



*Our mission is to prevent deaths, injuries, property loss, and environmental damage resulting from wildfires in Deschutes County.*

**July 16, 2019 – Steering Committee – Regular Meeting – 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM  
Approved Minutes**

**Steering Committee Members & Staff Present:**

	Vacant	Fire Rep 1	
x	Doug Green	Fire Rep 2	Bend Fire Dept.
	Gary Marshall	Fire Rep 3	Deschutes Rural Fire Dist. #2
x	Dan Daugherty	Fire Rep 3	LaPine Fire Dept.
x	Gary Githens	Insurance Industry	Brown & Brown
	Vacant	Business Community	
	Erica Pelley	Marketing	High Desert Museum
x	Chris Perry	911 Service District	Deschutes County
x	Zechariah Heck	Community Development Dept.	Deschutes County
	Dan Galecki	Private Forestry	Spin Drift Forestry
	Patti Gentiluomo	HOA Rep	Sunriver HOA
	Dave Gibson	HOA Rep	Black Butte Ranch HOA
x	Dean Richardson	HOA Rep	Upper Deschutes River Communities
	Craig Letz, Vice-Chair	HOA Rep	Tree Farm
x	Nathan Garibay	Sheriff's Office - Emergency Mgmt.	Deschutes County
x	George Chesley	Citizen Rep	At Large - Retired
	Vacant	Citizen Rep	
x	David Morman	Citizen Rep	At Large - Red Cross
x	Gordon Foster	Oregon Dept. of Forestry	ODF - Unit Forester
x	Doug Johnson for Alex Robertson	COFMS US Forest Service	USFS
	Nicole Strong	OSU Extension Service	OSU Ext
	Paula Simone	Central Oregon Comm. College	COCC
	Vacant	Environmental Community	
x	Ed Keith, Chair	County Forester	Deschutes County
x	Tony DeBone	Commissioner	Deschutes County
x	Jodie Barram	Contract Director	Project Wildfire/FireFree

Public Present:

Michael Adler, Awbrey Butte HOA  
Jeff Amaral, Bend Parks and Recreation District  
Julie Craig, City of Bend Code Enforcement  
Kathy Estabrook, Awbrey Butte HOA  
Gerald Griggs, Ridge at Eagle Crest  
Phil Henderson, Deschutes County Commissioner  
Nick Lelack, Deschutes Co. Community Development  
James Lewis, Deschutes Co. Property Manager  
Ray Miao, Deschutes Rural Fire District Board/Woodside Ranch  
Eric Moeggenberg, Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Todd Peplin, Deschutes Soil Water Conservation District  
Jim Phillis, Tillicum Village HOA  
Marie Phillis, Tillicum Village HOA  
Catherine Smith, Aperion Management  
Dan Smith, Deschutes Co. Community Development  
Jacob Smith, City of Redmond Code Enforcement  
Boyd Turner, Homeowners at Eagle Crest  
Hether Wardd, Deschutes Co. Community Development  
Helen Webre, Woodside Ranch  
Marlena Wiestbrot, Aperion Management  
Doug White, Buck Canyon

## **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was opened by Ed Keith, Chair. Introductions were made by those in attendance (name/affiliation).

## **AGENDA, PAST MINUTES AND UPDATE**

The agenda was briefly reviewed. Meeting minutes from May 21, 2019, were approved by consensus.

**Jodie Barram** updated on the Program of Work. Since the last meeting, she partnered with the Central Oregon Fire Prevention Co-op on Firebusters filming for an October segment, she did two community assessments, eleven home assessments, gave three presentations, educated 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders at Outdoor Day in La Pine, was on an interview panel for the Bend Fire Chief selection, attended the Pole Creek staff ride, coordinated the annual awards barbeque, toured Walker Range Fire Protection District, wrapped up five chipping projects with Ed for the area south of Sunriver and participated in FAC Network activities. She is catching up on the Sisters CWPP and it is on track for completion this fall.

