West Region Wildfire Council
Meeting Minutes
7/10/14

Meeting Attendance

	Last Name	First Name	Agency
1	Angell	Don	Montrose EM
2	Austin	Tom	Log Hill Fire
3	Barth	Chris	BLM
4	Bennett	John	Telluride Fire
5	Brack	Ben	WRWC
6	Caggiano	Mike	CSU
7	Conway	Bill	Arrowhead
8	Dickson	Tom	Egnar/Slick Rock Fire
9	Ellis	Steve	DFPC
10	Gomez	Jamie	WRWC
11	Griebenow	Claire	CFRI
12	Homstad	Kelly	BLM
13	Knuthson	Mason	CFRI
14	Morrill	Scott	Gunnison OEM
15	Petersen	Drew	CO OEM
16	Rist	Jodi	CSFS
17	Sharrow	Barbara	BLM
18	Shelby	Austin	CSFS Montrose
19	Staehle	Alan	Ouray Fire Protection Dist.
20	Stilley	Kevin	Arrowhead Fire
21	Wolk	Brett	CFRI

Objective/Purpose

The Council gathered to discuss the following:

Introductions

Chris Barth facilitated this meeting and initiated a round robin of introductions, starting off with an introduction of Jamie Gomez, the new Program Coordinator for the West Region Wildfire Council.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes approved

The Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Program: Effectiveness Assessment & Program Overview – Brett Wolk, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute

Please click (or copy & paste) the following link to view Brett's PowerPoint presentation:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B73_1AQQokPxaWQ3UmtBeE1mN28/edit?usp=sharing

The Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Program:

- The grant program is primarily intended to reduce risks through vegetation management, but can be used to purchase equipment to aid in this goal.
- The map on slide 5 depicts the locations and types of projects that have been awarded, but the circles are not reflective of their relative award size.
- Next application deadline is August 8th, 2014 with $3.5 million available.

Colorado Forest Restoration Institute's Role & Project Effectiveness Monitoring:

- CFRI is charged with assessing the effectiveness of wildfire risk reduction projects.
- CFRI is using the Fuels Characteristic Classification System (FCCS) which is a model that utilizes field measurements to predict relative fire hazard.
- One of the products is a detailed table that shows the Fire Potential Ratings (0-9) in three main categories:
    - Surface Fire Behavior Potential
    - Crown Fire Potential
    - Available Fuel Potential
- The Fire Potential Ratings (0-9) are on a relative scale, based of vegetation and fuel types seen across the nation. The Pacific NW has areas with a rating of 9 while Colorado may not have any areas with a rating above 6.

Log Hill Pre and Post Treatment Preliminary FCCS Fire Potential Ratings Results:

- Wolk stressed the importance of having clearly defined and highly specific goals
- The number and variety of methods, tools, implements and machinery available to masticate, chip or in other ways modify fuels has made it difficult to compare results between one method/machinery and another.
- Wolk is trying to document the exact machinery and method used for each mastication project, though this may ensure that the task of comparing results will be challenging.
- The science of fire behavior modeling does a poor job of predicting fire behavior in chipped and masticated areas.
- Wolk visited three different project sites (#1, 2 & 3 for our purposes here) in the Log Hill Community, collecting pre and post treatment data.
- Site #1 is an area with ponderosa pine, pinyon, juniper and Gamble's oak. Pre and post treatment data indicate an increase in surface fire potential, a decrease in crown fire potential and no real change in available fuel potential.
- Site #2 is an area with older pinyon and juniper. This area saw a similar trend amongst surface fire potential and crown fire potential with a slight decrease in available fuel potential.

- Site #3 is characterized by younger pinyon and juniper with shrubs. The FCCS Fire Potential Ratings stayed about the same for surface fire potential and available fuel potential and decreased for crown fire potential.
- Several meeting attendees asserted their belief that, based on personal observation and experience, surface fire behavior potential should decrease between pre and post treatment areas.
- Wolk acknowledged that there isn't sufficient science to support this claim, which is why the FCCS model predicts that surface fire potential will actually increase after mastication.
- Several attendees pointed out that the masticated fuels that lie on the ground are subject to increased moisture and, over time, increased rates of decomposition. Wolk acknowledged that fuel moisture plays a critical role in fire behavior and that this monitoring effort is a very short (1-2 year) snapshot of the project and is not taking in to account multiple years of decomposition and re-growth.
- Several meeting attendees were confused by the bottom row in the table on the left entitled "FCCS Fire Potential Code". Wolk pointed out that the codes are merely a summary of each category. Several attendees suggested that this be modified to include vertical or horizontal lines between each number so that it is not misinterpreted by others.
- One attendee questioned how the FCCS model compares to other fire behavior models such as Behave (BehavePlus Fire Modeling System).
- Everyone thanked Brett Wolk for his presentation and the work of the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute.

Resource Ordering – Scott Morrill

- Scott attended a meeting during the first week of May intended to be a 'gloves off' discussion of the resource ordering systems for wildfire and all hazard incidents.
- Resource ordering occurs at local, state and federal levels.
- During the Black Forest Fire, the group identified six ordering mechanisms.
- The group determined that the most significant result, of the complex ordering systems, was 'delayed attack'.
- Through a 'sticky note' modeling exercise, the group identified that the greatest number of problems occurred during the initial response.
- Some of the desired solutions included the need for quicker attack and response, a reduction in duplicate ordering, a reduction in follow-up calls for the same resource by the Incident Commander, and the need to have one person that is proficient in ROSS and one person who is proficient in WebEOC working together on large incidents.
- Another result is that the Colorado Emergency Management is systematically meeting with each dispatch center across the state.

- ROSS and WebEOC have their strengths and weaknesses and we still think we need to use both systems
- Fire Chiefs are encouraged to review, and if needed, update their resources in both ROSS and WebEOC.

DFPC Update- Steve Ellis

- There is a proposal, in the works, to set up financial agreements to help pay for resources during initial attack.
- There is a new five person crew available with two type 3 helicopters and one type 2 helicopter.

Incident Updates

- Approximately three weeks ago there was a 1.5 acre fire which was started by a controlled burn – San Juan Vista Fire.
- A mutual aid pre-agreement was instrumental in the success of putting this fire out
- Two engines were used and everything went "incredibly smooth".

Round Robin

- On Saturday July 26th there will be a large exercise in the Arrowhead FPD
- The next WRWC meeting will be on August 14th, 2014.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 pm.