

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



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Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 11, 2015 - 9:00 am.
Plumas County
Planning & Building Services Conference Room
555 Main Street – Quincy, CA

Board of Directors

Mike De Lasaux, Chair (16)
Chuck Bowman, Vice Chair (15)
Mike Callaghan, Sect/Treasurer (16)
Jim Hamblin (15)
Deb Bumpus (15)
Shane Vargas (16)
Jerry Sipe (16)

PC FSC will comply with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) by making every reasonable attempt to accommodate any attendee or participant at our meetings needing special assistance beyond what is normally provided. Please contact the Plumas Corporation at 530-283-3739 at least 5 business days prior to a scheduled meeting to inform us of your particular needs and to determine if accommodation is feasible. Please advise us at the time you call if special assistance is required to attend or participate in meetings on a regular basis.

Mission Statement:

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

2015 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;
- Explore green waste disposal and community chipping options for all communities in the County.

1. Welcome & Introductions—Chuck Bowman; **Mike De Lasaux was not present, Vice-Chair Chuck Bowman facilitated the meeting; Rod and Barb Macy of Chandler Road, Laurie Bailey of Quincy and Oswaldo Feuntes of CAL FIRE were all first time attendees**
2. Review Agenda—Chuck Bowman; **Mike Callahan added a discussion item to the New Business section of the agenda (see New Business section number 3 for further details); Jim Hamblin, Motion; Shane Vargas second**
3. Review Meeting Minutes—Chuck Bowman; **Mike Callahan, motion; Deb Bumpus, second**
4. Public Comments—Chuck Bowman; **No public comments made**
5. Discussion of potential PC FSC funding sources, upcoming opportunities--Nils Lunder

Nils discussed potential funding for two HFR projects in Mohawk Vista and Dixie Valley. Nils worked with the PNF Fuels staff to submit information required to apply for Stevens Funds. If successful the PCFSC and the USFS will work with those communities to implement fuels reduction on private lands. Nils also discussed the upcoming Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) funding opportunities. Lynn Campbell of the SNC was in attendance, so she provided additional information on the program.

The first round of funds will have a request for proposals (RFP) that will open on July 1. The deadline for proposals will be September 1. \$10 million will be available to this first round, two subsequent rounds will occur and a total of \$25 million will be available for projects that reduce hazardous fuels and improve watersheds. Preference will be given to projects that engage diverse stakeholders and illustrate collaborative efforts that incorporate public and private lands.

6. Status update of Current Grants– Nils Lunder

- A. PC FSC 10-7 –Stevens 2010- In-kind, C Road, Whitehawk–Nils reported that the Whitehawk portion of this project has just been completed and signed off by the Registered Professional Forester. Remaining funds will be spend to reduce 9 acres of fuels on C-Road**
- B. PC FSC 11-3- PC FSC Council Coordination 2014-2015–**
- C. PC FSC 11-2 –Stevens 2011– 200 acres of Soper-Wheeler lands in 3 areas – Nils reported that he has been working with the Soper Company to facilitate work on this project. At this time it appears that Soper will be able to contract with a local mastication contractor to treat lands in the American Valley and on Lee Summit. Soper is working with the USFS to move the process forward**
- D. PC FSC 11-4 – RAC – Cutler Meadow/La Porte Rd II HFR (partial) 75 acres –This project has been stalled by paperwork required by and developed by the USFS, recently staff from the USFS have requested spatial data for the project, the PC FSC hopes to move forward with this project ASAP**
- E. PC FSC 12-3 – SNC Prop 84 – La Porte Rd. II HFR- 172 Acres—All treatment has been completed, the remaining work is to burn piles that have not been burned due to challenging condtions during the winter of 2014. The PC FSC has requested a grant extension in order to ensure that grant funds will be available to pay contractors after all piles have been burned. Once all burning has been completed the PC FSC will submit a final grant report and will conduct a tour with staff from the SNC**
- F. PC FSC 12-1 –Stevens 2012 – 698 acres of Soper-Wheeler, GL&W, & BNRR lands—The PC FSC will work with their registered professional forester to proceed with the Barry Creek Project in partnership with Greagle Land and Water. Nils is planning on conducting outreach to landowners along State Route 147 to develop a HFR project there.**
- G. PC FSC 14-1 – Stevens 2014 -West Quincy Highway 70 – HFR 65 acres—The PC FSC has sent their RPF a list of participating landowners and the RPF will be working with those landowners to develop treatments on those lands in late June/early July. Then a Decision Memo will be developed. Implementation may occur in fall/winter 2015**
- H. PC FSC 13-4 – RAC – Crescent Grade II. HFR-68 acres—All treatments on this project have been completed and signed off by the RPF**
- I. PC FSC 13-5 – RAC - Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project—Rachael Norton briefed the Council on activities that have occurred and will continue to occur with this project. The next public meeting is scheduled for June 24 in Greenville. The last meeting occurred in Portola. A public field trip is scheduled for Saturday June 27 at 12:30, the group will meet at the Greagle Fire Hall and will travel to the Lake Basin area.**

