

**September 4, 2017**  
**Fire Briefing**

Present were Commissioner Bennett, Commissioner Peck, County Administrator Darren Coldwell, Brent Teske, Marc McCully, Vic White, Sheriff Bowe, Ernie Anderson, Heather Benjamin, Chris Nelson, Kathi Hooper, Brent Shrum, Jennifer McCully and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson. Present from Eureka via VisionNet were Commissioner Cole, Ron Hvizdak, John Hannay, Ron Komac, Tracy McIntyre, Dennis Radish, Sheriff Bowe and Tammi Michels from the Red Cross.

9:00 AM

Vic said the Emergency Operation Center in Libby (EOC) is set up at the EMA office located within the Ponderosa Room. Tracy said the EOC is set up at the Eureka Town Hall. The EOC is a public information center for evacuation status, community resources and fire information. Jennifer said the goal of the EOC is to tie in with all fire teams to provide updated, accurate information to the public. Commissioner Peck commented that he would like to see daily communication with the EOC in Libby and North Lincoln County.

Updated status of the West Fork, Caribou, Moose Peak, and Gilbralter fires in Lincoln County were discussed. Public meetings are being held at the Lincoln High School in Eureka and the Libby High School. Commissioner Peck said a meeting needs to be held at the Fisher River Fire Hall to inform residents on the Moose Peak Fire.

The Red Cross is set up at Libby Assembly of God Church and at the Church of God in Eureka. Donations are set up to be taken to those locations.

Kathi said the animal shelters are set up to take in domestic animals and the fairgrounds are available for livestock.

At this time the fire acreage is as follows:

West Fork-3,679 acres

Moose Peak-4,179 acres

Caribou-17,000 acres

Gilbralter-7,000 acres

**Meeting adjourned** at 10:15 PM.

**LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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Mike Cole, Chairman

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Robin Benson, Clerk of the Board

**September 5, 2017**  
**Fire Briefing**

Present were Commissioner Bennett, Commissioner Peck, County Administrator Darren Coldwell, Sheriff Bowe, Vic White, Ernie Anderson, Steve Lauer, Scott Beagle, Craig Barringer, Gregg Smith, Jeni Lawver, Brandon Huff, Wendy Drake, Heather Benjamin, and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson. Present from Eureka via VisionNet were Commissioner Cole, Mike Cuffe, LeeAnn Schermerhorn, Tracy McIntyre, Ray Price, Bo Pitman, Nikki Meyer, and Tammi Michels from the Red Cross.

9:00 AM

Brent said the Type II Team arrived yesterday, introducing Gregg Smith and Jeni Lawver.

Ernie discussed the Reverse 911 and the Code Red phone systems and mapping capabilities for fire information.

Commissioner Peck said the Libby road department is engaged in the West Fork Fire; currently having a tender and grader up Quartz Creek.

Kathi said the animal shelters are currently housing 81 animals and commented that air quality is very poor.

Steve said the Libby Fire Department is having a Type II meeting briefing later today sharing information, maps and coordinating efforts.

Tammi said the community is doing an awesome job in Eureka and the Red Cross is receiving donations. Kevin Lindgren is organizing receiving donations for South Lincoln County.

Sheriff Bowe said the biggest concern right now is working with the evacuees and escorting them to their homes temporarily to take care of pets and other home matters that need attention. It is difficult for people to be away from their

### September 5, 2017 Fire Briefing Continued

homes and we are trying to be understanding, compassionate to accommodate them. This effort needs to be coordinated with fire crews manning road blocks.

The Libby Police Department is helping with road blocks; currently, there are 5 closures between Libby and Eureka combined.

Commissioner Peck expressed his concern with the Moose Peak fire and said he attended a meeting with approximately 150 people in attendance. Right now, the fire may be settled down, but there is a lot of potential for it to run quickly. Commissioner Peck said he would like to see more long range, planning ahead. The Moose Peak Fire threatens several hundred homes.

Commissioner Peck said the public is expressing concerns wanting to go to State III Fire Restrictions, but we do not have the resources to manage that. Stage III calls for complete closure.

