

WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 24, 2019
DNR NRB EOB
1111 Washington St SE
Olympia, WA

Committee Members Present:

Gary Berndt – Wildland Fire Liaison, Chair
Randy Johnson – Fire District Commissioner (Eastside) *Conference Call*
Reese Lolley – Statewide Environmental Representative
Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt – State Land Trust Beneficiary
Bill Slosson – Assistant Fire Marshal
J.D Marshall – Industry Landowner (Timber) *Conference Call*
Lee Hemmer – Industry Landowner (Range) *Conference Call*
Tony Craven – Small Forest Landowner
Jim DeTro – County Commissioner (Eastside)

Committee Members Absent:

Cody Desautel – Tribal Nations Representative
Joe Gardner – County Commissioner (Westside)
Dave LaFave – Fire Chief (Westside)
Erick Walker – USFS Deputy Forest Supervisor
Dave Johnson – Fire Chief (Eastside)

Guests/Other Attendees:

Loren Torgerson - Wildfire Policy Advisor
Chuck Turley - Wildfire Division Manager
George Geissler – State Forester
Shelly Goodwin - WFAC Coordinator
Jim Passage - Guest
Andrew Spaeth - FHAC Facilitator
Rod Haeberle – Guest
Bob Tollefson – Guest
Zack Kennedy - Guest

I. Opening, Roll Call

The meeting of the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee was called to order at 10:10 a.m. on April 24, 2019 in Olympia, WA. Roll was taken, 9 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 February 22, 2019 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 Jim DeTro. Motion carried with Aye's.

III. Chairman Report

Chairman Berndt, provided a written chair report. Attached.

Who is missing? Chairman Berndt recommended an additional federal agency representative, we have Forest Service but we don't have a Dept. of Interior representative. Erik Walker has indicated that he could probably represent interior. Additionally another possibility would be from a non-governmental entity such as Fire Adapted Communities. George Geissler said we need to represent all groups and active members. Committee members may need to "time out" and be replaced. It is getting critical to have voices at the table. Make sure we get a diverse representation across both WFAC and FHAC. If you have names of candidates please submit them.

Reese – Forest Service may not be able to cover BLM

Chuck – Nationally DOI has an office of Wildland Fire.

Gary – National Parks

Tenure and attendance – Chairman Berndt also recommends implementing into the Charter an annual membership review to verify continued commitment.

IV. DNR/WSP Update

- a. Bill Slosson from the State Fire Marshal's Office reported fire in March in N Maple, Chief Lafave's district. He had 7 or 8 fires. He reported unique fire behavior this spring. He also reported that both deputy field positions are vacant. It is hard to get people through the background clearances.
- b. Chuck Turley discussed that he and Julie are interviewing for vacant positions in both Wildfire and Forest Health Divisions. Training is going on now, there are three academies, and National Guard will be attending the scheduled academies this year. There were unusual March fires – weather stations started at 70-80 humidity in the morning and by afternoon the humidity was at single digits. There were 60 total fires and 59 were on the west side. All helicopter pilots are on and trained, Contracted "Fire bosses" tankers will start first of June. There has been a new "belly tank" installed for safer urban operations on one of the helicopters now but it still works with a bucket. The helicopters previously stationed in Ellensburg will be moved to the airport in Yakima due to wind limit constraints for takeoff.
- c. George Geissler discussed how Chuck and Julie have had to fill in at all of the jobs at the moment. It is motivation to get vacant positions filled. Legislation has been busy. Federal Cooperators agreement is being discussed. Briefing the Commissioner on wildfire season. There are changes that have been made to the organization that are working well. There are FHAC sub-committees that I encourage participation from WFAC on. (J.D. Marshall would be interested).
- d. Loren Torgerson, Wildfire Policy advisor gave an update on legislature. Operating and Capital budget are still being negotiated. Senate budget does a good job of funding some of our asks, like 7 new positions to do community outreach. The following bills were discussed.. 1137 – National Guard pay - 1188 – Rangeland fire protection – not active 5305 – Electric utility – passed with a lot of support, task force final report due to legislature the end of the year. (Gary will send out). 1782 – Public meeting/Advisory groups – not active. 1894 – Temp

