



Wildland Fire Leadership Council

May 16th, 2016, 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Washington DC

USDA Whitten Building, Room 104A

Meeting Notes

Meeting Purpose:

To collectively discuss Risk-Based Response heading into the 2016 Western Fire Season, to understand how each partner may approach the issue, to understand the wildfire potential in the 2016 wildfire season, and make decisions as necessary around the four WFLC priorities, addressing strategic issues as appropriate.

Action Items and Next Steps:

- See next steps for each issue area

Attendees:

Council Members or alternates: Robert Bonnie (USDA), Kris Sarri (DOI), Tom Tidwell (FS), Jim Karels (NASF), Peggy O'Dell (NPS), Erik Litzenberg (IAFC), Vern Stearns (ITC), George Geissler (NGA), Sue Phillips (USGS) Mike Zupko (Executive Manager), Steve Guertin (FWS), Patti Blankenship (FEMA/USFA), Tami Defries (BLM), David Koch (BIA), Dan Shoun (NACO)

Partners: Maureen Sullivan (DoD), Cecilia Clavet, Chris Topik, Erica Goldman

Support Staff: Jim Hubbard, Bryan Rice, Caitlyn Pollihan, Dan Olsen, Harry Humbert, Chris Marklund, Juan Espinosa, David McCoy, Rick Obernesser, Jeremy West, Kent York, Bob Eaton, Gary Schiff, Maureen Brooks, Kristin Merony, Thomas LaCrosse

National Strategy Committee: Rich Cowger, Patti Blankenship,

Phone participants: Katie Lighthall, Gary Wood, Larry Mastic, Jim Erickson, Joe Stutler, Brad Simpkins, Brad Washa, Pete Anderson

Meeting Summary:

Robert Bonnie and Kristen Sarri welcomed everyone to the meeting and had everyone introduce themselves. Bonnie then turned the meeting over to Mike Zupko to review the agenda, meeting purpose and goals of the meeting.

Risk-Based Response

Objective: To evaluate engagement potential with relation to Cohesive Strategy response principles and consider opportunities to build off the dialogues initiated by the Forest Service around risk-based response.

Chief Tidwell opened the issue by giving a brief background on the leader's intent behind the Life First engagements. Vicki Christensen then provided an overview of the initial engagements and introduced the concept of the 'Wildland Fire System.' She framed the discussion around the intention statement, "Continue to improve the wildland fire system to one that more reliably protects responders and the public, sustains communities, and conserved the land."
(ATTACHMENT I)

Discussion: WFLC members discussed ways individually and collectively they can approach risk-based response.

- Discussion opened on feedback on where we go from here? What does it mean to you, your agency, etc.? What are some different approaches? What are you already engaged in?
- For many of us who are in the "all risk" environment, this concept is not new. Managing risk is something we are familiar with. Responders – WUI/Wildland is an extraordinarily complex environment. Huge opportunity to engage others as we create a risk map.
- Doctrinal approach rather than rule-based.
- Data sharing is critical, leveraging our partners is also critical.
- Reviews and using more deliberate learning to build capacity.
- We need to make sure we do not transfer the risk to other partners.
- Tidwell wrapped up with a request for help and follow up on the Cohesive Strategy implementation. We are all in this together. We need more fire in the system.
- The intent is to get this concept ingrained in organizational culture.

Next Steps:

- Continue to facilitate discussion at the leadership level and direct engagement around the three opportunities the Forest Service has identified:
 - Facilitated learning analysis (Significant Incident Review)
 - Learning reviews that are coordinated with response protocols
 - "Hard Truths" developed around daylighting unnecessary exposure and ways to reduce exposure.
- Expand discussions with those members that represent organizations regarding how education through their respective organizations can help to expand and inform this discussion.
- Explore opportunities between agency and bureau specific intersections – shared learning between federal agencies.

- Provide continued information to WFLC members to allow individual determination on how they want to engage – building shared learning opportunities and information resources are only two of the opportunities. It can be nationally, regionally or locally led.

2016 Western Fire Season Outlook

Bryan Rice opened the issue by giving a presentation on the western wildland fire season outlook highlighting the May 2016 National Significant Fire Potential Outlook, fire season progression, review of fires and acres burned to date, 2016 Federal firefighting resources, and key messages.