Commissioner Bennett said public meetings have been scheduled in Troy and the Yaak, stating that he is getting calls from people wanting to get back into closed areas.

Commissioner Peck suggested routing people through the EOC since this needs to be a coordinated effort, allowing people go to their home for a short period to get valuables and take care of animals. Sheriff Bowe said this has to be a site-specific plan.

Sheriff Bowe estimated that 10 homes and 30 structures have burned in West Kootenai.

Craig said the schools need to have communication to plan for misplaced kids, bus routes, and sporting events. Craig said he will coordinate with the EOC.

Gregg said the Type II Team is coordinating with agencies and will hold public meetings, distribute flyers (fact sheets) on public bulletin boards and social media, hold local radio interviews and communicate with local newspapers. Gregg said he would like to see a flow of actual, factual information to the public.

**Meeting adjourned** at 9:50 AM.

### LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Mike Cole, Chairman

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Robin Benson, Clerk of the Board

### September 6, 2017 Fire Briefing

Present were Commissioner Bennett, Commissioner Peck, County Administrator Darren Coldwell, Brent Teske, Vic White, Brandon Huff, Steve Gunderson, Craig Barringer, Scott Beagle, Steve Lauer, Wendy Drake, Ernie Anderson, Kathi Hooper, Darren Short, Jennifer McCully, Heather Benjamin, Gregg Smith, Jeni Lawver, Darren Clabo, Ben Pratt and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson. Present from Eureka via VisionNet were Commissioner Cole, Tammi Michels from the Red Cross, Tracy McIntyre, and LeeAnn Schermerhorn.

9:00 AM

**EOC:** Vic said the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is manned by an excellent team and is running well. The EOC is tied in with the fire teams and is connected with Eureka to provide the best, accurate information to the public.

**IT:** Ernie said the IT side is running smooth, and Heather is keeping maps updated.

**County Services:** Kathi said the air quality in Libby is unhealthy, but is improving in Eureka. Commissioner Cole said the Eureka road department is engaged and helping where they can. Tammi said over 200 people came by with supplies; numerous trucks of supplies are coming in and a local church in Eureka is providing meals.

**Finance:** Darren said the tracking of county hours worked and equipment used is going good. The Commissioners will be voting on a Disaster Emergency two (2) millage levied for current fiscal year later today.

**Schools-**Craig said due to air quality, kids are inside and extracurricular activities are postponed at this time.

**Fire Department:** Steve said the Libby Fire Department is on standby, waiting for any structural protection.

Commissioner Cole commented the Eureka Fire Department is highly aware and acting very diligent.

**Sheriff's Department:** Brandon said there are no scheduled new evacs or pre-evacs at this time, but that could change. The Big Horn Terrace area is being closely monitored. Search & Rescue is on standby. Coordination efforts are planned to allow property owners to visit their homes for various reasons; trying to accommodate that effort as much as possible. Darren Short said the Libby Police Department is assisting the Sheriff's Department.

**County Commissioner's:** Commissioner Peck said he is meeting with EPA, DEQ, and ARP to look at OU3 mine site. This is not an eminent threat right now, just preliminary discussion and coordination.

Commissioner Peck said a lot of people are pushing for stage III restrictions and he is finding it harder to argue with them.

Commissioner Bennett commented on a couple of public meetings in Troy and the Yaak to get information out.

Commissioner Cole said he is meeting with the forest ranger to get up-to-date fire information; everything in Eureka is running smoothly and appreciates all the support.

### September 6, 2017 Fire Briefing Continued

**I.C. Information and Fire Update:** Meteorologist, Darren Clabo gave a future weather report; no rain, potential thunderstorms and winds predicted for Saturday. Fire Behavior Analyst Ben Pratt stated we are reaching unprecedented dry conditions. Agencies and fire crews need to prepare for increased fire activity on Saturday.

Commissioner Peck said it is important to understand what crisis we are up against; resources are lacking because the whole western U.S. is on fire. We need to help dispel negative rumors and inform people that everyone is doing everything they can do.