duties around unprotected grounds (WFAC affected) – dead. 1940 – Response resources within 48 hours – dead. 1941 – Required DNR, WSU to look at wildfire in 2015 and what the true cost to communities had been – dead. HB 1958 – Pre-mob aviation assistance – not active. SSB 5010 – Protected land fire levies, no paid fire district protection but still receive assistance, if wholly within a fire district, they may annex - . HB 1784 and SB5279 were amended together. HB 1784 – Requiring a significant fire break to be developed on state lands across the state. Passed. FH strategy how will it affect support. SB5279 – Burning in urban growth as a tool to reduce threat of wildfire – supporting. SB 5996 – Insurance bill, surcharge on P&C companies doing business in the state to fund various aspects of the fire protection program (in this bill suppression is paid for) – Rules committee.

V. Old Business

- a. Report on implementation of the Wildfire Strategic Plan in 2019 and beyond. Challenge is with the budget, there is still a few days away from finding out the budget. Loren has a start on it. May change priorities depending on the budget. This topic will be carried forward
- b. HB2561 – requires committee to make a report on three topics, prevention, response and suppression - unprotected lands, develop a plan for protection of LEP communities. Status report due last December with final report due this November. A project employee will be hired as a report writer to partner with WFAC to finalize a report to the Commissioner by October 2019. Sub-committees or full committees will need to be actively involved to get that accomplished. This will also involve a focused outreach and stakeholder input. WFAC is to develop the recommendations by October. The report will be submitted to Commissioner of Public Lands.

VI. New Business

- a. Andrew Spaeth – Consultant/Facilitator for Forest Health Advisory Committee discussed the five strategic goals that were devised (handout). There were 33 partner organizations and dozens of individuals that worked on this. There was so much diversity that it was a difficult task. OSU did paper that said any given watershed in eastern Washington needs 30% acreage treated, at the moment about 15% is being treated, Not keeping pace with existing needs. To reduce risk we need an All hands All lands approach. We need a pace and scale that will be meaningful. Collaborative grants – Overall investment needed \$1.8 million, it's a small piece of the cost. Nine forest collaborative that offered to support. Effective partnerships to help bring it up in priority and be better able to manage wildfires. Without grant program and DNR support these projects probably wouldn't happen or at least not as fast. **There needs to be a cross pollination with FHAC and WFAC.** Forest Health work plan 2019-2020 – engage the members, six overarching topics to focus on. Three sub-committees, Community engagement, collaborative, and monitoring. How do we reach non-industrial private landowners to get treatments done on their property if they want it? We need a liaison between the two groups? Develop future appropriations requests.

- b. How to better implement the strategic plan (handout) – Direct feedback from people on the ground. Apply across all regions. Red in progress or partially in progress.

VII. Final Q&A – Committee roundtable

- a. Tony C. – Insurance emerging issues
- b. Reese L. – All lands grant. Cascadia PF spring training TREX in Cle Elum. Washington PF Council – 5 year strategic plan (working on). Send out publication.
- c. Chuck T. – Feds entering into agreement with local fire districts, there is one element that is not appropriate – single resource that falls on DNR (won't happen this year, maybe next year).
- d. Russ P-F. – Sub-committee meet face to face after our next meeting to work on HB2561?
- e. Jim D. – Having wolf issues. Liked what he saw last year at Omak and hopes to see the same model this year.
- f. Lee H. – Question about fire fighters utilizing exterior “cages” during suppression. Per Bill Slosson, there has been a change in the law. Cannot strap fire fighters to a truck – high risk.
- g. Jim Passage – He and his wife attended a forest collaborative session in Hood River Oregon. . (Gary will send out the notes from this).History of fire in Washington in 1700 between Rainier and Baker. Fire everywhere until about 100 years ago. A lot of education needs to happen. The issue is funding and no plan. It's a public relations problem.

VIII. Adjournment and Next Meeting

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 1:05 p.m.

At the time of adjournment the decision was to where to hold the May 22, 2019 meeting. Suncadia was first choice. Gary will let the committee know.

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