

MINUTES OF THE WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
June 22, 2016
Suncadia Resort, Cle Elum Washington

In Attendance:

Gary Berndt, Wildland Fire Liaison, Chair

Committee Members Present:

Tony Craven- Small Forest Landowner
Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt - State Land Trust Beneficiary
Dave Leitch- Fire Chief (Eastside)
Dave Johnson - Fire Commissioner
J.D Marshall - Industry Landowner (Timber)
Tom Bugert - Statewide Environmental Representative (by phone)
Joe Gardner – County Commissioner (Westside)
Lee Hemmer - Industry Landowner (Range)
Jim DeTro - County Commissioner (Eastside)

Committee Members Absent:

Rodney Smoldon - Federal Fire Agency
Chuck Duffy - State Fire Marshal
Dave LaFave - Fire Chief (Westside)
Cody Desautel - Tribal Nations Representative

Guests/Other Attendees:

John Kaikkonen, DNR, Deputy Division Manager, Wildfire Division (by phone)
Lacey Vaughn, DNR, Wildfire Division Support Supervisor
Megan Fitzgerald-McGowan, DNR, Firewise Challenge Coordinator
Andrew Tate, DNR, Fire Prevention & Fuels Reductions Program Manager

I. Opening, Roll Call

The seventh meeting of the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee was called to order at 9:04 a.m. on June 22, 2016 in Cle Elum, WA. Roll was taken and four members were absent and excused. Due to travel constraints, one member participated in the meeting by phone.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the June 01, 2016 council meeting were presented in draft and reviewed. Motion to approve draft minutes made by Committee member Johnson, seconded by Committee member Pfeiffer-Hoyt. Motion carried with unanimous Aye's.

III. Old Business

a. Operations Expectations

Chairman Berndt shared in draft the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee Operations Expectations and Quorum for review at the next committee meeting. Committee members were asked to review the draft form and report back for a potential vote to adopt as written. Also on this draft was an adaption to approve a quorum for the majority vote.

b. DNR Wildfire Updates

John Kaikkonen, Washington DNR Deputy Division Manager updated the committee on the status of the three Wildfire Training refresher academies, one central academy that completed in May with an estimate of 410 inter-agency participants. A Westside and Eastside academy happening now, with a combine estimate of 837 inter-agency participants. John discussed the current conditions and level of preparedness that the agency is currently at and the expectations for the potential of change. DNR reports 190 fires to date for a burned acreage amount of 880 acres. Expecting warmer, dry weather leading into the 4th of July holiday. John commented on the additions of the contract strike-teams, ready to respond and the additions of the three fire bosses stationed in Omak, Deer Park, and Dallesport.

c. Workgroup Report- Forest Health

Committee member Bugert gave a recap of the work that his work group has been working on and the ideas they have attempted to put into terms acceptable for the magnitude of the Forest Health issues. The workgroup members spent time reviewing with the committee the ongoing efforts on how to best provide help with the limited amount available, and evaluating where they to make the most value of change.

d. Workgroup Report- Contracting

Chairmen Berndt reported on contracting issues related to heavy equipment, and provided the committee the draft recommendations revolving around this issue. Round-table discussion about the issue for ready response including local contractors during initial and extended attack. Discussion about the availability to work with local contracting on Federal fires and how to integrate hire-at-fire contractors and crossing Federal boundaries.

e. Workgroup Report- Employee Sharing

Chairman Berndt will contact this group following a meeting that committee member Pfeiffer-Hoyt attends. Report will be scheduled for July meeting.

f. Workgroup- Training/Certifications

Chairmen Berndt reviewed with the committee the final recommendations report to be given to the Commissioner of Public Lands. This includes the recommendation to adopt

the October 2015 version of PM 310-1, establish a peer review committee within each region that has interagency representation. This should improve response, communications, and coordination among all partnering agencies.

IV. New Business

a. Chairman Report

Chairman Berndt shared with the committee his chair report on the meetings he has attended since the last meeting of the committee. Meetings included attendance at the Kittitas County (Cle Elm) large fire simulation with a well-attended local and neighboring Fire Service personnel. A meeting with the “Quadco” County Fire Chiefs in Dayton, with conversation revolving around the grant applications and need for more equipment. On June 7th, Chairmen Berndt attended a session at Central Washington University to view a demonstration on a new technology for fire behavior. This also included talks about spread projections, and mapping that may lead to a training program at the University.

Chairmen Berndt attended the Steven’s County Chief’s Association meeting which was well attended by approximately 10 Chief Officers. DNR also provided an update on the Red Cards, staffing, grant applications, and Federal Excess equipment. Questions revolved around concerns of DNR changing frequencies that affect them, and that the notifications of change lacks organization.

Chairmen Berndt attended a Yakima County “pre-fire meeting” that was also attended by Committee member Leitch, several Fire Chiefs, and representatives from DNR, USFS, WDFW, and BLM. They discussed mutual aid, staffing by each agency, and a long discussion about “no-man’s land” in non-forested areas not within fire districts where fires have no agency providing protection. The question was raised “should there be any no man’s lands in Washington State”?

Chairmen Berndt as was provided by The Washington State Cattlemen’s Association a list of contacts for each county in Eastern Washington. As the list is compiled Chairmen Berndt will work with each member to determine if they would like to be that contact. A list will be provided upon completion to DNR regions, Olympia and dispatch centers.

On 6/11 Chairmen Berndt attended the Governor’s Listening Session, this was the 4th and final session this spring. Approximately 15 speakers spoke on issues from after fire impact, needs for better predictive capabilities, “severity” funding, delegation of resources and culture changes for the changing fire seasons.

b. Radio Frequency Issues- New

Chairmen Berndt shared with the committee a new draft proposal for consideration on radio frequencies when an agency alters or updates frequencies. Draft proposal discussion

revolved around how to establish solid communications during initial and extended attack, and will the radios be able to be utilized efficiently.

c. Communities at Risk Mapping, WA State DNR

Presentation of Risk Mapping, State and Federal GIS Mapping from DNR staff.

V. Adjournment and Next Meeting

By consensus, the committee decided to schedule the next general meeting at 9:00am, on July 27, 2016 at Suncadia. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 12:14 p.m.

Draft minutes submitted by Lacey Vaughn, approved by Gary Berndt.
Formal action to be taken to approve the minutes at the July 27th, 2016 meeting.