



Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners

Brad Little, Governor and President of the Board
Lawrence E. Denney, Secretary of State
Lawrence G. Wasden, Attorney General
Brandon D Woolf, State Controller
Sherri Ybarra, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Dustin T. Miller, Secretary to the Board

Be it remembered, that the following proceedings were had and done by the State Board of Land Commissioners of the State of Idaho, created by Section Seven (7) of Article Nine (IX) of the Constitution.

Final Minutes
State Board of Land Commissioners Regular Meeting
June 15, 2021

The regular meeting of the Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners was held on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 in the Capitol, Lincoln Auditorium (WW02), Lower Level, West Wing, 700 W Jefferson St., Boise, Idaho, and via webinar. The meeting began at 9:01 a.m. The Honorable Governor Brad Little presided. The following members were in attendance:

Honorable Governor Brad Little
Honorable Secretary of State Lawrence Denney
Honorable Attorney General Lawrence Wasden
Honorable State Controller Brandon Woolf
Honorable Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra

For the record, the Governor's Stage 4 Stay Healthy Guidelines, dated 5/11/2021, allowed for public meetings of any size with adherence to physical distancing and sanitation requirements. Four Land Board members were present at the physical meeting location, and Attorney General Wasden joined via Zoom webinar.

1. Department Report – *Presented by Dustin Miller, Director*

Trust Land Revenue

- A. Timber Sales – May 2021
- B. Leases and Permits – May 2021

Discussion: Director Miller mentioned the press release and news on the Caldwell Area property disposition which was pretty exciting. The Department auctioned two adjacent Ag College endowment parcels for the University of Idaho, 282 acres adjacent to Vallivue High School and Middle School in the Caldwell area. The ground appraised for just under \$6 million and was sold for roughly \$36.6 million, including the buyer's premium of \$1.4 million. That \$36.6 million is quite an up bid from the appraisal, very pleased to see that. Director Miller said there was a lot of interest and high demand for this piece of ground. That land sold to Corey Barton Homes. The University of Idaho leased these parcels for Ag College research purposes since the 1940s; the university recently sold the training facility adjacent to these lands so the preference for the university is to reinvest this funding into its new Center for Agriculture, Food, and Environment, or CAFE facility, to be located in the Magic Valley.

Controller Woolf recalled that at previous Board meetings, the Leases and Permits report, page 1, included a potential exchange in Madison County and wondered why it is no longer listed. Director Miller replied that the proposed exchange is still moving forward and staff will make sure it is shown on the report in future.

Governor Little directed attention back to page 2 on the report, under Other; mineral leases show an actual of \$85,000 but the graph on page 4 shows \$1.64 million. Governor Little asked for a refresher on how the Department determines what goes into the category of mineral receipts on page 2 and revenue on page 4. Director Miller explained that some of the mineral revenue goes into the permanent fund and some goes into earnings reserve. The \$85,000 referenced is only for the earnings reserve income. That comes from late fees, minimum rent, and application fees. There is also about \$485,000 year-to-date in permanent fund earnings which is royalty revenue. Governor Little noted then that the \$85,000 is not mineral income. Director Miller clarified that it is not income from mineral production. Governor Little restated that mineral production is in essence depletion and is deposited into the trust fund because a state asset is being depleted. In effect, the \$1.6 million is actual revenue from minerals. Governor Little inquired how quickly EFIB is able to invest that money. Deputy Director Bill Haagenson answered that as soon as possible after those funds are received by the Department, they are moved over to EFIB which is then able to invest them almost right away. Governor Little stated the money is put right to work. Mr. Haagenson replied yes and reiterated that it is rentals versus royalties that separate those two numbers. Governor Little suggested placing an asterisk on Mineral because with 2 1/2 million acres and generating only \$85,000, it looks a little anomalous.

