



Wildland Fire Advisory Committee

Meeting minutes April 21, 2022

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 1:14pm April 21st, 2022.

III. Meeting Minutes Approval & Previous Business

- a. Committee chair Allen Lebovitz entertains motion to review and approve minutes from February 17th, 2022. Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt moves to approve, Cody Rohrbach seconds. All members vote yeah and there are no abstains.
- b. No outstanding business discussed.

IV. Agency Updates

- a. **State Mobilization Update** – Melissa Gannie, Assistant State Fire Marshall.
We have had one mobilization so far in Friday harbor for a large structure fire. We provided 3 type 1 engines to that fire. Have a pre-season meeting scheduled with Emergency Management Division, will mostly be talking about staffing the fire season. Received 47 vax verifications for contracts for reimbursement to fire agencies. 59 vax verifications from casual hires and emergency hires. 2021 fire in WA report was published. Leading fire cause was burning of vegetation, followed by rubbish burning, structure fires was third. Continue to work on community risk reduction through national fire academy. Bringing in a youth fire incident course. RCW 19.27.560 dealing with WUI codes has specific requirements for local agencies, DNR has done the mapping for agencies to use. Local jurisdiction could adopt the WUI code as an option.
- b. **Federal Update** – Eric Veach, Deputy Forest Supervisor, U.S. Forest Service Gifford Pinchot Ntl. Forest. N/A
- c. **Fire Service Update** – Leonard Johnson, Fire Chief Thurston Co. Fire District 9. N/A

Cody Rohrbach, Fire Chief Spokane Co. Fire District 3, recently held S42. Received a briefing on long term weather forecast, have not seen a lot of correlation between the forecasts and the fire season. Seeing some improvements on drought conditions.
- d. **Wildland Fire Management Division** – George Geissler, Deputy Supervisor, Wildland Fire Management Division and State Forester. Russ is in the process of hiring to staff positions that have become vacant. We have new positions as well that need to be filled. DNR's readiness level is similar to last year, 120 engines ready and prepared. Getting new firefighters hired is a struggle. Aviation looks to be close to last year's numbers. Anticipating ordering an air tanker Q400, and portable tanker base. Looking to keep same



tactics as last year, with a tanker base at Moses Lake. As result of 1168, will have heavy equipment coming on early, around 9 pieces, mostly dozers and excavators. We will be adding three, 20 person hand crews as result of 1168. One crew of note is our Arcadia crew, they will be DNR firefighters that are coming out of the corrections program.

- e. **WA State Forester Update** – George Geissler, Deputy Supervisor, Wildland Fire Management Division and State Forester. Primarily leaning in on 2 things. Infrastructure and jobs act. DNR receiving funds, going to forest stewardship, urban forests, forest health. \$1.3 million split between programs, starts arriving in early May. State fire assistance is receiving \$900K extra funding. Volunteer Fire assistance \$80K extra. Secretary of Agriculture announced 10 landscapes that are going to be supported (123 million next 5 years) central washing initiative one of those landscapes. Will see a MOU in the next month which will define the projects that need to be funded along with outreach to partners. 2.5 million acres that need forest restoration treatments. Community wildfire defense grant, \$200 million funding in grant program. Grants to communities to implement their CWP plans. Can update or prepare a CWP plan. Guidance has not been finalized. DNR will take a leadership role and be the organization that manages the grants. Provide DOI grant funding as well. More to follow on it, goal to have it in place by August, with money out the door in November. \$5 million over 5 years.

V. **Chairman's Updates**

- a. Relaunch of Wildfire Ready Neighbors, started the spring surge in Chelan County, and will be returning the three from last as well as three more. Participation of Café Wenatchee continues this year, were partners last year and helped with the keeping Chelan County communities engaged throughout the year. The focus community last year, Boodry Street in Wenatchee, has continued to stay engaged and the community captain has been trained to do home ignition zone assessments. They have trained 10 more individuals to the same standard. WRN surged on Tuesday in Chelan County, and seeing a good surge of signups. We will initiate the spring surge in Spokane and Yakima Counties in the beginning of May. We also developed a strong partnership with the Yakama Nation with Wildfire Ready Neighbors. Working to adapt the program for their needs. Will be launching in three other Counties in summer and fall. Once initiated in a county, the intention is to keep the program active year round, with surges at needed times during the year for those communities. With new staffing DNR will be able to continue to grow and support this program.
- b. Budget proviso passed, that gives \$500,000 to launch WRN pilots in three west side counties. Pierce, Thurston, and Mason Counties are the first to receive this support. In planning phase now. More to follow as we get closer.
- c. Unprotected lands project continues to move forward, with outreach to concerned parties like the Fire Defense Committee. Looking to hold virtual workshops with Fire Chiefs. Recommend contacting Steve Wright to schedule the virtual session. Goal is to have draft recommendations in May for review. Looking to include the WA Cattlemen's Association as well in the feedback process. Working with the Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency initiative as well.



VI. WDNR Work of Wildfire Assessment 2021

- a. **Presentation by Derek Churchill, Forest Health Scientist & Garrett Meigs, Forest Health Scientist.** Presentation Attached

VII. Roundtable, Public Comment, Future Topics

- a. Potential future topic to how to integrate Work of Wildfire Assessment with the 10 year strategic plan.
- b. Resource Conservation and Development and Wildfire Adaptive Communities are good for post fire recovery resources.
- c. Discuss future in person meetings at next meeting.

VIII. Adjourn

- a. Meeting is adjourned at 4:03pm

IX. Appendices

- a. Attendance
- b. Chat Log
- c. Work of Wildfire Assessment 2021 Presentation
- d. Work of Wildfire 2021 Report

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.