



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

**September 21, 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
	Kyle Collins	Community Development Dept.	Deschutes County
	Dan Galecki	Private Forestry	Spin Drift Forestry
	Patti Gentiluomo	HOA Rep	Sunriver HOA
X	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
	Gordon Foster	Oregon Dept. of Forestry	ODF - Unit Forester
	Kevin Stock	COFMS US Forest Service	USFS
	Ariel Cowan	OSU Extension Service	OSU Ext
	Paula Simone	Central Oregon Comm. College	COCC
X	Ed Keith, Chair	County Forester	Deschutes County
	Patti Adair	Commissioner	Deschutes County
	Nick Ahnen	Marketing	At Large
	Brandon Fogelman	Business	
	Jessica Laberge	Business	
X	Robert Pohly	Citizen Rep	At Large Retired
X	Boone Zimmerlee	Director	Deschutes County

**Public Present:**

Bill Boos – Bend Fire and Rescue  
Boyd Turner – Ridge at Eagle Crest  
Chris Paul - OSFM  
Craig Letz – Independent Contractor  
Frank Ammirata – Tillicum Village  
Georgia Hill – Ridge at Eagle Crest  
Greg Bryant – Deschutes River Woods  
Jane Merrow - North Rim HOA  
Jeff Amaral – Starwood  
Jodie Barram – Oregon Living With Fire  
Ray Miao – Woodside Ranch  
Todd Peplin – Deschutes SWCD

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Introductions were 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 as this helps to capture attendance in notes. Ed then turned it over to Boone for a program of work update.

Boone – Provided updates including current progress with Firewise Sites and CWPP process. Boone shared a tool he is using to track the communities that are in process of being recognized. This online tool allows collaboration between agencies and has checklists moving communities through the recognition process. There are currently 19 sites working on recognition with most of those having started the process this year. Big thanks to ODF for their participation this year.

The Greater Bend CWPP is entering the signature phase of the revision process; this is the final step before implementation. Some folks can expect to see emails regarding getting signatures in the coming days. In 2022, the Greater Redmond CWPP will be revised.

Ed –Reminded folks of the grant opportunities for Firewise Sites in Deschutes County and that the applications are due by the end of the month. To learn more visit [www.Deschutes.org/grants](http://www.Deschutes.org/grants)

Ed then transitioned from the monthly update to the monthly topic.

## **Meeting Topic**

### **Labor Day Fires of 2020, 1 Year Later – Nathan Garibay, Deschutes County Emergency Manager and Boone Zimmerlee, Project Wildfire Director**

Boone - Started the discussion by reminding folks of the conditions during the timeframe of Sept 7-9. During those three days, more acres burned than the combined last 36 years along the crest of the Cascades. He discussed the three sides of the fire behavior triangle, fuels, topography and weather. Given this was late summer and the region had been experiencing high temperatures and low humidity fuels were quite dry and available. The weather forecast was for an east wind event. While east wind events are not uncommon, however, this wind event had higher than expected speeds given the time of year. The topography across the Cascade Range also aided in speeding and channeling winds through passes and east west aligned drainages. Adding to the equation of conditions were existing fires that were largely inaccessible.

These conditions led to the fire growth we saw and the impacts to the communities in the path of the fire. The fire event inspired a significant increase in public interest in fuels reduction and what constituted a risk near structures. The fire activity left many feeling there is nothing we can do when the fire exhibits this behavior, however, the last 3 decades of research around defensible space and even looking through photos shows that what we do around homes in the last 100' matters the most in decreasing home ignition regardless of conditions beyond the 100'. Boone showed several photos of structures lost with much of the large trees around the structure remaining. In general, all of these homes had some kind of "wick" that led to the home ignition.

Greg Bryant – How much of these weather events are due to global warming? Boone – It is hard to say, these types of weather events have happened in the past leading to large-scale fires that would often result in entire watersheds burned. I think the question of how often these events continue to happen into the future may be an indicator of global warming. This question is for the most part is outside of my expertise.

Dean Richardson – Is consideration of another level of warning for these events similar to what the Australians have developed? Nathan – This would be a conversation that would need to happen at the national level with local input. The risk would be that we would put out these warning and the event would not result with the expected outcome and credibility would be lost. It would be good to continue with education around red flag warnings and watches.

