

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



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Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 13, 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—Mike De Lasaux
2. Review Agenda-- Mike De Lasaux **Mike Callaghan motion, Jerry Sipe second, unanimous vote**
3. Review Meeting Minutes-- Mike De Lasaux **Jim Hamblin motion, Brian West second, unanimous vote**
4. Public Comments—**None made**
5. Discussion of potential PC FSC funding sources, upcoming opportunities--Nils Lunder, Mike De Lasaux—Overview provided of the Proposition 1 funding: **Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC)**—USFS/PCFSC partnership to secure state funds to implement fuels reduction work on Federal lands, proposal is being drafted collaboratively and may be submitted for the September 1 deadline, if not,

there are two other rounds of funding through that opportunity in 2016. **California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)** has also announced a round of funding that will be used to implement projects that benefit fish and wildlife. The first deadline for those funds is September 16. The category that applies to the work that the Council does is “Manage Headwaters for Multiple Benefits”—this includes “restoring forest health through ecologically sound forest management”.

The Plumas County Board of Supervisors has requested proposals for the Title III funds that they have recently received from the Federal Government via the Secure Rural Schools and Self Determination Act. The RFP closes on September 15.

The USFS informed the Council that they have been awarded \$120,000 to provide fuels reduction treatments in the Dixie Valley area. Additionally, they informed the Council that \$80,000 has been awarded to provide fuels reduction in the Butterfly Valley area.

6. Status update of Current Grants– Nils Lunder

- A. **PC FSC 10-7 –Stevens 2010- In-kind, C Road, Whitehawk–Whitehawk has been completed, PC FSC may want to consider purchasing a sign to educate people about how the project was funded and how it was implemented. C-Road project has been held up by a lengthy landowner contract process, once all contracts have been signed and returned, then a bid prospectus will be sent out to the PC FSC contractor list.**
- B. **PC FSC 11-3- PC FSC Council Coordination 2014-2015–This grant funds the ongoing efforts of the Council coordinator. Nils will be developing a proposal for the Council in order to request additional funds to facilitate the efforts of the Council.**
- C. **PC FSC 11-2 –Stevens 2011– Nils provided an update to the group on the Soper projects. Near Lee Summit mastication will occur when the operator will be available, the Dyer Tree Farm property (near Mt. Hough Ranger District) will be treated in 2016 as a portion of the Highway 70 project.**
- D. **PC FSC 11-4 – RAC – Cutler Meadow/La Porte Rd II HFR (partial) 75 acres –This project is awaiting a Decision Memo. Nils is working to organize a meeting between members of the Council (Coordinator, Forester, Chair) and members of the USFS (District Ranger, Deputy District Ranger, and Fuels) to discuss this process and to look ahead a future projects in an attempt to identify ways of making the process more effective and efficient.**
- E. **PC FSC 12-3 – SNC Prop 84 – La Porte Rd. II HFR- 172 Acres—Grant has been extended by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy in order to allow for the burning of additional piles. Once piles have been burned the grant will be closed.**
- F. **PC FSC 12-1 –Stevens 2012 – 698 acres of Soper-Wheeler, GL&W, & BNRRL lands--Nils provided an update on Soper (East Quincy property will be masticated this fall when the operator is available); Graeagle Land and Water will possibly use the funds to chip biomass and offset the cost of hauling materials to Honey Lake Power; Nils hopes to perform outreach to landowners along the East Shore of Lake Almanor along the Burlington Northern Rail Road in late August, early September.**
- G. **PC FSC 14-1 – Stevens 2014 -West Quincy Highway 70 HFR 65 acres—PC FSC Forester has met with landowners, forester is in the process of laying out the project. They will be developing NEPA materials this fall/winter and the goal is to implement in late 2016/2017.**
- H. **PC FSC 13-4 – RAC – Crescent Grade II. HFR 68 acres—Project has been completed and any remaining funds will be used to develop additional projects in the Indian Valley area.**

