Implementing
Wildland Fire Advisory Committee Recommendations

HONORING THE WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE & THEIR EXPERTISE

In 2015, the Washington state legislature acted to have the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) form an expert Wildland Fire Advisory Committee (WFAC). Their purpose was to ensure the agency, and wildfire-fighting agencies across Washington, are doing all they can to efficiently and safely protect resources and communities. These highly qualified volunteer members spent untold hours examining our state's wildfire management and response capabilities. The WFAC developed 57 recommendations.

DNR is working hard and many of those recommendation are underway. Some require a lengthier, interagency solution. Others, will take money – the funding requested in the 2017-2019 budget process – to see them through.

> "We're moving the dial on Wildfire. With proper funding, we can begin to go from defense, to offense."
>
> - Commissioner Franz

With more than 540 local fire districts across Washington, DNR is the right agency to help every corner of our state prepare for a coming era – even as our agency is successfully addressing its own challenges within a changing climate of growing risk.

Wildland Fire Advisory Committee Members

Gary Berndt, Wildland Fire Liaison and WFAC Chair

Jim DeTro, Eastern WA County Commissioner, Okanogan County

Joe Gardner, Western WA County Commissioner, Cowlitz County

J.D. Marshall, Industrial Timberland Representative, Hancock Forest Management

Lee Hemmer, Rangeland Representative, Hemmer Ranches

Chuck Duffy, State Fire Marshal

Randy Johnson, Eastern WA Fire Chief, Spokane County Fire District 4

Dave LaFave, Western WA Fire Chief, Cowlitz 2 Fire and Rescue

Dave Johnson, State Fire Commissioner Representative, East Jefferson Fire Rescue

Rodney Smoldon, Federal Representative, USFS Colville National Forest

Cody Desautel, Tribal Representative, The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Tom Bugert, Environmental Representative, The Nature Conservancy of Washington

Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt, Trust Beneficiary Representative, School Trust Lands Advisory Task Force & WA State School Directors Association

Tony Craven, Washington Family Forests Association, Suncadia Resort

THESE CRITICAL TASKS REMAIN...

WILDLAND FIRE TRAINING

Local fire districts represent some of DNR's strongest partners in wildland fire suppression. They're often the first to respond to an incident, and in many cases depend on volunteers for that response. These firefighters need to have appropriate, high-quality training – from basic wildland firefighter to advanced qualifications.

With 2017-2019 budget funding, DNR Wildfire will:

- Remove barriers that prevent local fire district volunteers, and paid staff, from participating in wildland fire training
- Fully implement national training standards across DNR by fire season 2018
- Implement interagency peer review committees to evaluate qualifications of DNR and local fire district personnel before they're promoted to more complex or leadership positions, to improve training and safety
- Give local leaders and stakeholders across Washington opportunities to learn about wildland fire suppression strategies and tactics
- Continue Interagency Wildfire Training Academies, providing introductory and advanced courses, and broadening participation to allow attendance from all partner agencies
- Provide hardship-based training scholarships for local fire district volunteer, or career, firefighters

LOCAL SUPPORT

Local fire districts are often the first agency able to respond to wildfires. Success by local districts needs to be maintained and increased across the state.

With 2017-2019 budget funding, DNR Wildfire will:

- Continue State Fire District Preparedness Grants for tools, equipment, protective gear, training materials and specialized training
- Reinforce the number of staff available in each region who help local fire districts access federal and state pass-through funds and equipment
- Expand proficiency on the technical programming of radio frequencies

THESE CRITICAL TASKS REMAIN...

INITIAL ATTACK

Aggressive response – the capacity to attack new fires while still small – is a top priority. We can also improve our use of new GIS and information technologies to learn and prepare – if we have the resources to turn data into information.

With 2017-2019 budget funding, DNR Wildfire will:

- Add engines in high-risk areas and replace old equipment sooner
- Retain experienced crew supervisors and add firefighters (so all engines have a full, four-person crew)
- Build the helicopter pilot candidate pool and proficiency through long-line training, training specific to DNR helicopters and mid-season proficiency tests
- Use science and technology to predict weather-driven risk and position resources accordingly

FOREST HEALTH

Where do you start when your state has roughly 2.7 million acres of forest with deteriorating health conditions? You start by fully understanding the magnitude of the problem and then setting forrth a strategy to change the trajectory from a situation that's getting worse, to a situation that's getting better.

With 2017-2019 budget funding, DNR Wildfire will:

- Update forest conditions maps for all Washington forestlands, for the first time since 2012, to better prioritize treatments – particularly given the dramatic changes following the 2014 and 2015 fire seasons
- Increase the availability of competitive grants for collaborative, large-scale forest treatments across 32,000 acres of multi-jurisdictional forest known to be at high-risk
- Conduct prescribed burns across 1,000 acres of forest in need of treatment, while incorporating training exercises designed to expand upon the limited number of people within our state who are currently qualified to do this work

WE'RE MOVING THE DIAL ON WILDFIRE

DNR Wildfire has made significant, recent achievements per Wildland Fire Advisory Committee's recommendations, such as:

- Supported local fire districts by assisting 126 with safety gear, 101 with equipment, four with fire engines and training more than 600 interagency wildland firefighters
- Expedited access to assistance from local heavy equipment providers by hosting annual equipment operator (blue card) wildfire trainings in every region; combining processes for simplified eligibility to work on both state and federal fires; and getting pre-season, third-party reviews of equipment, documents and certifications, so equipment and operators are ready to respond during fire season
- Improved radio communications by sharing frequency changes early, helping local fire districts to identify and purchase adequate radios, and creating agreements to let DNR share radios with local fire district crews

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