Steering Committee Member Roll Call

Attendees:  Will Smith, Juston Huffman, Kelly Howsley-Glover, Tricia Sears (DLCD), Cindy Miller, Kristin Dodd, Robert Palmer, Dave Anderson

Absent: Kathy White, Steve Kramer, Tyler Stone, Arthur Smith, Tycho Granville, Clinton Whitten, Angie Brewer, Ryan Bessette

ITEMS

1. Introductions

Frank Cochran is no longer with NRCS. His replacement will arrive October 1.

2. Updates

   a. Editing Process in 2018, comments received

   Will updated the group on the editing efforts that have been underway since the last SC meeting in December. Tricia, Juston, and Will have been incorporating the suggested edits and bouncing the documents back and forth, refining them. They have also created a new section regarding the small cities, which was reviewed by email by the SC and partner agencies. Dave and the city of The Dalles have been having separate meetings and writing up their addendum section to be included, which has also been reviewed by the groups.

   Will also described the comments that had been received from various partner agencies and how they had been incorporated. One of the respondents, DEQ, caught the attention of the group. They had submitted some edits of the NHMP documents and had also suggested being invited to participate in SC meetings in the future. The SC agreed that this would be a good idea and was glad they were interested. One member asked what the comments were in regards to and the discussion turned to Air Quality. Bob noted that this is becoming a seasonal issue. Dave mentioned that it is an operational issue for his workers. If AQI hits a certain number they are required to wear respirators, or not work outside. These protocols were started after the terrible smoke effects from last summer’s Eagle Creek fire impacted the area for so long. Again this year, with bad smoke from as far away as British Columbia and Southern Oregon there have been many dangerous days for Air Quality. Cindy said schools stop sporting events. Kelly wondered how to mitigate this and Tricia mentioned that other jurisdictions monitor vulnerable populations, have incentives to replace wood stoves, and even identify Air Quality as a Natural Hazard in their NHMPs.

   b. Small City Section and Communication
The small city section includes information about each of the other five small cities – Dufur, Maupin, Mosier, Shaniko, and Antelope. It discusses what kind of outreach and participation representatives from each city have been involved with throughout the update process. Only one, Dufur, expressed interest in signing on to the NHMP so their City Council will review that when The Dalles and Wasco County’s commissioners and councilors do, after FEMA and OEM approve the plan. Cindy expressed surprise that Maupin and Mosier were not interested but Will described the emails and phone calls that had gone unresponded to and unreturned on this issue so they will not be looking at it this time. Perhaps in another five years they can be worked in.

3. Climate Forecast Report

The Oregon Climate Change Research Institute released a report titled Future Climate Projections for several counties, including Wasco County. A few weeks ago they hosted a webinar to discuss their findings, which overall showed that most hazards will be getting worse in terms of severity and duration in the coming decades. Tricia said she would send the webinar out to the group later.

The discussion on this topic was what to do with this report. Tricia had reviewed the Wasco County NHMP updated sections after the report came out in early August and added edits in to describe the report and suggested adding it as an Appendix. The SC reviewed her edits and accepted them, but discussion ensued over whether to include the whole report as an Appendix or just link to it. Kelly pointed out the risk of it’s association with something that may be politically unpalatable and asked if other similar plans have been included as an appendix. Will pointed out the OPDR survey that was included last time. Tricia said other Eastern Oregon jurisdictions have added it smoothly and noted that technically it is just a climate forecast. Dave thought a link made more sense, but said if the County didn’t include it then the city would because it’s important information. Tricia stated that FEMA doesn’t require it but Will noted that certain lending institutions have begun to examine how jurisdictions are addressing climate change when looking at loan ratings. Bob wants to see it added, but thought a link is fine. Tricia further explained that this is a DLCD funded study done by OCCRI and it may update again in five years but that will be dependent on funding. She noted that we would have to post the document on our website since it isn’t posted online anywhere else currently so that would have to be the link. By an almost unanimous hand raising vote, the SC agreed that a link would be fine and the documents will be posted on the NHMP website.

