



Utility Wildland Fire Prevention Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 22, 2024

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Meeting Venue: Rm 172, Natural Resources Building

- I. Attendance**
 - a. Quorum met see attached for meeting attendance.
- II. Call to Order**
 - a. Committee Chair Loren Torgerson called meeting to order at 1:02 pm on May 22, 2024.
- III. Meeting Minutes Approval & Introductions**
 - a. Committee chair Loren Torgerson entertained a motion to review and approve minutes from February 21, 2024. Brett Conrad motioned to approve February minutes; Jason Callahan seconded. Evlyn Andrade abstains, all other members vote yeah.
- IV. Mitigation Plan Template Implementation & Technical Support**
 - a. Loren Torgerson, Committee Chair, DNR – Opens floor for discussion of the mitigation template. Any feedback for modifying the template going forward will be greatly appreciated for any potential future changes to the template. We have a work order with Guidehouse, the contractor who developed the template, to provide technical support for assisting utilities in their mitigation plans.
 - i. Jim Smith – Q: Have you received a lot of feedback? A: Most feedback was about whether the structure of the template had to be followed or its specific layout.
 - ii. Brett Conrad – Q: Is there any review and approval by DNR or will they just be held on to and available for public review? A: The DNR will not be the approval authority, the governing structure of the utilities or oversight bodies will review and approve.
 - iii. Ryan Collins – The DOC did a really good job with their rollout of communications for a new program. The vendor for that program is one we would recommend.
 - iv. Brett Conrad – Q: Can Guidehouse assist with risk assessment? It's an area that the smaller utilities may struggle to complete. Assistance here would be very useful. A: Not right now but will investigate seeing if it can be added. There is a federal resource that has a map can provide hazard data, that can be used to help with their risk assessment. [Homepage - Wildfire Risk to Communities](#)
 - b. Template attached.



V. Utility & DNR Communications Plan

- a. Loren Torgerson, Committee Chair, DNR – This is the last task from the original task force and HB 1032. I will bring a draft for the committee to work react to at the next meeting. Any ideas or areas that need to include or address? We did include a few elements related to communications in the mitigation plan.
 - i. Jim Smith – Do we have something put together from the HB 1032 report? Fires of what size, when to reach out to fire suppression agencies, etc.
 1. Need clarification from this from Jim.

VI. Department of Commerce Update

- a. Elizabeth King, Emergency Resilience & Emergency Management Director, Washington DOC – We are trying to ensure that your plans relate to others and not just on their own. CWPPs are written by city or county, and we are trying to include utilities as part of them where appropriate. We are in the second phase of this process. We have asked participants in the workgroup if they want us to continue and the answer is yes.
 - i. Jim Smith – who would be the contact? A: Johanna Hanson is the primary contact. johanna.hanson@commerce.wa.gov
 - ii. Loren Torgerson – Does it make sense to hand off the technical assistance off to DOC as they have this technical assistance workgroup. We could do an official interagency agreement.
 - iii. Jim Smith – Given the effort that has been made, we don't want to duplicate efforts. I support doing the agreement with DOC.
 - iv. Brett Conrad – I second. There are going to be different utilities that may rank a risk differently because of their larger data set, that should be accounted for.
 - v. Allen Berreth – I agree with that, just want to add to the idea of providing that technical assistance. Bigger utilities have sophisticated models and will not match what may be produced by smaller utilities. If asked why my model looks different, it's because I have a lot more data that may not be available to others. The assistance can help to create a good baseline/entry point.
 - vi. Loren Torgerson – How do we field questions on the plans? Do we just send those questions to the individual utilities?
 - vii. Allen Berreth – Utilities should field those questions. And you can't use a single model, it would take years to properly develop a sophisticated model for the state and doing so would create a risk model not adequate to the task. Having good messaging on this will be important.



- b. Elizabeth King – With the 4014D program. Wildfire mitigation would be part of that grant opportunity. We are developing tech assistance for this. We started at the ground level with help with community planning and are looking to do the same for utilities. We will have more on the program by mid-summer. Other grant opportunities are a \$5 million grant on hazard mitigation for most of the state, targeting the eastside of the state first working and then working west. Submitted a letter today for PNL to do a smoke survey. We are coordinating with members on the workgroup on communications for PSPS & emergency deenergization. Through the workgroup we are providing a list of links for resources on risk assessment. We have had discussion on communications with the workgroup, but we are going to focus on PSPS first and then move to more general communication.
 - i. Allen Berreth – Pacific power policy, not a PSPS, but wildfire power shutoff. Can help if you need a contact.
 - ii. Garry Rossman – One challenge we face in a rural area is the lack of internet and cell service which is compromised by PSPS.
- c. Presentation attached.

VII. 1032 Interagency Coordination

- a. Loren Torgerson – One of the tasks from 1032 is working on interagency coordination on wildfire. Any areas that we need to focus on?
 - i. Brett Conrad – As we are doing pre-wildfire season work, inspections vegetation work etc. One issue we are having is getting on state highways to do the work. With Department of Transportation (WSDOT) it is a yearlong permit process. Getting WSDOT T to be part of the process to smooth things along.
 - ii. Elizabeth King – Connection with DNR is greatly improved. Getting regular updates and the workshops have been helpful. Need to work to improve coordination and communication with EMD and that is our next focus.

VIII. Committee Work Plan

- a. Loren Torgerson, Committee Chair, DNR – Topics to discuss for following meetings should focus on: Mitigation plan template, utility-interagency wildfire communications plan, technical assistance to utilities, 2025 legislative session.
- b. Work plan attached.

IX. Closing Comments

- a. Loren Torgerson – Thank you all for attending.

X. Public Comment

- a. Jacob Gear – The transmission analysis is different, but we have a model that includes Oregon along with Washington.



- b. Nicolas Garcia – In terms of future items, useful to compare and contrast different risk models that are out there, what they offer. Legislative rumors and items for the 2025 session is another agenda item, probably the November meeting.

XI. Adjourned

- a. Meeting is adjourned at 2:32 pm.

XII. Appendices

- a. Attendance
- b. Mitigation Plan Template
- c. Committee Work Plan
- d. Wildland Fire Mitigation Workgroup Presentation
- e. PSPS Program Factsheet

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