



## Wildfire Programs Advisory Council – Meeting

Friday January 20, 2023

The complete Wildfire Programs Advisory Council can be viewed at the following website and serves as the official public meeting record: <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policies/Pages/wildfire-programs-council.aspx>

---

### Welcome

Chair Bennett

Chair Bennett welcomed the council members to the meeting and Director Grafe introduced the new staff members that would be assisting the council. Chair Bennett asked if council members had any changes to the agenda or the summary of the Council's December meeting and there were none. Vice-Chair Browning reviewed meeting etiquette and took the role.

---

### Public Comment

All

Chair Bennett reviewed the process for requesting the opportunity to present comment to the council and opened the floor for public comment. There was no oral public comment but two pieces of written public comment had been received by the council.

---

### Wildfire Programs Update

Director Grafe

Director Grafe provided an update on overall wildfire programs implementation. He also pointed council members towards the January 2023 Director's Report ([link](#)). Director Grafe explained the expanded nature of his role in the new governor's administration which includes both wildfire responsibilities as well as broader emergency management duties. He explained the additional focus on landscape resiliency driven, in part, by additional funding from the federal infrastructure bill. The director and the chair confirmed that there would be additional discussion on securing federal funding at the next regular council meeting.

State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple gave a presentation on the Office of State Fire Marshal's efforts implementing the directives of Senate Bill 762. Chief Ruiz-Temple highlighted the incentive programs that will be administered by the office. She talked about the priority for using multiple channels of communication to make sure that intended recipients are aware of the availability of these programs and that these programs will be prioritizing the most vulnerable groups for assistance.

Director Grafe noted that, when it comes to bills, agencies are largely in standby until there is direction from the Governor's office.

---

---

Department of Consumer and Business Services Director Andrew Stolfi provided an update on the department's work and encouraged that anyone having problems with insurance, due to wildfire risk, reach out to the department's Division of Financial Regulation for assistance.

Emily Jane Davis PHD talked about the steps that OSU extension was taking to support wildfire education and mitigation efforts across the state's different regions.

Heide Caswell from the Public Utilities Commission talked about the public safety shut-off in September of 2022. The Commission sees it as a success but noted that in the future even better communication about any shut-off would be the goal.

Susan Millhauser of DLCD stated that the department was awaiting legislative direction based on the report it provided on October and in the interim was working with the Association of Oregon Counties on ways of implementing rural Accessory Dwelling Units in a way that incorporates wildfire risk mitigation.

---

**Council Work Plan**

All – Relevant Agencies

---

Chair Bennett moved the discussion to identifying council priorities for 2023 in addition to the development of the Council's annual report to the legislature in October.

- Member Dave Hunnicutt stated that he would like the council to try to involve federal representatives in the council's discussions because of the proximity of federal forest land in high-risk areas.
- Member John O'Keefe echoed the desire for involving the federal government in the discussion. He stated that there was a need to examine the balance between air quality concerns and the benefits of prescribed fire.
- Member Mary Kyle McCurdy suggested the council prioritize ensuring that implementing agencies have sufficient budget, training, and best practices guidance to make the most of public engagement and education about the programs being implemented.
- Member Susan Jane Brown discussed a recent Environmental Protection Agency rulemaking on air quality that could potentially have an impact on the ability to use prescribed fire as a tool and would be something to keep in mind in discussing prescribed fire. She also stated that a good priority would be how to coordinate landscape mitigation efforts to achieve the greatest effect across Federal, State, and private lands.
- Member Alessandra de la Torre, emphasized that, in addition to prioritizing communications strategies it is important to ensure that the communications are reaching and informing relevant groups and stakeholders. Also, wished to prioritize how the council is not just receiving but responding to public comment. She also encouraged the council to prioritize uplifting indigenous knowledge and experience and including indigenous partners in the ongoing discussion.
- Member Terry Fairbanks noted that federal capacity to manage federal forest land has been significantly reduced but that tracking where funding goes can provide insight into plans for management of federal forest land.

The chair encouraged members to continue thinking about council priorities and to communicate those priorities. The chair recognized Senator Golden and provided an opportunity for the senator to speak.

Senator Golden thanked the council for its continued engagement. He acknowledged the tension in wildfire risk and federal land management and stated that time will be devoted to discussing that issue in the Senate Natural Resources committee. He acknowledged that the wildfire risk map would not be published until after the legislative session and noted that there was a significant appetite for public comment on a draft map but that ultimately the map would

---

---

be a product of the science and that was important to the integrity of the map as a tool.

The chair pivoted the conversation to talking about the development of the wildfire risk map. Multiple members of the council expressed a desire that the council be more active in the development and communication of the wildfire risk map. Generally, the council agreed that a map is necessary to be able to coordinate programs but there are some differences on details. The chair suggested that a more detailed discussion about the wildfire risk map be moved to workgroup two, which worked on the section of the council's report that dealt with the map in the council's October report.

The State Forester Cal Mukumoto shared what had already been done by the forestry department in regard to the statewide wildfire risk map and the department's plan going forward. He reviewed the initial publication and withdrawal of the first version of the wildfire risk map. He outlined some of the ways the department is hoping to improve the map rollout when a new map is published. This would include more robust outreach and communications efforts and additional collaboration with residents of affected areas while still maintaining the integrity of a map based in science.

Member O'Keefe noted that a map may be most effective at the regional level as opposed to categorizing individual tax lots and that incentives would be a good addition for individual affected tax lots.

The council further discussed moving the risk map discussion to a workgroup versus holding an additional council meeting to discuss the map as a full council examining the benefits of both approaches. Ultimately, the council decided to have the discussion within workgroup two, but to allow any additional council members not already a part of workgroup two to participate. Additionally, whatever recommendations come out of the workgroup discussion would move to the full council for consideration.

---