

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



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Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 12, 2016 - 9:00 am
Plumas County
Planning & Building Services Conference Room
555 Main Street – Quincy, CA

Board of Directors

Mike Callaghan, Chair (16)
Chuck Bowman, Vice Chair (17)
Mike De Lasaux, Sec/Treasurer (16)
Don Gasser (17)
Jim Hamblin (17)
Jerry Sipe (16)
Shane Vargas (16)

Mission Statement:

“To reduce the loss of natural and human made resources caused by wildfire through Firewise Community programs and pre-fire activities.”

2016 Goals:

- Implement and amend as necessary the Plumas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP);
- Increase public knowledge and awareness of hazards associated with wildland fire and inform the public about efforts that can be made to reduce their vulnerability to wildland fire;
- Increase community-based involvement in fuels reduction and facilitate the development of additional Firewise Communities in Plumas County;
- Identify, develop and implement community hazardous fuel reduction projects;
- Develop a strategy to provide for sustainable and renewable project funding and reduce the Council's dependence on grant funding;
- Support green fuels utilization and community chipping options for all communities in the County.

1. Welcome & Introductions - Mike Callaghan
2. Review Agenda - Mike De Lasaux requested Items 6 and 7 be added to New Business and Mike Callaghan asked for the addition of Item 8.
3. Approve Meeting Minutes - **m-De Lasaux, s-Norton, passed.**
4. Public Comments - None were made.

New Business

1. Report on Firewise Coordinator meeting - Sue McCourt reported that seven communities were represented at the May 2 meeting. Coordinators shared experiences, identified common issues and initiated a method for further communication. John Reynolds and Mike Callahan both expressed that the meeting was valuable, especially to communities just getting started, and Sue suggested having meetings twice per year.

2. Discussion of Senior/Disabled Assistance Program homeowner contribution - Mike McCourt requested that the Board waive the owner co-payment for all program participants for one year. The basis of the request is receipt of a Fire Prevention Fund grant funded by SRA fees paid by those who would benefit from the fuels reduction work in a manner similar to the American Valley project. Discussion centered on three issues: 1) Should co-pays be waived only for properties within SRA boundaries? 2) Should co-pays be discounted by the amount of SRA fees paid? 3) Would the waiver result in a substantial reduction in program fees? Mike Callaghan pointed out that SRA fee payments over multiple years would cover the full co-pay in most instances. Mike McCourt stated that two-thirds of program participants do not pay at all and about two per year pay the maximum payment of \$1,500 for initial entry. Mike De Lasaux expressed concern that ad hoc decisions about contribution waivers in the absence of a comprehensive policy might lead to future problems. He also suggested we initiate program advertising each year as funds might be better spent for initial treatment for new clients rather than maintenance treatment for prior clients. **Don Gasser moved to waive landowner co-payments for one year for all properties in program, s-Sipe, passed.**
3. Discussion of SNC-PCFSC-PNF cost share agreement - Bill Chapman reported that Lynn Campbell of the SNC, Ryan Bauer of the PNF had forwarded the documents that would be used to execute agreements between the three parties. Initial analysis shows that the documents have enough flexibility to allow each party to achieve its objectives. The next step will be identification of issues that need more research and the appropriate persons to provide needed information.
4. Report on CALFIRE firefighter crew activities - Bill Chapman reported that CALFIRE has a crew of firefighters waiting assignment which can work on fuel reduction projects for three weeks. The crew is working this week on roadside clearance on the Lake Almanor peninsula and is looking at a potential project on Quincy CSD property. Council members mentioned that if time allows, work could also be done on Indian Valley CSD property and at burn pile sites in a number of communities.
5. Update on SRA Fire Prevention Fund Grant Program proposed regulations - Bill Chapman reported that the Board of Forestry & Fire Protection had established an additional 15 day notice period at its May 12 hearing to allow comment on a technical adjustment to the draft rules. The new hearing date is June 15.
6. Council support of proposed Forestry and Natural Resources Advisor position - Mike De Lasaux explained that continuation of his position after his retirement needed to be proposed as a new position, which would serve Lassen and Modoc counties in addition to Plumas and Sierra counties - **Mike Callaghan moved to submit a letter in support of the position, s-Hamblin, passed.**
7. Potential Loyaltan-University of California cooperative program - Mike De Lasaux reported that UC Extension is considering purchasing the Loyaltan SPI facility to create a research and extension center, possibly in cooperation with other entities. The plan is to re-open the biomass facility and research other options for processing non-merchantable material.

