



WILDLAND FIRE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

WFLC and WFLC Western Region

2024 Fall Meeting
October 15-17, 2024

Minutes

Tuesday, October 15th – 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm

WFLC Business Meeting

Location: Flagstaff Public Works 3200 W Route 66, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Attendees (council members or alternates)

- Matt Kinglsey (NACo)
- Faith Berry (USFA)
- Cynthia Martinez (FWS)
- Chris Wilcox (NPS)
- George Geissler (NASF)
- Erik Svendsen (CDC)
- Joan Mooney (DOI)
- Bill Tripp (ITC)
- Chief Rich Elliot (IAFC)
- Laura McCarthy (NM rep for NGA)
- Erika Sasser (EPA)
- John Crockett (USFS)
- David Applegate (USGS)
- Erik Letvin (FEMA)
- Mike Zupko (WFLC)
- Ryan Orndorff (DoD)
- Anne Jewell (DoD)
- Brett Lacey (NLC)
- Johnna Blackhair (BIA)
- Ara Andrea (ID rep for WGA)
- Grant Beebe (BLM)
- Meryl Harrell (USDA)

RSC representatives, senior staff, discussion leads/presenters and other interested participants were also in attendance.

Welcome, opening remarks, introductions, meeting objectives

Joan Mooney, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Policy, Management and Budget, US Department of the Interior, thanked those who travelled and also acknowledged the increase in catastrophic disasters this year, the high preparedness level, the hurricane activity, and the climate emergency.

Meryl Harrell, Deputy Under Secretary, Natural Resources and the Environment, Department of Agriculture, talked about post fire clean up and post fire disasters, talked about the steps that are being taken at a federal level that will improve response. Introduced pieces of the agenda for the day and the plan for the field day.

Chief Mark Gaillard, Flagstaff Fire Department, gave his thanks for the group attending and talked about the post fire flooding and fire awareness. Chief Gaillard talked about some new steps that are being taken by our own community and the pride he has for it.

Patrice Horstman, Coconino County Vice Chair and Supervisor, District 1, welcomed the group and gave some statistics on the counties impact from wildfire and postfire flooding.



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Mike Zupko, Executive Director, WFLC, offered welcome remarks and reviewed some administrative items. He then facilitated introductions around the room.

Administrative Items

The minutes from the June 24, 2024, WFLC meeting were unanimously approved.

Set upcoming meeting December 2, 2024, Washington, DC, to be hosted at the Main Interior Building, Department of the Interior.

WFLC Priority Discussion: Enhancing and Integrating Science, Data and Technology

(Dave Applegate offered opening remarks)

- Mike Zupko and Paul Steblein walked the group through a presentation (ATTACHMENT I) discussing Science and Technology Needs for Wildland Fire Risk and Resilience. Objectives: Update, discuss priority recommendations, identify recommendations and action steps.
- They discussed the timeline and SDT Workshop Chronology. Where we've been, where we are going.
- Utilizing the Science for Technology Policy Institute report compiling, separating different recommendations then workshoping to look at immediate, short term, and long-term science needs. The report synthesized 266 recommendations into 29 top tier recommendations and 7 test cases. WFLC was given the top 29 and further narrowed that into the 9 top tier recommendations.
- A facilitated discussion among WFLC principals followed to generate desired outcomes and activities associated with each top tier recommendation.

Notes:

- S-91 Discussion – Decision support systems:
 - Elliot pointed out that they are getting feedback about lack of insurance or reduction of insurance, he pointed out that this is relevant to the public and IAFC offered to help lead.
 - Lacey said that nationally the cities need to have a play in it as well and offered NLC as a part of the team.
 - The question was posed: Who will be the users of this system and who will contribute to these systems.
 - Mcarthy noted that the insurance companies are heavily involved with the science as well.
 - Berry discussed consolidating tools so people can access them.



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- Letvin talked about the short-term action by utilizing the disaster supplemental and how now is the time to ask for it.
- Harrell talks about honing into the short term on two really high priorities on clearing house.
- Geissler builds on what was previously said, using the Texas wildfires as an example and how the Texas forest service is reaching across a lot of boundaries right now and trying to focus their application.
- Wilcox said what we need is to share information across the board and have the will to collaborate, he says we won't know what the gaps are until we can collaborate across the board.
- S142 Discussion – Support for post fire decision-making:
 - Director Applegate talked about how this is a great opportunity to move forward.
 - Svendsen talked about the inclusion of smoke and how CDC and NIAASH are important contributors that should be engaged.
 - Lacey would like NLC to play in that due to the work already being done by his organization, the importance of coproducing came up.
 - Berry brought up the development of wildfire risk maps and the importance of the US fire administration.
 - Harrell talked about shared visibility into the risk map so there would be better consistency.
 - Ryan asked about if fire behavior and post fire modeling are different parts of this or are they the same thing, how they fit together.
- S115 Discussion – Prescribed fire and managed fire impact on health:
 - It was brought up that this one is more in depth than people think.
 - Opportunity for CDC and EPA to provide leadership in this space.
 - Direct tie to local public health agencies and expanding relationships with appropriate organizations.
 - Continue to build on networks that include American Lung Association and other partners in this space.

Next Steps:

- Zupko and Steblein will continue to take feedback and approach potential volunteer/organizations that want to play a role in each of the priorities.
- Additionally, Zupko will distribute a method for WFLC principals to provide feedback on the 6 priority recommendations that were not discussed during the meeting.
- During the December 2 meeting, there will be more in-depth opportunities identified for the top 3+3 overarching recommendations identifying champions, resource opportunities and short-term actions.



