputy for Forest Resiliency and Forest Practices until a permanent Deputy has been recruited. The Wildland Fire Division will house all fire suppression and prevention activities. The change is to be effective August 1st. We are completing a lot of outreach and planning with HB 1168 implementation. Nationally we have moved to a PL5 (Planning Level 5 – highest level for wildfire preparedness). DNR has been working hard to secure suppression resources and has been very successful at acquiring more aircraft. We currently have 31 aircraft assigned in Washington. Conditions are more like late summer, already evaluating each large fire to see if we need to move personnel from one fire to another, normally this is done in August. Cedar Creek Fire – 8400 acres – being managed with smaller, more remote Delancy Fire, on USFS protection. Cub Creek Fire – 32,400 acres – in same area, on DNR protection. Red Apple Fire also burning on DNR protection in Wenatchee – Type I team managing this fire. Chuweah Creek Fire – 36,000 acres, started by lightning, extreme fire behavior, structures lost, located on Colville Agency protection. Lick Creek/Green Ridge Fires – 73,000 acres 45% contained, active fire behavior, on USFS and BLM protection, Randy Johnson's team is managing it. To date there have been 765 DNR fires, with 80,000 acres burned and 1,242 responses. These numbers are more typical for August. We have been working hard with state partners to place orders for resources and making use of interstate contracts. CA, KY, TX, NC, IK are providing additional resources and

allowing us to keep crews for at least a month. Dept. of Interior is also making ready reserve resources for fire suppression. The National Guard is supplying 1 Chinook for suppression work and 1 Lakota for IR work, but no troops have been needed so far.

- b. Melissa Gannie, Assistant Fire Marshal – Active MOB on 3 incidents, 14 MOBs this season, 1 preposition.
- c. Leonard Johnson, Fire Chief (Westside) – New WFAC member. Chief McLane – Black Lake Fire Department since January 2021. Been in fire service since 1992, starting at Grant County Fire District 2 and most recently Fire Chief for Grays Harbor Fire District 2. Actively engaged in wildland fire and have been the IC for SE WA Type 3 IMT. Was recently deployed to the Bootleg fire and have been on 4 MOBs this season already.

V. New Business

- a. **1168 Implementation** – George Geissler, Deputy Supervisor Wildfire and State Forester- Sets up an account and allows the legislature to provide funding – 3 components. Forest Resiliency, Wildfire Preparedness, and Community Resiliency. Does not allow for suppression costs. Specific elements include the following. Adds 100 fire fighters, to be used in hand crews and engines. Adding dozers to build our own strike teams. Division and Regions came together to figure out where the biggest need for them will be, which should be planned out by end of August. Plan to purchase and build out fire detection system. Angie Lane and her crew are working on this, early implementation with 10 cameras, will try to build out as quickly as possible. Build out aviation, increase life span and durability of air craft. Outfitting some with night vision, Training, purchasing 2 new air craft (Polaris and air attack platform). Unprotected lands to be addressed, implementing recommendations from WFAC HB 2561 report. Having conversations with fire districts around increasing fire service capacity, amount of grant money to existing grants, training, operating expenses, and buying equipment. Concerning providing fire district support, we would like to task the WFAC with assisting with the planning this fall. A community resiliency and community preparedness account is developed. We have begun with Wildfire Ready Neighbors (WRN), which is the brand name for the public outreach campaign we hope will drive increased awareness and participation from the public. Landowner assistance personnel are helping to implement the program currently, and we will be staffing a resiliency coordinator in each region and Assistant Division Manager. The objective is to assist the existing programs out there such as Fire adapted communities and Firewise with WRN. Funding for direct, on the ground preparedness assistance becomes available on July 25th and plans are in place to begin allocating it to existing needs. There has been a lot of pre-work in order to get this on the ground. Meet capacity needs and get the grants out the door quickly. Commissioner

made clear implementation of 1168 is a high priority. Will provide updates on each piece of the implementation to the WFAC. 1168 is very transformative for DNR.

VI. Questions, Comments and Chat

- a. Tony – IFPL level bump up on Friday? Closure all east DNR land no impact on IFPL levels. Logging still active.
- b. Jim – Nobody mentioned fuel shortage at Omak? Gov. released transportation to help with fuel delivery. We find fuel easy and move it with our own trucks. We are supplementing where needed.
- c. Tony – Early detection system effectiveness – building on to what? Air attack qualified? Personnel can be trained – have a couple who can come fly.
- d. Reese – Coordinator for Fire District – community funding also?
- e. Lee – Provisions for rehab of fire lines or dozer trails? No nothing in 1168 for that.
- f. KC – Analysis for Fire District, is that funded by the 10 million? No it is separate.
- g. Reese – turn around money and get the work done during fire season.
- h. Melissa – When do you plan to get started? It has been started and ongoing.
- i. Reese – Washington barely ahead of the curve. Summary of Prescribed Fire restructure. Forest Resiliency merge with Forest Practices we lose the regulatory, certification parts. Burn permits operational will remain with Wildfire.

VII. Committee roundtable – Public Comment

- a. Lee – Rehab? DNR protection will only rehab to the extent necessary to protect specific resources outside that is the landowner responsibility. Nothing in 1168 – that would fall under suppression and 1168 doesn't pay for that.
- b. Tony – In 2015 when committee was formed we never imagined getting our entire wish list.
- c. Russ – Appreciate 1168 discussion.
- d. Reese – Washington Prescribed Fire Council working with partners.. Community Fire Management – working with landowners to develop burn plans. Engage more opportunities with fire districts.

VIII. Adjournment and Next Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm. The next general meeting is scheduled for August 19, 2021 from 1 – 4 pm, by Zoom.

Draft minutes submitted by Shelly Goodwin, approved by Chairman Allen Lebovitz. Formal action to be taken to approve the minutes at the next general meeting.