

**West Region Wildfire Council  
Meeting Minutes  
5/14/15**

***Meeting Attendance***

	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
<b>1</b>	Angell	Don	Montrose County
<b>2</b>	Austin	Tom	Log Hill Fire
<b>3</b>	Barth	Chris	WRWC
<b>4</b>	Bennett	John	Telluride Fire
<b>5</b>	Block	Sheridan	Ouray County Plaindealer
<b>6</b>	Brack	Ben	GVFD
<b>7</b>	Cinnamon	Sophia	WRWC
<b>8</b>	Conway	Bill	Arrowhead Fire
<b>9</b>	Ellis	Steve	DFPC
<b>10</b>	Falk	Lilia	WRWC
<b>11</b>	Ferchau	Hugo	Gunnison
<b>12</b>	Fritz	Doug	Hotchkiss Fire
<b>13</b>	Gomez	Jamie	WRWC
<b>14</b>	Gottlieb	Paul	MCSP
<b>15</b>	Hibl	David	Montrose County Posse
<b>16</b>	Latta	Trevor	Ouray Fire Protection District
<b>17</b>	Lewis	Brandon	BLM
<b>18</b>	Mathewson	Tim	RMACC
<b>19</b>	Mattivi	Junior	Ouray County
<b>20</b>	McDonough	Tom	GVFD
<b>21</b>	Odom	Luke	DFPC
<b>22</b>	Oxford	Ross	NPS
<b>23</b>	Rist	Jodi	CSFS
<b>24</b>	Rogers	John	Log Hill Fire
<b>25</b>	Shelby	Austin	CSFS
<b>26</b>	Spritzer	Dennis	City of Gunnison
<b>27</b>	Tisdell	Ben	Ouray County
<b>28</b>	Weese	Allen	MFPD
<b>29</b>	Wright	Jeff	Delta County

**Objective/Purpose**

The Council gathered to discuss the following:

**Introductions**

Lilia Falk facilitated the meeting and initiated a round of introductions.

## Approval of Minutes

The Minutes from April's meeting were approved as written.

## Presentation from Tim Mathewson, Fire Meteorologist with the Rocky Mountain Coordination Center, on the 2015 Fire Outlook

To view the presentation, go to:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B73\\_1AQQokPxeElOQTNobU5fTDg/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B73_1AQQokPxeElOQTNobU5fTDg/view?usp=sharing)

To view current, up to date fire weather outlook information go to:

<http://www.rmacc.info/>

Tim started out his presentation providing a disclaimer about the strength, accuracy and utility of predictive services. Tim went on to discuss the typical fire seasons in Colorado and general considerations regarding wildfire outlook. Tim explained that there are three distinct fire seasons, which can be seen in data of fire start occurrences. The first season is generally referred to as the "Pre-Green Spring Time Window" and occurs in March / April. The second fire season is known as the "Pre-Monsoon Fire Season" which peaks, on average, around mid-July. While the peak of fire starts is usually in mid-July, the largest fires have usually occurred in June. Tim mentioned that one of the best ways to understand current and future fire weather outlook is to compare various measurements associated with fire weather with benchmark years.

Overall temperatures, over a long period of time, play a key role in understanding wildfire potential. Since January, the west has experienced warmer than average temperatures, with a lot of variability. In Western Colorado, we have seen higher temperatures than normal.

Another factor to consider is the number of days where there are unusually strong winds combined with unusually low relative humidity (RH). This is known as the Wind-RH Index. In a location near Colorado Springs, the number of Wind-RH days thus far is significantly less than for the same period in 2012 (a benchmark high fire severity year). In a location in NW Colorado (Lodore) has actually experience more Wind-RH days than for the same period in 2012. There is a fair amount of localized variability when considering the number of combined Wind-RH days.

Western Colorado has experienced some pretty warm, dry and windy days though recent precipitation events may have curtailed that a little bit. The 30 day precipitation (PCP) picture shows western Colorado at or above average while the 60 day average shows numerous locations to still be below average.

The Drought Monitor depicts drought intensity over the region. When comparing 2014 to 2015, the map demonstrates that much of our region is experiencing drier conditions. California is experiencing one of the most extreme droughts on record, with most of the state in the highest category.

Tim then went in to a lengthy discussion about the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) and, to a lesser extent, the Madden Julian Oscillation (MJO). (An interesting description of these oscillations can be viewed here:

<http://www.who.edu/main/topic/el-nino-other-oscillations>) Tim discussed the numerous

interactions between these ocean temperature systems, high and low pressure air masses (and their relative locations) and the weather patterns that we experience.

In general, the fire weather outlook at this point, for our part of western Colorado is looking to be about normal (average) with a trend towards below average.

Steve Ellis mentioned that the S290 course is a great one for folks to take to learn about all of these factors when considering fire management relative to wildfire outlook.

### **Training Resources**

West Region Wildfire Council has put up three links, on the Resources page of its website, where people can go to view training opportunities. Go to [www.Cowildfire.org/resources](http://www.Cowildfire.org/resources) to view those links.

Drew added that there is an upcoming Resource Mobilization Workshop (May 29).

### **Recent Wildfire Outreach Events**

The West Region Wildfire Council, in coordination with a number of other agencies and personnel, recently held two successful wildfire awareness outreach events. The events were in Log Hill and Norwood.

### **Round Robin Updates**

Steve Ellis provided a spreadsheet of aviation resource costs. DFPC has a three helicopters among its other aviation resources. DFPC will be utilizing a Technical Air Decision Support System (TADS) to determine optimal locations for staging these resources.

Austin provided an update to the Bostwick Park project, and invited everyone to take a look at the project from the road heading up to Black Canyon National Park.

Jodi Rist said that she is working closely with the City of Ouray as well as Ouray County to develop a project to manage forest health, spur forest resiliency and reduce wildfire hazards on City of Ouray owned and privately held lands in around the Ouray community. Jodi is currently looking for grant funds to assist with these efforts.

Bill Conway explained that their community will be deploying MCH packs (pheromone based Douglas-fir anti-aggregate packets) on trees throughout Arrowhead. Bill is available to talk with anyone about this program.

Chris Barth announced that Governor Hickenlooper signed in to law two bills, one re-authorizing the Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Program (WRRG) and the other setting up a fund for the Department of Public Health and Safety to train, equip and supervise crews comprised of veterans to help them gain experience in forest management and projects that reduce wildfire risk.

The next meeting will be June 11, 2015 at 1:00pm.