

**West Region Wildfire Council  
Meeting Minutes  
12/11/14**

**Meeting Attendance**

	Last Name	First	Affiliation
1	Angell	Don	Montrose County
2	Austin	Tom	Log Hill Fire
3	Barth	Chris	BLM
4	Beckhardt	Dave	Log Hill Fire
5	Bennett	John	Telluride Fire
6	Brack	Ben	WRWC
7	Davis	Michael	BLM
8	Falk	Lilia	WRWC
9	Falk	Sheridan	Ouray County Plaindealer
10	Fowler	Clay	USFS
11	Gelsomini	Jim	Arrowhead Fire
12	Gomez	Jamie	WRWC
13	Marby	Ron	Ouray County
14	Mattivi	Junior	Ouray County
15	Oxford	Ross	NPS
16	Shelby	Austin	CSFS
17	Stahle	Alan	OFPD

**Objective/Purpose**

The Council gathered to discuss the following:

**Introductions**

Jamie Gomez facilitated this meeting and initiated a round of introductions.

**Approval of Minutes**

Prior to approving the minutes, a short discussion ensued regarding the wildfire/ homeowner insurance topic. Jim Gelsomini provided some information about an Arrowhead resident that received some information from Karon Jacobs of Western Group Insurance regarding his Allstate insurance policy and the wildfire hazard on their property. Jim noted that the Arrowhead resident didn't feel that he had received adequate information and may be dropped from Allstate coverage. John Bennett noted that he has received upwards of fifty different letters from homeowners in San Miguel County regarding Allstate Insurance, wildfire and the potential for policy holder non-renewal. John noted that these landowners were being provided information about what they needed to do to satisfy Allstate's risk reduction objective's for their particular property. Alan Stahle noted the need for serious complaints and grievances to be brought directly to the state insurance commissioner. Jamie Gomez noted that, after the last meeting, he decided to follow up with CoreLogic to learn more about this company , the products and services that they provide, and to invite a CoreLogic representative to a future WRWC meeting to provide the group with additional

detailed information regarding their role in the homeowner's insurance industry. Jamie asked the group to provide input on what kinds of things that the WRWC would like to learn about during this presentation, which has been scheduled for the March 2015 meeting. Some ideas included: a detailed discussion of how their wildfire risk analysis tool fits in to the bigger picture of how insurance providers make decisions regarding individual homeowner's insurance policies; a detailed discussion of how CoreLogic determines risk; how CoreLogic takes in to account a variety of factors that influence risk such as fire regime; how CoreLogic weight's the various factors that go in to a risk determination for a particular property. After all of this discussion, the minutes were approved as written.

### **WRWC Work Planning & Information Sharing Session**

#### **Ideas for future monthly meeting topics:**

- Local Contractor Appreciation & Equipment Demo
- June – Fire Restriction Criteria
- October – Current wildfire risk social science research findings
- Wildfire response resource management, possibly in December 2015
- July – CWPP Implementation Update and/or Firewise Adapted Communities information from Courtney Peterson
- Firewise Communities USA Recognition
- Post-treatment area maintenance guidelines
- Information about forest products including biomass/wood utilization potentially involving Tim Reeder.
- Fundraising
- Lessons learned from the 2015 Colorado Wildfire Conference (currently scheduled for Sept. 24-26) as well as the 2015 Backyards and Beyond Conference

#### **Ideas for future grant funding & fundraising:**

- Lilia discussed the USDA Forest Service State & Private Forestry Competitive Grant. She is currently working on putting a grant application together for this grant, which could potentially provide up to \$300,000, over a several years, to support WRWC's programs to reduce wildfire risks in the 6 counties where we work.
- Ben Brack noted that we should continue to explore alternative funding source opportunities and consider the role of small business development center's in our work.
- Lilia mentioned how she thinks we need to consider opportunities for corporate sponsorship.
- Austin and Lilia discussed the idea of developing a Christmas tree fundraiser. Lilia noted that Firewise of Southwest Colorado (WRWC's sister organization in Durango) holds an annual Christmas tree sale which accounts for their largest fundraiser. This year, they ordered 1,000 trees. Lilia would like to see us utilize trees from mitigation projects to sell for our fundraiser and several suggestions were made for partnering with the USFS, local schools, youth organizations (e.g. Boy Scouts), DFPC and others to assist with various aspects of the program.

