

# MINUTES OF THE WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

October 26, 2016  
Cle Elum Ranger Station  
Cle Elum, Washington

## **Committee Members Present:**

Gary Berndt – Wildland Fire Liaison, Chair  
Chuck Duffy – State Fire Marshal – arrived at 10:16  
Cody Desautel – Tribal Nations Representative – by phone  
Dave Johnson – Fire Commissioner  
Jim DeTro – County Commissioner (Eastside)  
Rodney Smoldon – Federal Fire Agency  
Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt – State Land Trust Beneficiary  
Tony Craven – Small Forest Landowner  
Tom Bugert – Statewide Environmental Representative – arrived by phone at 11:30

## **Committee Members Absent:**

Dave LaFave – Fire Chief (Westside)  
Dave Leitch – Fire Chief (Eastside)  
J.D Marshall – Industry Landowner (Timber)  
Joe Gardner – County Commissioner (Westside)  
Lee Hemmer – Industry Landowner (Range)

## **Guests/Other Attendees:**

Bob Johnson, DNR, Wildfire Division Manager – by phone  
Gerry Day, Wildfire Division – by phone  
Loren Torgerson, Acting Deputy Supervisor for Wildfire – by phone  
Tami Kellogg, DNR, Executive Assistant to Deputy Supervisor Wildfire  
Jason Callahan, WFPA  
Anthony Chavez, Weyerhaeuser

### **I. Opening, Roll Call**

The ninth meeting of the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee was called to order at 10:02 a.m. on October 26, 2016 in Cle Elum, WA. Roll was taken, 7 members were present and 5 members were excused. Due to travel constraints, 2 members participated in the meeting by phone, constituting a quorum.

### **II. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the September 28, 2016 council meeting were presented in draft and reviewed. Motion to approve draft minutes made by Committee member DeTro, seconded by Committee member Craven. Motion carried with 8 Aye's.

### **III. Old Business**

#### **a. Issue 18 Discussion/Finalize**

Chairman Berndt provided a briefing on Issue 18, Helicopter Support and called for discussion. Committee member Johnson asked about the condition of the vehicles scheduled to be replaced. Bob Johnson responded they are federal surplus vehicles retrofitted to meet DNR needs to support helicopters. They are a

smaller version of a fuel truck and are able to travel on rural roads. Bob Johnson provided the cost of a new vehicle that meets all safety requirements. Discussion followed surrounding cost, number of vehicles in the fleet and whether it is better to own or lease. Chairman Berndt called for a motion. Committee member Johnson moved to approve with requested information on existing vehicles. A discussion followed on regulations surrounding aviation fuel, transportation of fuel and regulations, funding and phased replacement plan. The motion was tabled until the November meeting, pending further information and additions to the recommendation.

Chairman Berndt briefed committee on the Rangeland Protection Issue and that he and Committee Member Hemmer will meet with an expert from the Bureau of Land Management in January 2017.

#### **IV. Chairman Report**

Chairman Berndt, provided an update for the committee on his activities over the past month and provided hard copies of his report. He introduced Jason Callahan from WFPA who has replaced Debra Munguia.

#### **V. DNR Update**

**a. 2016 Fire Season Wrap Up** – Bob Johnson provided an update on the 2016 fire season stating we had below average numbers with approximately 15,000 acres within DNR protection burned. Staff is gearing up for 2017 leg session and preparing for next fire season. Fire Marshal Duffy added that there were 17 fire mobilizations this year, noting the average is 6-8 mobes per year.

**b. Legislative House Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee (AGNR) Study Session Update** – Bob Johnson, Fire Marshal Duffy, Loren Torgerson; The group provided an update on the work sessions with AGNR Committee stating the purpose of the work sessions is to provide information to the committee on the fundamental difference between what the Fire Marshal's Office and DNR do. A discussion followed on repositioning, funding and communication and coordination between the Fire Marshal's Office, DNR and local Fire Districts.

**c. Wildfire Summit** – Bob Johnson, Chief Duffy, Loren Torgerson; a summary was provided on the summit with 45 attending. The main focus of discussion was repositioning, coordination of resources and funding. Another event will be scheduled.

#### **VI. New Business**

**a. Forest Resiliency Roundtable Report** – Tom Bugert arrived at 11:30 by phone and gave an update on the October 24, 2016 roundtable discussion. He stated that the goal of the roundtable is to build a united coalition for forest health and resiliency. He suggested this be one of the work groups for the 2017 strategy. Chair Berndt referred to the roundtable agenda for issues to be discussed and

stated the WFAC can participate in addressing this issues in an effort to find effective coordination with our partners. It was noted that most forest health/resiliency issues are on federal land and the challenge of how to spend state funds on federal land that will benefit the state. Discussion followed on details to gain success. Committee member Desautel asked about the role of the committee as it relates to fire issues.

- b. Conceptual Fire Program Vision for November Discussion** – Chair Berndt discussed goals for next year, such as providing input on the work of the DNR regarding recommendations sent forward to the Commissioner. There is a report due to the legislature regarding the recommendations of the committee. He noted that DNR has requested an extension of time beyond the October 31 due date until 12/31/16. He posed a request to the committee to provide feedback from constituents regarding results of actions by DNR to improve response to wildland fires, increased training opportunities for local fire districts and to enhance the safety and effective use and viability of private and public wildland firefighting resources. Chair Berndt will pass the information on to Gerry to include in the legislative report.
- c. 2017 Strategy and Work Plan Discussion** – Chair Berndt stated the need to take a broader look strategically and have conversation as we move forward. He noted the question on extending the WFAC past June 2017, the need to discuss with new administration and creating a fact sheet,

## **VII. Final Q&A**

Anthony Chavez, Weyerhaeuser; commented that there is value in continuing WFAC past June 2017;

Jason Callahan, WFPA; concurred with Anthony Chavez and shared he believes that information is what the legislature needs. He suggested including the benefits of continuing the WFAC in the legislative report.

Committee member Craven asked if there has been a response from JLARC on suppression funding. Chair Berndt replied that it is still in process of evaluation and more information was requested this week.

## **VIII. Adjournment and Next Meeting**

By consensus, the committee decided to schedule the next general meeting at 10 am, on November 30, 2016, at the Tumwater Fire Station. No meeting will be held in December. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 12: 33 p.m.

Draft minutes submitted by Tami Kellogg, approved by Chairman Gary Berndt.

Formal action to be taken to approve the minutes at the November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 meeting.