

WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 27, 2020
Natural Resources Building
CR-461
1111 Washington St SE
Olympia WA 98501

Committee Members Present:

Gary Berndt – Wildland Fire Liaison, Chair
Dave Johnson – Fire District Commissioner (Jefferson County) *Conference Call*
KC Whitehouse – Washington State Council of Fire Fighters
Tony Craven – Small Forest Landowner *Conference Call*
Cody Desautel – Tribal Nations Representative
Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt – State Land Trust Beneficiary *Conference Call*
Dave LaFave – Fire Chief (Westside) *Conference Call*
Melissa Gannie – Assistant Fire Marshal
Jim DeTro – County Commissioner (Eastside)
Erick Walker – USFS Deputy Forest Supervisor *Conference Call*

Committee Members Absent:

Joe Gardner – County Commissioner (Westside)
Lee Hemmer – Industry Landowner (Range)
Reese Lolley – Statewide Environmental Representative
Bill Slosson – Assistant Fire Marshal
J.D Marshall – Industry Landowner (Timber)
Randy Johnson – Fire Chief (Eastside)

Guests/Other Attendees:

Loren Torgerson - Wildfire Policy Advisor
George Geissler – State Forester and Deputy Supervisor for WD and FH
Andrew Spaeth – Forest Action Plan Coordinator
Shelly Goodwin - WFAC Coordinator
Bob Tollefson – Public
Roger Haeberle - Public

I. Opening, Roll Call

Chairman introduced K.C. Whitehouse as a newly appointed member to the WFAC. He is representing the Washington State Council of Firefighters. The meeting of the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee was called to order at 10:05 a.m. on February 27, 2020 in Olympia, WA. Roll was taken, 5 members were present and 5 members were excused. Due to travel constraints, 5 members participated in the meeting by phone, constituting a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 23, 2020 council meeting were presented in draft and reviewed. Motion to approve draft minutes made by Committee member Cody Desautel, seconded by Committee member Jim DeTro. Motion carried with Aye's.

III. Chairman Report

Chairman Berndt, provided a verbal chair report. Busy month! Attended DNR orientation for 30 new full time staff and attended the Wildfire and Forest Health and Resiliency statewide quarterly meeting. Both meetings were to ensure common understanding and discuss issues for 2020. More questions than answers. Also attended the WD-FHRD Olympia staff All Hands meeting, where the Divisions could cross train and learn the deliverables divided between the Divisions. There were also team building exercises. I was invited to attend the Stevens County Fire Commissioners meeting where the discussion revolved around the Forest Land Response agreement definitions of single jurisdiction, joint jurisdiction, areas assessed, and compensation (if and how) Very productive evening – good group. Looking to “transition” away from WFAC. Transition is like an Olympic relay race, it takes a lot of practice. I want to take the time to do it right. Don't know how we are going to do this but we are.

George – This is a very important position. Gary has history and understanding to be able to interact with all of our partners. It is an appointed position. Would like to recruit, not the next Gary, but the next liaison. This will be done on the timeline Gary has given. It is an invaluable position.

IV. DNR/WSP Update

- a. Melissa Gannie from the State Fire Marshal's Office reported on the NFRS, National Fire Reporting System. Washington State Fire Marshall's Office is hosting a Webinar on April 14th. We are watching HB2228 “Mobilization pre-deployment”. Marshal's office is performing bill analysis and also scheduling mobilization training. Fire Defense Committee just met and will meet again in May. Fire Marshal is collecting fire incident data and would like to meet with DNR. Not knowing what fire season is going to be, how do we take that data and collectively use it? We are also potentially looking at filing for grants. Also looking at partnering with the Community Risk Reduction group on what we can do nationally.
- b. Andrew Spaeth the Forest Action Plan Coordinator did a presentation on the Forest Action Plan. The Forest Action Plan is a required document and discusses the entire state. The document is due on June 30, 2020. There is currently a comment period ... contact Andrew Spaeth for information Andrew.spaeth@dnr.wa.gov
- c. Loren Torgerson, Wildfire Policy advisor gave an update. Bill (1894) - Following up on unprotected land report. This bill requires WFAC to continue to review unprotected lands and under protected lands. . Senate appropriations potential for an additional- WFAC role – full review and audit looking at every part of

Wildfire and auditing programs that we say are part of Wildfire. Due December. Budget bill. This may be seen this as an opportunity, looking at it as a positive thing. The final report on SHB2561- was delivered to legislature somewhat beyond the due date. Due December and submitted in January. Committee was central in developing the report. The Commissioner was complementary of the report. No indication from the legislature on taking action on the report at this time. 1894 & 2561 are essentially similar bills. Look at Rangeland Fire Associations a little closer. Funding sources were a challenge in that WFAC couldn't figure out adequate parameters for funding. Need a subgroup (Tony & Russ?) to help deconstruct bill if it passes. Challenge will be defining under protected land, Western WA vs. Eastern WA. The agency requested Fire funding bill HB 2413 – surcharge on P/c and Liability insurance policies. 62 million to implement FH & WF strategy, about \$5 per policy. There are concerns about the fee and the Commissioner will testify – has interest. The funds give us the opportunity to “put our nose to the grind stone” to work on preventing catastrophic wildfires. Urban Community Forestry bill – to assist cities in maintaining forest on the Westside. This bill is still going forward. SB6195 – funding forest health activities through a bond. Don't know that this will go anywhere. Utilities Taskforce – Electrical Utilities Wildfire Prevention. There are 12 members on the taskforce, connected back to WF strategy. The committee task is to create model agreement on danger tree and vegetation as focused on trust lands. Look at education opportunities on wildfire prevention. Expertise in electric utility wildland fire starts. For WFAC what could be a 2020 work plan – what tasks are out there that the committee can help the department with? It's a 10 year strategy. Want to have some agreement at the table. Where are we appropriate and what is a priority. Requesting feedback. Review charter – communicate to constituents – evaluate the membership and agency support.

- d. Gary, Wildland Fire Liaison, discussed the Facilitated Learning Analysis at the Spring Coulee incident. This was a review not an investigation, more as storytelling. The process is to write a story not a report. Was assigned a mentor who guided me through the process. Okanogan Fire District 3 with DNR, the team, and responders met and went through the process. Took about two months. Ms. Johnson, wife of Assistant Chief Johnson, want as many people as possible to learn from her husband's death. Gary would like to endorse the concept of sending people to be trained on the process. The matrix” developed in 2018 was discussed. The Chair requested that members review the issues and determine if there are any issues that have not been addressed by the agency.- basically it may have been completed.. Can we agree that it is final?. If I don't hear anything from anyone then it will be done. Safety –Can we consider a “sub” group of WFAC to be aware of policy level safety issues?. Safety is in the charter but not really implemented.

V. Final Q&A – Committee roundtable

- a. Discussion on meeting schedule for 2020. Skype, skip months, sub committees, and longer lunch meetings?

VI. Adjournment and Next Meeting

By consensus, the committee decided to schedule the next general meeting at 10 am, on March 26 at Southeast Region 713 Bowers Rd Ellensburg WA 98926

Draft minutes submitted by Shelly Goodwin, approved by Chairman Gary Berndt.
Formal action to be taken to approve the minutes at the March 26, 2020 meeting.