## **VACANT AND ABSENTEE OWNER PROPERTIES**

**Ed Keith** kicked off the meeting highlighting that the issue of vacant and absentee owner lots comes up a lot this time of year. Ed asked **James Lewis** to give an overview of foreclosures, and what the county does. Deschutes County owns about 900 properties towards Hampton, Sisters, and lots in south county. They came into owning them because of property tax foreclosures. The county didn't have auctions for a few years, which would have put properties back on tax rolls. They have been working on the existing inventory to get it back on tax rolls. Deschutes County requires thinning within one year of purchase, then the County Forester, Ed Keith, confirms that the clearing has been done. In the past five years, the county has sold about 160 properties. Of those, about 100 have had this requirement for fire fuel thinning. Weed abatement is addressed in the cities. James works with Ed on grant funding. Deschutes River Recreation Homesites Unit 6 (DRRH6) has issues because of competing regulations. **Jodie Barram** mentioned the successful chipping project in that neighborhood this spring that was federally grant-funded, coordinated by Project Wildfire and administered by the County Forester. (See Attachments B and C)

James had a meeting with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Community Development Department, Code Enforcement, and other agencies for what would otherwise be a conditional use process to thin on lots with wetlands. They created a checklist that everyone can buy off on and agree to as a process. He reminded people that the county is just a property owner that doesn't necessarily make the rules. It has to go through the same permitting process that they administer.

**Dean Richardson** thought that years ago there was FEMA money for DRRH6, and Ed worked for two years to get help for that area. He recalled that when the money came, it was very restrictive. The wetlands were an issue too. Lodgepole pine has 'wet feet' and is thick. It is really a tinderbox. He asked **Eric Moeggenberger** and **Todd Peplin** if they could get funding. Eric said the lots are typically smaller than they deal with but they are looking at trying to address.

James talked about the regulations that are in conflict. He posed a question about what can be done to streamline the rules and regulations while trying to keep everyone in compliance.

**Dan Smith** said that County Code Enforcement gets complaints about neighbors, and uses solid waste regulations. They have to find something that crosses the line. They also refer to fire departments or ODF if there is not much they can do. James asked Dan what code enforcement would do about thinning on wetlands. They do an aerial photograph and go to planning to see how extensive the work was. Then they decide if they will pursue. Overall the intent could be good but the work needs to fit with regulations.

**Julie Craig** from the City of Bend Code Enforcement Department spoke about the flammable vegetation enforcement she's been doing for the past 10 years. It used to be done by the fire department before that. It applies to properties vacant or not. It is complaint-driven. Their department works with owners, and in the spring send a courtesy letter to remind people to clear. They have issued about 60 citations this year to folks who didn't comply. She is managing 350 flammable vegetation complaints right now. The code states that ½ acre or less have to clear grasses, reduce the density of and break up fuel, and limb up trees. On ½ acre or larger, there needs to be a 20-foot fuel break in addition to the other work. They give steps on what can be done over 2-3 years to stay on it. They work with Areas of Special Interest and the

Waterway Overlay Zone. Residents document what is there and what they want to take out so they don't violate those codes. Dealing with absentee owners and foreclosures can be a challenge. Bend doesn't have an abatement program. She recalled only abated one property in the last 10 years. They used a sheriff's office work crew and their own to take care of it. They don't have a budget to do much. They are proud of their 97% compliance rate.

**Catherine Smith** asked if the City of Bend fines people. Julie replied that yes, they do and it's \$750 per day. Wildfire resiliency is a council goal now so it's more of a priority. They will be discussing that more if the City actually has to go in and do the work. Dean Richardson said CALFire does the work there and adds the expense to a person's tax bill. Julie shared that they don't do that right now in Bend.

**Jacob Smith** from the City of Redmond Code Enforcement spoke about weed reduction. Redmond does abate with a contractor and then puts a lien on the property. They don't want a violation to sit there for too long and become a fire issue. Similarly, they are complaint-driven. They will also look throughout a neighborhood to see if there are others that need work. They look for dead shrubs, trees and the like. Redmond is similar to Bend and other communities.