2. Endowment Fund Investment Board Report – Presented by Chris Anton, EFIB Manager of Investments

- A. Manager's Report
- B. Investment Report

Discussion: Mr. Anton reported that equity markets continued their upward climb during May as the global economic recovery advanced once again. The fund was up 1.1% during the month of May and up 28.3% fiscal year-to-date as of May 31st. Through yesterday June 14th the fund was up 29.6%. Mr. Anton took a look back at the history and said 2012 was the record year coming out of the great financial crisis and the fund was up 24.6%. Optimistically, the markets will remain fairly stable the next couple of weeks and the fiscal year will end at a record high. Mr. Anton commented that vaccination efforts during the month of May, particularly in Europe which was lagging the U.S., allowed for broader reopening of economies and boosted the share prices of many economically sensitive companies. Investors seem to be focusing on two key things. One is inflation. Labor shortages have risen and wages have gone up for lower wages on the lower end of the scale. Commodity prices have increased; for example during the month of May oil prices were up 10% and as Director Miller indicated earlier timber prices have gone up significantly. There have been supply chain issues in numerous industries from semiconductors to automobiles, etc. The big debate has been whether inflation seen in the short term will be persistent or whether it is just temporary. Investors so far seem to be in line with the Federal Reserve's position that it is temporary which has kept interest rates fairly low. The yield on the 10-year treasury is about 1.5%. Should the perception change, that this is a persistent problem, interest rates will go up and that could really slow the economy. Hopefully, this is a short-term bubble in prices. Mr. Anton mentioned the other thing investors are really thinking about is when will the Federal Reserve and other central banks begin to withdraw their support which is

provided in two ways. One is they continue to buy bonds every month in the bond market; some have analyzed that and say that bond buying has kept interest rates about 1 to 1.5% below where rates would be without that support. The second is they have kept interest rates very low. The current best thinking is that this fall as the Federal Reserve meets in Jackson Hole, they will begin talking about reducing their accommodation, their bond buying. Maybe in early 2022 they will slow that down and possibly in late 2022 interest rates will start to creep up. Who knows what will really happen, but that is what is priced into the bond market today. Any surprises from that, any more rapid increase in rates or more rapid withdrawal of support may cause rates to go up again. People are worried about rates going up because it will slow things down. So far things are looking good. Mr. Anton observed the markets will probably continue to move sideways until it is really known how everyone will emerge from the crisis. Mr. Anton shared that in May EFIB received the \$31.8 million from the Land Bank that was approved last month and has put that money to work. Earnings reserves are in great shape. In August, EFIB has an Audit Committee meeting on the 11th, an Investment Board meeting on the 12th, and the Land Board meeting the following week. During that Land Board meeting, EFIB will discuss beneficiary distributions for FY2023 as well as moving money from the reserves into the permanent fund.

Consent—Action Item(s)

3. Disclaimer of Interest Request DI600300-City of Boise, Boise River – *Presented by Eric Wilson, Bureau Chief-Resource Protection and Assistance*

Discussion: Governor Little asked if this is where the river is right below the road going up towards Barber? Mr. Wilson answered that is correct. There is a very large diversion dam that kayakers like to surf during the summertime and that is at the south end of that accretion land. Governor Little inquired if \$300 is the totality of fees for the disclaimer. Mr. Wilson replied the Department receives the fee in two parts. In 1997 the Land Board approved a fee raise from \$100 to \$600. The Department requires a \$300 application fee initially before sending people out on the ground to identify the ordinary high water mark; that gets the ball rolling. Then, before the applicants sign the documents at the end of the process, they must submit the remainder of the fee which is at least another \$300. Department staff tracks time and expenses through this new process; if the total cost to the Department is more than that \$600, the Department can charge more than that. Governor Little commented that a hundred bucks an acre is a pretty good buy in the city of Boise. Mr. Wilson remarked it is much cheaper than a quiet title action.

