



Wildland Fire Advisory Committee

Meeting minutes November 21st, 2024

Meeting Venue: Zoom

- I. Attendance**
 - a. Quorum met, see attached for meeting attendance.
- II. Call to Order**
 - a. Committee chair Allen Lebovitz called meeting to order 1:10 pm November 21st, 2024.
- III. Meeting Minutes Approval & Previous Business**
 - a. Committee Chair Allen Lebovitz entertains motion to review and approve minutes from October 17th. Cody Desautel motions to approve minutes, Tom Smith seconds. All members vote yeah and there are no abstains.
- IV. Washington State Wildland Fire Protection 10-Year Strategic Plan Addendum Review**
 - a. Allen Lebovitz, Committee Chair, DNR – Chair motions to review and approve Wildland Fire Protection 10-Year Strategic Plan Addendum, Cody Desautel Seconds. Discussion: The consensus from the Committee was that the draft was ready for finalization for the committee to review and potentially approve. Final draft was sent out on November 7^h. Chair opens the floor for discussion.
 - i. Tony Craven – The document that fire adapted communities produced needs to be included as a referenced supporting document in an appendix.
 - ii. Chris Martin – Recommends adding a list of documents at the end of the Addendum that were used to inform its development, including the fire adapted communities document.
 - iii. Carlene Anders – For clarity it was not just the learning community it was a workgroup with multiple groups involved. We don't want the document to be lost, it needs to be included in some way.
 - iv. Cody Desautel – We should consider which documents we used that should be referenced that informed the creation of the Addendum.
 - v. Loren Torgerson – There are many documents that are out there and certainly informed the process, but if we did not pull those documents out specifically during deliberations then those documents should not be specifically referenced.
 - vi. Allen Lebovitz – We will include the community resilience workgroup document as a citation at the end of the Addendum.
 - vii. Chris Martin – I like the statement at the end regarding accountability but there is no assignment of who is responsible or a timeline. This is needed e.g. "This will require leadership from the State forester/CPL."



- viii. Kari Grover-Wier – Highlight at the end the action items for the committee to take on. Task the committee to work on an accountability matrix with a timeline to have it complete.
 - ix. Loren Torgerson – The document recognizes that more leadership is needed, I think that defining that should be worked on by the committee going forward. The role of the committee is to advise the commissioner, we should recommend to George that we should task the committee to take on the accountability piece.
 - x. Chris Martin – If WFAC takes the responsibility, we can reach out to other stakeholders and organizations to see who will voluntarily take it on. We should not beat around the bush on accountability.
 - xi. Kari Grover-Wier – Include a sentence in the summary moving forward section that says: the WFAC will work towards facilitating that accountability, roles, responsibilities, discussion, and just have it in there that it is our responsibility.
 - xii. Carlene Anders – In our last meeting, I thought that was an understanding that we would target those accountabilities within a 6 month to 1 year period. Can be in the Addendum or in the minutes that it is captured.
 - xiii. Allen Lebovitz – We are capturing that the committee has made a recommendation here in this discussion that WFAC play a role in developing and ensuring that all items in the Addendum are enacted, in particular the assignment of roles and responsibilities and accountability for them.
 - xiv. Cody Desautel – I think that works well, Allen. If we can produce some type of report that'd be helpful, like the Forest Health folks do, then you can see who's doing the work and who's not. And hopefully they'll be publicly shamed into catching up if they're not doing the work.
- b. Allen Lebovitz DNR – Motion is amended to approve the Addendum with a citation section added that references key materials that the Committee referred to during its development, in particular the report provided by the community resilience workgroup. Cody Desautel seconds the motion. Cody Desautel: Yea, Carlene Anders: Yea, Wade Peirce: Yea, Chris Martin: Yea, Kari Grover-Wier: Yea, Tom Smith: Yea, Cody Rohrbach, Abstains, K.C. Whitehouse: Yea, Tony Craven: Yea, Allen Lebovitz: Yea. Motion passes.

