

EMERGENCY FIRE COST COMMITTEE

June 6, 2023

In accordance with the provisions of ORS 477.455, a meeting of the Emergency Fire Cost Committee (EFCC) was held in the Tillamook Room of the Oregon Department of Forestry Headquarters in Salem and via Zoom Video Conferencing on Tuesday, June 6, 2023.

Committee Members Present (via Zoom)

Brennan Garrelts, Chair
Erik Lease

Committee Members Absent

Chris Johnson

Others Present (in person)

Nancy Hirsch, EFCC Administrator
Lorna Hobbs, EFCC Finance Coordinator
Chrystal Bader, Executive Support, ODF
Michelle Reed, Executive Support, ODF
Cal Mukumoto, State Forester
James Short, Chief Financial Officer, ODF
Mike Shaw, Interim Chief of Fire Protection, ODF
Ron Graham, Deputy Chief, Operations, Fire Protection, ODF
Tim Holschbach, Deputy Chief, Policy & Planning, Fire Protection, ODF
Neal Miller, Fire Cost Recovery Specialist, ODF
Stacey Chase, Finance Manager, ODF
Kyle Williams, Director of Forest Protection, Oregon Forests & Industries Council (OF&IC)
Cindy Robert, Manulife

Others Present (via Zoom)

Tracy Wrolson, Fire Finance, ODF
Sherry Brennan, Fire Finance, ODF
Justin Hallett, Assistant to EOA Area Director, ODF
Eric Kranzush, Giustina
Todd Scharff, DAS Risk Management
Sione Filimoehala, CFO Analyst, DAS
Randy Hereford, Starker Forests
Jerilee Johnson, Area Accountant, ODF

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER, CHAIR COMMENTS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Garrelts called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 6, 2023. He and committee member Erik Lease were present via Zoom video conference. Committee member Chris Johnson was absent and excused; Chair Garrelts was acting as a proxy for Chris Johnson and there was a quorum.

Chair Garrelts provided an update on the solicitation and recruitment process to fill the vacant position after Steve Cafferata's term ended, noting good progress with two good candidates. ODF and EFCC will present to the Board of Forestry at their September 7 meeting for appointment approval once a determination has been made on the selected candidate.

ITEM 2: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 7, 2023 MEETING, AND THE APRIL 3, 2023 SPECIAL EFCC MEETING *[Decision Item]*

Chair Garrelts asked for a motion to approve the March 7, 2023 Emergency Fire Cost Committee (EFCC) meeting minutes, and the April 3, 2023 special EFCC meeting minutes. No comments were made by committee members or attendees. A motion for approval of the minutes was made by Erik Lease and seconded by Chair Garrelts (as proxy for Chris Joanna). All were in favor and none opposed, and the minutes of the Emergency Fire Cost Committee March 7, 2023 regular meeting, and the April 3, 2023 special meeting were unanimously approved.

ITEM 3: FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE OREGON FOREST LAND PROTECTION FUND *[Information Item]*

The financial status of the Oregon Forestland Protection Fund was reported by Lorna Hobbs, EFCC Finance Coordinator and reviewed by the committee. Lorna noted the report covers current fiscal year actual revenues and expenditures through April 30, 2023, and projected revenues and expenditures through the end of the fiscal year. For fiscal year 2023, the beginning balance of the fund on July 1, 2022 was **\$10,955,583**.

On the report, under Estimated Revenue/Transfers In:

- **Item #1:** The total estimated amount for assessment revenue in fiscal year 2023 is **\$9,211,101**. As of April 30, **\$9,083,026**, or just under 99% of the estimated amount has been received.

- **Item #2:** Harvest Tax revenues for the fiscal year are estimated at \$2,178,594 with just under \$2M, or 88% received. The final quarterly payment of \$543,000 was received in May but is not reflected in this report.
- **Item #3:** The interest earned as of April 30, totaled \$217,629, and the total for FY23 is now estimated at \$280,575. The interest rate rose again on May 19 to 4.05%.

