



**Wildland Fire Leadership Council Call/Meeting
June 15th, 2017, 10:00 am – 11:10 am
Washington DC
USDA Whitten Building, Room 221a
Meeting Notes**

MEETING PURPOSE:

The purpose of the June 15 meeting of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) was to collectively discuss several issues of opportunity as well as understand the status of federal agency changes stemming from the new administration.

ATTENDEES:

Council Members or alternates: Dan Jiron (USDA)*, Harry Humbert (DOI)*, Mike Reynolds (NPS), Erik Litzenberg (IAFC)*, Vern Stearns (ITC), George Geissler (NGA)*, Anne Kinsinger (USGS), Steve Guertin (FWS), Patti Blankenship (FEMA/USFA), Michael Nedd (BLM), Hankie Ortiz (BIA), Jim Karels (NASF), Capt. Kyle Moses (DoD), James C. Ross (DoD), John Suthers (NLC), Dan Shoun (NACo), Patrick Holmes (WGA), Mike Zupko (Executive Manager)*

Partners and Support Staff: John Ruhs, Tami DeFries, Shawna Legarza*, Rick Obernessor*, Jennifer Eberlein*, Genevieve Giaccardo, Meg Gilley, Maureen Brooks, Katie Lighthall, Shawn Stokes*, Ann Walker, Brett Lacy, Jim Erickson, Brad Washa, Johnathan Shuffield, Larry Mastic, Gary Wood

** Denotes those individuals that met in person. All others participated via phone.*

MEETING SUMMARY:

TRANSITION DISCUSSION

Objective: To discuss the status of current and pending appointments and key issues being brought forward by the administration.

Discussion: Each of the federal principles updated the group on current status. Highlights included:



Department of Agriculture will most likely not see any permanent appointees other than Secretary Perdue until this Fall. There has been some restructuring that moved NRCS from within Natural Resources and the Environment (NRE) with the Forest Service into Farm Production and Conservation with NRCS and Risk Management Agency. An additional mission area has also been created around International Trade. NRE now only contains the Forest Service.

Department of the Interior reported that Secretary Zinke has a strong understanding of wildland fire and land management issues. It was also discussed the recent joint briefing between Secretaries Perdue and Zinke in Boise to overview the fire season and joint readiness. Internally within DOI, reorganization is expected. Several deputy assistant secretaries (non-confirmation) are on board.

Department of Defense discussed a recent pre-western fire season conference at NIFC discussing the readiness of their response units and the transition of the MAFFS from NC to NV. An assistant secretary was recently confirmed as are several mid-level appointees. DoD is also facing reorganization challenges in addition to the transition to the new administration.

Department of Homeland Security mentioned the FEMA administrator Brock Long had been named (and subsequently was sworn in June 23). The USFA administrator has been nominated, but not started the confirmation process. The USFA nominee is Chief Keith Bryant of Oklahoma City.

Next Steps:

- Zupko will continue to coordinate between each of the WFLC member organizations and inform members as key positions are confirmed and opportunities arise for joint coordination.

WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION FOREST AND RANGELAND INITIATIVE

Objective: To describe the initiative and potential intersection points between WGA and WFLC priorities and cohesive strategy goals.

Discussion: Patrick Holmes, Governor Bullock's Natural Resource Advisor, gave an overview of the initiative including the background and referenced ATTACHMENT I. He also went into further specificity of the key administrative and legislative components of the initiative that will be rolled out at the WGA meeting on June 27. This will be a multi-year initiative with opportunities for engagement along the way.

Next Steps:

- Zupko will distribute the year one initiative report when it is released.
- Zupko will continue discussions with both Patrick Holmes and WGA staff as to engagement points and look for ways to intersect WFLC priorities and actions with actions in the initiative.



USGS SCIENCE PLAN

Objective: To open the opportunity for WFLC members to contribute to the body of science USGS conducts around wildland fire related issues.

Discussion: Anne Kinsinger gave an overview of the upcoming opportunity for members of WFLC to help inform key components of the USGS Science Plan (Attachment II). With over 100 scientists within USGS doing work around wildland fire and public health and safety, it is a unique opportunity for the members to help identify key areas that can be highlighted and potentially addressed by the plan. Kinsinger requested for those interested in providing feedback to please contact Paul Steblein within the next three weeks (by July 10) and he will work to accept your input.

Next Steps:

- All members encouraged to contact Paul Steblein by **July 10** to provide feedback to initiative phases of the USGS Science Plan.
- Zupko will facilitate discussions with WFLC members as to the opportunity to provide input.
- Zupko will continue to coordinate with Paul Steblein for feedback and input from both the WFLC membership as well as other members of the wildland fire community.

MEMBER ROUND ROBIN ITEMS

EXCESS FEDERAL PROPERTY –

Issue: George Geissler described the challenge with certain types of equipment potentially being removed from the availability of state and local fire responders to access. The issue appears to be an internal interpretation issue within Defense Logistics Agency and GSA. NASF, IAFC, USFS and NVFC have been working closely but several WFLC members may need to become further involved to move the issue along.

Next Steps:

- Geissler will work with Zupko to help identify the appropriate WFLC members to further engage in this discussion.

USE OF DRONES

Issue: With multiple discussions occurring within separate WFLC member organizations, Zupko mentioned the opportunity to ensure each organization is aware what the others are finding or are considering. He will coordinate the sharing of reports and task force findings as appropriate to keep members informed.

QUALIFICATION STANDARDS, FORCE MULTIPLIER AND APPROPRIATE REIMBURSEMENT

Issue: Chief Litzenberg mentioned three issues briefly to keep them on the memberships' radar. The Forest Service, NASF, DOI and NASF have been in discussions over the past several months exploring how to better align wildland fire qualifications. These discussions will continue with the commitment



from each of the organizations to better align nationally. The force multiplier comes in when state and local resources are more easily accessed due to aligned standards to allow for seamless integration into any incident. He further mentioned appropriate reimbursement to flag the need for continued discussions to remedy issues with making all partners financially whole following a response.

ADMINISTRATIVE/INFORMATION UPDATES

- Smoke Data Gap Forum Update – Zupko briefly updated the group on the WFLC convened forum earlier in the week of a diversity of groups to look into data gaps around smoke management and air quality. Similar to the WFLC Smoke Research Gap Forum held last August, findings will be produced and shared with WFLC and others to leverage the collaboration and collective understanding of needs to help better inform policy and research around smoke management and air quality issues.
- www.LandscapeCollaboration.com – Zupko mentioned the website that has been developed through the WFLC Landscape Level Collaboration Priority Task Group has gone live. The intent is to continue to populate with additional case studies, utilize the tool as a way to identify and develop best practices and further market landscape level activities at the local level.
- GAO Report – It was briefly mentioned the recently published GAO report titled *WILDLAND FIRE RISK REDUCTION: Multiple Factors Affect Federal-Nonfederal Collaboration, but Action Could Be Taken to Better Measure Progress*. Zupko will distribute a copy with the call notes and work with the FS and DOI on appropriate engagement opportunities as they continue to finalize their responses to GAO.

CLOSEOUT

The co-chairs asked the membership to reserve a date in early August for a potential WFLC call, if necessary. Please reserve the morning of **August 3, 10-12 am EDT**.

The next meeting is scheduled as a **field meeting the week of September 11**. Zupko will begin working with potential local hosts on identifying an appropriate field location. As soon as the location plans are firm, Zupko will send a note out to the membership.

Closing remarks and gratitude were given by Harry Humbert, Dan Jiron and Mike Zupko.

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