**Gordon Foster** addressed the Defensible Space Act (SB360) being how the state looks at lots in their (ODF) jurisdiction. SB360 was driven by interface fires in the 90s. It's a prevention tool, not an enforcement tool. 2009 was when Deschutes county was classified. High-density extreme is the only classification that deals with vacant lots and it's a fuel break, not the whole lot. Everything else has to have an improvement like a structure or home on it for SB360 to apply. Postcards haven't been sent since 2009 for residents to self-certify that work was done. If a fire occurs and lack of fuels reduction made the fire worse, ODF can go after cost recovery after investigating, which is expensive. It is limited to liabilities up to \$100,000. The state has not gone after anyone in Oregon.

Ed brought a map of high-density extreme rated neighborhoods that include areas like Squaw Creek Canyon Estates, Saddleback, Deschutes River Woods and others. (See Attachment A)

**Tony DeBone** asked Gordon about HB2022 in the legislature this year and the reporting requirements. He wondered how is that going to play out. Gordon said it'll be an annual reporting to the legislature. Tony said that if cards aren't sent, there won't be anything to report. Gordon told the group that ODF hired Tom Andrade to do the original work implementing the Defensible Space Act for 12 counties starting in 2004, however that staffing support no longer exists as it was mainly grant funded.

Ed thanked everyone for coming today.

## **ROUNDTABLE**

**Doug Green** reiterated the Bend City Council goal and shared that he will be presenting tomorrow night on latest as the City looks at hazard mapping. The original maps don't show what might meet the goal. **Bob Madden** wanted Doug to pass on where the Smoke Management Plan update is. They are gathering more information to then resubmit an amended community response plan. Ed and Doug Johnson mentioned the one violation this spring that would have been exempted. There are a lot of changes in the department. On behalf of the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District, he thanked **Nathan Garibay** for the emergency test. Their department is talking to neighborhoods, updating the CWPP with Project Wildfire, and working

with the City of Sisters on codes as well. They need a wildfire hazard map because R237 maps don't show the true hazards.

**David Morman** reported that the Red Cross spring home safety campaign went well. They had a goal of 200 homes and exceeded that. They are also working on preparedness and evacuation planning, smoke detector installation, and personnel changes. Kristin Heath will try and get here. Shawn Kelly moved so the Red Cross is looking for a new Executive Director.

**Doug Johnson** shared that spring was a successful prescribed fire season. They treated over 5000 acres, which is about double what they've accomplished in the past. Some of the acreages were in Wildland-Urban Interface areas. The efforts of this group and others are paying off. Regarding the national fire situation, Alaska is the only place where fires are drawing a lot of resources. He hopes to have the community response plan done soon. He's starting to work on a Two Chief's proposal with the Soil Water Conservation District and NRCS. The new Forest Supervisor, Holly Jewkes will be starting next month.

**Jeff Amaral** updated the group on the fuel reduction project at Archie Briggs Canyon by Riley Ranch as the Homeowners' Association is doing work on their property. His agency is planning for Shevlin Park burns this fall.

**Nathan Garibay** reported that the Sisters Everbridge test went well. Crooked River Ranch is looking at doing a test that would be joint with Jefferson County. 911 is a huge partner in that. The Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning effort should move forward depending on funding from FEMA. They are looking at natural hazards and critical infrastructure. For recovery planning, the Sheriff's Office hired Hayley Riach to engage in building a strong recovery network in Deschutes County.

**Todd Peplin** shared that the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Grant is still in process. It's a three-pronged approach engaging landowners, entities and partners to leverage fund for fuels reduction work. It supports the Joint Chief's initiative, which gets complex. He has been meeting with a working group to write the grant. They are looking at boundaries and scope to see who will be managing the funding. SWCD has taken an interest in forestry. They want to look at private lands whether agriculture or not. They are doing more in south county than they ever have in the past.

**Eric Moeggenberg** said that NRCS is wrapping up the Greater La Pine Basin Joint Chiefs. They are going to write a conservation strategy with Todd's grant to do some more outreach. NRCS needs to see successes as a stand-alone project. He's also working with Warm Springs on conservation implementation strategy. As the local person, he covers Jefferson and Deschutes Counties.

