

MINUTES
JOINT MEETING

**SENATE RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
HOUSE RESOURCES & CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

- DATE:** Monday, February 15, 2016
- TIME:** 1:30 P.M.
- PLACE:** Lincoln Auditorium WW02
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Bair, Vice Chairman Vick, Senators Siddoway, Heider, Nuxoll, Bayer, Hagedorn, Stennett and Lacey
- Chairman Raybould, Vice Chairman Gestrin, Representatives Moyle, Andrus, Shepherd, Vander Woude, Gibbs, Miller, Bateman, Burtenshaw, Mendive, Youngblood, Pence, Erpelding and Rubel
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Representatives Wood, Boyle and VanOrden
- NOTE:** The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.
- CONVENED:** **Chairman Bair** called the joint meeting of the Senate Resources and Environment Committee and the House Resources and Conservation Committee (Committees) to order at 1:30 p.m. He welcomed the audience as well as the members of the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL).
- ANNOUNCEMENTS:** **Chairman Bair** announced that the meeting needed to be completed by 2:45 p.m. as the auditorium has been scheduled for another group to meet at 3 p.m. Following adjournment of the joint meeting, the House Committee will meet in EW40 and the Senate Committee will meet in WW17 so that each Committee may conduct Committee business.
- INTRODUCTION:** **Chairman Bair** asked Tom Schultz, Director, IDL, to introduce the speaker for today's program. **Director Schultz** introduced David Groeschl, State Forester and Deputy Director of Forestry and Fire, IDL, who gave a PowerPoint presentation on "Fire Suppression and Allocation of Associated Costs between State, Federal and Private Landowner Stakeholders" (see attachment 1).
- PRESENTATION:** **Mr. Groeschl** said there are approximately 53.5 million acres of land in Idaho that is divided into 16 forest protective districts. Two of these districts cover lands protected by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and two are tribal districts. The State of Idaho, IDL and two timber protective associations provide direct wildfire protection on approximately 3 million acres of private, state and some federal forest lands.
- Some state and private lands are located within federal protection areas, while some federal lands are located within state protection areas. These are known as "offset acres." Through an "offset agreement," the federal agencies protect approximately 900,000 acres of private and state endowment land around Idaho in exchange for the State protecting approximately 800,000 acres of federal land. Forested lands in Idaho are included in the offset agreement; rangelands in Idaho are not included.
- More than 200 local and rural fire districts provide structure protection in non-urban parts of the State that would otherwise not have structural fire protection. Six rangeland fire protection associations assist the BLM in providing initial attack on rangelands in southern Idaho.

Mr. Groeschl stated that with regard to the six rangeland fire protection associations, there are four additional areas being considered. There have been 230 ranchers trained, and they provided assistance on 30 fires in 2015, including the Soda Fire.

Mr. Groeschl explained that fire protection funding is grouped into two categories: preparedness and suppression. Preparedness is providing resources to be ready in advance of an actual fire. It includes hiring, training, tools, supplies and purchasing or leasing equipment such as fire engines. Preparedness on State-protected lands is funded by a combination of assessments levied on parties who own forested land, federal funds and the State General Fund. The forest land assessment is 60 cents per acre with a surcharge for forested parcels with structures.

Suppression is when personnel and equipment are dispatched to a fire managed by the State, and payment is made from the General Fund through the deficiency warrant authority. This allows IDL to pay promptly and the practice has been used since the early 1970s.

Wildfires within Idaho during the 2015 fire season burned approximately 742,000 acres and expenditures amounted to \$303,537,519. Following is a list of the owners and acres burned:

- U.S. Forest Service 351,000 acres burned
- Bureau of Land Management 230,000 acres burned
- Private 119,000 acres burned
- IDL 28,000 acres burned
- Bureau of Indian Affairs 11,000 acres burned
- Other 3,000 acres burned

The largest and most expensive fire was the Clearwater Complex Fire. It burned 68,100 acres and cost \$25.2 million. Sixty-two residences and 211 outbuildings were lost.

ADJOURNED: **Chairman Bair** thanked Mr. Groeschl for his presentation, then adjourned the joint meeting at 2:45 p.m.

CONVENED: **Chairman Bair** called the meeting of the Senate Resources and Environment Committee (Committee) to order at 2:50 p.m. in WW17 to conduct some Committee business.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTEE CONSIDERATION: Peter Black was appointed to the Idaho Parks and Recreation Board to serve a term commencing July 28, 2015, and expiring June 30, 2021.

MOTION: **Senator Lacey** moved to send the Gubernatorial appointment of Peter Black to the Idaho Parks and Recreation Board to the floor with recommendation that he be confirmed by the Senate. **Senator Siddoway** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Lacey will be the floor sponsor.

RS 24253C1 **Senator Nuxoll** presented **RS 24253C1** and said it allows counties in Idaho to declare a catastrophic public nuisance and request abatement from federal land management agencies when the condition of federally managed land presents a danger of catastrophic wildfire and threatens the health, safety and welfare of the citizens. This applies only to federal lands.

- MOTION:** **Senator Nuxoll** moved to print **RS 24253C1**. **Vice Chairman Vick** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- RS 24511** **Ms. Kate Haas**, representing Alta Mesa Idaho, said **RS 24511** streamlines the administrative permitting process, providing certainty and clarity for developers, state agencies and members of the public who own mineral interests. Currently, an application can take more than 400 days to process. This bill seeks to address that problem by clarifying the permitting process for drilling permits.
- MOTION:** **Senator Siddoway** moved to print **RS 24511**. **Vice Chairman Vick** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- RS 24416** **Senator Lee** presented **RS 24416** and stated that this RS provides a process for claims in the event of damage to bees and beehives by bears. This bill amends Idaho Code § 36-1109 by adding the words "bees" and "beehives" to the Expendable Big Game Depredation Fund. Currently the fund is only authorized to pay for honey.
- MOTION:** **Senator Stennett** moved to print **RS 24416**. **Senator Hagedorn** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- DISCUSSION:** **Chairman Bair** said he is to speak Wednesday morning to JFAC regarding any financial concerns related to resources and he asked the Committee for their input. Water recharge seemed to be the main topic.
- ADJOURNED:** **Chairman Bair** adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

Senator Bair
Chair

Juanita Budell
Secretary