

MINUTES OF THE WILDLAND FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
December 18, 2015
Yakima, WA

In attendance -

Gary Berndt, Wildland Fire Liaison, Chair

Committee Members Present:

Tom Bugert
Mike Chapman (by phone)
Tony Craven
Chuck Duffy (by phone)
Jim DeTro
Dave Johnson
Dave Leitch
J.D. Marshall (by phone)
Allen Miller (by phone)
Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt
Rodney Smolden (by phone)

Committee Members Absent:

Dave LaFave (excused)
Mel Tonasket (excused)

Guests/Other Attendees:

Peter Goldmark, Commissioner of Public Lands
Mary Verner, DNR Deputy Supervisor for Wildfire and Administration (by phone)
Sandra Kaiser, DNR Communications and Outreach Director
Lacey Vaughn, DNR Support Supervisor

I. Opening, Roll Call

The first meeting of the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee was called to order at 10:03 a.m. on December 18, 2015 in Yakima, WA. Roll was taken and all members were present except for two whose absences were unavoidable and excused. Due to inclement weather and treacherous travel conditions, several members participated in the meeting by phone.

II. Approval of Minutes

No prior minutes were presented because this was the first meeting of the committee after its formation.

III. Old Business

There was no old business because this was the first meeting of the committee after its formation.

IV. New Business

a. Statutory and Leader's Intent for the Committee

Chairman Berndt reviewed with members the statute that created the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee (ESHB 2093, passed in 2015). He explained his role as Liaison

reporting to the Commissioner of Public Lands, and the appropriate role of the committee to gather information, share perspectives of the constituencies each member represents, and make suggestions and recommendations, through the Liaison, to the WA DNR. The committee's role is not operational or supervisory; it is advisory at the policy level. After discussion, all members acknowledged their understanding of the statutory roles and leader's intent.

b. Committee decision process for action items

After discussion, all committee members and the chair agreed that committee decision items will be decided by consensus, using a vote of a simple majority of those present only if needed if consensus cannot be reached.

c. ICS training for executives

The Chair suggested the committee offer the ICS (Incident Command System) training seminar for executives in conjunction and cooperation with the Washington State Association of Counties. This seminar will help community leaders build relationships before the wildfire incident occurs, and better understand the establishment and transfer of command at incidents. A handout was provided to the members. After discussion, all agreed that this suggestion will be explored by a workgroup of the committee and discussed at the next scheduled meeting.

d. Wildland Fire Contract Open House

A news release was given to each committee member present in Yakima, available also through this link: www.fs.usda.gov/colville. The release invites individuals who are interested in becoming wildland fire resource contractors to attend informational sessions about becoming trained and certified.

e. Committee workgroups

After discussion about the breadth of topics of interest to the committee, and the need to focus on recommendations that could improve wildland fire conditions for the upcoming 2016 fire season, the committee decided by consensus to form four ad-hoc workgroups, comprised as follows:

1. ICS Training: Gary Berndt, Mike Chapman, Dave Johnson, Rodney Smoldon
2. Fire District Training: Chuck Duffy, Dave Johnson, Dave LaFave, Dave Leitch
3. Fire Resource Contracting: Gary Berndt, Jim DeTro, J.D. Marshall
4. Volunteers: to be decided at a later date

In addition to these workgroup assignments, Tom Bugert volunteered to assist a longer-term workgroup on the topics of prescribed burning and forest health.

During the committee's deliberations about workgroup efforts, Bob Johnson and John Kaikkonen (Division Manager and Assistant Division Manager, respectively, for WA DNR's Wildfire Division) were brought into the conversation by phone. Messrs. Johnson and Kaikkonen described DNR's current planning for 2016 interagency fire training.

V. Other Business

During the committee's working lunch, Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark joined the meeting. He expressed his gratitude to the Liaison and Committee for accepting this important work. He provided a presentation recapping the 2015 wildfire season and DNR's request to the legislature for more funding for wildland firefighting capacity for DNR and its partners. Discussion ensued among Commissioner Goldmark and committee members.

VI. Adjournment and Next Meeting

By consensus, the committee decided to schedule the next general meeting at 1:00 p.m. on January 21, 2016 in Olympia, Washington. The meet was adjourned by acclamation at 2:36 p.m.

Draft minutes submitted by Lacey Vaughn, approved by Gary Berndt.

Formal action to be taken to approve the minutes at the January 21, 2016 meeting.