

LNFW Commission 09/05/2012 Session and Legislative goodRecommendations
Beth Semp
to:
LCS Lower North Fork Wildfire Commission
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Dear Madam Chairman and Commissioners,

With the Commission's recommendations and possible draft legislation the subject of our session today, I respectfully submit the ideas below for possible inclusion in any recommendations you might make as a result of this commission and its investigation.

The author of the USDA Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Region 2 (R2) Prescribed Fire Planning Document in compliance with AQCC Regulation 9, dated June 30, 2012, ('Planning Document') is Paul Langowski, Branch Chief of Fuels and Fire Ecology, and he may have expertise to help evaluate current forest practices. The USFS's Planning Document's purpose is in part to summarize "its use of prescribed fire as a grassland and/or forest management tool and the potential impacts to air quality" and I propose that it be expanded to include 'and potential risk to the public'. The 'USFS Mission' as stated in the Planning Document has seven major strategic goals with #6 being, "Engage urban America with Forest Services programs." Rural America needs to be included for engagement and participation in the Forest Services' programs.

In order for the public's and first responders' safety to be primary to the objectives of prescribed fires, statewide requirements for these types of forest management treatments must include standardized notification requirements that carry sizable fines or permit revocation for non-compliance.

Without proper, prior notification to and involvement with the communities which surround Colorado's forests that may be destined to prescribed fire treatment, our efforts to properly manage our citizen's and forests' safety and health remains unacceptable. Responsibility for the LNFW will be decided in the future but we must find more truth now.

We should all remain responsible to the lives and memories of the three folks killed in the LNFW by striving to preserve and protect our natural resources, citizens, animals and future generations as best we can with the knowledge gained through this investigation.

To learn from this tragedy means making changes to the causes of the Lower North Fork wildfire. Please consider the issues below when recommending changing to Colorado's current forest management, communications, mobilization and emergency practices.

LOCAL AND NEARBY NEIGHBORS BE PROVIDED WRITTEN NOTICE WITH ADEQUATE CONTACT INFORMATION AND CONTINGENCY PLAN IN CASE OF ESCAPE WITH EVACUATION INSTRUCTIONS

LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS RECEIVE PRESCRIBED FIRE PLANS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS, WHICH ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC VIEWING

PROTOCOL ACCOUNTABILITY THAT IS FAR REACHING AND EQUAL AMONG ALL PARTIES

STANDARDIZED WEATHER REQUIREMENTS FOR PRESCRIBED FIRES WITH MODIFICATIONS ACCOUNTING FOR CLIMATE AND WEATHER CHANGE, AND RECORD WILDFIRES

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UPDATE PRESCRIBED FIRE PLANS REGULARLY - INCLUDING FUEL INVENTORIES; LOCAL SUPPORT CAPABILITIES AND CONTACTS; CURRENT RESIDENCES, OWNERS, LOCATION TO PRESCRIBED FIRES

STOP EXPERIMENTING WITH MASTICATED FUELS IN PRESCRIBED FIRES; MORE RESEARCH WITH MASTICATED FUELS IS NEEDED; FOLLOW BASS' RECOMMENDATION TO INCREASE BLACKLINE DEPTH IN ALL PRESCRIBED FIRES WITH MASTICATED FUEL AND MAKE SURE IT IS COMPLETED

APCD'S REGULATIONS RE: PRESCRIBED FIRES' PERMITTING SHOULD INCLUDE MORE THAN SMOKE EMISSIONS; ALL SAFETY ASPECTS CAN BE ADDRESSED BY APCD AND DIVISION OF PUBLIC SAFETY

WITH ANNUAL AUTO REGISTRATION, REQUIRE REGISTRATION OF CITIZEN'S CONTACT PHONE NUMBER(S) FOR USE WITH 911 SERVICES, AND ENSURE TESTED AND PROVEN 911 SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT ALL COLORADO COMMUNITIES

WELL KNOWN NON-911 CONTACTS FOR COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN PRESCRIBED FIRES AS WELL AS TRANSPARENT AND CURRENT INTERNET INFORMATION ON A COLORADO WEBSITE

Your continued help is needed by the LNFW victims. Thank you for your dedication and efforts.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Semptimphelter

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Beth Semptimphelter



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