- I. PC FSC 13-5 – RAC - Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project—**The new name of the group is the Feather River Stewardship Coalition. 2 public meetings have occurred in each of the four communities in the County, the next meeting will occur in Quincy on Wednesday August 19th. A mission, Vision and charter are being finalized. The group may pursue funds that are currently available through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. The funds would be used to implement previously planned fuel reduction projects on public lands in Plumas County.**
- J. PC FSC 13-3 – RAC - Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance—**The first round of projects as been completed, the contract with High Sierra Fire has been extended in order to accommodate any latecomers to the process. 48 properties were treated in 2015 and approximately 2/3 of those were repeat clients; approximately \$55,000 remains for future treatments.**
- K. PC FSC 13-2– Greenhorn CSD--Firewise Communities USA & CWPP Development—**Nils will work to schedule a date to meet with members of the community, with the fire chief and other partners to discuss next steps for this process.**
- L. PC FSC 13-6 – Title III – Coordination of the Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance Program—**These funds are nearly expended. The Council will be developing a proposal to the Title III funds that will be available this fall. The goal is to seek sufficient funds to run the program for 2-3 years. Nils and Mike McCourt will work together to complete the application.**
- M. PC FSC 13-7—SRA funded American Valley Project—**~80 acres have been assessed, the RPF will develop a phase 1 that will be implemented in 2016. All other interested landowners will be placed into the phase 2 of the project and will received treatment in late 2016/spring 2017. This fall the RPF will work to develop the Negative Declaration documents in order to complete CEQA for the entire project.**

New Business

1. Discussion and action regarding the PC FSC policy on a check list of future HFR projects in the region— Mike De Lasaux, Mike Callaghan—**A brief discussion occurred on the development of a check list for future HFR projects in the region. The goal of the list is to have criteria to apply to future projects that are proposed within the communities at risk in the County. This item will be discussed in greater detail during the September Council meeting.**
2. Discussion and possible action regarding landowner implementation of HFR work on their lands; developing a policy to allow landowners to perform their own HFR work and get compensated to do so—Nils Lunder, Mike De Lasaux—A discussion occurred with numerous Council members. This item was on the agenda because two landowners in the Galleppi Ranch area have inquired with the RPF if it would be possible for them to do their own work as a part of the SRA project. One of the landowners was in attendance at the meeting—Alan Morrison.
Don Gasser: Feels that it would be advisable for the Council to adopt a policy that encourages and compensates active landowners for fuels reduction, especially in areas where aesthetics are a high priority. Don has worked with the Natural Resouces Conservation Service in order to accomplish fuel reduction work on his land and has received compensation for doing the work.
Claude Sanders: Thinks that a hybrid approach should be considered and encouraged. Much of Claude’s work results from proactive landowners who are able to take care of a majority of the work on their lands (small trees, limbing, piling and burning) but are not comfortable dropping large trees or hazardous trees near homes. Claude recommended that if the Council were to consider a policy that allows landowners to do their own work, that there should be flexibility for them to hire contractors to work under their supervision.

Alan Morrison: Alan has hired Claude in the past to fell challenging trees. That relationship has worked well for him in the past. Alan acknowledged that landowners commonly have a lot of concerns that need to be addressed when vegetation is being removed around their homes including: aesthetics, privacy, noise reduction and access issues.

Kyle Felker: Kyle's concern is that the final product must meet the objectives of the project and that is the main challenge with having landowners doing the work. He feels that some landowners are reluctant to treat their land to PC FSC standards, but he is concerned about potential liability associated with allowing landowners to implement their own projects with grant funding.

Ryan Bauer: As far as the Federal Government is concerned, contracting with landowners is OK with the Federal Grant Framework.

Mike De Lasaux: The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) already works with landowners and their program has a lot of benefits when compared with a Fire Safe Council project. Their projects are quicker to implement and there is greater autonomy for the landowner. Mike went on to acknowledge that due to the State Responsibility Area funds that the Council is now considering treating smaller parcels and also providing treatment within the Defensible Space area, this was not the case for Council projects until recently. Mike feels that liability will be a key concern if we allow landowners to provide their own treatment. Additionally he feels that we must work to have continuity with our treatments and the standards to which we hold landowners/contractors on projects.

