

CHARTER

WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

I. BACKGROUND

A long-term trend of hotter and drier conditions resulted in our state's highest recorded wildland fire damage in 2014. Concerned about the increasing risk and cost of wildland fires, the 2015 Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2093 establishing the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee. Soon after ESHB 2093 was passed, the 2015 fire season set a new record for damage, reemphasizing the urgency of the committee's work. The committee was established to generally advise the Commissioner of Public Lands on all matters related to wildland firefighting in Washington. The Wildland Fire Advisory Committee through collaborative leadership, with input from constituent groups and cooperating agencies, strives to facilitate improvements to the quality, responsiveness, and relevance of the wildland fire program in the state.

II. NAME

The Wildland Fire Advisory Committee hereinafter referred to as WFAC.

III. AUTHORITY

Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2093 (now RCW 76.04.179) created a statewide Wildland Fire Advisory Committee to be chaired by a Wildland Fire Liaison.

WFAC is chartered under The Commissioner of Public Lands, Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

IV. MISSION

The mission of WFAC is to advise the Commissioner of Public Lands on all matters related to wildland fire management and firefighting in the state. It is imperative that consideration be given to creative and proactive opportunities for solutions through open communication and a seamless partnership to ensure long-term applicability. The WFAC will work to thoroughly understand the context and specifics of an issue and consider a wide range of alternatives when developing recommendations. The WFAC will maintain an appropriate awareness of activities that either influenced or are impacted by wildland fire activities (e.g. hazardous forest health conditions, rural community development, etc.)

V. ORGANIZATION

The WFAC is composed of a Wildland Fire Liaison, committee members representing key groups or constituent entities who are either cooperators, or are affected by actions of the department. In addition, the DNR will provide a departmental advisor and administrative support.

WFAC operates under the strategic direction of the Commissioner of Public Lands through the Liaison.

The WFAC may create Project Task Groups as necessary in order to further explore, develop or address a specific issue or task. These Project Task Groups will sunset upon completion of the project.

VI. COMPOSITION

WFAC is composed of members representing specified groups or constituents defined in RCW 76.04.179(2), or as appointed by the Commissioner of Public Lands and serve at the pleasure of the Commissioner of Public Lands. The following positions comprise the WFAC:

A. WFAC Liaison, Administrative Chair

B. WFAC Committee Members; all committee members serve within the authorities of their represented agency. Voting members include:

- Two County Commissioners, one from East of the crest of the Cascades and one from the west of the Cascade crest;
- Two owners of industrial land, one an owner of timberland and the other an owner of rangeland;
- Two Fire Chiefs, one from Eastern Washington and the other from Western Washington;
- One Fire Commissioner whose authority is pursuant to chapter 52.14 RCW;
- One representative of a federal wildland firefighting agency;
- One representative of a tribal nation;
- One representative of a statewide environmental organization;
- One representative of a state land trust beneficiary;
- One small forest landowner; and
- The State Fire Marshal

C. Strategic Partners

- The Commissioner may appoint additional members to the WFAC when the Commissioner determines it would help in discharging the WFAC's duties.

- The committee may utilize additional subject matter expertise when it is appropriate to have information on a specific topic.

The following are not members of the WFAC, and as such, are non-voting participants, and will provide administrative, technical and other support to the committee:

- A. Deputy Supervisor for Wildfire - DNR Advisor – Designated by and on behalf of the CPL provides:
 - Executive level advice, counsel, and support to the WFAC Liaison;
 - Oversight and guidance to the WFAC Liaison to ensure the committee is addressing issues within the scope of the charter;
 - Recommends the annual program of work to the CPL; and
- B. Wildfire Division Manager - DNR Wildfire Program Liaison
 - Provides the WFAC with information regarding wildfire program activities, initiatives, budget plans;
 - Brings forward issues and questions for the committee to address or consider;
 - Provide subject matter expertise on topics to assist the committee; and
- C. WFAC Administrative Assistant
 - Provides administrative support to WFAC Liaison
 - Documents meeting notes
 - Maintains documents and WFAC schedule
- D. Strategic Partners (Ad Hoc, non-voting)

VII. WFAC RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. WFAC Liaison - Appointed by the Commissioner of Public Lands and reports directly to the Commissioner or the Supervisor, subject to available funding. RCW 43.30.111 sets forth the Liaison's duties:
 - Provides advice to the CPL on issues such as access to land during fire suppression activities, local fire suppression asset availability, environmental concerns, and generally represents the interests and concerns of landowners and general public during fire suppression activities of the Department of Natural Resources;
 - Provides leadership for the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee that develops recommendations on capital budget requests related to wildland firefighting, and strategies to enhance the safe and effective use of private and public wildland firefighting resources;
 - Attends meetings and outreach as directed by Commissioner; and
 - Serves as the WFAC Chair during committee meetings.

- B. WFAC Committee Members – Appointed by the Commissioner of Public Lands
- Solicit issues or agenda items from constituents they represent for inclusion in the group meeting agenda;
 - Attend and engage in all regularly scheduled meetings;
 - Provide copies of any briefing papers to the WFAC Liaison concerning issues one week in advance of a meetings;
 - Accept and complete work assigned by the WFAC Liaison; and
 - Report activities and dissemination information to constituents and agencies

VIII. MEETINGS AND GUIDELINES

Meetings/Conference Calls:

- A. The WFAC will meet at the call of the committee chair, but will typically meet monthly.
- B. WFAC is a committee composed of 14 members. A quorum for any vote requires a majority of the Committee to be present either in person or by phone.

Operating Guidelines:

- A. Under RCW 76.04.179, the WFAC serves in an advisory capacity to the Commissioner of Public Lands, and its advisory role is non-operational. WFAC will not set policy nor act as a political arm of DNR.
- B. The WFAC is not subject to the Open Public Meetings Act because the body acts in an advisory capacity to an agency head. Nevertheless, the FHAC will provide notice of its meetings, conduct its meetings in a public manner, and openly discuss its work. The Liaison/Chair will provide a minimum of 5 days' notice in advance of meetings, with information regarding meeting place, date, time, and an agenda.
- C. An agenda will be developed for each committee meeting.
- D. At a minimum, notes of committee meetings will record attendance, document approved decisions and work assignments (incl. the task being assigned, whom the action is assigned to, deliverable(s) and due dates, etc.).
- E. Meeting preparation may require outside reading or research prior to the meeting date. Work assignments will be set at each meeting.

- F. WFAC will work to make recommendations through consensus. Lacking consensus, committee decisions can be approved by a majority vote.
- G. Each WFAC member is selected for specific talents or credentials. Alternates may attend committee meetings. Alternates will not have voting rights or be counted for purposes of determining if a quorum is present.
- H. Efforts will be made to provide adequate phone or video conferencing as an alternative for travel to the meeting.
- I. If the attendance of a committee member is not possible, prior notification is appreciated.
- J. Committee members serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for travel expenses authorized under RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.
- K. The WFAC Chair will distribute recommendations to be formally acted on with the agenda of the next meeting.

IX. REPORTS:

- A. As required by the Commissioner

X. APPROVAL

This Charter is effective as of the date of approval by the Commissioner of Public Lands


Hilary S. Franz
Commissioner of Public Lands

August 28, 2017
Date

