



Montana County Fire Warden's Association

Wildfire Leadership Conference

May 17-19, 2024 | Billings, MT



| | Friday 5/17/24 | | Saturday 5/18/24 | | Sunday 5/19/24 | |
|-------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-----------------|---|--------------------------------|
| | Topic | Presenter | Topic | Presenter | Topic | Presenter |
| 8:00 | | | | | | |
| 8:30 | | | Welcome | | Elmo Fire | Mark Clary |
| 9:00 | | | Report to Congress | Aitor Bidabiru | | |
| 9:30 | | | The Alphabet Soup of Resiliency | Julia Berkey | Predictive Services | Predictive Services & NWS |
| 10:00 | | | | | | |
| 10:30 | | | Break | | Break | |
| 11:00 | | | Changes in Interagency Standards | Heath Gerber | Federal Agency Update | BLM & USFS |
| 11:30 | | | MT Master Agreement & Tie to Local Gov't | Cory Calnan | Equipment Development and Communications Center | AJ Angelo, Rose Kirschenheiter |
| 12:00 | | | Lunch and Keynote - Wildfire & the Insurance Industry | | | |
| 12:30 | | | | | | |
| 13:00 | | | | | | |
| 13:30 | | | Business Meeting & Elections | Board | | |
| 14:00 | | | | | | |
| 14:30 | | | | Shane Coleman | | |
| 15:00 | | | NorthWestern Energy Enhanced Mitigation Program | | | |
| 15:30 | | | Break | | | |
| 16:00 | | | Leading in Harms Way | Col. Randy Watt | | |
| 16:30 | | | | | | |
| 17:00 | Co-op Program today and tomorrow | Cory Calnan | | | | |
| 17:30 | | | | | | |
| 18:00 | Oregon Road Fire | Bill Neckels and Randy Johnson | | | | |
| 18:30 | | | | | | |
| 19:00 | No Host Social | | | | | |
| 19:30 | | | | | | |
| 20:00 | | | | | | |

CO-OP PROGRAM OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

Cory Calnan, Deputy Chief – Montana DNRC

Cory will present on the history on wildland fire protection in Montana and how the Cooperative Fire Protection and Cooperative Equipment Agreements came about. This created a unique, and highly effective, relationship between the State and counties that continues to evolve. With the passage of House Bill 883 in 2023, DNRC's capabilities are continuing to evolve substantially.

About Cory: Cory is currently the Deputy Chief for DNRC's Fire Protection Bureau. Cory previously worked as the County Co-op Program Manager after leaving the Clearwater Unit as the Unit Fire Management Officer. Over his career with DNRC he has also worked in both the Dillon and Helena Units. Cory currently lives in Havre with his family.

OREGON FIRE

Bill Neckels, Fire Chief – Spokane County Fire District #4

Randy Johnson, Fire Chief (ret.) – Spokane County Fire District #4

The Oregon Fire began near the small community of Elk, WA (~4000 people) on August 18, 2023 late in the afternoon on the North end of Spokane County. Another large wildfire on the opposite side of County had started earlier that afternoon and absorbed most of the County's resources. The fire burned 8,932 acres of the total 10,817 acres the first operational period along with burning 126 primary residences and 258 other structures and the death of 1 resident. The presenters will speak to the incident itself and the recovery from the incident for the community of Elk.

About Bill: Bill is the fire chief for Spokane County Fire District #4 covering 330 square miles on the North end of Spokane County. Following a career with the US Forest Service, last stationed in Jackson, WY, Bill took a job with Chelan County Fire District #1, later moving to Spokane County Fire District #4 as a deputy chief. Bill is a long standing participant on incident management teams as an operations section chief and is currently qualified as a Complex Incident Commander. Bill lives with his family in Elk.

About Randy: Randy is retired as the fire chief at Spokane County Fire District #4. Randy worked for fire departments in Yakima, WA, Jackson, WY and Wenatchee, WA prior to arriving in Spokane County. Randy is a long standing incident management team member in the NW having recently stepped down as the Type 1 Incident Commander of PNW3. Randy currently lives in Murphy, ID.

