



Wildland Fire Leadership Council Meeting
June 6, 2023, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time
Washington DC
Hall of States, 444 North Capitol St, NW
Suites 233-235
Washington, DC 20001

Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES:

Council Members or Alternates: Joan Mooney (DOI), Meryl Harrell (USDA), Johnna Blackhair (BIA), Mike Need (BLM), Jonah Seifer (WGA), Erika Sasser (EPA), Nicole LaRosa (FEMA-USFA), Erik Svendsen (CDC), Mitch Ellis (FWS), Jim Durglo (ITC), Jennifer Flynn (NPS), Laura McCarthy (NGA), Erik Litzenberg (IAFC), George Geissler (NASF), Matt Kinglsey and Paul Andres (NACo), and David Applegate (USGS), Jaelith Hall-Rivera and Jerry Perez (USFS), Yucel Orrs (NLC), Anne Jewell (DoD), Mike Zupko (WFLC Executive Director), RSC representatives, senior staff and other interested participants were also in attendance.

OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair, Joan Mooney, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, DOI, Co-Chair, Meryl Harrell, Deputy Under Secretary, USDA and Executive Director, Mike Zupko, WFLC, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Zupko asked everyone to go around the room and introduce themselves.

AGENDA REVIEW AND ADMINISTRATION

- WFLC Executive Director Mike Zupko reviewed the meeting agenda, intentions, and goals.
- The March 15, 2023, minutes from Klamath Falls, OR, were unanimously approved.

NOTE: *Potential next steps in each section were identified as opportunities to consider going forward. There was some general agreement, though not necessarily consensus, and will be considered through additional discussions between and during the next WFLC convening.*



Invasives and Wildfire – Intersection of work between WFLC and the National Invasives Species Council

Objective: Understand and engage in the shared workplan/roadmap and build out leadership priorities and support for the next year.

Stas Burgiel (NISC Executive Director) presented a power point (ATTACHMENT I) covering the following items:

- Increased insight into the joint work between WFLC and NISC around the intersection of invasives and wildland fire.
- Joint prioritization for focus and energy of both WFLC and NISC member organizations and staff over the next year.
- Further linkages with groups external to WFLC and NISC memberships to further the joint vision of the roadmap.
- Opportunity for increased commitment by leadership to further progress the work as identified in the joint roadmap and communicate both internally and externally.

Burgiel provided ATTACHMENT II outlining potential next steps and engagement points. There was conversation on how federal members can support a data request to identify ongoing activities that align with those priorities and how can WFLC and NISC work with partners to develop a framework or common vision that helps align federal and non-federal efforts on invasive species and wildland fire. There was also a discussion around considering if the level of federal funding is appropriate to address the issue and if gaining a better understanding of current agency funding would help better inform the need.

Potential Next Steps:

- There was general agreement on the need for a data call to advance regional engagement, though concern was expressed over timing and resources necessary to adequately pull together. Zupko and Burgiel will work with each agency to further define what data needs to be harvested and integrated into these decision points.
- Each WFLC member will identify a point of contact for the joint task team.
- The Forest Service requested a leadership level briefing.
- Zupko and Burgiel will tie together with the Western Invasives initiative (WGA).
- There was consensus around the need to identify a common vision/common communication around how we discuss this issue (internally and externally), especially to rural communities/public health. Zupko and Lighthall will work with NISC to bring together a team to evaluate.



CS Addendum Prioritized Implementation Challenge: Science, Data and Technology

Objective: Collective understanding and expansion of WFLC action in this area to coordinate and better utilize and integrate science, data, indigenous knowledge and technology into decision-making for fire, land and community managers.

David Applegate (USGS) opened the session discussing the importance of coordination in this space and the unique position WFLC can and should play in that coordination as we further define the shared challenges.

Paul Steblein, USGS, David Green, NASA. Danny Lee, USFS, presented a power point (ATTACHMENT III) surrounding the following items:

- Understanding the breadth of interest and knowledge around wildland fire science, data and technology and the need for better coordination and prioritization and dissemination.
- Development of strategies and prioritization for WFLC members collectively to build a pathway to overcome gaps and strategically coordinate the needs and opportunities to better utilize SDT.
- Identification of additional partners and collaborators.
- Proposals surrounding joint actions/short- and medium-term activities that WFLC can take to move the issue forward.

ATTACHMENT IV captured many of the proposed actions discussed by the presenters.

Potential Next Steps:

- Consider the strategic cohesion it would take to create more efficient and stronger coordination across science, data and technology spaces within wildland fire. Also consider the opportunity to roll-up effective decision support tools to share across the membership.
- Assess what a governance and/or coordination structure could entail to make engagement around SDT more efficient for both WFLC members as well as others operating in this space (including private companies, research etc.).
- Evaluate the potential for WFLC to host a workshop in this space to further define and identify the immediate needs for coordination, including a collective vision for working across SDT.
- Convene an informal group to dive deeper into those items identified above as well as others addressed in the ATTACHMENT IV and define the strategic space where WFLC should operate around SDT.
- Consider what are initial communications opportunities WFLC should be developing to facilitate a more coordinated approach to SDT.