The actual revenue received as of April 30, 2023 is **\$11,285,016**, and the estimated total revenue for FY23 is **\$11,670,270**.

On the report under Expenditures/Transfers Out:

- **Item #1:** Payroll and operating expenses are still estimated at \$185,000 for fiscal year 2023.
- **Item #2:** The insurance premium payment of \$315,000 for fire season 2023 has been removed since the purchase of the policy did not occur.
- **Item #3:** The Fund's payment for severity costs for the 2022 fire season was \$3,000,000.
- **Items 4, 5, and 6** are the expenditure reversals from previous fiscal years that were reported at the last meeting.

For the 2022 fire season draft claims, the current estimated net claim total for fiscal year 2023 claims is **\$15,739,653**. This is almost \$1.7M less than the previous report, mostly due to expected responsible party recoveries and reimbursements from other agencies.

These transfers result in the OFLPF's obligation for fire season 2022 costs to total \$7.9M, rather than the \$8.5M previously reported and already transferred to the large fire fund. However, the two recent fires in SW Oregon and Western Lane districts, and any other fires that occur between now and the end of the month, will likely shorten that gap.

The Elkhorn Butte fire in SW Oregon is currently estimated at \$98,000 in extra costs and the 7K fire in Western Lane District is estimated at \$2.3M. However, both are human caused fires and under investigation.

[FY23 total claims at \$15,739,653 + WL at \$2,228,793 = \$17,968,446]

Actual expenditures, including previous year reversals, as of April 30, 2023, remain at **\$9,948,415**. Without the reversals, expenditures for this fiscal year total \$11.5M, which leaves \$1,995,605 remaining from the original \$13.5M estimate. After subtracting the estimated \$185,000 for operating costs, \$1,810,605 remains for fire season 2022 expenses.

The **current fund balance** ending on April 30, 2023 is **\$12,292,184**.

The estimated fund balance for June 30, 2023 is \$10,996,833. *This assumes the entire \$13.185M will be spent.*

Chair Garrelts noted it is a good reminder that fire season is July 1 to June 30, and it is not terribly uncommon to see spring fires; so while there is some growing certainty with the numbers shown on this report, there is still the spring season before things really roll into the 2023 fire season. He then thanked Lorna for the update and asked the committee members if they had any questions. No questions or comments were asked or made by committee members.

ITEM 4: ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT

Nancy provided this report for FY21 (fire season 2020) noting the bulk of the audit work is completed but there is some fine tuning still needed. The next two audit reports are scheduled to be completed within the next few months. ODF and EFCC staff annually audit all fire costs which are a part of the claims against the OFLPF. This report summarizes the findings of EFCC's FY21 audits. Nancy added that due to COVID-19 restrictions, most of the audits were performed remotely, which was a significant shift in business practices. There were a few, however, that were performed in person, including DPFA, CFPA, and NC.

Nancy continued her report providing additional detail on FY 2021 in that the total extra costs were \$134,055,919. After reductions were made for district deductibles, reimbursements, and fire cost recoveries, the total estimated claim to the OFLPF and General Fund is \$47,867,951. See Agenda Item #4, page 6 & 7 for additional details on district reimbursement eligibility. With no further dollars needing to be transferred, Nancy recommended the committee approve the EFCC Fiscal Year 2021 Audit Report of the Oregon Forest Land Protection Fund.

Chair Garrelts thanked Nancy and Lorna for their participation in these audits and provided his appreciation to all districts for their serious dedication in this process. Without the good record keeping by districts, this audit process and results would not have been possible.

Erik Lease shared his appreciation for the work, especially given the challenges and difficulty of the year.

A motion to approve the FY21 audit report and transfer dollars as appropriate, was made by Brennan Garrelts and seconded by Erik Lease. All were in favor and none opposed, and the audit report was approved.

ITEM 5: WEATHER UPDATE *[Information Item]*

Ron Graham, Deputy Chief of Operations for the Fire Protection Division, provided the weather update for today's meeting, noting that as May came to a close, both temperatures and precipitation were above normal in the eastern part of Oregon. For the temperature outlook, central Oregon saw some improvement in drought conditions. Previous reports showed drought persisting, however, that has since improved. Northwest and western Oregon are now moving into abnormally dry conditions.

