

**WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

*June 17, 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)
Bill Slosson – 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
Vacant – Fire Chief (Westside)
Jim DeTro – County Commissioner (Eastside)
Vacant – Fire District Commissioner

Guests/Other Attendees:

Shelly Goodwin – WFAC Coordinator
Mark Teske – WA State Department of Fish & Wildlife
Mark Doumit – WA Forest Protection Association
Chuck Turley – Wildfire Division Manager
Kasey Norton - Warehauser
Mary Cathrine McAleer – Warehauser
Jim Passage
Matt Castle – Deputy Fire Staff for Fuels

I. Opening, Roll Call

The meeting of the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee was called to order at 1:06 p.m. on June 17, by Zoom. Roll was taken, 8 members were present by Zoom and 3 members were excused, constituting a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the May 20, 2021 council meeting were presented in draft and reviewed. Motion to approve draft minutes made by Committee member Cody Desautel, seconded by Committee member Reese Lolley. Motion carried unanimously.

III. Chairman's Report – Report attached

Chairman Lebovitz had a written report - Report attached. Couple things not in the report. Discussions about tasking WFAC with work going forward and also getting an in depth update on how we propose to build 1168 out. The CPL would like to meet with us to talk about 1168 implementation and George was planning on providing us with more details and an update. Potentially on whether there is a tasking there to provide direct feedback on the implementation process. I would encourage you to give some thought to tasking needs. Upcoming meetings COVID protocol is in flux, don't know what the requirements will be. Possibility of going back to in person meetings. How do you feel about in person meetings? And meeting with the Commissioner in July in person?

IV. Agency Updates

- a. Chuck Turley, Wildfire Division Manager – Seeing more than average number of fires with more than average number of acres burned. We expect conditions are not going to change. Exclusive use contract. I will retire May of next year, it might be sooner. We plan to hire for my position now, the position has been posted.
- b. Bill Slosson, Assistant Fire Marshal had a written report - Report attached
- c. Erick Walker, USFS Deputy Forest Supervisor – Chief of Foresters Vicki Christenson will be retiring. We are working on finding a new Chief.

V. New Business

- a. **USFS Wyden Amendment and RX fire on private lands** - Erick Walker, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Okanogan-Wenatchee NF – PowerPoint attached.
- b. **Using UAS for RX fire** – Matt Castle, Deputy Fire Staff for Fuels, Okanogan-Wenatchee NF–PowerPoint attached.

VI. Questions, Comments and Chat

- a. JD – We are also developing our protocols. I don't know exactly what my rules will be. Couldn't commit for sure, would have to get special permission. I think going forward meeting should be hybrid with in person and video conference.
- b. Bill – Two things as 1168 implements. They will have 2 aircraft capable of moving people, I think you will be set up for some travel. Also 2 of the organizations I am in have developed a real smooth in person on a quarterly basis and remote the rest of the time that seems to meet the need for the face to face conversation.
- c. Allen – Meet centrally, Ellensburg or Wenatchee?
- d. Cody – Meeting in Ellensburg or Cle Elum was easier.

- e. Reese – I like the quarterly suggestion. Meeting in Cle Elum worked well and Olympia during session.
- f. Allen – I will push for meeting in person with Commissioner in July.
- g. Tony – Would it be helpful to push up a week earlier for July because of lightning season?
- h. Allen – One of the challenges is working with the Commissioners schedule.
- i. Allen – Challenge filling staff positions in the Forest Service, What are the percentages filled vs. not filled? Matt – We are at about 85% of permanent positions filled and our temps are down now too. Erick – Normally we are able to staff a couple more engines than we were able to staff this year. California is the bigger region that we have been hit with impacts.
- j. Allen – How is the Forest Service mitigating COVID impacts going forward? Erick – Agency side, we anticipate getting the re-entry plan from the department and the agency about mid-July. Right now we are still encouraging that people work from home when they can and come in to the field and office when they can and respond to emergencies as safely as possible. Matt – Fire line environment – We are still pretty much module 1 and I think that will carry on but with vaccinations and lack of requirement for masks certainly makes the environment better.
- k. Jim – Who should we contact about taking advantage of this Wyden Authority? Mike Brahouse is the primary contact.
- l. Kasey – The beehive project, what dates were you doing that? It would likely be a fall burn. Depending on the unit it may be a spring burn. We either burn in the spring or fall. I assume that burn is targeted for next year.
- m. Matt - When the program develops more on our DNR side there will be more opportunities. Allen – I encourage you to reach out to me when that happens.
- n. Erick - Drones are the future.
- o. Marc - Here's to prescribe fire via drone ignition.
- p. Reese - While the mid-west and SE are leading, California has over 27 Prescribed Burn Associations in the works, 13 formed... See: <https://calpba.org/> The Washington Prescribed Fire Council (<http://waprescribedfire.org/>) is working closely with supporting multiple nodes of private land owners and Fire Districts in Central WA (Cle Elum) and NE WA. Appreciate partnership with FS, DNR, WDFW, FS, NPS, USFWS....

VII. Committee roundtable – Public Comment

- a. Reese – Community Fire management work and Prescribed fire training exchange. In the NE they are still working with FD 8 out of Spokane and with Private Landowner Assistance developing a burn plan there. Moving forward with them for future training and fuel reduction there and with 4 other landowners a little bit farther north. Wrapped up the training exchange.
- b. Cody – Hope litigation doesn't hold up the Sap Wall project to long because we do have some cross boundary burning planned for that project area that would start on Reservation and go on up through Forest Service and probably could include some State. Anxious to try that and figure out the funding mechanism and how that would be managed from a smoke perspective.
- c. Tony – Note – 30 Mile Memorial in Roselyn on July 10th.

- d. KC – Fire briefing schedule and phone number to WFAC.
- e. Jim – There was a fire a couple weeks and the local fire department requested a DNR helicopter. DNR said they had to have eyes on the fire first. Finally got eyes on it and sent a helicopter, total time lapse was about 2 hour. Can there be some additional training so DNR has confidence that the people calling for a helicopter know what they are doing and what they are talking about.
- f. Allen – That has been the goal is to work with Fire District partners to give them that ability to call and manage aircraft without having DNR oversight.
- g. Mary Catherine – Emergency rule making on Smoke regulations and PPE. There is a stakeholder session about it tomorrow. What they are proposing is a lot more stringent than California or Oregon.

VIII. Adjournment and Next Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 3:28 pm. The next general meeting is scheduled for July 21, 2021 from 1 – 4 pm, at Putnam Centennial Center, 719 E. 3rd St., Cle Elum, WA 98922 and 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.