Recommendation: Direct the Department to issue Disclaimer of Interest DI600300 for one parcel totaling 2.782 acres of the former bed of the Boise River to the City of Boise following their payment to the Department of the remaining processing fee of \$300.

4. State Participation as a Member of Clearwater-Potlatch Timber Protective Association (CPTPA) and Southern Idaho Timber Protective Association (SITPA) – *Presented by Craig Foss, State Forester/Division Administrator-Forestry and Fire*

Discussion: Governor Little asked Mr. Foss, at the start of the presentation, if there is any reason the Land Board needs to hear this report; it is the same report each year. Mr. Foss responded it is an annual routine report, as is the next agenda item; Mr. Foss offered to skip them at the Governor's direction. Governor Little said he would like to have discussion on the next topic and Mr. Foss moved to that report.

Recommendation: Direct the State to continue to participate as a member of the Clearwater-Potlatch Timber Protective Association and Southern Idaho Timber Protective Association.

5. Authorization for Issuance of Deficiency Warrants to Pay Fire Suppression Costs in FY2022 –
Presented by Craig Foss, State Forester/Division Administrator-Forestry and Fire

Discussion: Governor Little remarked this is the second year in a row he has wondered why the Land Board approves this silly request and asked if in the package of proposed legislation the Department has a fix to this. Mr. Foss indicated this place holder has been a long established budgeting process for the state and it has worked well. The challenge faced by the Department is what is the right number, because fire costs are unknown from year to year. In 2015 Department fire costs exceeded \$60 million; the next year they were about \$10.5 million and the range is everywhere in between. What would that right number be has been part of the challenge. Governor Little stated it is not an issue with the number. The Land Board knows it has warrant authority; the legislature always honors it. The question is how much time and staff and paper the Department and Land Board spend on this inane legacy piece of legislation. Governor Little assumed the Department has already spent over \$151,000 this year. Mr. Foss said that is correct. Governor Little requested that Director Miller make this a topic for discussion at a later date. Director Miller assented.

Recommendation: Authorize the Department to issue deficiency warrants necessary to pay the fire suppression costs beyond the \$151,600 appropriation for fiscal year 2022.

6. Approval of Draft Minutes – May 18, 2021 Regular Meeting (Boise)

Consent Agenda Board Action: A motion was made by Controller Woolf that the Land Board adopt and approve the Consent Agenda. Attorney General Wasden seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

Regular—Action Item(s)

7. Omnibus Rulemaking – Adoption of Temporary Fee Rules – *Presented by Scott Phillips, Policy and Communications Chief*

Recommendation: Rescind the existing temporary fee rules with an effective date of July 1, 2021, set forth in Attachment 1, and adopt as temporary rules all of the Department's administrative fee rules, as set forth in Attachment 2, to become effective on July 1, 2021.

Discussion: Superintendent Ybarra inquired if there were any changes made by the legislature from what the Land Board previously adopted until now. Mr. Phillips responded, no, this is a housekeeping issue at the direction of the Division of Financial Management.

Board Action: A motion was made by Attorney General Wasden that the Land Board adopt the Department recommendation that is rescind the existing temporary fee rules with an effective date of July 1, 2021, set forth in Attachment 1, and adopt as temporary rules all of the Department's administrative fee rules, as set forth in Attachment 2, to become effective on July 1, 2021. Controller Woolf seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

8. Proposed Legislation – Presented by Craig Foss, State Forester/Division Administrator-Forestry and Fire, and Scott Phillips, Policy and Communications Chief

Recommendation: Approve these legislative proposals and direct the Department to proceed with the 2022 executive agency legislation process by submitting them to the Division of Financial Management.

Discussion: On the All Hazard Deficiency Warrants legislation, Governor Little asked if the request is for the cash or for spending authority. Mr. Foss clarified it is the authority to spend the cash. Governor Little heard Mr. Foss say the Department would not be reimbursed. It is always reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), or the state's emergency fund, or some other fund. This is just cleaning up the spending authority. Mr. Foss replied that is correct; he may have misstated earlier.

