

WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 22, 2017

Natural Resources Building

1111 Washington Street SE, Room 449

Olympia, WA 98504

Committee Members Present:

Gary Berndt – Wildland Fire Liaison, Chair
Chuck Duffy – State Fire Marshal
Cody Desautel – Tribal Nations Representative
Dave Johnson – Fire Commissioner
J.D Marshall – Industry Landowner (Timber) – conference call
Lee Hemmer – Industry Landowner (Range) – conference call
Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt – State Land Trust Beneficiary
Tony Craven – Small Forest Landowner – arrived at 11AM

Committee Members Absent:

Dave LaFave – Fire Chief (Westside)
Jim DeTro – County Commissioner (Eastside)
Rodney Smoldon – Federal Fire Agency
Tom Bugert – Statewide Environmental Representative
Joe Gardner – County Commissioner (Westside)

Guests/Other Attendees:

Bob Johnson, Wildfire Division Manager
Gerry Day, Wildfire Deputy Supervisor
Tami Kellogg, Executive Assistant to Deputy Supervisor Wildfire
Mary Verner, Forest Health 20 year Strategic Plan Project
Loren Torgerson, Wildfire Policy Advisor
Jeff Wainwright, Washington State Council of Fire Fighters
Chuck LeBlanc, Deputy State Fire Marshall, WSP
Trevor McConchie, Forest Health Policy Advisor
Michael White, Washington State Council of Fire Fighters

I. Opening, Roll Call

The meeting of the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on February 22, 2017 in Olympia, WA. Roll call was taken; six members were present and five members were excused. Due to travel constraints, three members participated in the meeting by phone, constituting a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

After presentation of the draft minutes of the January 25, 2017 council meeting, a motion to approve draft minutes, made by Committee member Johnson and seconded by Committee member Pfeiffer-Hoyt, carried with unanimous ayes.

III. Old Business

- a. Forest Health Resiliency Sub-group Update – Cody Desautel

Mr. Desautel shared the outcome of a call regarding a post fire study conducted by the USFS research station, which evaluates fires across the state. The final report will be available in 2019. Other projects will happen over the years to move this forward.

b. Forest Health 20 Year Strategic Plan – Mary Verner

Ms. Verner provided an update on the progress of the Forest Health 20 Year Strategic Plan steering committee. She shared the meeting packet for the February 24 steering committee meeting and provided an update on the work of the sub-groups and next steps. She also asked for the assistance of the WFAC in prioritizing landscape treatments. She shared information on the Forest and Community Resiliency Roundtable, which functions as an advocacy group for interested and affected parties.

Committee member Pfeiffer-Hoyt shared the vision of adjusting management fees to apply towards restoration. Discussion followed surrounding prioritization, WUI communities, funding, and air quality and the perimeters of what the committee would review.

Chair Berndt suggested a conference call with Cody, JD and Tom on next steps. Ms. Verner is handing this project over to Chuck Hersey, who will be the lead on this piece, adding overall lead of a contractor with Sustainable NW, who is to produce a report by the end of June 2017, will fall to Loren Torgerson and Trevor McConchie.

c. 2016 Recommendations – Chair Berndt. Chair Berndt provided an overview of the recommendations summary presented to the Commissioner. They will have a further conversation at the SE region on March 1, 2017.

IV. Chairman Report

Chairman Berndt provided an update for the committee on his activities over the past month and provided hard copies of his report.

V. DNR Update

a. Wildfire Division Update – Bob Johnson – Mr. Johnson stated the division is currently working on preparation for the upcoming 2017 fire season: training courses for staff, the type 3 interagency fire academies scheduled for Deer Park, Rainier, and Yakima. He said a separate National Guard training at JBLM is scheduled. The division is working with tribes for training and to find funding, he added there is a legislative request for additional funding to accommodate all requests. Next steps are to reach out to rural areas to provide training, who typically do not have funding to provide own training. Since legislative funding would kick in July 1, they are submitting a request for emergency funding. Committee Pfeiffer-Hoyt suggests requesting a sustainable funding source for training. Discussion followed surrounding logistics and funding.

Mr. Johnson said they are looking into FLRA's and contractor agreements, such as VIPR and federal agreements, replacing engines, noting some engines sent to surplus could be purchased by rural fire districts who could use assistance grants to upgrade the engines for volunteer fire stations, initial air attack, aviation, and call when needed resources. He went on to say Type 1 (2) & 2 (8) teams are

rostering and training is well in place, and interagency teams are training in March.

The 2017 wage and equipment rates are updated and reflect the same rates across the board. Training on interaction with water dipping and dropping on ground, as well as fire training and refreshers, are scheduled. He shared the division has scheduled Type 3 training in both eastern and western Washington. Budgeting process is ongoing and he hopes to bring in our meteorologist at next meeting.

b. Legislative Update – Loren Torgerson, Wildland Fire Policy Advisor

Mr. Torgerson provided an update on current bills:

- HB1736 – pre-mob assistance, worked with legislatures on bill to cover funding aircrafts by local entities in order to provide mechanism for reimbursement
- SB5198 – fire suppression methodology, surrounding use of foam to protect structures and other retardants
- HB1489 – continuation of 2093, evaluating who is available to fight fire, asking DNR to provide training to SFLO who could fight a fire on their property.
- SHB1019 – early bill on pre-positioning, WSP is neutral
- SHB1711 – FH treatments and restoration on state forestlands to accelerate pace and scale of treatments on state trust lands
- SB5046 – global bill to do some of the same as the 20-year strategy, but in a 6-year timeframe

VI. New Business

a. Charter – Chair Berndt – the following comments were made on the draft Charter:

- i. Chief Duffy noted in Section VII item d, need to list the State Fire Marshal;
- ii. Chair Berndt noted the addition of the DNR advisor to be Deputy Supervisor for Wildfire;
- iii. Discussion took place under section F, on adding strategic partners to the committee as determined necessary; perhaps move DNR staff under heading of committee support;
- iv. Mission statement and liaison duties should reflect current tasks assigned by commissioner.
- v. Should add long term firefighting to mission statement;
- vi. Add budget rec and FF resources to section VIII, A;
- vii. Section VII term length, split section to those required by law (position) and appointees by CPL to add term length. Perhaps add 2-3 month transition period. Stager the term limits;

b. Wildland Fire Management Plan – Chair Berndt asked the committee to review material to determine if the plan is still relevant, and consider what can be useful going forward and what should be updated.

VII. Final Q&A - Jeff Wainwright, WSFC mentioned the state wildfire committee he chairs would like to collaborate with DNR and are currently working with Loren and

the Commissioner on issues. The WSFC would like to participate in current work of the committee.

Committee member Hemmer shared he left info with several people on the need for grant funding that is not tied to fire districts so rural landowners are able to get equipment to fight fire. Gary is to set up meeting with Steve A. from Idaho to explore funding opportunities. Committee member Marshall invited a speaker from Oregon speak on what a wildfire costs to the March meeting. Chair Berndt will send email to committee.

VIII. Adjournment and Next Meeting

By consensus, the committee decided to schedule the next general meeting at 10 am, on March 29, 2017 in Olympia. The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 12:50 p.m.

Draft minutes submitted by Tami Kellogg, approved by Chairman Gary Berndt. Formal action taken to approve the minutes at the March 29, 2017 meeting.