

West Region Wildfire Council

Meeting Minutes

7/14/16

Last Name	First Name	Affiliation
Bennett	John	Telluride Fire
Berg	Eric	SMC SO
Brink	Greg	Town of Cedaredge
Falk	Lilia	WRWC
Gomez	Jamie	WRWC
Lewis	Brandon	BLM
Masters	Bill	San Miguel Sherriff's Office
McKee	Fred	Delta County
Petersen	Drew	Colorado OEM
Robert	Mark	Delta County
Strandberg	John	City of Ouray
Wright	Jeff	Delta County

Introductions

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

First Presentation: “Life First” presented by Matt Zumstein with the USDA Forest Service Norwood Ranger District

To view the presentation, click or copy of the following link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B73_1AQQokPxOEFrckOzRUpNSnBpMDVUalhYWGplMzJrdVVV/view?usp=sharing

Zumstein began by explaining that Life First is essentially a campaign promoted by the Forest Service to “do whatever it takes to significantly increase the odds that everyone goes home in 2016”. Based on the last several years of wildfire throughout our nations forest, a trend is emerging. Fuel loads are increasing, and wildfires are burning more intensely. The goal of this campaign is to understand balance the need to respond to the ever increasing wildfire threat with the sincere need to put human life as the top priority. To do this, firefighters and managers will need to make decisions that result in the least firefighter exposure necessary. Determining the necessity of exposure is a key element. Questions to be answered, when determining necessity should include: What are the values at risk and how important are they really? What is the probability the a difference can actually be made? Are there alternatives that could require less exposure?

After the main presentation, an ensuing discussion occurred regarding the subject of drones.

Thad Chavez (USFS) brought up the fact the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) is employed to help fire managers make these kinds of decision. Chavez explained that using the WFDSS is a lengthy process involving numerous players and lots of science.

Second Presentation: Fire Dire Operating Plan presented by Randy Chappell with the Bureau of Land Management

Chappell gave a presentation on the Fire Danger Operating Plan which takes a ‘best science approach’ towards understanding current and future predicted fire dangers. The system that is employed locally utilizes the National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS). Chappell went on to provide a detailed explanation of how the plan is developed, the kinds of data inputs that it requires and what kinds of products can be produced. Chappell explained that the whole process can involve numerous partners. One of the key outcomes is that it provides information to managers to help determine ‘breakpoints’ in the current fire weather that will signify to these managers that the fire weather has gone beyond local capacity of responses to any kind of incident. This is primarily based around a set of pre-defined Fire Danger Rating Areas. This has a large impact on staffing and resource levels for a given area.

Round Robin

Chief Ted Mueller explained that Norwood FPD is planning to hire a full time paid Chief.

Mike Tarantino provided an update to progress, activities and accomplishments with special emphasis on mitigation and education work in the Blue Mesa Community as well as the town of Pitkin after the Rosebud Fire.

John Bennett explained his work with local officials related to recent fourth of July celebrations in Telluride.

Drew Petersen provided updates related to the Cold Springs Fire, the Hayden Pass Fire, the Beaver Creek Fire as well as some incidents near Ft. Carson, Durango and on the White River National Forest.

Thad Chavez provided updates related to his incident management team.

Lilia Falk discussed her involvement with the Rosebud Fire and provided an anecdote related to the structure protection group’s risk assessment process and the potential opportunity for WRWC to incorporate certain principles, processes or methods for pre-fire structure assessment in the Council’s already established wildfire risk assessments for private landowners.

Jamie Gomez provided an update to mitigation and education activities within the three counties where he works, including upcoming education and outreach activities.