

WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

January 25, 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 – depart at 11:20
Cody Desautel – Tribal Nations Representative
Dave Johnson – Fire Commissioner
Dave LaFave – Fire Chief (Westside) – arrived at 11:16
J.D Marshall – Industry Landowner (Timber) – by phone
Jim DeTro – County Commissioner (Eastside)
Lee Hemmer – Industry Landowner (Range)
Rodney Smoldon – Federal Fire Agency – by phone
Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt – State Land Trust Beneficiary
Tom Bugert – Statewide Environmental Representative – arrived at 10:28
Tony Craven – Small Forest Landowner – by phone

Committee Members Absent:

Joe Gardner – County Commissioner (Westside)

Guests/Other Attendees:

Bob Johnson, Wildfire Division Manager
Gerry Day, Strategic Advisory, Wildfire Division
Tami Kellogg, Executive Assistant to Deputy Supervisor Wildfire
Commissioner Franz
Dave Warren, Legislative Director
Mary Verner, 20 Year Forest Health Strategic Plan
Loren Torgerson, Wildfire Policy Advisor

I. Opening, Roll Call

The meeting of the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on January 25, 2017 in Olympia, WA. Roll was taken, 8 members were present and 1 member was excused. Due to travel constraints, 3 members participated in the meeting by phone, constituting a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 30, 2017 council meeting were presented in draft and reviewed. Motion to approve draft minutes made by Committee member Johnson, seconded by Committee member Duffy. Motion carried with 11 Aye's.

III. Old Business

- a. **Forest Health Resiliency Sub-group Update** – Cody Desautel/Tom Bugert
Mr. Desautel shared how the conversations have centered on management of the 20-year Forest Health Strategic plan, working towards establishing deliverables, as well as working on an integrated management plan. He mentioned there have

been discussions on breaking down the deliverables in to smaller tasks instead of addressing all the targets at once. He made note on the age of loggers, noticing the age of loggers is typically over age 50. They are exploring ways to bring in younger loggers. It was noted that the County Commissioner forum of Okanogan, Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille known as QUADCO has been renamed Northeast WA Counties (NEWC). Commissioner DeTro requested information on the Forest and Community Roundtable, Chairman Berndt will provide his information. Mr. Craven and Mr. Desautel discussed the importance of developing a forest inventory, such as species and the level of stocking. Mr. Craven believes that the thought Wenatchee National Forest may conduct an inventory this year.

- b. **DNR 20-year Forest Health Strategic Plan Update** – Mary Verner, Mary provided update on her assignment and when she implemented the project that was directed by legislative proviso. Ms. Verner stated the committee decided early the purpose of steering committee will be to accelerate the pace and scale of plans and treatments. Based on meetings with USFS, Colville and others, all agree treatment should be on the landscape level. She shared the four subgroups are making great progress, each subgroup has meet at least 2 times. Ms. Verner stated the subgroup tasks: articulate vision, prioritize treatments, measure success, and economic analysis. They are working to ensure better communications between the groups to coordinate efforts.

Mr. Bugert stated the roundtable was established to avoid having several interested groups bring multiple uncoordinated bills to the legislature. The roundtable decided to create a coalition with one voice. Mr. Burger shared the legislative platform handout for 2017. He stated some of the topics come from the recommendations of the advisory committee. His intent is to use the work of the Forest Health Steering Committee (FHSC) in 2017 as a blueprint for future work after the 2017 session. Chair Berndt stated WFAC will stay focused on fire resiliency and communities at risk. He asked if the steering committee completed the criteria for priority. Ms. Verner stated it has not been completed and they would like the WFAC to provide input on criteria and that the FHSC will be more deliberate in their process to prioritize treatment areas: 1) Wildfire hazard; 2) Values at risk; communities, infrastructures, habitats, timber, then we will be at project level.

Chief Duffy noted the WUI Code, which is the next step beyond Firewise, should be considered a valuable tool if communities are willing to support it. A discussion followed surrounding the WUI issue; ingress and egress, what the risks and expectations are when fire hits, and taking into consideration, when rebuilding communities, if they are rebuilding with WUI in mind or setting the community up for another catastrophe.

- c. **Issue 19: WA Fire Resource Mobilization Plan Pre-Positioning** – from Chair Berndt, & Chief LaFave, and Chief Duffy. Chief Duffy provided an overview of suggested changes to the issue statement. Discussion followed on cost, process

and coordination between agencies, both state and federal level, and on the use of aviation assets and the location of firefighting resources, noting a more central location could potentially cut response time in half for fires on the eastside. There was no formal recommendation, but with a hearing scheduled in the near future, a poll of the committee agreed that the concept should be pursued.

- IV. **Commissioner Franz** – Commissioner Franz thanked the committee for their work on wildland fire issues and shared her approach on how she operates and her goal to be one of the strongest outward facing fire agencies. She stated her top priorities are wild fire management and forest health and looks forward to having a 20-year plan for both issues. She also shared her goal on rural economic health by partnering with rural communities to diversify economic growth, climate change adaptation, and renewable energy. **She'd like to task the committee with 20-year wildfire management plan.**

Commissioner Franz shared the updated organizational structure for the department. Discussion followed on whether or not to bring additional members to the table for this discussion. The committee could focus less on recommendations and assist in developing the Wildfire Management Plan. The committee should be proactive, and bring in specialists as needed versus adding additional permanent members to the committee.

Chair Berndt noted the TriData and 2020 Wildfire Plan Phase 1 reports were sent out to committee members on 1/24 and Mr. Day mentioned work coming up to update them at the conceptual level. He asked the committee to review and provide personal feedback and that received from constituents on the vision and context, adding the intent is to add on to what is still current and feasible and update details that are outdated. Discussion followed surrounding developing budget recommendations and climate change.

A There is a request from WA State Fire Fighter Council to have a representative on committee. Mr. Day stated a charter for the committee should be established stating roles, their constituency, rules of engagement, and responsibilities for members. He suggested the committee should invite subject matter experts to provide input on a topic or issue and all comments should be routed through the Chair. A discussion followed on involvement, strategy and next steps.

V. **Chairman Report**

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

VI. **DNR Update**

- a. **Wildfire Division Update: What to Look Forward to in 2017 – Bob Johnson**
Mr. Johnson discussed refining the biennium request for additional funding and he stated that the previous request had been reduced from the original \$28Million to \$13 Million by the new Commissioner, noting that the previous request was not accepted in the Governor's budget. The department is going back

to the Governor with a reduced and scaled back budget request Mr. Johnson shared the budget handout and reviewed the budget request. Adding this handout shows what needs to be done, what we can afford, and what is needed to complete mission critical work.

Chief LaFave shared the DNR needs to think outside the box of what has traditionally been done and to consider centralizing resources, and staying until the job is done, not just 14 days.

VII. New Business

- a. 2017 Work Plan – focus on wildland fire management plan, draft charter, challenges looking out on horizon.

VIII. Final Q&A

Lee Hemmer; Conservation Reserve Program safe acres' law may be amended in the farm bill. Board to recognize prescribed burning as a tool. Discussion followed.

IX. Adjournment and Next Meeting

By consensus, the committee decided to schedule the next general meeting at 10 am, on February 22, 2017, in Olympia. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 1:15 p.m.

Draft minutes submitted by Tami Kellogg, approved by Chairman Gary Berndt.
Formal action to be taken to approve the minutes at the February 22, 2017 meeting.