



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

**October 19, 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.
	Doug Green	Fire Rep 4	Bend / Sisters Fire
	Vacant	Insurance Industry	
	Chris Perry	911 Service District	Deschutes County
X	Kyle Collins	Community Development Dept.	Deschutes County
	Dan Galecki	Private Forestry	Spin Drift Forestry
X	Patti Gentiluomo	HOA Rep	Sunriver HOA
	Dave Gibson	HOA Rep	Black Butte Ranch HOA
X	Dean Richardson	HOA Rep	Upper Deschutes River Communities
	Nathan Garibay	Sheriff's Office - Emergency Mgmt.	Deschutes County
X	David Morman	Citizen Rep	At Large - Red Cross
	Oliver Tatom	Citizen Rep	At Large
X	Gordon Foster	Oregon Dept. of Forestry	ODF - Unit Forester
X	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
X	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:

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
Jodie Barram – Oregon Living With Fire
Shawn Jaca – COFMS Deputy Fire Staff
Stacy Lacey – COFMS, Fire Prevention
Todd Peplin – Deschutes SWCD
Tom Mooney – Redmond Fire and Rescue
Tony DeBone – County Commissioner

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 FireFree fall event, The Greater Bend CWPP updates and current progress of Firewise Communities.

The fall half price FireFree event will run Oct 30 – Nov 6 at Knott Landfill. Deschutes Recycling, part of Republic Services, hosts this event. Flyer and additional information is on the FireFree.org website.

The Greater Bend CWPP is in the signature phase of the revision process; this is the final step before implementation. The plan was signed by the Board of County Commissioners and will be signed by The City of Bend, Oregon Department of Forestry, Deschutes Rural Fire District #2 and Bend Fire and Rescue in the near future.

Ed – Gave a quick update on the discretionary grant funds given out to Firewise communities. At this time if you had applied for a grant and have not heard back from Ed, reach out to him directly. Ed.Keith@deschutes.org

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

Meeting Topic

A look back at the 2021 fire season. Kevin Stock – Fire and Aviation Staff Officer, Central Oregon Fire Management Service, and Gordon Foster - Prineville/Sisters Unit Forester, Oregon Department of Forestry.

Kevin Stock, Fire Staff COFMS - Kevin started his discussion outlining the average number of starts along with average acres burned across the Central Oregon dispatch area. While the season had record setting drought conditions, Central Oregon was below average for fire activity. Average acres burned were ~65,000ac and for 2021, Central Oregon had ~9,000ac burned.

The reason for the lower number of acres was largely due to less ignition sources. In 2021, Central Oregon had one major lightning event, which was less than the average number of events in a season. Through much of the season additional resources were staged at the Redmond fairgrounds to increase the number of fire resources available in anticipation of an active fire season. A majority of fire starts were in the lower elevations where there is easier access allowing for quick response. In addition, Public Use Restrictions went in to effect early in the season reducing the number of human caused fires.

Regionally, across Oregon and Washington, the fire season was busy. This year broke a record of number of days at the highest Preparedness Level, PL5, for the region.

Gordon Foster, ODF Prineville Unit Forester – Gordon displayed a graph of the Energy Release Component (ERC) to show trends of the season. Starting in May ERC had already departed from average and began to set historical maximums for the analysis period. There was a slight dip near the end of the May, but ERC quickly returned to setting record highs. On June 24, ODF went into Regulated Use limiting activities on ODF protected private lands. June 30 additional requirements went into effect for industrial timber operations.

For the Sisters sub-unit, Deschutes and Western Jefferson Counties, there were three large fires that occurred with the Grandview being the largest at 6,032 acres. Grandview fire is currently under investigation. Prior to fire season they did have the Bull Springs fire in March that was 211ac caused by debris burning; for ODF the fire season started on June 1st. Human caused fires 71% of their fires. Darlene fire in La Pine on July 13 burned 686 acres. After the Darlene fire, there were no large fires for ODF in Deschutes County. As the season moderated, Additional Restrictions for forest operations terminated on Sept 14, Regulated Use terminated on Oct 1 and fire season terminated Oct 16.