At this time, Boone turned the discussion over to Nathan.

Nathan – Started his presentation with prefacing the weather warnings that the National Weather Service was putting out and calling the weather event a "high end weather event". This emphasized how out of the ordinary an event with this much potential occurs since "high end weather event" is not a term used during fire season.

Locally we had a fire near La Pine on September 7 before the big fire event west of the cascades. Locally, fire managers and emergency services were ready for aggressive fire behavior given the predicted weather. The fire near La Pine had a large firefighting response and was quickly suppressed; part of the response was planning for a large evacuation area from the start of the fire.

Around 2 AM on Sept 7 Nathan received a call from OSFM informing him about the fire activity and the possibility of folks headed towards Central Oregon. Evacuees were found at gas stations and other locations around Sisters. A temporary evacuation site was set up at the Deschutes County fairgrounds. Red Cross was a great help coordinating the efforts at the fairgrounds.

Nathan took several teams over the pass to begin helping more directly with the efforts. The gas station in Mill City was the command post for evacuating residents. There was no power, communication or fuel. Having a satellite phone was a valuable asset. Eventually fuel was brought in to keep operations moving. A lot of good work was done, but it was hard to operate with limited resources like communication links.

Using a physical map book and taking photos, an evacuation plan was made. Additional resources were ordered along with another satellite link for communications.

Beside the active fire, the wind event also took out many roads and power lines due to trees coming down. The Deschutes County road department came to assist in clearing roads as well and made a big dent in opening roads and overall general safety.

Efforts Deschutes County provided to support the labor day fires throughout Oregon included: temporary evacuation point, support evacuations in Linn and Lane Counties, route clearing in McKenzie Bridge and Blue River (Roads), support displaced populations from 8 counties, EOC support for Lane County, law enforcement support for Lane and Jackson Counties, Road Department support for Jackson County, and recovery support for multiple counties.

As Nathan rounded out the discussion his key takeaways were: plan for the unexpected, communication challenges, when you are having a bad day...other communities may also be having a bad day, responders & key personnel will be impacted, look for opportunities to combine coordination entities, recovery does not look the same...and it takes a really long time, lift where you stand.

Todd Peplin – Asked how did or would you organize volunteers. Nathan – Volunteers need to be vetted and having those volunteers work with existing organizations that are set up for volunteers is best. Red Cross does a great job at doing this and working directly with the emergency resources. Getting volunteers to the right place and getting people to help in the most meaningful way can be a challenge.

Greg Bryant – Asked with areas that were not able to dispense gas, are they working to solve this issue? Nathan – There are several initiatives to get the fuel out of the ground in the case of emergencies. The Cascadia earthquake would be an event that this would a large issue. A reimbursement program is one of the options being looked at among others. As an example, Deschutes County brought fuel over to Mill City to continue operations there.

At this time, Ed turned the meeting over to round table updates.

## **ROUNDTABLE**

Jeff Amaral – Moved on from Bend Parks and Rec and now represents Starwood Estates north of Bend. They have been quite active lately in fuels reduction throughout the community.

David Morman – After a long pause due to COVID, Red Cross is starting to canvas the area knocking on doors asking if folks are interested in having smoke detectors installed. Nationally volunteers are being held within their regions for local emergencies.

Nathan Garibay – [www.OrAlerts.gov](http://www.OrAlerts.gov) is a new system for alerts through Everbridge. If you go to the OR Alerts site, it will take you to the Deschutes Alerts System. Either website does the same function.

Dean Richardson – The UDRC has maxed out all the money they have reserved for defensible space. UDRC is receiving more money from BNSF and will continue the program into the next year. [www.UDRC.org](http://www.UDRC.org)

Boone – Brought attention to the recently created video featuring Craig Letz and the Discovery West community discussing how they are addressing defensible space. Craig – The discovery west neighborhood does not always have the 30' of space and has presented challenges in designing the landscaping. Ed – Encourage all to watch the video. It is nice to see a community built from the start with defensible space in mind.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dx0EJWAyKo8&ab\\_channel=DiscoveryWestBend](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dx0EJWAyKo8&ab_channel=DiscoveryWestBend)

At this time, Ed thanked everyone for joining and closed out the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 a.m.