



Utility Wildland Fire Prevention Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2023

1:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Meeting Venue: Rm 175, Natural Resources Building

I. Attendance

- a. Quorum met see attached for meeting attendance.

II. Call to Order

- a. Committee Chair Loren Torgerson called meeting to order at 1:07 pm on February 15, 2023.

III. Meeting Minutes Approval & Introductions

- a. Committee chair Loren Torgerson entertains motion to review and approve minutes from November 16, 2022 & September 21, 2022. Garry Rosman motions to approve September minutes, Gary Margheim seconds. Brett Conrad Motions to approve November minutes, David Bayard seconds. All members vote yeah and there are no abstains.

IV. Previous Utility Task Force Business – Wildland Fire Investigation Protocols

- a. Gary Margheim, Chief Wildland Fire Investigator, DNR – Reviewed the history and process of developing the protocols. No changes made since last meeting.
- b. Committee members suggested minor verbiage changes to better clarify certain sections and definitions.
- c. Jim Smith motions to approve document with suggested changes, Gary Rosman seconds. All Members vote yeah, there are no abstains.
- d. Draft protocols attached.
- e. Gary Margheim, Chief Wildland Fire Investigator, DNR – Discussed Request for Qualifications; It has been a process to have it available for both state use and for outside use. Goal is a list of wildland fire investigator, electrical engineer, vegetation manager with background in utilities made available. Should be available mid-May for review.
- f. Committee discussed the requirements associated with the qualified experts.

V. Round Table Discussion

- a. Jim Smith, PUD No. 1, Klickitat – Want to see pre-fire season meeting with partners, as done in the past pre-pandemic. Also want to see information on smoke detection cameras project. A: DNR will begin coordination to set up, recommends be at region level. Will have an update on the smoke detection cameras.



- b. Jim Smith, PUD No. 1, Klickitat & Dave James, Avista Utilities – Would like to see an updated fire risk map. Additional urban/community data has been added to FS models that has been useful A: DNR is interested still in completing wildfire risk assessment but does not have resources currently.

VI. Committee Work Plan

- a. Loren Torgerson, Committee Chair – Presented the current suggested objectives
- b. Gary Rosman, Inland Power & Light – We should say that we accomplished the goals originally set out.
- c. Work Plan Attached

VII. Next Meeting Agenda

- a. Discussed in work plan.

VIII. WPUDA Discussion of Vegetation Management Model Agreement & Future Work Group Cooperation

- a. Michael Kearney, Natural Resources Div. Manager, Products Sales & Leasing, DNR – Reviewed the model agreement, going over the intent behind it. Trees in red zone have Habitat restrictions but DNR has difficulty operating in, utilities contact DNR when planning to operate in red zones, but utilities still have pathway in emergency need. Black areas are (e.g. nature area preserves) not part of this agreement. Merchantable trees, after utilities cut trees they send packet of trees cut to DNR for review and put an appraisal to pay the trust for any trees cut that are merchantable, but this is done after the fact not to impede operations. Disputes, process for resolving disagreements over merchantability etc.
- b. Dave Bayard, Seattle City Light – Is the GIS layer available outside DNR? A: Will follow up and distribute as possible.
- c. Steve WPUDA – How is communication going out? A: It has been posted on the DNR website and we can send it further out from there.

IX. Closing Comments

- a. Committee Members –
 - i. David Bayard – make the expectation to attend in person explicit. Having the future agenda items helps to make the case for travel as well.
- b. Committee Chair – Appreciate all who attended. Continuing to work on filling the vacant positions. DNR has its position on current legislative items.

X. Public Comment



- a. Debora Witmer – serving as energy resilience manager at Dept. of Commerce. Look forward to future interactions and coordination with the committee.
- b. Robert Mitchell - thank you for using cameras, believe wide rights of way cause more harm than good and support other means of dealing with fire concern around utilities.

XI. Adjourned

- a. Meeting is adjourned at 3:48 pm

XII. Appendices

- a. Attendance
- b. Draft Fire Investigations Protocols
- c. Draft committee work plan
- d. Vegetation Management Model Agreement
- e. 2022 Annual Wildfire Season Report

Draft minutes submitted by Bryan Perrenod, approved by Chairman Loren Torgerson. Formal action to be taken to approve the minutes at the next general meeting.

DRAFT