

**West Region Wildfire Council  
Meeting Minutes  
9/10/15**

***Meeting Attendance***

	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
1	Austin	Tom	Log Hill Fire
2	Barth	Chris	BLM
3	Beckhardt	Dave	Log Hill Fire
4	Bennet	John	Telluride Fire
5	Berg	Eric	SMC SO
6	Block	Sheridan	Ouray County Plaindealer
7	Chappell	Randy	BLM
8	Cinnamon	Sophia	WRWC
9	Conway	Bill	Arrowhead Fire
10	Ellis	Steve	DFPC
11	Falk	Lilia	WRWC
12	Ferchau	Hugo	Gunnison County
13	Gomez	Jamie	WRWC
14	Gottlieb	Paul	MCSP
15	McCarthy	Jim	Log Hill County
16	Mckee	Fred	Delta County
17	Rist	Jodi	CSFS
18	Rogers	John	Log Hill Fire
19	Odom	Luke	DFPC
20	Rist	Jodi	CSFS
21	Rogers	John	Log Hill Fire
22	Spritzer	Dennis	City of Gunnison
23	Staehle	Alan	Ouray Fire Protection District
24	Castrodale	Mark	Ouray County
25	Moore	Adam	CSFS
26	Scavo	Sam	CSFS
27	Matthews	Susan	CSFS

**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 August's meeting were approved as written.

## Presentation from Kris Cooper, Deputy Fire Marshall, Colorado Springs Fire Department, presented on wildfire mitigation in Colorado Springs and the lessons learned from the Waldo Canyon Fire and the code changes that followed.

Kris Cooper began his presentation with the history of wildfire mitigation in Colorado Springs and a general overview of the greater city. Colorado Springs has the largest continuous WUI in the state with over 36,000 homes throughout 29,000 acres. Wildfire mitigation efforts began in 1993 with planning ordinances to address aesthetics. Further studies, most notably, a report from Tri-Data in 1999 identified weaknesses in the WUI and from there a CWPP was completed and in 2001 the mitigation program was solidified. The Fire Department took over wildfire hazard assessments and inspected homes.

Cooper detailed the importance of “hardtruthing” the data in the CWPP by conducting parcel-level risk assessments. From the parcel-level assessments, the Fire Department created an online-interactive map where homeowners can view their parcel-level risk rating. Along with the introduction of the online map, Cooper held several HOA-specific meeting to educate homeowners about their risk and how to move forward with mitigation. Cooper noted that the interactive map was a very effective tool and created a grassroots level efforts among neighborhoods.

Cooper transitioned his focus to specific details surrounding the 2012 Waldo Canyon Fire, including fire behavior and neighborhood fuel packages. He supplemented his data with video footage and photos showing fire behavior and the aftermath of the fire. Cooper drew audience attention to specific neighborhoods that suffered the most structure loss. He related the extreme loss to building materials, lack of defensible space, and heavily flammable landscaping. This combination allowed the fire to make a continuous run from house to house.

Shortly after the devastating fire, the Colorado Springs Fire Department began discussing code changes with local officials. Cooper discussed the importance of “striking while the iron is hot” especially when advocating policy changes. The FD identified factors related to structure loss and meet with members of the HBA and the AIA, in order to gain their support for new ordinances. The timing for the new ordinance was very strategic because it encouraged timely rebuilding while enforcing code regulations for fire resistant building.

Community feedback informed several components of the ordinance including privacy fencing, landscaping and exemptions. The final ordinance proposed fuels management and structure hardening for new construction and remodeling only. Cooper did not feel the national WUI code was appropriate for the communities in Colorado Springs. The outcome of the ordinance was very measurable with an 80% rebuild rate in less than three years.

Cooper went on to discuss the specifics of the detailed code requirements and the Ignition Resistance Construction Design Manual. View the Design Manual here:

[https://www.springsgov.com/units/fire/wildfire/hillside\\_wildfire\\_mitigation\\_design\\_manual.pdf](https://www.springsgov.com/units/fire/wildfire/hillside_wildfire_mitigation_design_manual.pdf)

Cooper candidly discussed the “Lessons Learned” and repeatedly underlined that risk is a product of public perception and there is a need for public outreach and education at the community and neighborhood level. “You need to get buy-in and build social capital for a successful mitigation program”, Cooper said. Cooper also suggested using targeting mechanisms specific to each neighborhood

and tailoring the outreach plan accordingly. In closing, Cooper spoke to the importance of continuous mitigation efforts and recommended an “annual check-in” with communities.

To learn more about the Colorado Springs Wildfire Mitigation program visit their page: <https://csfd.coloradosprings.gov/public-safety/fire/prevention-and-safety/wildfire-mitigation>.

Here is the link to an IBHS ember test that supports the position on the vulnerabilities of ember intrusion and ignition. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IvbNOPSYyss>

## **Fire Outlook**

<http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/outlooks.htm>

### **Chris Barth, BLM SW**

The Northwest and Southern California will have heavy fire activity through September. The national preparedness level is currently at 4. Today, 21 IMT are out in the field/less than half than during the heightened part of the season

## **Resources**

### **Steve Ellis, DFPC**

The state seat is based in Grand Junction and is under contract until October 30<sup>th</sup>. The Pueblo “ship” is currently stationed in Craig. The MMA aircrafts will be operating year round and are currently in Washington and Oregon. Type 3 engines are slated to replace Type 4 and Type 6 engines, there will still be support for the existing engines. If you have the need for an engine in your fire department or would like to house a state engine, contact Luke Odum, DFPC.

### **John Bennet, Telluride Fire Department**

The TFD has sent resources to a fire in Montana

### **Dennis Spritzer, Gunnison Fire Protection District**

The GFPD is sending resources out throughout fire in the West.

### **USFS/BLM**

Three quarters of all resources are currently in the NW.

## **Round Robin**

### **CSFS Alamosa**

Currently working with Rick Hernandez, Hinsdale County CWPP coordinator to develop mitigation projects around the county. CSFS is funding defensible space work in the Ptarmigan Meadows and Hermit Lakes neighborhoods

### **West Region Wildfire Council**

Lilia provided an update on recently completed grant funding. Jamie is provided an update on ongoing defensible space projects. The brochure is almost complete.

### **CSFS Montrose**

Jodi just returned from Teepee Springs Fire in McCall, Idaho. Austin completed his fuel break in Boswick Park

### **Tom Austin, Log Hill Fire Protection District**

Log Hill Village will be doing chipping day October 6<sup>th</sup> and just completed a “re-up” of Firewise certification.

### **Chris Barth, BLM SW**

Chris just returned from the Eagle complex in Eastern Oregon where is was working as a PIO.