Key Messages:

- Safety of the public and our firefighters remains paramount.
- We are prepared.
- Wildfire knows no boundaries. Together, we can do more.
- International agreements are in place if we need them.
- The protection of human life is our single, overriding priority.
- Fire-adapted communities are essential.
- New framework for funding suppression operations is needed.

Next Steps: Intended to inform each WFLC member of wildfire potential and help to build from the risk-based discussion and elevate each member to a similar level around thinking about the western fire season and appropriate leadership engagement points and messaging.

WFLC Priority Issues

(reference WFLC briefing paper – strategic priority short and mid-term – ATTACHMENT II)

Landscape Level Collaboration

Issue: Increase the number and area of wildfire resilient and healthy landscapes, resilient communities, and efficiency of wildland fire response by expanding cross-landscape, cross-ownership collaboration.

Zupko led the update for this priority. The opportunities revolve around four primary areas: construction of a virtual center of excellence, developing a monitoring framework, establishing and leveraging/growing pilot projects and building cross-boundary engagement training.

Environmental Compliance

Issue: Conduct project planning and analysis in a timely, coordinated and efficient manner to expedite fuels management, restoration and maintenance of healthy, resilient landscapes.

Zupko led the update for this priority. The opportunities revolve around the construction of a virtual center of excellence to compile and sharing best practices, to enhance communications and shared learning and ultimately expedite processes.

Reducing Risks to Communities

Issue: Build a suite of enabling conditions for the creation and enhancement of fire-adapted communities across the country.

Erik Litzenberg led the update for this priority. The opportunities revolve around four primary areas: reviewing policies, programs, and grant funding for mitigation (and further leveraging), consistent messaging, risk-based mapping and addressing the challenge that risk-reduction near communities is a national challenge addressed locally.

Smoke Management and Air Quality

Issue: Minimize air quality impacts from wildland fire over the long-term, improve the resiliency of landscapes to wildfire, and increase the health and safety of communities, firefighters and the public by using fire as a land management tool.

Zupko led the update for this priority. The opportunities revolve around four primary areas: Enhanced relationship building with EPA and regulatory agencies, both nationally and regionally; determining joint research and data needs between the regulatory and land management communities; unified messaging nationally around prescribed fire and smoke management; and engagement in training sessions and workshops to expand the understanding of the science and applicability of research to the issue.

Next Steps on the priority issues:

- The council was in agreement with the proposed opportunities for each priority and encouraged the task groups to move forward with the ideas, funding dependent.

Public Comment

- Chris Topik with TNC raised a few considerations for WFLC involvement:
 - What is WFLC doing to reach out to additional sectors?
 - How can cross-boundary priority setting be better coordinated?
 - Is there a joint document or way for messaging across the federal government on key issues around wildfire, including budgets?

Zupko will follow up with Topik on these items and look for ways to intersect with other initiatives.

Administrative Items

- WFLC MOU – The final draft is being circulated around the legal departments of the four departments that will sign the MOU (USDA, DOI, DHS and DoD). Zupko reminded everyone that DoD has been added to the MOU to bring in both the military operations perspective as well as the installations and environment perspective. Also, Zupko should be receiving a letter from NLC confirming the mayor of Colorado Springs to fill the open seat.
- National Strategic Committee – Patti Blankenship reported the following:

- NSC is planning a meeting around the September WFLC meeting. Committee will be drafting report on CS strategic alignment evaluation.
- John Ruhs has resigned his Natural Resource Management position on the NSC. BLM nominated Kevin Oliver, District Manager, Utah BLM for the SME seat. **WFLC CONFIRMED** this appointment.
- White House WUI Forum – Will be held Wednesday following this WFLC meeting. All WFLC members have been invited. Zupko will be working with the National Security Council on any items stemming from the WH meeting that can be undertaken by WFLC or coordinated with the WH NSC.

Closeout

- Next meeting is targeted to be in early September out west to look at both tribal issues and range/sage issues. Zupko will send out a poll to determine the best week. The following meeting in DC is being targeted for early December and will most likely be structured around the transition and strategic engagement of incoming leadership.
- Closing comments from Bonnie and Sarri - Thanked everyone for their input, efforts and participation.