**Tony DeBone** explained that two chiefs and joint chiefs are the same things. The Board of County Commissioners supports Project Wildfire and appreciates the neighborhoods for being involved. The budget committee is looking at the big picture to see what we can be doing better.

**Dan Daugherty** shared that La Pine Fire did send a letter encouraging DRRH6 to do some work. They got a lot of phone calls on it. They have some new employees and are busy with academies.

**Gordon Foster** highlighted the wet spring, and summer. They are fully staffed. The detection center at the Central Oregon Interagency Dispatch Center (COIDC) is staffed now. The Bear Wallow detection camera will be up next week. It's a new progressive system. He encouraged people to check it out if possible. They are waiting and preparing for fire season.

**Gary Githens** reported that 2017 and 2018 were challenging for the insurance industry. They had \$12 billion in payouts in 2018. There is a wildfire risk goal to evaluate the level of fire risk. Carriers do this, especially in California and Colorado. They are sending out non-renewal notices in some areas. Along the same lines, an agency will hire independent firefighting companies as an additional layer. Some are developing more packets about wildfire preparation, and home ignition zones.

**Zechariah Heck** updated the group that a master-planned 85-lot subdivision in the Westside Transect Zone has been submitted. Wildfire standards are built into it. The Community Development Department staff is working with Ed on whether or not the wildfire hazard zone needs to be updated and what that will mean for codes and standards. They may establish a working group.

**Dean Richardson** reported that the UDRC recently updated their Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and are following up on that. He met with Jeff Crawford from the US Forest Service to scope out WUI areas and evacuation routes. Jeff took over for Alex Enna. It looks like it'll be good to work with him even though he's in Alaska on a fire now. The wheels turn slowly on a planning process. They might get work done with categorical exclusions. On private lands, they have two defensible space programs this year. The first is one where people can apply after they hire a contractor and can get reimbursed up to \$500. They have 29 properties signed up and can cover at least 17 more. The Maybelle Clark MacDonald grant helped fund this. UDRC matches the grant with \$5,000 each year. The second is a program for low-income seniors with \$150,000 from that same fund. They are working with Central Oregon Council On Aging for referrals. Neighbors are referring too. They got the first five properties done with First Interstate Bank funding. It looks like there will be more people in south county to help as well. UDRC needs more help in south county with connecting.

**Gerald Griggs** shared that the Ridge at Eagle Crest taking a bit of a breather. They had a fuels reduction project, FireFree, and then dealt with storm damage. They are prioritizing projects.

**Ray Miao** updated on the Deschutes Rural District's construction schedule for two fire stations is a little behind schedule. The Tumalo Station should be done in October and Pilot Butte in November. Woodside Ranch is concerned about the 'elbow and thumb' of Bend's Urban Growth Boundary expansion and what standards will or won't be applied. They want Firewise standards for construction and landscaping. They are still concerned about evacuation routes not being adequate and failing. Woodside Ranch is in a quandary because they are outside the city and new development is in.

**Doug White** said that Riverbend Drive had a stakeholders meeting. They will organize even though they don't have a Homeowners Association. There are 170 lots along Riverbend Drive across from Meadow Camp where the Awbrey Hall fire jumped the river. It is also a County road with a lot of bitterbrush that needs cut.

**Helen Webre** reported on the Woodside Ranch Homeowners survey. Plants and Firewise landscaping were the most important issues raised. Residents like fire prevention research.

They will start fire focused e-newsletter. They want to use Nextdoor to reach people. She encouraged using Nextdoor for Project Wildfire. Jodie shared that she partners with multiple agencies that have government accounts to share messages on Nextdoor. Helen said that people in Woodside Ranch respond fast to issues on Nextdoor.

The meeting was adjourned 9:21 am.

Attachment A – Deschutes County SB360 Ratings Map

Attachment B – South County Owned Lots La Pine Area Map

Attachment C – South County Owned Lots Map