As for the snow-water equivalent, with May temperatures nearing records, there's been some loss of snowpack and snow melt. Washington has seen a more dramatic decrease in snowpack. Southern Oregon has seen less of a decrease in snow water equivalent.

There is a good chance of warmer than normal temperatures for June, with higher than normal winds and dry air. There has also been some change in the predicted above-normal precipitation in much of the state with the exception of the far northwest corner, which is moving into stages of early drought conditions. Looking at the outlook for July through September, a large portion of the country (northwest through the southwest) has a really good chance of above-average temperatures. The northern 2/3 of the United States is showing a chance of below-normal precipitation.

The significant wildfire potential outlook is increasing for both Washington and Oregon in June, primarily in the north-central part of Oregon, and continues to increase through July. Northwest Oregon is showing repeated drought moving in with below-normal precipitation and above-normal temperatures. Out of ODF protection (southeast Oregon), ample early rains led to growth of fine fuels, however, this change will add to the increase in fire behavior potential in that area of the state.

Through August and into September, Oregon will continue to see a slight build in significant wildfire potential, with some potential for decreases in southeast Oregon, but remaining steady in central and northwest Oregon.

ODF's Smoke Management Unit report of days without significant precipitation shows a handful of sites with over 60 days with no moisture. Several sites are recording days in the mid-50s without significant precipitation. As for fire behavior on the ground, most initial attacks have been in dry fuels, but there has also been some exceptionally dry fuels and control issues on prescribed fires. In summary, outlooks are generally showing no drastic early start to fire season, however several ODF districts are declaring fire season with initial attack slightly increasing. Given the current weather pattern, the state will see an increase from normal conditions through July.

ITEM 6: UPDATE ON STATUS OF LARGE FIRE COST COLLECTION EFFORTS *[Information Item]*

Neil Miller, Fire Cost Recovery Specialist, provided an update on the status of large fire cost collection efforts, highlighting a few of the closed fire cost collection claims. CFPA pursued their own cost recovery actions for the Lake Creek and Table Rock fires, and received payments for the associated EFCC extra costs and are now both closed. The final payment plan amount was received from the responsible party for the South Cascade District's Soda Fork fire, and it is now closed.

For new fire cost collection claims, the COD Grizzly fire, after being recertified, is shown on the list. The new demand was sent on March 13th. DOJ is assisting with this case and to date, no payment has been received. For the COD Bull Springs fire, demand was sent in April but to date, no payment has been received. CFPA is also pursuing EFCC extra costs on the Twelve Mile Road and Transpacific Parkway #2 fires. Neil reported that payment for the Transpacific Parkway #2 fire is expected soon.

For significant fire investigations in progress or under DOJ review, the NEO West Campbell fire from 2022 is off the list. The investigation is complete, and costs are being certified with the district to send a demand to the responsible party. The COD Memaloose fire from 2017 is also off the list as the investigation is complete. ODF is still waiting on the district for their decision to pursue costs or to close the claim. The estimated cost of this fire was \$225k. The recent Western Lane District 7K fire (started May 26) in an active operation, is new to the list. The original and cause field investigation is complete, however there is still plenty of additional investigation and reporting work to be completed. The SWO Fielder Creek fire has also been added to the list. The investigation is being finalized and DOJ is already moving forward with settlement discussions with the responsible party. The CFPA North Bank Road and TL Pike Road fire investigations are also being finalized and DOJ is already moving forward with settlement discussions with the responsible parties for these fires as well. The DFPA Archie Creek / Star Mountain fire is scheduled to begin mediation / settlement talks with DOJ, the responsible party, and other agencies affected by the incident, in January 2024.

The remaining fires on the report are still in various stages of investigation and DOJ review.

Chair Garrelts asked what the response/invoice payment time typically is for fires that occurred in April and March; is it months or years? Neil replied they have 90 days to respond. If they do not respond, they default and ODF can file a lawsuit.

