

## WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

March 29, 2017

### Natural Resources Building

1111 Washington Street, SE 4th Floor Room 449

Olympia, WA 98504-7001

#### **Committee Members Present:**

Gary Berndt – Wildland Fire Liaison, Chair

Chuck Duffy – State Fire Marshal

Cody Desautel – Tribal Nations Representative

Dave Johnson – Fire Commissioner

Dave LaFave – Fire Chief (Westside) – *via conference call*

Joe Gardner – County Commissioner (Westside) – *via conference call*

Lee Hemmer – Industry Landowner (Range)

Randy Johnson – Fire Chief (Eastside)

Rodney Smoldon – Federal Fire Agency – *via conference call*

Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt – State Land Trust Beneficiary

Tom Bugert – Statewide Environmental Representative – *arrived at 1030*

Tony Craven – Small Forest Landowner – *via conference call*

#### **Committee Members Absent:**

Jim DeTro – County Commissioner (Eastside)

J.D Marshall – Industry Landowner (Timber)

#### **Guests/Other Attendees:**

Bob Johnson, Wildfire Division Manager

Gerry Day, Wildfire Division Special Assistant

Tami Kellogg, Executive Assistant to Deputy Supervisor Wildfire

Chuck Hersey, Forest Health ADM, Wildfire Division

Trevor McConchie, Strategic Advisor for Forest Health and Wildfire

Warren Peterson, East Olympia Fire Department

Loren Torgerson, Wildfire Policy Advisory

Anthony Chavez, Weyerhaeuser

Jason Callahan, WFPA

#### **I. Opening, Roll Call**

The March 29, 2017 meeting of the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee was called to order at 10:00 a.m. in Olympia, WA. Roll was taken, 8 members were present and 2 members were excused. Due to travel constraints, 4 members participated in the meeting by phone, constituting a quorum.

#### **II. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the February 22, 2017 council meeting were presented in draft and reviewed. Motion to approve draft minutes made by Committee member Johnson, seconded by Committee member Pfeiffer-Hoyt. Motion carried with unanimous Aye's.

#### **III. Old Business**

- a. Forest Health Resiliency – Committee member Desautel had no updates from the committee sub-group; Mr. Chuck Hersey gave an overview on the FH Resiliency

roundtable and went on to provide an update on the work of the 20-year FHSP Steering Committee presenting details through a power point presentation including the timeline, and the FHSP Steering Committee sub group's focus and progress to date; Mr. Pfeiffer-Hoyt stated that from beneficiaries standpoint, the proposed forest health treatment in House Bill 1711 exceeds revenue and stated the preference that the model not be used on the westside. Discussion followed on work throughout the state and WFAC's involvement. Committee member Bugert gave a brief update on the released capital budget of 15million to DNR for forest health treatments.

- b. Charter – Mr. Day reviewed the most recent draft and asked the committee to review and provide comments prior to presenting to the Commissioner. A discussion took place on member term limits and how that would best suit the committee and its members. Chair Berndt asked that proposed changes be submitted to him by Friday, April 7. The committee discussed the following additions to the charter: voting to approve work assignments; noting who is/is not a voting member of the committee; add a statement that members serve at the pleasure of the commissioner;
- c. 2016 Recommendations – Chair Berndt stated the recommendations are finalized as our work product for last year; 15 topics, 57 recommendations. The Commissioner requested a different format for the recommendations. Committee Member Bugert asked if the final version has been shared publicly.
- d. Wildland Fire Management Plan
- e. 2017 Work Plan
- f. Project Task Proposal – Mr. Day reviewed the proposal, to assist the 2017 work plan for the committee to lay the groundwork (frame the project plan) on the direction the state should be working towards. Mr. Day asked for feedback; a question was posed if of this is to parallel the DNR Forest Health Strategic Plan and Mr. Day replied not at this time. He gave the priority for the bullets listed in the project task proposal: bullet 3, due 05/15/17; bullet 1, due 06/15/17, bullet 2, due 07/15/17.
- g. Issue 19 – Chair Berndt shared the issue no longer exists. State Fire Marshal Duffy said the prepositioning bill is on hold at this time but it doesn't appear it will go through the legislature, it may come out as a pilot program.