Regarding the Wildland Firefighter Hazard Differential Pay, Superintendent Ybarra thanked the Department for bringing this proposal forward. The Department needs its firefighters and this is a great retention and recruitment tool. Mr. Foss appreciated the Superintendent's support.

For the Wildland Firefighter Rest and Recuperation Compensation piece, Controller Woolf remarked that the Controller's office has worked closely with the Department on these two items, the hazard pay and the R&R, several times over the past few months. Controller Woolf appreciated the Department bringing these proposals forward and noted his office will continue working with staff on this to make sure it is done correctly. Controller Woolf concurred this will go a long way for recruitment and retention of Department staff. Mr. Foss thanked the Controller and Land Board members for their support.

Concerning the Preventing Damage to Endowment Land legislation, Superintendent Ybarra questioned the due process aspect. Superintendent Ybarra remarked the school building principal in her is coming out; it is a huge deal for the citizens of Idaho, not just students, when there is an issue. Will the Land Board get to see the due process, the piece that the Attorney General was working on for that, at any point? Mr. Phillips responded the Department could bring the text of the bills forward to the Land Board for approval next month prior to the August submission deadline, or Mr. Phillips could work with Land Board staff on bringing that forward. The Department's intention is to keep Land Board members and Land Board staff informed of the process and make sure that members are comfortable with any language brought forward. Attorney General Wasden noted this falls under the arena of criminal law and there are some very specific things that have to be met in order to pass constitutional muster. This cannot simply be drafted alone; it requires people who have expertise in criminal law to draft this. Mr. Phillips thanked Attorney General Wasden for the service, the work, and the assistance that his deputy attorneys general provided in drafting proposed legislation, going through an initial round of vetting on all of the bills. Mr. Phillips mentioned he is meeting this afternoon with one of the deputy attorneys general to discuss specifically the due process rights of individuals. Mr. Phillips is 100% committed and understands that it is essential to get this piece of legislation right and will work through the process appropriately.

About the Funding Fire Prevention Activities proposal, Attorney General Wasden questioned the use of Smokey Bear. The Attorney General's understanding is that Smokey Bear is a trademark or owned by the federal government and he suspects there would be some sort of payment to the

federal government for the use of Smokey Bear. Attorney General Wasden also had concerns that since it is a federal symbol that the Department and Land Board will end up with some pushback regarding the use of that symbol. Mr. Phillips answered, regarding the ownership of the Smokey Bear trademark, Smokey Bear was created in 1951 and it is not just the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that owns a piece of that trademark. It is trademarked in a little different way. A federal law [P.L. 82-359] was passed that created a congressional trademark. That is owned by the USDA, the Ad Council, and the National Association of State Foresters, of which the state of Idaho is a member, so it is not just a federal entity that benefits from the Smokey image and the use of that image. Idaho is a licensee of the Smokey image and as such is allowed to use it for revenue-generating activities provided that 10% of the proceeds are paid back to the trademark holders, the Ad Council, USDA, and the State Foresters Association; those revenues are used for fire prevention activities. Mr. Phillips responded to concerns about legislative pushback for use of the symbol, saying he talked to legislators who tend to be more skeptical of the Forest Service and agrees there will be pushback on this issue. However, Mr. Phillips asserts it is worth moving forward with this proposal because revenue is needed to help fund fire prevention education work. The Department is operating on grant monies right now. There is much more that needs to be done; a bit of prevention could save a lot of money on the back end. It is worth the effort on the Department's part to shepherd this through the legislature.

Board Action: A motion was made by Attorney General Wasden that the Land Board approve the legislative proposals and direct the Department to present the actual proposed language to the Land Board at the next meeting. Controller Woolf seconded the motion. Hearing no objections, Governor Little so ordered.

Information

Background information was provided by the presenters indicated below. No Land Board action is required on the Information Agenda.

