

EUREKA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
NDF Workshop
May 5, 2008

STATE OF NEVADA)
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COUNTY OF EUREKA)

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Eureka County Commissioners met pursuant to law on May 5, 2008, for an informational workshop presented by Nevada Division of Forestry. Present were Chairman Jim Ithurralde; Vice Chairman Kenneth Benson; Member Donna Bailey; and Deputy Clerk & Treasurer Amanda Rosener. Chairman Ithurralde called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

NEVADA DIVISION OF FORESTRY – INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP

Chairman Ithurralde read the notice of workshop. Sam Hicks, Fire Management Officer, began his presentation by naming the five cooperating partners that work with NDF: Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Sho-pai, and Fish & Wildlife Service. A state-wide Master Agreement is signed between these agencies.

COST SHARES (Exhibit B – attached)

Mr. Hicks stated that early season fires are often human caused. When a human caused fire is contained within 24 hours, each agency bears responsibility for their own costs. If the fire burns longer than 24 hours, the agencies meet and agree on a preliminary cost share plan. The cost share will list the involved agencies; the incident number; incident commander; fire start date/time; cause of the fire; jurisdictions; and cost structure, including what each agency will pay for suppression based on total acreage. The cost share is updated and finalized when NDF receives accurate mapping and data regarding the burn.

In conjunction with the initial cost share plan, the agencies conduct a wildland fire situational analysis review, to determine burn perimeter that can be managed by the participating agencies.

MULTIPLE AGENCY COORDINATION GROUP (Exhibit A – attached)

Each year, once fire season begins, the Multiple Agency Coordination (MAC) meetings are commenced with Field Management Officers from the BLM, USFS, and BIA. The other agencies don't participate unless there is fire activity in their jurisdictions. The purpose of these meetings is to establish priorities for new fires, existing fires, to share resource information, and allocate manpower and equipment. Exhibit A provides a breakdown of the 2007 MAC meetings.

BOO HOO FIRE IN PINE VALLEY (Exhibits C & D – attached)

The Boo Hoo Fire in Pine Valley was started due to lightening. 19,569 acres of private ground and 7,562 acres of public land were burned for a total of 27,132 acres. NDF costs for this fire totaled \$66,669.26 and BLM costs totaled \$135,739.06. Final USFS costs were not available but were estimated at \$10,000.00 and were mainly associated with aircraft and large tankers.

RED HOUSE FIRE (Exhibit C – attached)

The Red House Fire, primarily located in Elko County, but also affecting the northeast corner of Eureka County, was also started by lightening. NDF costs for this fire totaled \$375,283.04, BLM costs totaled \$845,970.78, and USFS costs totaled \$590,054.48. Costs were higher because it was a large and complex fire, with multiple burns in one incident. A type one team (hot shot crew) was also dispatched to this fire.

PARTY FIRE (Exhibit E – attached)

The Party Fire began on a private road leading up to Mary's Mountain in northern Eureka County. This was a human caused fire that burned over 4,870 acres.

2007 HUNT AREA FIRE MAP (Exhibits F & G – attached)

Two maps were presented that showed large fires occurring in the Nevada Department of Wildlife hunt areas. Fire #27 on the map (Exhibit F) occurred on the Lander/Eureka County border near Dunphy. This was an anomaly fire because private land was burned and multiple counties were involved. In these instances, the BLM negotiates suppression costs with the affected county or counties, based on private acreage burned. In early 2007, federal agencies came out with a doctrine stating they could not afford to fight fire on private property, which spurred a debate on who was liable for suppression costs on private lands. In the case of Eureka County, NDF will pick up the private suppression costs, because Eureka County has formed a fire district, making NDF statutorily responsible.

RESOURCE ORDERING SYSTEM STATUS (ROSS)

When resources are needed above what can be provided in the initial attack, NDF uses the ROSS system. This puts out a network request for such things as heavy helicopters, infrared flights, TFRs (temporary flight restrictions), type one crews (hot shots), type two crews, dozers, fire engines, water tenders, air tactical, lead planes, and air tankers. Any entity or agency on the network can fill the request, which reduces response time.

COST ALLOCATION

Cost allocation is a very precise process, used when more than one state or fire district is involved in an incident. Each day, head teams will meet and divide up the resources. Costs are allocated based on where the equipment was used for that day. Mr. Hicks stated, because of formation of the fire district, NDF is responsible for Eureka County's costs.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Commissioner Benson asked Mr. Hicks to identify any deficiencies in resources that Eureka County might have. Mr. Hicks replied that more dozers could be used and there was always room for improvement in coordination. Mr. Hicks did explain that NDF had many new faces last year and is in the process of hiring an Elko County Battalion Chief; so he felt coordination is improving and will only get better once full staff is in place.

Commissioner Benson and Chairman Ithurralde agreed that the Diamond Range in Eureka County would suffer greatly if it were ever hit by lightning. This led into a discussion regarding defensible space. All agreed that creating defensible space not only saves homes and property, but can save lives.

ADJOURNMENT

The workshop adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Approved this 19th day of May, 2008.

/s/ J.P. Ithurralde

J.P. Ithurralde, Chairman

Attest: /s/ Jackie Berg

Jackie Berg, Clerk