#### **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**

Mr. Torgerson provided an update on current DNR legislature:

- Senate Bill 5546 (Hawkins sponsor/forest health assessment and planning) - \$991,000 in Senate Operating Budget for implementation
- Senate Bill 5198 (Becker sponsor/ fire methodologies/ review use of retardants) - \$211,000 in Senate Operating Budget for implementation
- Senate Operating Budget proviso – Recruit other state agency employees who wish to volunteer in wildland fire suppression.

- Senate Operating Budget proviso - \$15,000,000 for forest health to target programs and projects
- House Bill 1711 – (Kretz sponsor/forest health assessment of state lands and state forest lands/revolving account) – Sufficient funding to implement.
- House Bill 1489 – (Kretz sponsor/concerning wildfire suppression contractors) - In Senate Rules Committee)
- House Operating Budget proviso - \$140,000 for DNR to administer to assist low income counties in eastern Washington with radio equipment, fuels mitigation projects and wildfire education. Passed out of Senate Natural Resources and Parks Committee in Executive Session yesterday.

Mr. Bob Johnson, Wildland Fire Division Manager, provided an update on the following: communications with the media in regards to preparedness for coming fire season, fire engines that need replacement, hiring seasonal staff, and conducting and setting up training for seasonal and permanent staff for fire season. He shared with the committee that eight helicopters are reset for coming season and the department has put out bids for a fixed wing fleet; 6 air tankers and 2 platforms; the division/regions are working on agreements and existing Forest Land Response Agreements to ensure partner agencies could attend trainings. A question was posed if the DNR is ready to cover SE corner of the state, Mr. Johnson stated we are prepared to provide assistance to partners in the area. He also shared he anticipates requests from FDs for PPE assistance. A discussion followed and it was shared to go to [www.scf4.org](http://www.scf4.org) to view a [video on fire training](#).

## VI. New Business

- a. **Good Neighbor Agreement** – Committee member Smoldon introduced Trevor McConchie to speak on the GNA and provided a summary on the purpose of the GNA; Mr. McConchie spoke to current projects for consideration and where current GNA focus area is; he announced Matt Ugaldea as SPA assistant for a project in Colville National Forest and is working to develop external messaging with the USFS. Mr. McConchie shared locations of planned projects in WEN-OK NF and Gifford Pinchot NF in addition to the one in Colville NF and that all projects are still required to go through the NEPA process. He shared the potential for USFS to work with WDFW in the future. Mr. Pfeiffer-Hoyt asked how the GNA would interact with HB 1711 if it is approved. Mr. McConchie replied it would be complementary to work of HB 1711;
- b. **Rangeland Protection Association Meeting Report** – Committee member Hemmer provided an update on meetings and progress of RPA, he shared concerns with legal issues, possible alienation of nearby Fire District's and the prospect to overlay with areas covered by a fire district yet so remote it would take too long to arrive to fight the fire. He shared examples of similar entities such as industry and refineries who have a similar set up to get the fire out quickly while fire fighters arrive. Chair Berndt shared the BLM/Department of Lands in ID provide funding for training and equipment. Committee member Hemmer would like to set up the RPA to work with and alongside fire districts, adding that volunteer fire departments are low on funding and volunteers end up going to fires where they are paid. Committee member Hemmer proposed the

RPA would back fill behind volunteer fire departments when they have no one available. Discussion followed on the need to focus on putting out fire instead of protecting structures.

**VII. Final Q&A**

April 27<sup>th</sup> event for Chuck Duffy retirement at 3pm in the GA auditorium.

**VIII. Adjournment and Next Meeting**

By consensus, the committee decided to schedule the next general meeting at 10 a.m., on April 26, 2017, at Suncadia Resort in Cle Elum, Washington. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 1:12 p.m.

Draft minutes submitted by Tami Kellogg, approved by Chairman Gary Berndt.  
Formal action to be taken to approve the minutes at the April 26, 2017 meeting.