9. **Pre-Season Fire Forecast/Update** – *Introduction by Craig Foss, State Forester/Division Administrator-Forestry and Fire*
 - A. Predictive Services Forecast – *Nick Nauslar, Meteorologist, NIFC*
 - B. Resource Readiness – *Josh Harvey, Bureau Chief-Fire Management*
 - C. Rangeland Fire Protection Associations – *Rick Finis, South Idaho Fire Liaison*

[Editor's note: Due to duration, the Discussion portion of this item is written in first-person format. This is not a verbatim transcript.]

Discussion:

Josh Harvey: Governor, members of the Land Board, my name is Josh Harvey, I'm the Fire Management Bureau Chief for the Department of Lands. It's always interesting following predictive services and doing our pre-season readiness when they throw a lot of red blobs up on the board, makes things very interesting. Very happy to be here this morning in person, to speak with you folks. In your binder you'll find three maps, three attachments. The first attachment is a summary of initial locations for our 2021 aviation resources. The second attachment is a map depicting the positions and locations of our aviation, engine resources, as well as the 10 IDL

FPDs, the Timber Protective Associations, and the RFPAs. The third and final map is a map of just the RFPAs. First thing I want to provide for you this morning – we were talking about deficiency warrants just a few minutes ago – as of yesterday, we have 96 fires in our fire reporting system, for 432 acres. Ninety-one of those fires are human caused. To put things into perspective, those fires are at 297% of our 20-year average. The 432 acres that have already burned is at 223% of our 20-year average.

Governor Little: And that's just on state land?

Mr. Harvey: State and private, sir.

Governor Little: State and private?

Mr. Harvey: Yes, within our response protection areas. Aircraft and staffing – IDL contracted for aviation resources to be initially located in Coeur d'Alene, Grangeville, and McCall. These resources throughout the summer will be available statewide and to be shared with our neighbors. Specific details for those resources are in your briefing packet, but I'll talk over those here quickly. For this year we brought on two type 2 medium helicopters; one will be located in Coeur d'Alene, the second will be based out of Lewiston and/or Grangeville as the need indicates. IDL staffs two 7-person crews to staff those ships, a helicopter manager plus six crew members for each one of the helicopters. The first helicopter will come on contract June 15th and we typically do our pre-season training with the helitack crew on that ship before the other ship comes on and the crew is deployed. Both those helicopters are capable of carrying seven personnel and/or dropping 300 gallons of retardant or water at a time. We also bring on two amphibious water scoopers; these are commonly known as Fire Bosses. Initially both of these aircraft will be located in Coeur d'Alene, but again, will be available to move statewide as the need arises. Both of these airplanes are capable of dropping up to 800 gallons of retardant or water. Initially when they take off from the airport they will be loaded with retardant unless specifically ordered otherwise. Both of these aircraft are capable of scooping water out of lakes, rivers, and reservoirs where they have enough runway to take off. They both are capable of mixing Blaze Tamer gel inside the tank after they've filled with water; Blaze Tamer makes the water essentially more effective. We like to say it makes the water wetter; it works well. It also weighs the water down, makes it more accurate for the pilots when they drop, and it also leaves a color on the ground so the trailing pilots know where to begin and end their drops. The single engine air tankers [SEAT], these are solely land-based aircraft. We have exclusive use contracts in place for four SEATs; two will be located in Grangeville, two will be located in McCall. All SEAT contracts will begin the first week of July, and similar to the Fire Boss, they are capable of carrying up to 800 gallons of water or retardant. Call when needed aviation resources – we have seven call-when-needed agreements currently in place; we're working to secure more. Those aircraft are available to support wildland fires as well as other project work as needed. A few years ago, IDL began investing in unmanned aerial systems (UAS). Currently, we have six aircraft. We have nine certified UAS pilots and we use those UAS aircraft only for wildland fire suppression purposes in the fire program. Our other programs within the agency use them for other work. These aircraft come capable with infrared cameras, and we fly those cameras early in the morning or late at night and they detect hotspots either near the fire line or outside the fire line where we typically can't see them during the day. It leads to a much more effective and efficient process in putting out our fires. Engines and staffing – IDL currently has 29 engines located at our 10 IDL offices. Timber protective associations are staffed with six engines. They're