4. DOGAMI Risk Report

The group decided to do the same thing for the Risk Report as they are doing for the Climate document – add it as a link. This one is still in draft form.

a. Critical Facility list update

One significant addition from this report are a few extra critical facilities and infrastructure that DOGAMI identified that had not already been added to our list. The SC agreed to add them as well, and also noted a few edits of existing facilities that needed to be made (names, classification etc).

5. Plan Update toolkit review

Will asked the group to look at the plan update toolkit review checklist and see if we have missed anything. Bob noted that several fires this year were conflagrations and that should be updated. The discussion turned to unprotected lands for fire response in the County. He mentioned that the NFPA
standard for a 2,000 SF house fire is 15 people and MCFR has 5 on duty at any time. The first engine has to be on scene in four minutes and all personnel need to be there in eight. This is a hard standard to meet. Dave was hoping this could support the ISO report. Will asked how the substation fatality may affect the way fire is fought east of 197 in the Columbia Rural Fire Protection District. Bob said there is an OSHA investigation because the victim may have been working for another rancher, which means it was an on the job fatality which may end up involving NIOSH. Since the CRFD is not a recognized FD by state they do not fall under ICS and can be complicated to work with as communications, strategies, tactics, and objectives may be different. Kristin questioned why unprotected land was a thing that existed – ambulance service is statewide due to a state law. What is the best method to achieve zero unprotected land in the County? Tricia suggested a new Action Item that could focus on communication with rural fire protection districts and rangeland protection districts. The action item could make a goal of meeting with CRFD and discussing steps forward. Will mentioned that he had heard at the CPAW site visit 2 from one of the CRFD representatives that recent changes to include no till practices for area farmers led to increased vulnerability to fire with continuous fuel. This program does help increase water quality, soil quality and retain top soil though so there is good with that extra risk as well. Dave likened any resistance to no till practices in order to reduce fire risk as being the same attitude as “If we cut down all the forests, we won’t have any more fires”. Kirstin mentioned rangeland fire protection agencies could be formed. Dave wants to identify protection systems for these unprotected lands. Bob said if CRFD exercised their fire district to buy updated equipment mutual aid could be more effective. Kelly mentioned that there has been some discussion in south county about forming a Shaniko Bakeoven (SBO) rangeland protection association. Tricia mentioned that other counties have these, such as Malheur and Harney. Kristin noted that Crook has several. The Action item could include research into what works well in other counties. Will gave an update on the CPAW site visit 2 meeting that occurred in July. Bob noted that things like enterprise zones and urban renewal zones have some great benefits but also impact fire protection services by reducing their income. Will said he would write a new AI. Dave also pointed out that our plan does not address dollar figures anywhere but Tricia said the DOGAMI report has some charts and that we could pull a table or two from there to add to our plan.

6. Next Steps

   a. Approvals needed – FEMA, OEM, Boards, Councils

Tricia described the next steps going forward. After the NHMP is ready and we fill out a FEMA Mitigation Plan Review Tool checklist, we will submit it to OEM.. They have an unlimited timeframe to review the document. If they have changes they want us to make they will ask us to make them. If they do not have changes for us to make, they then submit it to FEMA, who has 45 days to review it. FEMA reviews it and may or may not have changes for us to make. If they do have changes for us to make we do that and return it to FEMA for additional review. Once FEMA is ok with it, they send an “Approval Pending Adoption” aka APA letter. Once we receive the Approved Pending Adoption letter, we can take the NHMP to the Wasco Co BOC, as well as The Dalles and Dufur City Councils. If they all adopt it as is, we provide the approved resolution documents to FEMA and they provide us with a final letter stating FEMA approval of the NHMP and identifying the NHMP expiration dates. Then we follow up with NHMP maintenance meetings and implementing the mitigation actions.

Will adjourned the meeting at 2:44 PM.