ITEM 7: STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS *[Possible decision item]*

Nancy provided an update on the potential balance in the strategic investments fund at the end of spring, highlighting that there is a lot of uncertainty surrounding where large fire costs will end up by the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2023). The EFCC may consider fund transfers for future strategic investments when dollars remain under the \$13.5M cap. Large fire costs already transferred is \$8.5M, as well as \$3M for Severity. That leaves a balance of \$1.8M for strategic investments, however, there remains uncertainty with the remaining unspent dollars under the \$10M cap. Nancy added that the only certainty in the funds remaining is the \$315K that was to be used for the catastrophic wildfire insurance policy premium payment. Nancy said she could provide additional details/information if needed, related to large fire costs.

Chair Garrelts asked committee member Erik Lease if he had comments or questions. Erik responded that he is uncomfortable with the uncertainty on the ending balance in June 2023. He doesn't think now is the time to consider expanding strategic investments. Chair Garrelts agreed noting the value in long term trends in the OFLPF and stated that at this time, the committee will defer the transfer of dollars to the strategic investments fund; Erik Lease concurred.

Ron Graham introduced the SWO Acting District Forester, Matt Fumasi, who walked the committee through the details of the district's request for additional strategic investment funds to complete their current detection center project. Matt noted that the detection and dispatch at the district headquarters office building is now occupied and 50% operational with the detection network back online. Matt said that snowpack has put the district behind in their project completion due to limited access to sites. There were also additional costs that came up on this project, including soil testing, which ultimately showed that the building needed repairs. An additional building that was scheduled to be demolished had to be done by district staff to save costs. Additionally, the phone network had to be updated (\$5K), combined with the increase in the cost of city permits, and the city is still asking for sidewalks and landscaping to be added. A fiber

network line which led to the existing network line was clipped during the construction process and had to be replaced. All in all, the district is requesting an additional \$50K, on top of the initial request of \$100K, to complete its strategic investment projects.

Chair Garrelts asked about capital budgeting, noting that the additional costs seem to be things that could have been expected, or possible contingency dollars added to the original costs. He asked Matt if this was done. Matt responded, yes, and in addition to the strategic investments, the district received \$300K in SB 762 funds as well as funds from the Klamath Dam removal project. Matt stated he would look there to hopefully have enough funds to complete the projects.

Chair Garrelts asked what kind of situation would develop and what projects would be dropped if these additional funds were not received. Matt replied that not receiving these funds would be a sacrifice into the protection system with respect to cameras, controllers, and other equipment.

Chair Garrelts then asked if the district would have to use district funds for camera repairs, to which Matt responded, yes, that is correct.

Erik Lease then asked for the current status of the project and whether the additional funds could be absorbed by the district. Chair Garrelts mentioned the undistributed balance of the strategic investment funds, which is currently \$107K. He then noted his struggle with his immediate desire to approve since some of the projects seem to be expected contingencies, realizing he is not directly involved in the project. Erik Lease asked if Chair Garrelts was comfortable approving a portion of the requested \$50K amount. Chair Garrelts responded yes, but he also sees the value of early initial attack and doesn't want to see some cameras go down if funds are needed for this project and are not received. Erik concurred.

Chair Garrelts added that \$50K seems like a round number and asked Acting District Forester Matt Fumasi if direct costs had been determined. Matt responded that they are still waiting on invoices but thinks it will be close to the \$50K, however, any amount will help.

Chair Garrelts then noted that the numbers in the original proposals are not always allocated. If the committee agrees to fund the full amount of \$50K, it will be requested that those dollars be used specifically for this project and not for other district costs. Additionally, any unused amount will be returned to the strategic investment fund.