currently staffed about 60% with qualified engine bosses. This is a huge improvement over last year where our engines were only staffed up to about 40% with qualified engine bosses. We're currently recruiting for the ten .83 engine bosses that was approved through the legislature this year. That process is ongoing. If for some reason we're unable to fill those positions this spring, we'll begin recruitment again this fall. We anticipate that many engine bosses, especially from outside the organization, have already committed to their positions and we're anticipating that as an issue but we'll work this fall to fill those. Recruitment is also underway for a helicopter manager position and the Teakean crew boss position that was included in that decision unit. Each of our engines is staffed with a three-person engine crew and we provide extra engine crews at each district to ensure that we have seven-day-a-week coverage for response throughout the summer. At our districts, we typically staff type 5 and type 6 engines; we call these light engines. Our type 5 engines carry 550 gallons of water; our type 6 engines carry 325 gallons of water. Over the last few years, we've transitioned away from the heavy engines, the type 3s and 4s, simply because they're not very agile. They're hard to turn around on mountain roads and there are CDL requirements; with a seasonal workforce it is hard to maintain those CDL qualifications. We also staff a 10-person hand crew that is based out of the Ponderosa District, commonly referred to as the Teakean hand crew. This crew is a statewide resource as well as Crew 6 that is located here in Boise. We're working to expand that Teakean crew to 16 over the next couple of years to meet the minimum NWCG standards of a 20-man type 2 initial attack crew so IDL will have its own standing crew. These crews are considered a booster resource, and we move them as the need arises and share them quite frequently with our interagency partners and neighboring states. For this year, we've hired 140 firefighters for the 2021 fire season. Our firefighters travel nationally and internationally; we share with Canada and Canada shares their resources quite frequently with us. COVID has prevented that the last couple of years. In anticipation of this year, we're hoping to be able to reengage with our neighbors to the north. IDL is an active participant in the Great Basin Coordinating Group and the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group. As you're aware, the state is split into two different coordination groups. It makes for a challenge for my staff and myself, but we make it work. I represent IDL as the chairperson on the Northern Rockies Coordination Group, which is Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and the Dakotas, and that involves several other federal interagency partners as well as the states and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Questions that we have discussed heavily within the coordination group is how COVID, vaccines, and vaccinations are going to affect this fire season. We learned a lot of lessons from last year. We implemented a lot of protocols, especially our incident management teams in all the agencies to keep our firefighters safe. An example, the typical fire camp that you would normally see alongside the freeway, "tent city" – a thousand tents out there – chances are that you won't see those necessarily and if you do it will be a lot smaller in size. We went to dispersed camping and spike camps where firefighters are actually staying out on the line far more and rotated into camp for showering and hygiene purposes. Food wise, expenses related to COVID, this is where logistically we've seen the biggest uptick in expense. We've had to individually box food. Often times we're flying food out to these spike camps; obviously flying a helicopter to transport food is expensive. Virtual capabilities – our teams have had to change how they do business, but in a lot of cases, our incident management teams are able to check in and demobilize firefighters virtually over cell phone or laptop, as well as submitting time and other reports that have to be done. Minimal face to face contact has been implemented through all of the interagency partners and teams. As you remember from last year, we brought on 11 contract engines as well as a type 2 contract hand crew. This year

