



# Wildland Fire Advisory Committee

Meeting minutes November 17, 2022

Meeting Venue: Zoom

## I. Attendance

- a. Quorum met see attached for meeting attendance.

## II. Call to Order

- a. Committee chair Allen Lebovitz called meeting to order 1:03 pm November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

## III. Meeting Minutes Approval & Previous Business

- a. Committee chair Allen Lebovitz entertains motion to review and approve minutes from September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Carlene Anders motions to approve minutes, Lee Hemmer seconds. All members vote yeah and there are no abstains.
- b. No outstanding business discussed.

## IV. Agency Updates

- a. **State Mobilization Update** – Melissa Gannie, Assistant State Fire Marshall. Bill Slosson presented as alternate. Had slow start to the season, still have ongoing fires keeping the season going. We have asked for a change to our operating statute from the legislature to make training to other organizations easier. We are asking for an increase in funding to increase staffing to meet current demand. We have asked for \$20 million budget increase for the disaster response account.
- b. **Federal Update** – Kari Grover-Wier, District Ranger, Acting Chief of Staff, USFS, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. Have been moving into AAR and prescribed fire mode. Will be working on late season transition. Have a short season for broadcast burning and are moving into pile burning. Central WA initiative, one of the ten landscapes across the west, implementing shelf stock for landscape restoration and fuels reduction through collaboration and NEPA. Planning for the next 8 years, working closely with Forest Resiliency group at DNR. Receiving input on our high risk fire sheds. Looking at a fire shed by fire shed approach, what is the most important work for these lands. Sustainable NW is helping us facilitate. For Federal FY 23 hoping to get \$30 million for the Central WA initiative.
- c. **Fire Service Update** – Leonard Johnson, Fire Chief Thurston Co. Fire District 9. N/A  
  
Cody Rohrbach, Fire Chief Spokane Co. Fire District 3. N/A
- d. **Wildland Fire Management Division** – Russ Lane, Wildland Fire Management Division Manager. Management team has been traveling to the regions, been through 5 out of 6 region AARs, though fire season has continued to linger. Fighting fire in Pacific County, as well as fires further north. Have 2 helicopters, 3 camps crews, and 6 engines assisting the operation. Federal infrastructure law has created a lot of activity, we went through CWDG process, requested 25% of the money available nationwide for 47



projects. New round of grant applications about to begin to get net wave of funding out to fire districts. Received additional funding for state fire and volunteer fire assistance, working on putting those packages together. Recruiting two positions in our operations section. Camera RFP solicitation ends this week for the remote viewing sites, have multiple solicitations to go through, confident to find vendor for our first 20 sites. Going back to in person fire academy, host them at the north bend fire training academy on a trial, primary focus on DNR seasonal employees but open to non-DNR personnel. Work continues on getting the two new aircraft operational, expect final delivery in May. Hiring heavy equipment operators for our new equipment.

- e. **WA State Forester Update** – George Geissler, Deputy Supervisor, Wildland Fire Management Division and State Forester. N/A

#### **V. Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment**

- a. Anna Barros, Wildfire Scientist with Forest Resilience at DNR. First assessment was released in 2018, DNR currently working on 2023 update. We have new analytics to use for modeling fire risk. Criteria has been changed and more added to adjust the priorities from the 2018 QWRA.
- b. Questions:
  - Q: What are the sizes of fire sheds? A: The ones we are mapping are smaller than the federal lands, as ours is focused on state owned lands but we are looking at incorporating the larger federal fire sheds as part of the planning process.
  - Q: Is there any analysis of how the 2018 model performed? A: No, the models are not comparable. Analysis could be done to see how accurate the predictions were but has not been completed at this time.
  - Q: With CRP being renewed, is that and restricted grazing going to be factored into the plan? A: Yes, they are working on including the rangelands in the plan.
- c. Presentation Attached

#### **VI. Utility Wildland Fire Prevention Advisory Committee Update**

- a. Loren Torgerson, Wildland Fire Management Policy Advisor at DNR. Committee was established by the legislature in 2021. It took time to get members to commit to joining the committee, but were able to get enough members to stand the committee up earlier this year. Had our first in person meeting November 16<sup>th</sup>. The September meeting's goal was to close out and finalize the previous task force business, e.g. vegetation management model agreement. Working on investigations protocol for fire investigations and utilities. We have started to create a work plan for the committee to address future issues, e.g. best management practices on rights of way, refining based on guidance from CPL on priorities.

#### **VII. Wildfire Response, Forest Restoration, and Community Resilience Account (SHB 1168) WFAC/FHAC Joint Work Group Update**

- a. Loren Torgerson, Wildland Fire Management Policy Advisor at DNR. We had our first meeting this week reviewing the pass through programs. Jen Watkins presented on building forest partnerships and Andy Tate on service forestry and financial assistance.



Upcoming meeting on November 30<sup>th</sup> will have the following programs presented: all-lands direct investment, prescribed fire implementation, post-fire recovery, operational grants to fire districts, fire district assistance program, and fire district assistance surplus engine. December will have community micro grants, wildfire preparedness community response, equity and inclusion grants, capacity and leadership building. Jan 5<sup>th</sup> will be an in person meeting to pull everything together.

#### **VIII. Chairman's Updates**

- a. Discussed future in person meetings, committee members prefer keeping it mostly remote with in person meetings during the legislative session and maybe once in the summer in central Washington. Look to have an in person meeting in January to coincide with the AJW meetings.

#### **IX. Roundtable, Public Comment, Future Topics**

- a. Annie Schmidt – the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission is accepting public recommendations. The site has the different work groups that recommendations can be sent to for consideration. The commission is focused on congressional action. Communities and landscape will be open till mid-December for comment.
- b. Loren Torgerson – Finalizing report to the legislature on HB 1168, after December 1<sup>st</sup> that report will be available to read.
- c. Tony Craven – Seeing insurance companies using our risk assessment products inappropriately to approve or deny coverage to homes.

#### **X. Adjourn**

- a. Meeting is adjourned at 3:46pm

#### **XI. Appendices**

- a. Attendance
- b. QWRA presentation

Draft minutes submitted by Bryan Perrenod, approved by Chairman Allen Lebovitz. Formal action to be taken to approve the minutes at the next general meeting.