- J. PC FSC 13-3 – RAC - Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance—**Mike McCourt has been working to develop the first round of project for the 2015 season and has over 40 properties under contract for treatment. The winning bidder was High Sierra Fire based in Susanville. Implementation has already begun and will most likely be completed by the end of June.**
- K. PC FSC 13-2– Greenhorn CSD -Firewise Communities USA & CWPP Development—**Nils described the funding for this project and discussed next steps with the Council, two residents from the Greenhorn community were in attendance. Nils will follow up with Greenhorn residents in order to facilitate the development of this process. The next step is to meet with the CSD board and other parties including USFS, SPI, Soper and CAL FIRE to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan for Greenhorn.**
- L. PC FSC 13-6 – Title III - Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance Coordination—**Nils described Mike McCourt’s efforts to coordinate and develop the 2015 program**

New Business

1. Discussion of the prioritization of future HFR projects in the region—Chuck Bowman, Nils Lunder
The Council was asked to identify elements that should be considered when prioritizing future HFR project in the County, the following notes were taken from that discussion:
 - **Access by fire suppression personnel**
 - **Fire Hazard Severity Rating should be analyzed; response time by fire suppression personnel, and fire history**
 - **The presence of “critical infrastructure” such as radio transmission facilities, cellular phone towers, power transmission lines, water storage facilities**
 - **The presence or absence of fire hydrant infrastructure**
 - **Whether the project is within a fire protection district**
 - **Whether the project is within a community that is either a recognized a Firewise Community or an aspiring Firewise Community—i.e.: community capacity and involvement**
 - **Connectivity of past, present and future projects**
 - **Degree of risk of wildfire spreading onto USFS lands; degree of risk of wildfire spreading onto private lands from USFS lands**
 - **Potential for wildfire spread and growth within the project area**
 - **Presence of recreational facilities within the project area**
 - **Presence of critical watersheds for community water supply**

2. Modifying the PC FSC in-kind policy to accommodate specific funding opportunities—Chuck Bowman, Nils Lunder
A discussion was had by the Council regarding the modification of the PC FSC in-kind policy for projects that are funded by the State Responsibility Area fee. The following list documents key points from the discussion:
 - **Residents that currently pay into the SRA fee will be bitter to pay more to receive HFR assistance**
 - **The service should be provided without requiring additional fees from landowners**
 - **CAL FIRE supports waiving in-kind fees associated with the SRA funding source**
 - **The in-kind fee acts as a barrier for landowners to participate in projects, the Council should do whatever is possible to offer services to landowners for zero or minimal cost**
 - **Defensible space should be treated as that is the goal of the SRA fee.****After the discussion the Council worked to develop the following policy:**

The Plumas County Fire Safe Council will waive matching fund requirements for landowners that participate in hazardous fuel reduction projects that are administered by CAL FIRE and funded by the State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Fund (SRA FPF). The total acres treated on any one parcel will be determined by the PC FSC and their Registered Professional Forester.

A motion was made by Shane Vargas to accept this language; a second was made by Deb Bumpus

3. Discussion and updates regarding the Resilient Federal Forest Act—Mike Callahan
Mike Callahan provided background to an act that is being considered by members of the US Congress. Basically, HR2647 would enable the Forest Service to implement numerous similar/related forest health projects based on a single environmental analysis instead of having to repeat that analysis each time; the bill expedites the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to increase the pace and scale of forest management projects on public lands. Another element of the bill is to facilitate collaborative processes between the USFS and other stakeholders in an attempt to reduce litigation. Active forest management would generate funds for rural communities and for a revolving fund that helps speed faster planning of restoration.

Mike C opened the floor for additional comments on the bill:

- More categorical exclusions will be possible for forest treatments (500-1,500 acres) especially for projects that are developed by collaborative groups
- Accelerates forest restoration post wildfire
- Improves habitat for wildlife
- Protects local collaborative projects from outside litigation
- Increases funding to counties from stewardship contracts

Mike C asked the Council for approval to draft a letter of support to our local congressional representatives regarding HR 2647.

Jim Hamblin made a motion to approve the development of a letter of support from the PC FSC to local congressional representatives; Mike Callahan seconded the motion; during the vote all were in favor of the motion, no one was opposed. Deb Bumpus and Claude Sanders abstained.

Updates

1. Plumas County OES update-Jerry Sipe—The OES is continuing with their evacuation map project. They now have approximately 12 maps posted on their website: <http://www.countyofplumas.com/index.aspx?NID=88>
Sue McCourt has developed a special presentation called Engaging Wildfire. The presentation is focused on what to do when there is an eminent threat posed by a local wildfire. How to prepare for evacuation, what do you do, how to prioritize. This short presentation is less than one hour in length and she has presented to residents of Mohawk Vista and is planning a presentation to Whitehawk.
OES has been planning a meeting with residents of Warner Valley regarding wildfire preparedness and they are hoping to work with the residents of the Red Dirt Road area near Johnsville, which is a high risk community due to access issues, heavy fuels, and numerous other factors.