Even with the fire season terminated, current indices put much of Central Oregon between moderate and high with potential to have fire activity.

Gordon opened the conversation to questions.

Boone- Asked what additional resources ODF brought on as the fire season started. Gordon – Funding was given to ODF to bring firefighters on earlier this year and to staff engines earlier than usual. There were also additional aircraft made available such as air tankers and helicopters. Kevin – Since the region shares much of the resources, there were few available to have here locally as everyone in the region was busy.

Boone – Were the OSFM resources staged at the fairgrounds utilized during the fire season?
Ken Kehmna – The resources were used locally on a fire along with the Single Engine Air Tankers (SEATS) that ODF had at the airport.

Question VIA chat – Are there any lessons learned this year? Kevin – Having resources available at the fairgrounds was very efficient in using the resources. With COVID, this will not likely be the standard in the future and they will need to find another location to stage resources. Having resources available as things continue to burn more intensely with each year, this staging will continue to be important. Gordon – Going into the future, it continues to be important to have community understanding and resilience.

Patti Adair – Asked if the resources staged at the fairgrounds rotated through the season with different folks from different areas. Chief Kehmna – OSFM resources were staged twice this summer at the fairgrounds. The first time was just for 3 days and next time was planned for a week each time were different folks, eventually resources from Utah were brought in as well. These resources ultimately ended up on the Grandview fire.

Greg Bryant – What is planned for prescribed fire locally. Kevin – Burning has been somewhat slow due public sensitivity from smoke after all the smoke this past summer, and firefighters have been quite fatigued after the long fire season. Right now, conditions are good for broadcast burning and they will be doing some on all three districts and soon transitioning to pile burning. As long as COVID allows, the spring will be back to broadcast burning.

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

ROUNDTABLE

Bob Pohly, Mountain High – Happy to announce they were a recipient of the county grants and thanked the County Commissioners. They were awarded \$2,300 this year, last year they were awarded \$2,000 and had invested \$6,500 of their own funds. This will be a good start to fuels reduction for next spring.

Patti Gentiluomo, Sunriver – VIA Chat – Working on ladder fuels reduction program and continue to do property inspections.

Chris Paul, OSFM – This is his last meeting for him with Project Wildfire. OSFM has continued to build out their program with this he will be working in Eastern Oregon. Heather Miller will become the Fire Reduction Specialist in Central Oregon for OSFM. She starts November 1 with OSFM and will be at the November meeting.

Georgia Hill, Eagle Crest – Thanked Commissioners for grant money and will be using to enhance their FireFree activities in the spring.

Gordon Foster, ODF – With senate bill 762 in process there are many moving parts inside ODF including an additional 20 million for landscape scale restoration work. Gordon plans to share information as it comes available. ED – Board of Forestry is to set WUI definition soon.

Ken Kehmna, Redmond Fire and Rescue – Introduced Tom Mooney as the new fire marshal for Redmond Fire and Rescue. Tom will be the Redmond Fire and Rescue representative at the Project Wildfire meetings going forward.

Patti Adair, County Commissioner – Hoping to continue to plan events like FireFree into the future and continue to hold the event for extended periods.

Shawn Jaca, COFMS – Introduced himself as the Deputy Fire Staff for Central Oregon Fire Services.

Todd Peplin, SWCD – Staying busy with Joint Chiefs, Buttes to Basin, near and around Sisters with inventory work. They are also looking at ways to assist folks in South Deschutes County.

Tony DeBone, County Commissioner – Great to hear the grant funding is being put to use improving fire preparedness. The smoke over the summer was difficult, hopefully that will not be the trend going into the future. His community also received a grant for fuels reduction. Mt Bachelor is putting in a hog fuel boiler. This will take wood chips to feed a boiler heating system for Mt Bachelor.

Dean Richardson, Upper Deschutes Communities – Hopes we continue on the path to more fire resilient forests and fire adapted communities.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 a.m.