CS Addendum Prioritized Implementation Challenge: **Proactive Use of Fire**

Objective: Collective understanding and expanded WFLC action to significantly increase the proactive use of fire (prescribed fire and managed fire for resource objectives) across the country to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire.

Marek Smith, TNC, Melanie Colavito, SWERI, Darry Jones, SCFC/CPFC and Jim Durglo, ITC, present a PowerPoint (ATTACHMENT V) and distributed ATTACHMENTS VI (WFLC paper on implementation challenge), ATTACHMENT VII (SWERI Managed Fire paper) and ATTACHMENT VIII (recommendations).

Potential Next Steps:

- Convene a small group to further define WFLC's role to utilize leaders' intent to fill gaps and build out common communications around use of proactive fire. Bridge gaps and facilitate information flow. Intersect with WFLC Comms group.
 - Identify potential coordinated messaging across the WFLC membership, and with key partners (e.g. TNC, SWERI, Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils)
 - Identify terminology with opportunities for consistency as it relates to "managed fire" and related messaging.
 - Consider common reporting methodology to gain a better understanding of fire starts and management approaches.
- Tie with other WFLC communications opportunities WFLC to facilitate a more coordinated approach to increasing the use of proactive fire.
- Draft a MOU for consideration by leadership between WFLC and the Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils that can leverage the network of councils across the country on joint communications and expanded data collection.
- Continue to facilitate conversations around the WFLC priority issue of Enhancing Smoke Management and Air Quality (joint messaging, intersect with public health, understanding data nuances/gaps etc.).



CS Addendum Prioritized Implementation Challenge: Education, Communications and Marketing

Objective: Collective understanding and expanded WFLC action in this area to overcome the challenges to utilize education, communications and marketing to inform stakeholders and decision-makers about the Cohesive Strategy and its implementation, the WFLC efforts around each of the five challenges to CS Implementation, and WFLC operations/activities in general as an organization of national wildland fire leadership.

Katie Lighthall, W-WFLC and Chelsea Ealum, SGSF presented a PowerPoint (ATTACHMENT IX) discussing the gaps and initial communications that WFLC needs around the Cohesive Strategy addendum, the integration and education strategy as well as to help facilitate a more coordinated approach to both the SDT and Use of Proactive Fire priorities. Following up from the two previous discussions around the need for WFLC to increase building of joint communications messaging and materials for WFLC membership to be able to utilize, the following opportunities were identified.

Potential Next Steps:

- Convene interested parties to further evaluate a communications committee that can coordinate across WFLC membership.
- Consider what defining consistency in language and communications to the broader community around joint leadership intent may look like and the opportunities to better coordinate.
- Consider how to further weave in messaging around public health.

WFLC Intersect with Wildland Fire Commission and Interagency Working Group – Status Update

Annie Schmidt and Tyson Bertone-Riggs, Wildfire Commission and Jenna Knobloch, IWG Commission provided an overview of the work being done by the IWG and the Wildland Fire Commission. The Commission work is still on schedule for a mid-September release. WFLC will work with the Commission on those items that will be relevant for WFLC to implement at the agency and organizational level going into the Fall and evaluate findings that can be utilized in common messaging going forward. IWG continues to be hyper focused on smoke and post fire, looking to build ways to further connect federal programs in an efficient manner.



Misc. Items

- Next WFLC field meeting – The target is middle October (17 & 18) for a field meeting to be hosted by NPS at Yosemite National Park. Most likely the following meeting will either be virtual in December, or the middle of January in DC.
- TNC Hosted Cohesive Strategy Partner Briefing Prep – The group discussed and prepped for the briefing that was immediately following the WFLC meeting with additional partners.
- All Lands Wildfire Resilience Framework and proposed convening/workshop – Zupko and Tom Fry (NFF) discussed the upcoming WFLC All-Lands Wildfire Resilience Framework Workshop in late September for the purpose of aligning an overall coordination structure or “Framework” that will accelerate Cohesive Strategy implementation through increased coordination across multiple stakeholders and developing an All-Lands Planning and Implementation Playbook that informs and supports strategic plans to reach landscape-scale outcomes and wildfire risk reduction goals on federal, state, Tribal, local, NGO and private lands. A steering committee is being formed to lead the development of both the workshop, and what will be an ongoing coordinated framework.
- The co-chairs expressed gratitude to Zupko and Lighthall for all the work that went into planning the meeting and creation of the briefing materials as well as the prep work and execution for the rollout of the CS Addendum.