Erik Lease agreed that a lesser amount would be fine and made a motion to allocate \$50K from the strategic investment fund with the understanding that any unused or indirect funds are to come back to strategic investment fund. Chair Garrelts, as proxy for Chris Johnson, agreed and the motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 8: ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCH REPORT

- ODF financial report

State Forester Mukumoto provided an update, along with staff from the ODF Admin Branch noting that as of today, June 6, ODF's main cash balance is at \$49.1M. The General Fund appropriate for fire is at \$404K. Admin staff are working with Protection Finance to move funds to make payments. The OFLPF balance is at \$13.04M today, up from the last EFCC meeting in March when it was at \$11.4M. Overall, the agency is in decent shape to pay for large fire costs this fire season, but depending upon severity and continuing resolution, it will be hard to pay for large fire costs and agency operations. ODF is currently working on a contingency plan to be able to continue agency operations.

- Legislative session

State Forester Mukumoto also provided an update on the current legislative session, highlighting the walkout, which is concerning to him.

James Short, Chief Financial Officer for ODF, added that the recent Ways and Means Committee presentation was one of the best presentations the agency has made in a long time, despite the quick turnaround time ODF was given. If ODF's budget is not approved this week, it will have to go through continuing resolutions, however, it will be approved at only 1/8 of the original amount requested by the agency, however, the fire program will be elevated to a critical need and the General Fund and Other Fund appropriations will be adjusted to an adequate level. Additionally, all programs would be able to spend again through the continuing resolution.

James then noted that the landowner offset, unfortunately, was not included in ODF's budget, however, it is still in SB 80. Once legislators come back to the capitol, the landowner offset could be funded in the Christmas tree bill. James reiterated that the landowner offset dollars is a legislative priority for the agency.

James then closed his update noting \$14M in severity funds were included in the agency budget and will need Emergency Board approval. This number is down \$1.5M for the next two fire seasons.

- Strategic Investments financial report

Tracy Wrolson, Fire Protection Finance Unit Manager at ODF, opened his report noting the hope to have the pending expenditures for the 2017 strategic investments completed by the next EFCC meeting in September. This would be a carryover balance of \$14,000.

For the 2020 strategic investments, the Chiloquin guard station and the COD grapple dozer projects are also complete. Tracy anticipates the DFPA software licenses and the CFPA microwave to be completed by the end of this fire season, or soon after. This also includes the SWO detection center.

Currently, the agency is on a good path and there has been good communication with the districts in continuing to move forward with the strategic investment projects.

Chair Garrelts asked about the EOA trailers. Tracy responded that the district coordinators have been identified. The NEO radio technician is leading the project for EOA and reaching out to the vendor from the original strategic investment proposal to see if

the model is still available. Additionally, the district will be doing more research on the viability of the equipment to ensure the correct equipment is received to complete the project.

Erik Lease asked about the EOA detection camera delay. Brian Pew, Eastern Oregon Area Director for ODF, responded to this question noting the EOA trailers were initially designed to be Type 3 fire operations communication support trailers since most of the Eastern Oregon Area is off the grid. However, technology has changed since the proposal was submitted 5 years ago and the districts agreed not to move forward without the new technology. Brian added that districts will scope out what is needed and what can be afforded. He then asked for the new proposal to be brought back in the fall at the September EFCC meeting as they are currently working to put up detection cameras, with money from the legislature, which expires June 30, 2023, but were delayed by snow as well as supply shortages. He added the area will not have the communication trailers available for this fire season. The camera installation is being done as fast as possible and is a priority. However, it may not be completed until this fall.

Brian then noted that the dozer for the Central Oregon District, from CAL Fire, has been received and is a good machine for a good cost. COD also ordered a new trailer to haul the dozer but used district funds. Additionally, a new dozer operator has been hired.

Chair Garrelts supports the focus of the strategic investments be the detection cameras, and Erik Lease agreed.

- FEMA update

Stacey Chase, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, provided an update on the status of FEMA reimbursements noting that since the last meeting, ODF has received a total of \$11.6M. The largest portion of that reimbursement was from the public assistance grant claim on the Obenchain fire at \$10.4M. ODF has submitted a total of \$5.3M in both FMAG and public assistance grants, one related to the 2022 fire season and another \$4.2M related to the 2021 fire season (one supplemental and one initial). There remains \$35.1M still outstanding in FEMA reimbursements. This brings the estimated balance to \$1.8M. Stacey then added that a large portion of the outstanding reimbursements is from the 2020 fire season with \$25.6M waiting to be transferred from the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (ODEM) to ODF, while ODEM goes through their audit process.

