



City Council

Approval of a Resolution Authorizing an Interlocal Agreement with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources for Forest Land Wildfire Mutual Aid Response

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Title

Approval of a Resolution Authorizing an Interlocal Agreement with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources for Forest Land Wildfire Mutual Aid Response

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve a resolution authorizing the City Manager to sign the agreement with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources for Forest Land Wildfire Mutual Aid Response.

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve an interlocal agreement with the State Department of Natural Resources for mutual aid response that will support Olympia Fire Department with resources to extinguish and to investigate the cause of fires in the Urban Wildland interface areas of the City. (See below for description of such land within the City).

Staff Contact:

Greg Rightmier, Battalion Chief of Training, 360.709.2703

Presenter(s):

None - Consent Calendar Item.

Background and Analysis:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) collects property taxes on certain lands and are statutorily charged with the protection of those lands from wildfire. Within the City of Olympia limits and/or Urban Growth Area (UGA) are land parcels that are individually or contiguously greater than five acres and have harvestable size timber stands. The ownership of those lands varies, however both agencies respond to fire incidents on those lands. Such areas exist north of Providence St.

Peter Hospital, Watershed and Priest Point parks, LBA Woods, and areas both north and south of the City on the west side.

In years past, the City of Olympia Fire Department has taken a lead role in the extinguishment of fires on these parcels and has worked with mutual aid partners and the DNR to access manpower, equipment and technical expertise, without working out the details in advance.

In the event of a fire on “protected forest land” within the City, or if a fire originating on “protected forest land” extends to the City, the incident commanders from the City and DNR would join together to create a “unified command” to manage the situation. A unified command allows the City to remain in control of the situation for the City while working cooperatively with the DNR commander with their suite of resources and responsibility for the “protected forest land”. Unified command is a common approach to complex or multi-jurisdictional situations. Unified Command provides a framework for cooperation “on the scene” just as the interlocal agreement provides a framework for cooperation at the administrative level.

The attached standardized Interlocal agreement provides the legal and practical framework that DNR uses to guide the operations in these Wildland Urban Interface areas with fire departments and districts throughout the state. During an emergency, when structures and the environment are at risk, is not the opportune time to work out agreements regarding resource ordering, incident authority and reimbursement processes. This agreement specifies how the City of Olympia Fire Department and the DNR will cooperate, as mutual aid partners, during an emergency response. The agreement provides guidelines on how resources are ordered, how unified command is used to share the responsibility of leading the response and how that responsibility is transferred. While the intent of the agreement is mutual aid without the need for reimbursement, the agreement sets forth details on payment rates and invoice processing should the need arise.

By entering into this agreement, the City of Olympia will be better prepared in the event of a wildfire within our City limits. Should the City need outside resources or be part of a mutual aid response outside the City, the agreement will provide the mechanism for those services to be reimbursed by DNR.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

N/A

Options:

1. Approve the resolution and authorize the City Manager to sign the agreement.
 - a. With the agreement in place, The City will be able to receive and give mutual aid in a standardized fashion with clear guidelines for incident command, resource ordering and cost sharing.
2. Do not approve the resolution and send the agreement back to staff for additional work.
 - a. Pre-incident planning and development of standard operating procedures will be delayed.
 - b. Operational readiness for wildfire urban interface response will remain as it has in the past.

Financial Impact:

If there is a wildland fire within the city limits that requires expensive resources such as aviation

assets, heavy equipment or hand crews, the city will be liable for those expenditures until or unless payment by DNR can be negotiated at the time. With this agreement in place those negotiations are not needed. A standard cost sharing formula is already in place.

Attachments:

Resolution

Agreement