Jeni said Sheriff Bowe is requesting two new community information meetings to be set up for Thursday in Libby and a second meeting at the Fisher River Fire Hall or the church camp on Middle Thompson. There are currently two public meetings set up in Troy and in the Yaak.

Steve Gunderson commented that Weyerhaeuser has announced that all of its lands are closed to public access.

Incident Action Plans were provided for the West Fork and Moose Peak Fires in Libby and the Caribou and Gibraltar Fires in Eureka.

**Meeting adjourned** at 9:50 AM.

### LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Mike Cole, Chairman

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Robin Benson, Clerk of the Board

### September 7, 2017 Fire Briefing

Present were Commissioner Peck, County Administrator Darren Coldwell, Clerk & Recorder Robin Benson, Sheriff Bowe, Libby PD Darren Short, Kathi Hooper, Wendy Drake, MTHD1 Steve Gunderson, John Blodgett, Red Cross Tara Ercenbrack, Craig Barringer, Scott Beagle, Jeni Lawver, Gregg Smith, and Heather Benjamin. Present from Eureka via VisionNet were Commissioner Cole, Tammi Michels and Michael Mee from the Red Cross, and Tracy McIntyre.

9:00 AM

**EOC**-Darren said the EOC was busy providing evacuation and pre-evacuation information. The EOC doubled its size from 3 phone lines to 6. Jennifer commented that people were very understanding.

**IT**-Heather said she is busy keeping the maps updated and thanked Jason out of Kalispell for helping with the overlays.

**County Services**-Kathi said the animal shelter is taking in more animals from Big Horn Terrace. Tammi said the Eureka Red Cross served 92 people last night, and the donations and volunteers are awesome. There may be some planning to potentially take in some people from Canada. Tara said the Libby Red Cross is serving meals and is also collecting supplies.

**Finance**-Darren said the good news is that DNRC is providing some funding for the Moose Peak Fire and structural fire protection.

**Schools**-Craig said displaced families with kids are placed on free meal status and currently all outdoor events are canceled. Scott said that Troy does have space for meetings if necessary. Commissioner Cole said that football practice in Eureka was indoors, and an upcoming football game is still planned subject to conditions or may be relocated.

**Fire Department**-Steve said the Libby Fire Department is patrolling the Big Horn Terrace area and is available to help where needed.

**Sheriff's Department**-Sheriff Bowe said everything is going well. There was a communication gap with Code Red, but that has been fixed. Been allowing people to evacuation areas in Eureka to get livestock animals removed and tend to vegetable gardens if needed. Everyone is very busy; dispatch is doubled up most of the time. Sheriff Bowe said the STAR Program was activated through DNRC and he is expecting law enforcement personnel; stay at camps and the sheriff's department will assign placement. The STAR Program is a mutual aid system.

**County Commissioners**-Commissioner Cole said he is communicating with and attending stakeholders and regional and local forest service meetings. The Gibraltar Fire is stable for now. Caribou is having a dozer brought in to create fire lines and some back burning has been completed. Four new crews are coming in today to assist.

Commissioner Peck commented that 2017 nationwide stats are 47,298 fires and 7 million acres burned compared to last year at 41,000 fires but only 4.6 million acres burned. The point being is there is not a rain cloud in sight and we are on tap to set a record for acreage burned. It's a tough year, but wants to express how great it is to see the communities come together and county staff working at the EOC. It would be an achievement if we could bottle this attitude and every day take care of each other. Thanks to everyone for efforts to accommodate people; people are nervous and stressed out.

**September 7, 2017 Fire Briefing continued**

**I.C. Information and Fire Update**-Gregg said there may potentially be more back burning done today. Jeni commented on the public meetings to be held at the Libby Christian Church tonight and Friday at the Thompson Lake Christian Retreat. Public meetings are also planned at the Troy High School. Current maps and Incident Action Plans for the West Fork, and Moose Peak fires were distributed.

**Meeting adjourned** at 9:45 AM.

**LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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Mike Cole, Chairman

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Robin Benson, Clerk of the Board