

Attachment A

Dear Madame Chair and Wildfire Matters Review Committee,

I am grateful for this opportunity to participate in our state's quest for improvements to all things wildfire-related.

More effective, efficient communication is needed among those agencies which protect and defend our citizens from the horrific consequences of wildfire; as well as from all entities implementing prescribed fire. Please consider implementation of the items below as you examine wildfire in Colorado.

- An Internet Site to Provide Status on Federal, State, and Private Prescribed Burns Statewide
- A Toll Free Phone Number to Provide Status on Federal, State, and Private Prescribed Burns Statewide
- State Standards for Dispatch Requirements for Large Prescribed Burners
- State Standards for Fire Trained 911 Emergency Operators
- State Standards for 'Cold and Out'

Thank you for your service to our state and your passion for keeping us safe. Peace

Respectfully,
Beth Semptimphelter

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Beth Semptimphelter



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USFS LOWER NORTH FORK WILDFIRE REVIEW dated 19 Feb 2013
KEY ANALYSIS OBSERVATIONS, pp 30-36 *direct quotes italicized*

POINTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF LNFV MISTAKES

USFS' LNFV Review report does not point to exact causes of the any of the LNFV operations' mistakes that are provided with its findings.

FAILED EVACUATIONS

The most relevant part of these findings is the evacuation section, page 33, which states:

"Evacuation analysis revealed that evacuation procedures were not standardized and entirely reactive in nature. Residents reported that the reverse 911 system and the direct evacuation notice was not as effective as expected. Residents who contacted 911 during the prescribed fire did not receive a call back once the prescribed fire was declared a wildfire."

The following sections are most useful in supporting claims of gross negligence of CSFS Incident Command.

Pedigo's Recommendations section is not included, but will be addressed in another memo.

WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS p 30

A comprehensive, interagency, statewide operating plan that has the involvement of federal, state, and county agencies is not well understood and clearly followed.

*Standardized protocols and procedures (for wildfire preparedness) among response agencies are either **lacking or not followed** and require clarification.*

Wildfire response roles for contingency resources were not clarified prior to the point of wildfire declaration.

A common geospatial database accessible to all agencies does not exist.

Mutual aid funding and response are not clearly defined and understood.

Adequate attention is not focused on year round activities: many items

State and federal leadership support to county teams is generally lacking.

There is not a clear understanding of which positions of the federal agencies including dispatch, and field fire management, are responsible to liaison with counties and fire departments.

There is a general lack of step up preparedness throughout the fire management organization in response to a known worsening fire situation.

Resource Availability analysis revealed that adequate resources are not available on a year round basis.

FIRE MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS p 31

Jurisdictional boundaries were unknown or were confusing.

Responsibility for the management response of associated initial action was unclear.

*Incident Command Post facilities were **not pre-planned**. Fortunately due to spring break the local high school campus was available as an ICP.*

RMACC and PIDC responded to the Lower North Fork Wildfire as a Wildland fire rather than what was warranted for WUI fires.

In general, interagency dispatch offices are not familiar with their role in supporting non-federal fires.

Communications among all dispatch centers was inadequate. No pre-season meetings were held, which hampered communications during the incident.

*Ordering circumstances caused a delay in obtaining resources. **Most problematic was a 16 hours time lag to obtain the full complement of aviation overhead.** Pedigo repeats this as the most problematic event, on page 32.*

Jefferson County OEM was unaware of wildfire dispatch protocols and procedures.

Closest available resources were not dispatched. There is a breakdown in ordering local government and state resources between PIDC/RMACC and OEM.

Dispatch requirement for Incident Management Teams were not understood. Multiple points for ordering the same resource resulted in multiple points of origin and diminished tracking for that resource. Single point ordering was not utilized.

p 32

Communications analysis revealed that common communications and frequencies were lacking among all local, state and federal cooperators.

Radio communications were hampered due to the county repeater becoming inoperable.

STRONGLY DISAGREE – “Information communicated to the public revealed that Public affairs communications on wildfires in Jefferson County is a very efficient and successful activity.”

STRONGLY DISAGREE – “Information dissemination needs exceeded the standard IMT information dissemination process.”

EVACUATIONS p 33

Evacuation analysis revealed that evacuation procedures were not standardized and entirely reactive in nature.

Residents reported that the reverse 911 system and the direct evacuation notice was not as effective as expected.

Residents who contacted 911 during the prescribed fire did not receive a call back once the prescribed fire was declared a wildfire.

WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE/INTERMIX p 33

The potential seriousness and magnitude of the WUI situation in Colorado is under recognized. State and local political leadership must recognize that the WUI problem is a critical issue.

The current WUI situation does not provide an opportunity for the emergency responders to be successful.

p 34

Large wildfires are associated with wind events.

Local topography is conducive to rapid spread rates and higher intensities.

LESSONS LEARNED p 35

These lessons represent areas that have reduced optimal efficiency or caused confusion and uncertainty due to inadequate information dissemination. The lessons learned may be acted upon by the public, emergency response agencies and governmental leaders to improve overall capacity in preparing for and responding to future Wildland fires in the WUI.

Paraphrasing Lessons Learned's key items below:

LACK OF OR FAILURE TO CONSISTENTLY ADHERE TO STANDARDIZED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE AGENCIES - In need of adoption of standard practices, development of response plans, interagency training

YEAR ROUND PREPAREDNESS and READINESS – climate shifts – fires not just in summer months

INCOMPLETE, IMPROPER, CONFUSED ORDERING POINTS FOR RESOURCES – CO's resource mobilization must be significantly improved

LACK OF COMMON COMMUNICATION CAPABILITIES; DIFFERENT AGENCIES USE DIFFERENT RADIOS; UNKNOWN FREQUENCIES – promotes operational inefficiency, compromises safety of first responders and public

AERIAL ATTACK CONFUSIONS – cost vs. potential loss, risk tradeoff ; inappropriate, untimely, inefficient

FIRE IN THE WUI DEMANDS RAPID INFORMATION DELIVERY – up-to-date information dissemination, use social media

“A lack of or failure to closely follow and maintain dynamic statewide standards for hazardous fuel reduction, fire-safe building codes, and infrastructure development reduces the possibility of having definitive direction and a comprehensive strategy for reducing the wildfire threat in WUI areas. Wildland fuel and vegetation dynamics require consistent and coordinated attention. Strategic documents have been prepared but have not been fully implemented (**FRFTP Roundtable. 2006**, DOI-USDA 2011).

Insufficient coordination between law enforcement and fire management agencies impedes efficient and safe operations of first responders and the public during emergency incidents.

There is a basic lack of understanding of how and when to access emergency funds, including the use of county emergency fire expenditures, the State Emergency Fire Fund activation process, access to the Governor's contingency fund, and FEMA funding requirements. "

Resource ordering and utilization due to this uncertainty deterred timely, decisive actions during emergency response actions.

This last statement is the only one in Lessons Learned that is specific to the LNFV; the delay in ordering resources deterred timely decisive actions.

Does anyone know: What is the Governor's contingency fund?

Our state continues to experience a leadership problem.
private land because immunity ignores justice and avoids accountability.