Chair Garrelts asked how many outstanding FEMA claims there are prior to 2020. James Short replied that there is just under \$1M still outstanding, a majority of which are administrative claims. The oldest outstanding admin claim is from 2017 but an invoice has been sent to FEMA and ODF is awaiting payment.

James then added the projected budget for severity is \$13.6M. This includes three aircraft with awards current pending through ODF Procurement. He anticipates the aircraft will be on board for this fire season. If it is an average fire season, it is anticipated the ending balance will be \$3M after fire incident costs are calculated. James will return with a full update on severity through the fire season at the September EFCC meeting.

ITEM 10: FIRE PROTECTION DIVISION REPORT *[Information Item]*

Mike Shaw, Chief of Fire Protection for ODF, opened this report by referring to Ron Graham's weather update in that it aligns with current fire activity. The current drought conditions are concerning with significant portions of the state in severe drought and even more portions in moderate drought. Persistent drought, even given the amount of snowpack and early spring rain, is alarming. Mike added that unless there is additional late spring rain in the next few weeks, drought conditions will have a major impact on fire season this year. He mentioned that SW Oregon District went into fire season June 1, and South Cascade District went in June 5, and a few more districts will be going in to fire season on June 9, including Central Oregon District. Additionally, all Southern Oregon Area districts will be in fire season by June 9, as well as a bulk of Eastern Oregon Area. This is a significant transition. Mike then highlighted some recent fires that are of concern, including the 7K fire in the Western Lane District, which has been resistant to control. Also, the Reuben Leigh fire in South Cascade District is also proving to be a challenging fire. He added that he spoke with the SC District Forester who said he was seeing July conditions in the beginning of June.

Chief Shaw then provided an update on the Canadian fires and the heat dome over Alberta, causing major fire activity, as reported by ODF personnel who mobilized to assist. All ODF employees have since returned home. Additionally, ODF entered into a shared incident management team scenario with the Washington Department of Natural Resources. A bulk of ODF's out of state resources (21 total) are returning tomorrow from Alaska. ODF is scheduled to have all seasonal hiring completed by the end of the school year.

Mike then turned it over to Ron Graham, Deputy Chief of Operations, who provided the following updates:

- BLM Western Oregon Agreement

BLM contacted ODF this week to say the second invoice for the current fiscal year (over \$3M) is currently being processed. ODF will be sending estimated district budgets for FY24 to BLM today. ODF's protection finance section is currently projecting the third and final invoice for FY23, which is expected to be close to the estimated costs originally sent to BLM.

Ron then mentioned the current Western Oregon Operating Plan expires on June 30, 2024, and a new plan will need to be put in to effect for July 1, 2024. He anticipates agency discussions to begin soon.

State Forester Mukumoto added that he recently talked to Congresswoman Val Hoyle, who mentioned she told BLM that they needed to stay in the plan.

- Geoboard

Ron noted the commitment of the GeoBoard to succession management within the agency. The GeoBoard continues to plan and monitor complex incident management teams. He added that the anniversary of the Northwest Forest Fire Compact, with

the first ODF IMT deployment to Canada. Ron also mentioned that interagency partners also sent teams but struggle getting folks to Canada due to international travel requirements such as passports.

ODF also sent some Command and General Staff to Curry County to assist with a major cyber threat security breach. This was a unique assignment for ODF staff but provides an opportunity to stretch the abilities, skills, and knowledge to further evolve in incident management.

- Severity resource plan

ODF is assuming the same \$10M severity budget for the next biennium. Resources are currently on hand at the current service level. There will be a transition of a Type 2 helicopter to a Type 1 for more efficient and effective suppression as well as being useful to firefighting partners. Additionally, two SEATS will replace the Type 2 helicopter in Roseburg. This is also the final year of the current Large Air Tanker (LAT) contract. Bids will go out next year for a new LAT contract, which is a significant part of the severity budget at \$4M per year.