Wildfire Mitigation and Management Report to Congress

Aitor Bidaburu, Wildfire Technical Advisor – US Fire Administration

In 2021 the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law created the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission and charged it with reporting to Congress with recommendations on how federal agencies can better manage wildfire across the landscape. 50 members, including Aitor, from a variety of disciplines were appointed to the Commission and began a structured process of reviewing the full spectrum of wildfire management. Aitor will speak to the 148 recommendations across 7 themes that were provided to Congress in their September 2023 Final Report.

About Aitor: Aitor represents the US Fire Administration at the National Interagency Coordination Center as a member of the National Wildfire Coordinating group and National Multi Agency Coordinating Group where he is

the liaison to the Northern Rockies. Prior to his position with the Fire Administration, Aitor worked in wildland fire for the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. Aitor lives in Boise, ID with his family.

CWPP's, Risk Data and Prescribed Fire

Julia Berkey, Community Preparedness & Wildfire Prevention – Montana DNRC

Seem confused and like there is conflicting information on how to do a CWPP, how to define you WUI, like there are many different data sets defining wildfire risk in your area, not to mention what the rules are or aren't with prescribed fire? Julia and her team are working hard to bring consistency to Montana on these topics. Hear where they are at and are heading.

About Julia:

Changes in Interagency Standards

Heath Gerber, Training, Safety & Workforce Development Manager

Big changes are taking place with incident management teams at the national level, which causes cascading changes for all. Heath will speak to the transition of our interagency incident management teams to Complex Incident Management Teams and what that means when a team is ordered for your fire. Additionally, he'll address the transition for personnel qualifications away from Type 2 and 1 to Complex along with other recent pertinent changes to type 3 qualifications and Montana's Chiefs Certification.

About Heath: Heath is currently detailed into the Training, Safety & Professional Development Manager position at DNRC. He previously worked as the eastside training specialist after serving as the Area Assistant Fire Management Officer in Lewistown. Prior to his transition to DNRC, Heath was a firefighter at Lewistown Fire Department. Heath is an operations chief on the County Assist Team and working on his Complex Safety Officer with Northern Rockies Team 2. Heath and his family live in Billings.

New Montana Master Agreement and the Tie to Local Government

Cory Calnan, Deputy Chief – Montana DNRC

Montana signed a new Montana Cooperative Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement (often referred to as "Master Agreement" or "Six Party Agreement") that outlines how wildland fire is managed in Montana among the State and federal agencies. This new agreement required implementation of Sub Geographic Operating Plans that the Counties should be signatory to. Learn about these documents and how it affects your jurisdiction.

About Cory: Cory is currently the Deputy Chief for DNRC's Fire Protection Bureau. Cory previously worked as the County Co-op Program Manager after leaving the Clearwater Unit as the Unit Fire Management Officer. Over his career with DNRC he has also worked in both the Dillon and Helena Units. Cory currently lives in Havre with his family.

LEADING IN HARMS WAY

Col. Randy Watt (ret.)

With the prevalence of a multitude of real time information available to all levels of our organization it can be hard to deconflict what the full picture is depending on what source you have and determine what needs to be shared without getting in other people's business. Randy will speak from his experience as a special forces officer and SWAT commander about the limitations of single dimensional information and the importance of leaders empowering their personnel while avoiding the impulse to drive from the back seat.

About Randy: Randy retired as the Police Chief in Ogden, Utah where he spent 36 years in many roles and much of his tenure as the commander of the SWAT Team. Concurrently, he served in the Utah National Guard as part of the 19th Special Forces Group after 34 years. Randy is the recipient of the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star for Valor in Combat and 3 Bronze Stars. Randy now spends his timing lecturing and providing consulting services. Randy lives in Morgan, UT.

MONTANA EQUIPMENT DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

AJ Angelo, EDCC Manager

Rose Kirschenheiter, EDCC

AJ and Rose will provide an overview on services provided by EDCC to local government agencies to include coop equipment and military programs. They are also looking to have dialog about new prototype equipment current in development and what other products could be valuable in the future. They also plan to be several pieces to coop equipment for hands on discussion.

