



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

**March 16, 2021 – Steering Committee – Zoom Meeting – 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
DRAFT Minutes**

Steering Committee Members & Staff Present:

X	Ken Kehmna	Fire Rep 1	Redmond Fire Chief
	Gary Marshall	Fire Rep 2	Deschutes Rural Fire Dist. #2
	Dan Daugherty	Fire Rep 3	La Pine Fire Dept.
X	Doug Green	Fire Rep 4	Bend / Sisters Fire
	Vacant	Insurance Industry	
X	Chris Perry	911 Service District	Deschutes County
		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
X	Nathan Garibay	Sheriff's Office - Emergency Mgmt.	Deschutes County
X	David Morman	Citizen Rep	At Large - Red Cross
X	Oliver Tatom	Citizen Rep	At Large
X	Gordon Foster	Oregon Dept. of Forestry	ODF - Unit Forester
	Alex Robertson	COFMS US Forest Service	USFS
	Vacant	OSU Extension Service	OSU Ext
X	Paula Simone	Central Oregon Comm. College	COCC
	Vacant	Environmental Community	
X	Ed Keith, Chair	County Forester	Deschutes County
X	Patti Adair	Commissioner	Deschutes County
X	Nick Ahnen	Marketing	At Large
	Brandon Fogelman	Business	
X	Jessica Laberge	Business	
X	Robert Pohly	Citizen Rep	At Large Retired
X	Boone Zimmerlee	Director	Deschutes County

Public Present:

Ariel Cowan – OSU Extension Services
Bert Neumaier – Tillicum Village
Bob Madden - Retired
Boyd Turner – Resort at Eagle Crest
Craig Letz – Independent Consultant
Greg Bryant – Deschutes River Woods
Jack Hamann – The Parks community
Jane Merrow – North Rim HOA
Jenna Trentadue – Oregon Department of Forestry
Jodie Barram – Ready Set Go
John Saltenberger – Predictive Services
Katherine Hetts – Deschutes National Forest
Kevin Hopper – Wyndemere HOA
Kris Green – Prevention COFMS
Kyle Collins – Deschutes County Associate Planner
Matt Mackey – Oregon Department of Forestry
Nicole Mardell – City of Sisters
Ray Miao – Woodside Ranch/Deschutes Fire District #2
Rick Unzueta – Black Butte Ranch
Rod Bjorvik – Sunriver Fire
Sheldon Rhoden – Prineville BLM
Stacy Lacey – Prevention COFMS
Suzanne Butterfield – Awbrey Park HOA
Tara Bandor – Oregon Department of Forestry
Todd Peplin – Deschutes SWCD
Tony DeBone – Deschutes County Commissioner

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were done through Chat

AGENDA, PAST MINUTES AND UPDATE

Agenda and past minutes were sent out in a previous email. Ed solicited for any input and reminded folks to email Boone or himself directly if they found any needed changes.

Ed- Welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded folks to mute themselves and do introductions through the chat.

Boone – Covered monthly program of work update. The spring 2021 FireFree events are planned with the FireFree.org website updated with dates and flyers for Deschutes and Jefferson Counties. Crook County has not identified dates at this time. Planned for April 15 is a virtual defensible space class that Project Wildfire will be offering. Registration for the class to come out soon. The Story Map for the Firewise sites in Deschutes County has reached a final version and has begun to be shared across networks. Boone gave a quick tour of the map and concluded the monthly program of work update.

Ed – Introduced John Saltenberger and turned it over to him.

Meeting Topic

The Labor Day 2020 Wildfire and Wind Event

John Saltenberger, Meteorologist for Predictive Services at the Northwest Coordination center

John – First discussed the air masses that influence the weather over North America. This included where the air masses originate from, how the strength of the air mass will determine which air mass will dominate the weather pattern that influences us along with the weather associated with the boundary between the air masses.

The cold dry air mass from the central northern portion of North America was the dominant weather feature that influenced the Pacific Northwest on Labor Day 2020. This weather pattern is often associated with bringing Santa Ana winds to southern California. As this boundary between the air masses moves across, we see the greatest winds and greatest fire danger at the boundary. This is what we saw on Labor Day 2020. John showed satellite images of that displayed that boundary moving across the PNW along with smoke from the fires becoming active. After these images, John showed a series of images that further illustrated the severity of the winds and the contrast of pressure gradients between the cold front and the thermal trough that was present off shore. John stated that by far this was the strongest wind gradient we have seen in September in a 50-year period.

This event caused both existing fires to flare up but also an initiation of several new fires. Initiation of new fires is not generally correlated with a passage of a cold front like this one.

Next John covered the fuels conditions and fire danger indices within the Predictive Service Areas that he monitors. All of the fuel moisture were sitting low, not to record level but did become record setting after the weather event had fully settled over the area. Energy Release Component and Burning Index both were quite high but did not get to record levels until the weather pattern was over us. In conclusion, fire danger was high, but not extreme during the initiation of the event.

At this time, John opened for questions.

Dean Richardson – Looks like some of our extreme fire behavior can come from the east, is that correct? John – This is generally a rare wind event and the greatest threat has been cold fronts from the west. There have been a few of these events in the West over the past few years, but do not know if this enough to draw conclusions from.

Greg Bryant – How much of a lead-time would we have in preparation of an event like this?

John – This was a well-forecasted event by several days. This is more of user community question for what they do with the info. Weather forecasters have been doing a good job forecasting these events well ahead of time.

Boyd Turner – With indices reaching so high, should we be looking at another decision point above what we currently have? John – Good question, in Australia after 2009 weather event, they recommended adding another level for these type of events named “code black”. This may

be an opportunity for us to do the same. Boone – This also raises the question of, what we do at that next level, is it additional sharing of information, or is there something we do that is more actionable as a response to the fires.

Commissioner Adair – The fires were incredibly unfortunate. She is quite impressed with the accuracy in forecasting winds and timing of the events. If events like this become a trend this is something we definitely want to keep an eye on for our communities. Making folks aware of the wind events are very important for safety during the fire season. She appreciates the presentation today. John – With weather being repeatable events he is confident that in the future these events will be forecasted even further in advance. In the future, this will be less about the technology and more about what we do with the information.

Jane Merrow - VIA chat – Where do we go to find out about fuel conditions?
https://gacc.nifc.gov/nwcc/predict/fire_fuel.aspx

Ray Miao – If this is a trend, what is causing it? John – “That is beyond my paygrade.” Looking at global trends will need to be done by researchers that study these trends.

Ed – Turned the meeting over to a roundtable discussion with updates.

ROUNDTABLE

Dean Richardson – Upper Deschutes River Communities has had a greater interest in fuels reduction grants. Likely due to the fires this past fire season. Ed – Is your website still up to date with links for the grants? Dean – That is correct, there are two grants available. One in the Upper Deschutes River CWPP area and one in the Greater La Pine CWPP area.
<https://udrc.org/>

Ariel Cowan – OSU extension has a webinar series Fire Aware Fire prepared. This happens on Wednesdays during the lunch hour. This will run through this spring then pick back up in the fall. <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program/online-webinar-guide>

At this time Ed Closed out the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 AM.