2. **Plumas County green waste disposal update-John Kolb, Plumas County Department of Public Works**
John Kolb presented to the Council on the difficulties that the County is having with the development of an effective and efficient green waste disposal program for local residents. Currently there is not outlet for the materials that are generated by residents who are maintaining their properties. The local lumber mills have stopped accepting green waste due to difficulties associated with processing materials. The County has not identified a solution to the problem.

Currently available outlets include the Transfer station-\$25/cubic yard

Air Curtain Burner-\$5/cubic yard, the burner is not efficient at disposing of large volumes of materials, also, if the fuel is heavy with needles, leaves or grass clippings, combustion is not efficient and smoke is produced.

Options faced by the County:

- **To restrict acceptance at burner to woody materials and not accept needles, leaves and grass clippings**
- **To direct other materials to the transfer station and to subsidize the disposal of those materials (this costs the County \$)**
- **Develop a “trench burner” at the Chester Transfer Station (long haul, and air quality impacts to that area)**

Nils Lunder shared with the group that the Feather River Resource Conservation District recently submitted a proposal to the CAL FIRE Greenhouse Gas Reduction program that would develop a green waste processing facility that would convert residential green waste into a dry, uniform fuel for biomass fired boilers. In addition, the proposal seeks funds to provide hazardous fuels reduction on 150 acres of forested lands in the Indian Valley area, the fuels removed from the forest will be transported to the green waste facility to be processed into fuel for the boilers; also funds were requested to purchase and operate a horizontal tub grinder that will be used to process community green waste piles and transport processed materials to the green waste processing facility.

The disposal of non-combustible materials remains to be a challenge.

3. **CAL FIRE Update-Oswaldo Fuentes**

Oswaldo Fuentes of CAL FIRE presented to the Council regarding his experience as a Defensible Space inspector in Plumas County.

- **There were 4 inspectors assigned to Plumas County during the 2015 season, one firefighter was selected from each of the four CAL FIRE battalions within the Lassen Modoc Unit (LMU).**
- **591 inspections were performed, these included the communities of Meadow Valley, Galeppi Ranch, Dixie Valley, and East Quincy**
- **Burn permits were issued, the inspectors also informed residents of the programs offered by the PC FSC.**
- **190 personal contacts were made**
- **468 man hours were spent during the process**
- **CAL FIRE hopes to continue the program into the future**
- **Education was the main focus of the program, there was not a focus on violations**
- **30-40% of the residences were in compliance with PRC 4291**

4. **USFS Hazardous Fuel Reduction Update-Deb Bumpus**

Deb had the following updates:

- **The Thompson Peak fire lookout will remain closed during the 2015 fire season due to damage that was incurred during winter storms, the USFS will staff the lookout during thunderstorms**

- **The USFS will staff the Red Rock fire lookout most days of the fire season**
 - **Steve Millert is on a four month detail and Dave Updike will fill in during that time**
 - **The Beckwourth Ranger District will conduct two public meetings regarding their Lakes Basin project: June 24 at 5 pm at the Mohawk Ranger Station; June 27 at 10 am at the Graeagle Fire Station**
5. Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District update-Julie Ruiz
Julie shared the following updates:
- **In general, the air quality has been quite good recently; as a result, there have been many burn days.**
 - **Graeagle recently conducted a community burn pile operation that went very well. Large volumes of materials were combusted. The community utilized large electric fans to ensure good combustion of those fuels. There were very few complaints and Julie even received a call to compliment the effort.**
 - **There is a short term funding source available through the USDA Rural Development Group that will fund the replacement of woodstoves and will also fund other energy saving upgrades to homes. To learn if you qualify for this program interested residents should contact Julie.**
6. Other HFR updates-Paul Violett
Paul reported that Soper has met with a local mastication contractor and is working to move forward with projects on Lee Summit and in Quincy. Soper and the PC FSC will work with the USFS to facilitate progress on these projects.
7. Implementation of the Plumas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), fuel reduction projects, local Firewise Community activities, community events-
Gold Mountain is having their Firewise Committee meeting on June 17, from 10-12 at the Nakoma Lodge; they are beginning to implement their fuel reduction policy. Nils is working with Plumas Eureka Estates to develop their draft Firewise Community Assessment and the draft will be submitted to their Firewise Committee by late June.

Upcoming events

- **Gold Mountain Firewise Committee meeting, June 17, 10-12 at Nakoma**
- **Plumas CFLR public meeting, Greenville; June 24, 6-8 pm at the Greenville Community Center**
- **Plumas CFLR Field Trip, June 27 at 12:30 at the Graeagle Fire Station**
- **USFS Lakes Basin Public Meetings:**
 - **June 24 at 5 pm at the Mohawk Ranger Station**
 - **June 27 at 10 am at the Graeagle Fire Station**

Brian West requested that when planning future events, that more coordination occurs in order to reduce the scheduling of two events at one time.

Adjourn, next meeting July 9, 2015