we're anticipating bringing on seven contract engines and bringing that number down simply because we feel there will be more resource movement. After Nick's presentation, I am starting to wonder if we shouldn't be bringing on more engines just because the way the outlook is and that is something we will take back and discuss. And as we build the Teakean crew, our anticipation is that we won't be bringing on the contract crew next year in anticipation the Teakean crew will be up to minimum standards and will be bringing those folks on and make them available. Overall readiness for IDL – I would like to introduce Julia Sullens, she is our Deputy Chief Operations. She is not new to the Department; she has returned after a brief hiatus, and she is now in my previous role as operations. She has been out on the ground personally doing the readiness reviews at all of our districts and TPAs. By policy, we're required to review 50% of our districts every year. This year, in light that last year we were unable to visit any of our districts in person, we've been trying to do a 100% review of all of our districts. That review includes operations, equipment, and personnel readiness. This review is almost complete. There is only a couple more pieces to go with a couple of our districts and I fully anticipate and expect that all of our districts and TPAs will be fully ready for fire season 2021. With these reviews, they're tested on drills as far as testing their fire engine operations, hose lay deployment, small pump set up, chainsaw proficiency, fire line construction, and physical fitness. In relation to training – the last couple of years, as you're all aware, all of our training has been done virtually. There was discussion this winter as far as should we have our annual wildland firefighter training in person this year. The interagency partners still are not allowing much of their workforce into the workplace and so in anticipation of that we planned on not doing in person basic firefighter training this year and again it will be held virtually. Within the last few weeks, we have been holding classes within IDL for our firefighters in person and moving forward with that. Heavy equipment – to date, the IDL offices have not been able to provide a whole lot of training or signup opportunities for our heavy equipment operators but again that is opening up and they are working diligently to get equipment signed up. To date, we have seven contractors signed up for IDL contracts. IDL has worked with the Association of Logging Contractors over the years to provide training to meet the minimum requirements and also provide online resources for these contractors to meet those requirements. One of the benefits that we do have is when we have an emerging incident, we can sign a piece of equipment up on the spot under an emergency equipment rental agreement (EERA) and most of our contractors actually prefer that method. It is much simpler for them; the payment is relatively easy and it is quick. Additional contractors that are available to IDL this summer are through the VIPR [Virtual Incident Procurement] system. It is a federal system. Currently there are 93 pieces of equipment that are on the VIPR system: dozers, excavators, feller bunchers, water tenders, and engines. These contractors, they can work on federal fires or they are available for us to use. All the heavy equipment is dispatched through the interagency dispatch centers throughout the state. Two other pieces to this – the Idaho Cooperative Mobilization Agreement, commonly referred to as ICMA, that's where IDL has signed up and worked with the fire service organizations (FSO) across the state. It is a five year agreement that is currently in place; we currently have 78 FSOs that are signed up, trained and ready to fight fire this summer. The Idaho National Guard – last year we conducted training down in the Orchard Training Center where 50 guardsmen completed that training. This year nine guardsmen completed the refresher training and 14 new guardsmen went through basic guard school. This training brings those firefighters, those guardsmen, up to the same level of training as our entry-level firefighters and with the appropriate supervision,

upon a declaration, those crews are available to use within the state. That ends my update and I stand for questions.

Governor Little: Josh, do you know how many red cards the loggers have? Not that we ranchers are better than the loggers or anything.

Mr. Harvey: Governor, members of the Land Board we typically don't red card our loggers, but the process that they went through, they got a yellow card which is a certification that said that they meet a minimum...

Governor Little: But has their equipment been inspected?

Mr. Harvey: Typically...so the seven pieces of equipment that I mentioned that is signed up, that wouldn't have a pre-season inspection on it. The emergency equipment rental agreement – the guys that go on a call when needed – they will receive an inspection on site. What they run into is their equipment is currently in the woods and to do that inspection we either have to go find it, or they have to haul it into town. On occasion what they'll try to do as they're passing through town moving to a job site, they'll pull it in and get their inspection.

