

**WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

February 18, 2021

Zoom Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Allen Lebovitz – Wildland Fire Liaison, Chair
Tony Craven – Small Forest Landowner
Cody Desautel – Tribal Nations Representative
Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt – State Land Trust Beneficiary
J.D. Marshall – Industry Landowner (Timber)
Melissa Gannie – Assistant Fire Marshal
KC Whitehouse - Washington State Council of Fire Fighters
Reese Lolley – Statewide Environmental Representative
Erick Walker – USFS Deputy Forest Supervisor
Randy Johnson – Fire Chief (Eastside)
Lee Hemmer – Industry Landowner (Range)

Committee Members Absent:

Vacant – Cowlitz County Commissioner
Dave LaFave – Fire Chief (Westside)
Jim DeTro – County Commissioner (Eastside)
Vacant – Fire District Commissioner

Guests/Other Attendees:

George Geissler – State Forester & Deputy Supervisor for Wildfire & Forest Health
Loren Torgerson – Wildfire Policy Advisor
Angie Lane – Assistant Division Manager for Wildfire, Plans and Information
Kristine Reeves – DNR Legislative Director
Shelly Goodwin – WFAC Coordinator
Mark Teske – WA State Department of Fish & Wildlife
Mark Doumit
Jim Cahill
Marc Daudon
Darcy Batura

I. Opening, Roll Call

The meeting of the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee was called to order at 1:02 p.m. on February 18, by Zoom. Roll was taken, 11 members were present by Zoom and 4 members were excused, constituting a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 21, 2021 council meeting were presented in draft and reviewed. Motion to approve draft minutes made by Committee member Cody

Desautel, seconded by Committee member Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt. Motion carried unanimously.

III. Chairman's Report

Chairman Lebovitz highlights from report. Received an email of resignation from Committee member Joe Gardner. Also looking for a replacement for Chief LaFave. Also need to reach out the fire commissioners to get a recommendation to replace Dave Johnson. Conversation for next meeting on prescribed fire, the use of managed fire and HB 1784 project. Some information in chat comments below - Report attached

IV. Agency Updates

- a. George Geissler, State Forester & Deputy Supervisor for Wildfire & Forest Health – Wildfire Ready Neighbors program is being rolled out. A project very near and dear to the Commissioner. Allen will be concentrating on this as a liaison. Carrie is the project manager and has no history with DNR. Wildfire has gotten a lot of notice, especially as the new administration has come in to office. That is a positive for Washington State. Have already had a meeting with the Chief of Staff and Climate Advisor that was great. Expect to see a lot of actions and reactions on the federal level, especially with policy to accelerate forest management and fire suppression. Trying to make sure that everyone is focusing on the cohesive strategy. Wildfire caucus in both the house and the senate, they are both bipartisan caucuses which are being formed. That is going to bring additional focus at the congressional level for what we are doing.
- b. Angie Lane, Assistant Division Manager for Wildfire, Plans and Information – Had our hiring for fire fighters, the announcements have been out for a couple of months. Assisting federal and state partners with mobilization and resources with COVID vaccine planning. GEO board just met and approved the rosters for the type 2 teams and type 1 teams. Regional and divisional staff will be embarking on a winter meeting, will be working on a lot of action items that will be part of the after action review that we conducted last fall. Finalizing a needs analysis that we put together for training purposes.
- c. Melissa Gannie, Assistant Fire Marshal – Report attached
- d. Erick Walker, USFS Deputy Forest Supervisor – Report attached

V. New Business

- a. **Legislative Update** – Kristine Reeves, DNR Legislative Director
HB 1168 – wildfire/forest health bill – strong bipartisan vote – bummed up fiscal note by several million \$ - addition of null and void cause – on its way to rules – expect this bill will be around until end of session – stakeholder meeting every Friday – funding source needs to be discussed and decided on.
HB 1080 – not agency request bill – capital budget bill. HB 1423 – Smoke management civil enforcement – short end of this as it went to energy and

environment committee – as it came out 3 key changes were made – what is the scale of the penalties – no fiscal note attached. Passed out of committee and is sitting in rules. SB 5158 – Electric Utility Task Force - create committee - currently sitting in rules in senate. Capital budget bills – Forest resiliency – 25 million out of governor budget at 20 million. Broadband ask 2 came out at 1. Family forest fish 10 no gov funding. Richland 16 not covered in gov budget. Community forest – 2.4 out 1.9. Rivers and habitat open space 6.1 out 3.1. Silviculture not included in gov budget. Rmap 1.9 fully funded. Natural areas 5 out 4.9. Minor works 2.98 out 2.98. State forest lands replacement fully funded. Airway Heights 4.2 fully funded. Longview fire station fully funded