- Chris Barth mentioned that are indications that the DNR funding for wildfire mitigation grants will be reauthorized by Colorado State legislature.
- CSFS / USFS “Stevens Funding” is a potential opportunity worthy of exploration where there is a ‘planned ignition’ (broadcast or pile) within 3 years on National Forest lands; The City of Ouray could potentially utilize this due to planned burning in the amphitheater; the grant provides for up to 100% funding of fuel mitigation on private lands.
- The Widen Amendment was discussed which gives the federal government the ability to enter in to an agreement with a participating landowner to do work on private land.
- The CSFS Grant Matrix was discussed and it was expressed that WRWC could potentially add this to the WRWC website.
- Lilia discussed the BLM Community Assistance Grant, noting that the WRWC is coming to the end of its 5 year agreement in August of 2015 and that the council would be looking to create a new 5 year agreement to continue this invaluable program.
- Austin noted that the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has a program called the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) which could potentially be utilized to meet project and program objectives on private lands.
- Allen Staehle encouraged WRWC to contact Barbara Uhles and Ben Tisdell regarding potential work in Ouray

#### **WRWC Budget Outlook**

- While specifically the subject of the January 2015 monthly meeting, Lilia provided the group with a brief budget update noting that the WRWC is currently overseeing approximately \$500,000 which can be applied under future grant programs over the coming years.
- She also noted that WRWC spent approximately \$150,000 on fuels reduction projects in 2014.
- The WRWC continues to explore opportunities to provide funding for personnel time and strives to have at least two years of funding for these purposes.

#### **Ideas for Outreach & Education Initiatives**

- Chris Barth talked about the social science concept of “nudges” and how we could incorporate “nudges” into our or overall outreach efforts;
- Jamie asked if an example could be putting together a targeted mailing to ‘high risk’ residents asking them “did you know your property was identified as a high risk...” then explaining “...look what your neighbors are doing to address their wildfire risks....”.
- John Bennett noted that another outreach opportunity is during the National Night Out and stated that he would be able to provide follow up information about that outreach event.
- An attendee stressed the importance of targeted youth education, potentially through the schools, incorporating key learning standards while utilizing existing curriculum.
- National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day (Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015) is also worthy of additional consideration and planning

- Additional discussion occurred around the topic of post mitigation maintenance and the need for targeted outreach to landowner's that have already completed mitigation and are now in need of maintenance practices such as invasive species control and follow up fuel management work.
- It was noted that the week of May 2<sup>nd</sup>, there is a "Natural Resources Festival" involving a large number of 6<sup>th</sup> graders that could be a potential venue for youth education.
- Additional events on a include the WUI conference in Reno, NV (March); the Human Dimensions of Fire Conference in Boise, ID (April); Colorado Wildfire Conference (Sept); Backyards and Beyond (Oct); CO Emergency Management Conference (Feb)
- Award opportunities include the Smokey Bear Awards and the Mitigation Award for which WRWC was nominated.

### Change of Monthly Meeting Time

- Jamie Gomez provided the group with a the results of the doodle poll while giving those present that had not yet responded an opportunity to list their availability. There was a total of 27 respondents. Of those respondents: 17 indicated that they preferred 10am-12noon; 24 indicated that they preferred 1pm-3pm; and 15 indicated that they preferred 3pm-5pm. (It was possible to vote for more than one option). Given these results, it was decided that the meeting times for 2015 would be moved to be on the **second Thursday of each month at 1:00 to 3:00pm.**

### Round Robin Updates

- A number of training opportunities were discussed, additional information can be found at [www.co.train.org](http://www.co.train.org)
- Chris Barth that he is working to coordinate a regional public information officer meeting, this spring, to coordinate pre-wildfire season talking points.
- Bennett gave an update relative to the TFPD's efforts provide outreach regarding the "living with wildfire in San Miguel county" survey.
- Tom Austin explained to the group that the Council has received some recent attention from the Ouray County Plaindealer, with a recent article about the November insurance panel meeting.
- Tom Austin also explained that Log Hill Fire will be receiving an award from Pinnacle Insurance for their excellent service, a prestigious recognition that was only award to 43 fire districts out of 55,000 nationwide.
- Michael Davis explained that he will be replaced by Brandon Lewis, who is relocating from Oregon. Brandon will be starting in February and Clark Hammond will be the interim FMO for the BLM.
- The Forest Service is planning to burn piles outside of Ouray in January

Meeting Adjourned at 4:55pm.