- Forest Land Classification update

Tim Holschbach, Deputy Chief of Policy and Planning for the Fire Protection Division, provided an update on the status of the forestland classifications noting Yamhill County's recertification from 2018 has been reviewed and refiled with no changes. Also completed are Lincon County, Coos County, Wasco County, and Hood River County. Jefferson County and Washington County are currently engaged in the forestland classification process and will be working on public information moving forward.

- WUI map

Tim Holschbach also provided an update on the WUI risk map. Senate Bill SB 80, after amendments, now includes changes to the map. Currently, we are in a waiting period. One requirement of Senate Bill 80 is that Association of Oregon Counties hold regular meetings and ODF is also required to engage in those meetings. A quantitative risk assessment update continued through this spring, and the new risk map will be released later this year and will include new data. Public feedback from last year's process will guide ODF's path forward in implementation of the new map.

ITEM 12: EFCC ADMINISTRATOR REPORT *[Information Item]*

Nancy Hirsch, EFCC Administrator, reported that overall, Lorna Hobbs, herself, and Tracy Wrolson, with help from Western Lane District Business Manager, Andrea Lively, will be working to complete the fire season 2022 audits soon. This team has been very effective with the added capacity of the area accountants. Nancy highlighted the timelier closure of corrections from districts now. Additionally, the 2021 fire season audit report will be done and ready for the September EFCC meeting, and consistent with the schedule, the 2022 fire season audit will be provided to the committee at the January 2024 meeting.

Nancy then provided additional details noting audit discussions this year were very robust. The operational breakout to visit with district staff, included details on their strategic investments. Coos Forest Protective Association's microwave will be ready for this fire season, as will the La Pine guard station. Nancy also noted that the Fireweb software for Douglas Forest Protective Association replaced 6 of the 8 tools for dispatchers. The status of the Bly guard station investment is that properties are unavailable. As for the Chiloquin guard station, it will not be ready until fire season 2024.

Nancy then highlighted the innovative and creative planning and implementation in Northeast Oregon with the use of power poles for detection camera installation. This created substantial savings and NEO will now be able to accomplish all of their original strategic investment projects.

Nancy is putting together a report on successful fire stops and has asked districts for more information. One example is the Horseshoe fire last year. This fire was reported in the early morning two miles south of the Troy guard station. This fire was caught at .10 of an acre. If not for the guard station in Troy, the response time would have been two hours. Since the guard station has been in place, there have been two fires like this this year per year and is proving to be a good investment.

Nancy noted these success stories will be emailed to committee members and ODF staff, as well as be included in the EFCC audit report. Nancy then mentioned the audits provided time for a thorough review of human caused fires, including investigations status and cost recoveries, to ensure communication and connections were timely. The 2022 fire season audits are now complete and the documentation package continues to improve.

As to the fire season 2021 insurance claim, Nancy updated the committee that there is a meeting this Friday with Willis Towers Watson, DAS, and the insurance adjustors/auditors to provide updated claim numbers. She and the EFCC audit team will work with districts to reconcile the 2022 fires, then ODF will receive the payment.

Chair Garrelts thanked Nancy and Lorna for their work on the audits behind the scenes. Erik Lease commented that he appreciated hearing about fire stops as they provide good assurance of investments made.

ITEM 14: PUBLIC COMMENT / GOOD OF THE ORDER

Eric Kranzush, member of the public, commented that the meeting materials for the April 3, 2023, EFCC special meeting and the EFCC March 7 meeting were not available on the ODF website as of today. He also mentioned that he didn't see the meeting materials for today's meeting posted either.

There being no further business before the committee, Chair Garrelts adjourned the meeting at 11:38 am. The next regular meeting of the Emergency Fire Cost Committee will be held at **10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 5, 2023** at the Oregon Department of Forestry Headquarters in Salem and via Zoom Video Conferencing.

Minutes drafted by: Chrystal Bader
Minutes reviewed by: Nancy Hirsch and Erik Lease