- b. **DNR Wildfire Proviso Phase 2 Update**– George Geissler – phase 1 took deep dive into wildfire division – phase 2 was a deep dive into dept. admin budget function. Brought in a vendor contractor to do analysis – Steller was the vendor – have gone through the process – got input from advisory committee (Cody, JD, and Reese). Just received final recommendations. Very thorough report. Highlights the work that was already on going. Was reaffirming in many places that we were on track. Recommendations: How we address fire suppression, administrative costs – work on this, Update policies, Increase capacity, aligning budget with performance measures, Use in the militia model. Next steps – still due to leg march 1 – where do we go from here? Report be put to use not collect dust on a shelf. WFAC help implement recommendations. Everyone will get a copy when finished. If a revenue source is set up and attached to the bill. Discussion on HB 1168. Small private landowner – language has taken us from “the explore” and asking for funding. Technical assistance on west side and – how do we provide a holistic – technical assistance to landowners should be one stop shop.
- c. **Electric Utility Task Force Report** – Loren Torgerson - part of a bill that passed in the 2019 regular session. Two years to work through it, COVID did get in the way some. Develop a model agreement and develop communication protocol – protocol for implementation – create rosters of certified fire investigators and third party utility personnel to help work through the cause of the fire and lessons learned.
 - i. Establish a model agreement – worked through the process – subcommittee worked on that (utility personnel and DNR uplands staff). Number of concerns from taskforces how effective and efficient it was with hazard trees. Concern about ability to. Wasn’t going to complete model agreement before the report was due.
 - ii. Communication protocol – important part of the taskforce work, establish ongoing communication between taskforce and DNR. Have the commissioner continue as an advisory committee. Real time communication protocols, utilities and DNR speaking on the same page about risks. Establishing forums – DNR/Utility one on one forums as well.

- iii. Investigation protocol – in depth deep dive on how DNR investigates fire. DNR transparency. Direct communications when we do start an incident with utilities. How do we collect and store evidence – utilities have an opportunity to see what caused the incident.
- iv. Rosters – a fairly lengthy process to get to the understanding of what they would be used for. Just another resource to tap into. Laid out experience and qualifications would be. How we would go about sharing t, probably on a public website.
- v. SB 5158 – advisory committee that would live beyond the taskforce. Recommendations would be tasked to the advisory committee. Still draft leg, hasn't been through the legislature. Annual basis coming to WFAC and providing a report. Bill highlights implementing the recommendations. Wildfire prevention and risk mitigation.

VI. Comments and Chat

- a. Melissa suggested that Allen reach out to Roger Ferris for recommendations on new fire commissioner replacement. Also requested that the rangeland list be shared.
- b. Melissa mentioned maybe contact the Insurance Commissioner's office to get their input on what they are doing to assist local property owners. Also to present for The Community Risk Reduction Workgroup re – giving resources developed for the local fire agencies. Next meeting March 10
- c. Tony asked what has the Insurance Commissioner's office done to help with getting insurance in fire areas
- d. Reese said Wildfire Ready Neighbors and Fire Adapted Communities are very complimentary efforts that can support Washington resilient communities' efforts in Washington.
- e. Wildfire Ready Neighbors Project Manager for DNR is Carrie Ulvestad, Carrie.Ulvestad@dnr.wa.gov
- f. The webinar recordings, resourced shared by the panelists, and answers to the questions we were not able to answer during the webinar are all posted on the Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning website, under the "Fire in the Shrub Steppe Webinar Series" header and organized by sessions. <http://www.fireadaptedwashington.org/learn/> we have heard from you that there is interest in continuing to learn about wildland and prescribed fire in the shrub-steppe, as well as other topics not specifically covered in this series. In order to prioritize our learning opportunities for the upcoming year, we would appreciate your ideas and feedback via this survey.. <http://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeqhPlcUzcmOEPfnrWG-hPP-6LHgUTxzV6uQUAWhlVBqS3Xw/viewform>
- g. Cody requested the DNR Covid-19 mitigation protocol be emailed so he can share with his constituent group
- h. NRCS – Oregon has an agreement with NRCS – Is there a possibility moving forward to work with Chad Davis on a discussion on an agreement that might

help the support the forestry community assistance, technical assistance components. George said he has already started talking with NRCS.

VII. Committee roundtable – Public Comment

- a. Cody – America burning Wooey
- b. Next meeting zero based budget exercise – phase 2
- c. Reese – Conservancy is actively supporting 1168
- d. Tony – Insurance companies are making up rules that have nothing to do with fire.
- e. Russ – HJR 4205 we are watching also – redefine trust mandates from specific trust of schools and universities to make public
- f. Mark Teske – 1168 how does that impact what we experienced last summer – set up an account that is appropriated account that would apply to the wildfire situation. Difficult to plan in the time frames that we are looking at. Doesn't pay for suppression. Source of funding for those long term investments.

VIII. Adjournment and Next Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm. The next general meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2021 from 1 – 4 pm, by Zoom.

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