About AJ: AJ started his career with the Montana DNRC in 2008 as a seasonal firefighter with the Anaconda Unit. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and a teaching license from the University of Montana Western. In the summer of 2013 AJ accepted a full-time teaching position, teaching business and technology but returning to the DNRC as a seasonal Engine Boss every summer. In the spring of 2019 AJ became the Fire Management Officer for the Clearwater Unit. In the fall of 2023, AJ became the Equipment Development Center Program Manager for the Montana DNRC. Outside of work AJ loves spending time with his family, friends, and being outdoors. He is an avid bowhunter and enjoys chasing bugling elk in September. During the winter months AJ can often be found in the shop working on his jeep preparing for trail rides and fishing trips with his wife and daughters.

NORTHWESTERN ENERGY ENHANCED MITIGATION PROGRAM

Shane Coleman, Wildfire Situational Awareness Manager

Charles Tuss, Wildfire Situational Awareness Specialist

Shane and Charles will be presentation on NorthWestern Energy's Enhanced Wildfire Mitigation Plan and Public Safety Power Shut off (PSPS) program that is coming online in 2024. This represents a large programmatic shift for power utilizes here in Montana that will be highly visible in Montana communities.

NorthWestern Energy will be presenting the content of it Approved (Nov 2023) Enhanced Wildfire Mitigation Plan (EWMP). Which will include a high level overview why and what is in the EWMP and how NorthWestern Energy is going about implementing the (EWMP) including information on Power Safety Power Shut off and where NWE is heading.

About Shane: Shane joined NorthWestern Energy in 2016 as the Gas Operations Supervisor of the Missoula Division and has been in his current role of Manger of Wildfire Situational Awareness for year and half. He earned a bachelor's degree in forestry-resource conservation from the University of Montana and bachelors' degree in civil engineering from Montana Tech. Colman worked as a wildland firefighter for nine years. The majority of his time was spent on initial attack crews including hand crews, hotshots and helitack.

About Charles: Charles Joined NorthWestern Energy In 2019 as a Wildfire Situational Awareness Specialist. Previous to that, He had 32 year of wildland fire experience with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Unites States Forest Service (USFS) combined, most recently as the Fire Management Specialist for the BLM Western Montana District. He earned a bachelor's degree in Forestry Resource Conservation from the University of Montana and completed graduate course work at Colorado State University.

CWPPs, MWRA AND RX FIRE: THE ALPHABET SOUP OF RESILIENCY

Julia Berkey, Community Preparedness Program Manager

Jack Rinck, Montana Prescribed Fire Council

Sarah Kleinhanzl, Wildfire Resilience Specialist

Creating and supporting communities that are more resilient to wildfire is of increasing importance to fire response agencies everywhere, but it can be hard to keep up with the latest tools, guidance, and happenings. The Community Preparedness Program of the Montana DNRC is currently working with partners across the state to update Community Wildfire Protection Plans, provide the best possible wildfire risk data, and provide guidance for implementation of cross-boundary prescribed fire. Taken together, these provide for some significant tools in the toolbox that can help reduce wildfire risk to Montana's communities. Join us to find out more these topics

About Julia-- Julia Berkey joined the DNRC in 2020 after graduating from the University of Montana with a Master's in Forest Ecology and a focus in fire ecology. Since then, she has worked to foster more wildfire-resilient communities across the state. As the Community Preparedness program manager, she continues to grow the program and its offerings sustainably and strategically with the overall goal of creating a state that can better live alongside fire, rather than constantly battling against it.

About Jack— Jack Rinck is working toward the creation and coordination of Montana's Prescribed Fire Council. While the specific focus of the council is to be determined, Jack will likely work with council members to address common barriers to prescribed fire. This may include liability, resource sharing, providing Rx training opportunities, and giving a unified voice to Rx fire proponents across the state. Along the way, Jack will also work to capitalize on opportunities to expand the use of prescribed fire within the DNRC and promote its use within the agency.

About Sarah - Sarah Kleinhanzlis the Community Wildfire Resilience Specialist for the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Although she is based out of Missoula, Sarah works across the state to help better prepare communities for wildfire through the creation and implementation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans along with grant funding initiatives for wildfire preparedness work.