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Community Resilience and the Built Environment

- Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell joined via teams meeting to talk about mapping WUI better and interaction between wildfire and communities. She also discussed how FEMA engages before and after wildfire.
- She presented a power point (ATTACHMENT II) to walk through the challenges and opportunities she sees for the built environment around wildland fire.

Notes:

- Moore-Merrell discussed the importance of being in the field and the impact of defensible space on communities and structures.
- Taking lessons learned from the field and communicating them to communities and homeowners is very important.
- It was also discussed recent meetings with insurance industry and how they are treating a symptom and not the real problem.
- Additionally, engaging around evacuation and how we need a different way to look at wildfire evacuation, how do we provide better instruction about evacuation to the community.
- There need for an actionable workplan that can be measured and isn't just theoretical and how the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation is leading conversations around the 50 years challenge and a 25 year action plan.

Potential Next Steps:

- Moore-Merrell will share the notes from the insurance industry conversation with the WFLC principals.
- Zupko will follow up with USFA on the construction of the 25 year action plan and how that may fit within WFLC work planning and WFLC priorities.
- Zupko will convene the WFLC members that have representation towards the built environment to further identify potential next steps for WFLC engagement.



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WFLC Work Planning including Priority Actions and Wildland Fire Commission Recommendations: Proposals for short-term action and resource considerations

- Opening remarks were given by Mike Zupko and Jenna Knobloch and they walked through a presentation (ATTACHMENT III) containing the current workplan priorities to date. The discussion included: Where we are going next. Identification of priorities. What's our plan today and right now?

Facilitated Discussion and Action:

- Cultural burning was unanimously adopted as part of the workplan.
- Post-fire recovery - FEMA and WGA are the designated champions along with lots of support from other members, and was unanimously adopted as part of the workplan.
- Integrated Planning, a statement of leader's intent, FEMA and USFA are the champions, looking for more scope into this topic and then coming back to WFLC once its better defined at the December meeting.
- Grants and Agreements, looking at specific issues to be identified. Champion is FEMA. How do we refine this? Tribes will be added to this. Making Grants and Agreements easier to navigate and go through, more accessibility. Reconvene with champions and SMEs to understand what the phase 2 would be after that. Shooting for the December meeting but definitely by the spring meeting. Will come back to part 2 in the December meeting.
- Community/Built Environment: Looking for opportunities to figure out what this means in a WFLC context. Mapping these things together. Tabling this due to time constrictions, very important. No objections on tabling.
- Resource sharing for Prescribed Fire Leaders Intent: Defining what success looks like is the next steps along with continuing the rollout strategy when the timing isn't competing with other disasters etc. A pause on movement due to PL5 is currently in place.
- Science, Data, and Technology: It was noted there is strong commitment in this suite of recommendations and the 3+3 recommended priorities will be built out further and presented during the December 2 WFLC meeting.
- Other Priority Topics: Smoke and Air quality management summit in the future, Workforce, All-lands wildfire resilience playbook, Outcome-based performance, Invasive Species will each continue moving forward with existing activities already in place.

Potential Next Steps:

- Zupko and Knobloch will continue to reach out to champions and potential champions to gain their input into next steps and refinement of specific actions.



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Closing for the day:

- Recap on workplan. Champions and Specific next steps will be further refined in the upcoming weeks.
- Directions for field trip on the following day were given.
- Adjourned for the day at 6:00pm

Wednesday, October 16th – 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm

WFLC Lunch Discussions

Location: Snowbowl Ski Resort, 9300N. Snow Bowl Road, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Recognizing and Expanding Cultural Burning

- Opening remarks were given by Jenna Knobloch to set the stage and give context from previous engagements on the subject.
- Bill Tripp, Sara Clark and Ryan Reed served on an informal panel conversation with Knobloch facilitating a leadership dialogue around the following questions: How can WFLC contribute to enabling conditions for burning to occur? What opportunities does WFLC have to allow for better utilization of cultural burning and the proactive use of fire

Potential Next Steps:

- Knobloch will continue to work with the Forest Service on rolling up best practices and looking forward ways to better describe the challenges and needs of tribal nations around cultural burning.
- Knobloch will build out the WFLC work planning document working through a core team.

Smoke Readiness

- Opening remarks were given by Katie Lighthall and she facilitated a conversation with the following panel members.
- Neil Chapman, Pete Lahm, Erika Sasser, Beth Palma, Matt Pace discussed local and national efforts including the following:



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- Flagstaff and Arizona efforts
- Communicating effectively with communities – EPA & Forest Service programs (CWDG), ongoing communication
- National Campaign linking Prevention, Rx Fire and Smoke Readiness
- Impacts of Emission Inventory data
- Exceptional Events Rule
- Lighthall facilitated the following leadership dialogue: With the changing focus toward community resilience and community responsibility, how can WFLC amplify effective messaging and enable actions in this space?

Potential Next Steps:

- Zupko will continue to work towards securing key champion(s) for the priority as included in the WFLC work planning document.
- There is strong interest with the state level WFLC members (WGA and NASF in particular) to further build out what a smoke data summit may look like and how to efficiently create the appropriate forum to further this conversation. Zupko will work closely with these two champions to scope.
- WFLC will continue to keep this priority high on the radar as many related issues go forward and partner with USDA, DOI, EPA and CDC as they work through their federal family MOU to gain traction collectively.

Thursday, October 17, 2024, was reserved for W-WFLC activities and learning. Notes can be requested through Katie Lighthall, W-WFLC coordinator.