V. **WDNR Community Resiliency Program Update**

- a. Guy Gifford, Assistant Division Manager Community Resilience, DNR – We have 8 community resiliency coordinators that have been on staff for about 2 years, 6 in eastern WA and 2 in western WA with a third to be filled. Results to date; 11 counties statewide have launched Wildfire Ready Neighbors; an additional 8 counties are open for signups on the website and have some level of activity. At least 1000 signups per year, it does



vary yearly. We are engaging with 58 total partners. Firewise microgrant program; 131 sites, 112 awards in \$499,054. CWDG total \$56,006,753 awarded, 15,788 acres treated. Trained leaders: 207 DEI leaders trained; 92 leaders trained. CWPPs, 4 completed 2024, 7 expected 2025. New program, wildfire ambassador program, focusing on San Juan and Okanogan counties as pilot program.

- i. Chris Martin – The technology project, while not directly part of your group, that piece made doing 900 homes so simple. The mapping personal are a great asset and always willing to help and want to acknowledge that.
- ii. Carlene Anders – The insurance concerns, came up during assessments that homeowners are concerned about assessments affecting their insurance. It’s an issue that needs to be addressed.
- iii. Russ Lane – We see this topic continually come up on our end, a suite of recommendations from the committee would help advance policy.

b. Presentation attached.

VI. WA State Forester Update

- a. George Geissler, Deputy Wildland Fire Management Division, State Forester, DNR – Currently going through the transition process at Federal level going to new administration. National Association of State Foresters has been reached out to by the new administration. Indications are they’re using a similar playbook from the last Trump administration, focus on state and local solutions rather than federal. Multiple meetings in early December regarding the transition. Multiple bills based on the Wildfire Mitigation and Management Commission’s recommendations are in mark up, addressing the components of the Commission’s recommendations. Don’t see any one of the bills to go straight through, will likely see bills consolidated. Cabinet and judicial appointments are taking precedent in congress. At state level, smoke management taskforce report on the West Bend pilot project, Central Washington pilot project. Solidified that we have a charter. Rep Reeves intends to bring forward wildfire mitigation standards workgroup, developing resiliency mitigation standards for communities, insurance is one of the topics to cover as well. Asked Allen to prepare a document on the committee to present to the new commissioner.

VII. WDNR Wildland Fire Management Division Update

- a. Russ Lane, Wildland Fire Management Division Manager, DNR – Fire season recovery mode is the current posture we are still in. It’s been a long season, lot of tired people. Going to take time to rest and recover and reset, both locally and nationally. Project we are working on is our policy and procedure guidance, which has not been updated in a while, it’s an emphasis this fall and winter to review and update those policies and procedures. We are anchoring the new policy and procedures in the 10-year strategic plan. By April we hope to have everything reworked and approved. Another heavy lift that has been going on is the master cooperative agreement in WA state, it comes up every 5 years. We have it out for agency review, the WA forest office won’t review until all others have reviewed. Forestland response and interagency agreements with fire



service are out for renewal. The new template has been sent out for review. Where we have adjacency and cooperative agreements is one structure. HB 1498 required us to have a response agreement with fire districts to be able to support them with aviation. We have included robust language around when we send resources out or keep them home to meet our needs. Type 3 incident management teams are being worked on. Team training models are being decided. At the Chief Managers and Supervisors Group meeting in January, going to focus on prescribed fire and cost share agreements. We have an austere budgeting environment that we are facing, the policy framework helps us justify what we need. Safety is a bright spot for DNR, Sam Lane has done incredible work for us. Accident and injury rates are down 5% across the board. He has built a lot of trust with firefighters in the field.

VIII. Round Table

- a. Wade Pierce – Not seeing good treatments of slash burns, permits are a bottleneck. Our ability to burn piles above 6000 ft was about 6hrs this year due to limitations. Need a meeting with NE folks on loosening the restrictions on permits for burning.
- b. Kari Grover-Wier – Dealing with transition and reduced budget on the federal side. We have some banked up funds, but a lot of unknowns for the Forest Service.
- c. Tom Smith – Russ Pfeiffer, Hoyt and I are on a County Forest Resilience task force. Appreciate going over the addendum for the 10 Year Plan, because the group is kind of spinning off into wildland fire and fire responses and coordinating responding agencies.
- d. Tony Craven – Looks like good research coming out of CAL Poly on how fire moves between homes. Looking at biochar to become a functional process.

IX. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment.

X. Adjourn

- a. Meeting is adjourned at 3:35 pm.

XI. Appendices

- a. Attendance
- b. Addendum
- c. WDNR Community Resiliency Program Update

Draft minutes submitted by Bryan Perrenod, approved by Chairman Allen Lebovitz. Formal action to be taken to approve the minutes at the next general meeting.