8. Council membership issue - Mike Callaghan reported that the Board had not followed its Bylaws when Steve Murphy was elected to the Board. Since Steve will not be staying at the PNF, he should be removed from the Board. Ryan Bauer said Scott Lucas may be serving on the board in Steve's place. **Mike Callaghan moved to remove Steve Murphy from the Board of Directors, s-Gasser, passed.**

Updates

1. Status of Current Grants - Bill Chapman reported that the Crescent Grade final report would be submitted next week. He also reported that field work was beginning on the three projects that require cultural resources surveys. Jones Forestry has submitted CEQA materials for a categorical exemption for the American Valley project, which is likely to be granted in 6-8 weeks. During this period, bids will be obtained so the project may begin as soon as the CEQA process is completed. Jones Forestry is also preparing NEPA materials for submittal to the PNF for the Highway 70 project. Existing C-Road project burn piles have been examined and are currently too green to burn. Because of the approaching end of the burn season, they many need to wait until fall to be burned.
2. Status of Grant Applications
 - a. Sierra Nevada Conservancy - Rachael Norton reported that the Wolf & Grizzly Creek project has completed the CEQA public review process and will be under consideration by the SNC Board at its June 2 meeting. The Bucks Lake project is being scored by SNC staff and if it receives enough points, it would be submitted to the board in September.
 - b. USFS Stevens Funds - Bill Chapman reported that the four projects recommended by the Council have been submitted to PNF for inclusion in its capability plan.
 - c. California Fire Safe Council - Mike McCourt reported that the application had been submitted, but we have not heard from the Council.
3. Standing Reports and Discussion
 - a. Website Development Committee - Sue McCourt reported that members of the committee had met with a potential vendor with experience designing simple, easy to maintain sites.
 - b. Feather River Stewardship Coalition - Rachael announced that the Stewardship Coalition will be conducting a Mohawk Vista field trip on May 26 at 10:00 am followed by the Coalition meeting at 3:00 pm.
 - c. Plumas County OES - Jerry Sipe described the table top exercise County department heads will be conducting based on a catastrophic wildfire. There was some discussion of the transfer of OES to the Sheriff's Office. Jerry indicated his willingness to serve the remainder of his Director term.
 - d. CAL FIRE - The agency has hired two inspectors and has authority to hire two more. Victoria Basnett and Ken Wagner introduced themselves to the Council. Shane indicated that the inspectors are not subject to fire assignments and will try to inspect all areas of the county at least once. In response to Claude Sander's question, Shane stated that approximately 50% of Plumas County properties have been inspected. Ryan asked the inspectors to note when adjacent PNF land is involved in meeting RC 4291 standards as they have authority to bring PNF land up to the standards. Don Gordon, the new Unit Chief, introduced himself to the group.

- e. USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction - Ryan Bauer reported that PNF staff is looking to treat 12,000 acres for fuels reduction in 2017, with more scheduled for 2018. Steve Ross reported on the kids poster project.
- f. Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District - Julie Ruiz reported that they received 70 applications for the wood stove change out program and have begun installations. She also reported the opening of green waste disposal sites around the county with more information on their website.
- g. Firewise Communities - John Reynolds reported that the Grizzly Ranch Association projects are going forward and they will have their Firewise Day in August. Mike Callaghan reported that Gold Mountain is proceeding with its mandatory lot fuel reduction program, focusing on 28 fire critical lots.

Upcoming events - None announced.

Adjournment - Next meeting June 9, 2016