Governor Little: I know everybody here is tired of me talking about this, but there's a time of year when all the loggers and all their equipment is in the shop and safety inspectors go out there and give them their safety inspection. My plea to the Department of Lands is that they go at that time or certify them. It's during break up, they're all there, because the issue on initial attack, just like the RFPAs, is not that somebody has to run out there and find a guy with a chainsaw or skidder and say you're blessed and then you're safe when you're not safe, which is what we did when Director Schultz was here at Orofino. We put everybody in the gym and said magically you're all firefighters. We're trying to keep them safe; we're trying get coordination, and I'm going to plead...it's too late this year, but I am going to plead one more time that next spring when they're getting their safety inspection that we inspect. The problem is we want them there on initial attack. If there's a logging job – there's one going on today on state land at South Mountain and if there's a lightning strike up there, those guys can't go, unless somebody blesses them. We, collectively, are spending unappropriated monies in deficiency warrants and we have an obligation to do all we can to get on initial attacks so that's my request for next year.

Mr. Harvey: Understood.

Director Miller: Governor, we appreciate that question and that plea. We'll continue to work with the Associated Logging Contractors to work through that situation and continue to gauge interest to try to get folks involved.

Governor Little: Okay. Follow up, Director, on COVID. Do we know what the cost is of helicopters flying lunches to spike camps from the base camp, and if we know that number, what do COVID protocols cost us? Can we take part of that number...it's too late now because the fire season starts Sunday officially in Idaho...a certain percent of that money as an incentive for people to get vaccinated? I don't see any COVID protocols in this room, except you guys are spread out. It's got to be enormous what the helicopter costs are for packing lunches to those people. And in the firefighters, if you were either an RFA member or anybody else you could have started getting vaccinated in January. What have we done, what have other states done, and federal agencies to get people vaccinated so we don't have to spend this money?

Director Miller: Governor, we've continued to encourage all of our employees, including our fire crews and firefighters to get vaccinated. It's their choice, but we continue to encourage and stress the importance of vaccinations. With regards to fire camp and just how fire operations have gone, given the COVID protocols, you're right; additional slinging of resources up the hill to spike camps, the prepackaged meals, a lot of the things that Mr. Harvey talked about did add some cost, the additional wash stations, all of that. Our restrictions at IDL have been relaxed because we're confident looking at the infection rates and where things are with the state and continuing to encourage vaccinations that we feel comfortable to relax our COVID protocols and we've done that. However, when we bring other resources on to our fires, federal agencies – maybe we have a team that's predominately federal employees – they have a different set of standards and protocols that they are required to meet so we're trying to find ways to ensure COVID safety protocols continue at fire camp on our protection yet being very cognizant of those costs and realizing that we want to minimize those costs.

Governor Little: That's fair. I've got a call at noon with the Secretary of the Interior, I might bring it up.

Director Miller: We can share our protocols with you, Governor, and you can pass them along.

Governor Little: Further questions. Tell everybody to stay safe out there; this is going to be a real risky year and I worry about it because this call I have with other governors, other states are trying to get resources deployed into those other states that are a lot drier. I know Governor Cox is very, very concerned about the situation in Utah and with scarce resources...we're very lucky that we've got the Interagency Fire Center based here. I worry that there's going to be a lot of stuff elsewhere and given the fact that COVID protocols by other states are going to diminish the front line effectiveness, just out of an abundance of caution, that somebody gets hurt this summer and we lose a lot of resources and spend a lot of money. Everybody will need to be careful. I know the Land Board wants to support all of the firefighters out in the field as much as we can.

Director Miller: Governor, we certainly appreciate your support and the support of the Land Board for our firefighters, our fire program. I'm very proud of our program and our firefighters. They're highly trained specialists and I'd put them up against anybody else in the west. They will be safe; we really stress the training, the safety, and the strong fire line leadership. We're ready to go.

Executive Session

None

There being no further business before the Land Board, at 10:25 a.m. a motion to adjourn was made by Attorney General Wasden. Controller Woolf seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

