

Washington Prescribed Fire Council Conference
JFSP Project 13-2-1-10
Final Report

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The objectives set forth at the 3rd Annual Washington Prescribed Fire Council Conference (held March 4-5, 2014 in Olympia, WA) were to develop annual action plans to achieve goals associated with each of the four Priority Action Areas for the Council. On the first day of the conference, the 60 attendees from 28 different agencies (Figure 1) heard from federal, state and non-profit managers and elected officials on fire policy and management (see Agenda, pg 3). These presentations provided an excellent baseline for discussion in subcommittee breakout sessions. Attendees broke into four subcommittees and developed action items for each of the Priority Action Areas:

- 1) Policy, Influence and Issue Resolution,
- 2) Training, Certification and Expertise Exchange,
- 3) Partnership, Collaboration and Funding, and
- 4) Public Understanding, Outreach and Communication.

The action items were prioritized and tagged with timelines (i.e. deadlines) to provide assistance to the WPFC Coordinator throughout the year (Table 1). Day two brought two expert panels, organized by the Northwest Fire Science Consortium, that were focused on building partnerships and enhancing communications to inform and influence policy. The panelists provided candid guidance and examples from their respective agencies and organizations about successful (and not-so-successful) collaborative efforts, with clear suggestions for the Council as it moves forward into the policy arena.

One exceptional opportunity that came forward at this conference was the attendance and presentation by the WA State Commissioner of Public Lands, Dr. Peter Goldmark. Goldmark currently controls the application of the state-wide burn ban, which has dramatically limited prescribed fire use in past years. However, he delivered an invitation to the Council to work with him to develop policy and practices to safely use prescribed fire when it's most needed and most effective. The Council has since prepared an information packet for the Commissioner and is working with his staff to craft a process that would provide exemptions for ecological burning during the annual state-wide burn ban.



Figure 1. Day one WPFC 2014 Conference attendees.

Table 1. Subcommittee Action Plans with associated timelines

Subcommittee	Topic	Action Item	Timeline
Policy, Influence & Issue Resolution	Laws and policies	Review current laws and policies that affect Rx fire actions across the state	By July 2014
	Prescribed fire barriers	Identify a working group to draft a Rx fire barriers list	By Dec 2014
	Working with the Commissioner	Develop unified WPFC approach to meet with and inform Commissioner on Rx fire season plans	By June 2014
	Burn bans	Work with Commissioner and DNR staff to clarify burn ban exception process to better inform practitioners	Throughout 2014-2015
Training, Certification & Expertise Exchange	Training	Establish training mechanism through sponsorship for FFT1 and ICT4	Throughout 2014-2015
	Training calendar	Create calendar on WPFC website for training opportunities	By June 2014
	Training exchanges	Establish locations and groups for training exchanges. Offer training to suppression agencies	Throughout 2014-2015
	Training network	Establish links with interested groups and other state PFCs	Throughout 2014-2015
Partnerships, Collaboration & Funding	Conference planning	Provide suggestions for locations and new partners for 2015 conference planning	By October 2014
	Sales pitch	Draft effective sponsorship solicitation document to be shared with partner agencies	By May 2014
	Partner sponsorship	Distribute sponsorship solicitation letter to appropriate leads in their home agencies	By December 2014
	Resources	Provided suggestions for additional resources to be listed on WPFC website – add to Resources page on website	By November 2014
Public Understanding, Outreach & Communication	Publish Smoke Impacts Survey	Develop and distribute Smoke Impacts Survey to identified communities	By August 2014
	Communications Plan	Incorporate results of Smoke Impacts Survey into targeted Communications Plan for the Council	By December 2014
	Website	Develop calendar of events/activities around the state; create blog to highlight recent Rx fire stores	By July 2014
	Social media	Post weekly news, events, updates from members to WPFC Facebook page	Throughout 2014-2015

3rd Annual Washington Prescribed Fire Council Conference

Strengthening partnerships to influence policy

March 4-5, 2014 Doubletree Hotel, Olympia, WA



Conference Goals:

- Develop basic understanding of policy framework for Rx fire in WA
- Identify ways that the WPFC can engage in the policy arena
- Expand and develop subcommittee goals and tasks for 2014-2015
- Provide guidance on communication with policymakers and the public

AGENDA

All presentations will be held in the Capitol Room at the Doubletree Hotel

Day 1 – March 4, 2014

Time	Event
8:30-9:00am	Welcome and 2013 Year in Review <i>Sarah Hamman, Center for Natural Lands Management & Reese Lolley, The Nature Conservancy</i>
9:00-9:30am	Fire Adapted Communities: fostering new partnerships and implementing new policies <i>Annie Schmidt, Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition</i>
9:30-10:00am	The role of policy in natural resource management <i>Craig Partridge, The Evergreen State College and WA Department of Natural Resources (Retired)</i>
10:00-10:30am	Coffee break
10:30-11:00am	The National Cohesive Wildfire Management Strategy: what it means for you <i>Craig Goodell, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region</i>
11:00-11:30am	Fire suppression, burn bans and prescribed fire-a discussion about objectives and tools for resource management <i>Peter Goldmark, State Commissioner of Public Lands, WA Department of Natural Resources</i>
11:30-1:00pm	Lunch (provided)
1:00-1:15pm	Introduction to breakout sessions
1:15-2:45pm	Subcommittee breakout sessions: 1) <i>Policy & Influence</i> 2) <i>Training Exchanges</i> 3) <i>Outreach & Education</i> 4) <i>Partnerships and Funding</i>
2:45-3:00pm	Coffee break
3:00-4:00pm	Breakout sessions cont'd.
4:00-4:30pm	Subcommittee Reports and Day 1 Wrap-up
4:30-5:30pm	Social hour (hors d'oeuvres and cash bar)
5:30pm	Dinner (on your own – see map for suggestions)

AGENDA continued

Day 2 – March 5, 2014

Time	Event
8:30-8:45am	Introduction to morning session
8:45-10:15am	NWFSC panel #1–Building a successful coalition to influence policy <i>Panelists: Nick Goulette, Watershed Research and Training Center Cassandra Moseley, University of Oregon Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy</i>
10:15-10:30am	Coffee Break
10:30-12:00pm	NWFSC panel #2–Effective tools to communicate with policymakers <i>Panelists: Lisa Remlinger, Washington Environmental Council Robert Duff, Washington Governor's Office Paula Swedeen, Swedeen Consulting</i>
12:00-12:30pm	Conference wrap-up and next steps for the Council <i>Reese Lolley, The Nature Conservancy</i>
12:30pm	Adjourn
1:00-3:30pm	WPFC Steering Committee Meeting

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