John Sheehan: The Plumas County Counsel could help the Council to develop a policy if that is a direction that the Council chooses to go. If the County Counsel reviews the documents, then they will be more legally defensible. John recommended that if this is a priority for the Council, then perhaps a line item in the Title III application would be devoted to compensating the County Counsel for their time.

Dan Martynn: The NRCS has a diameter limit that is fairly limiting (<9" diameter at breast height). He feels that if our Council does not have such a restrictive limit, that perhaps our program could help remove larger trees, could be more flexible. With the NRCS program, the landowner has to complete all work to the project specifications before they get compensated.

Mike De Lasaux: Feels that the PC FSC uses tested contractors that are very solid. He feels that as the SRA program develops, there will be more work for qualified contractors. He recommends that the risk of issues is reduced by controlling the people that are performing the work.

No resolution was reached regarding allowing landowners to be compensated to do work on their own property. Nils will work to secure documents from NRCS.

3. Update and possible action regarding Feather River Regional Watershed Management Plan Update—Leah Wills, Uplands and Forest Workgroup Coordinator

Leah Wills: The main reason why this topic is on the agenda is because the Plumas County Fire Safe Council has yet to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in order to participate in the process. Many other groups have signed and Leah asked for the Council to sign the MoU.

Mike De Lasaux: Intro/overview of IRWM process; overview of Regional Water Management Group and four work groups (Forest and Uplands; Meadows, Floodplains and Waterbodies; Municipal; Agriculture/Working Lands) and Tribal Advisory Committee. Note: Mike D is the Chair of the Forest and Uplands workgroup.

John Sheehan: John discussed background on the effort including Bill Stewart and his work on forest/water relationship that has been occurring since the 1990s. Water is the greatest value that the Sierra Nevada Mountains creates. There is currently no mechanism in place to have the beneficiaries (downstream water users) to steward the lands that are responsible for delivering the water to them. John strongly recommends that the PC FSC signs the MoU. He feels that it will help with the upcoming Title III applications that the Council will be submitting in September. John also feels

strongly that the Council will help to facilitate the implementation of projects from small to large scale including the Soper Wheeler cooperative regional thinning proposal.

John Sheehan made a motion to have the Council sign the MoU, Mike Callaghan seconded the motion, the board voted in favor with one abstention (Claude Sanders), the motion passed. Mike De Lasaux signed the MoU on behalf of the Council.

Updates

1. Plumas County OES update-Sue McCourt--**Sue has been developing Evacuation maps for the following communities: Warner Valley, Butterfly Valley, C-Road, Red Dirt Road and Johnsville. Sue inquired if the Council could keep an eye open for any funding opportunities that could be secured to assist residents of the Red Dirt Road region.**
2. Plumas County green waste disposal update-**The County is working to get residents to separate woody and non woody waste. In Q, non woody will go to transfer station; woody will be burned in air curtain burner. Ryan Bauer reported that he brought a truck load of leaves to the Quincy Transfer Station on Sunday August 9 and only had to pay a few dollars to dispose of his non woody biomass (Half Price Sunday).**
3. CAL FIRE Update-Scott Rosikewicz—**Scott reported that the Lassen Modoc Unit received four applications for the Western WUI Grants program (one from PC FSC). He reported that the Greenhouse Gas applications are under review in Sacramento at this time. He also reported that CAL FIRE will not be requesting Concept Proposals for the next round of SRA grant funds.**
4. USFS Hazardous Fuel Reduction Update-**Weather has been cooperating and allowing work to be completed on the Forest. The Forest is utilizing the foreign resources that have been stationed here to implement fuel reduction projects (Keddie Ridge, Round Valley and Butterfly). Additionally, late timber sales will be awarded this season.**
5. Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District update-**Julie Ruiz reported that smoke has been drifting into the region from fires throughout the state. Julie will be testifying in Sacramento on the importance of replacing woodstoves in an attempt to improve air quality in the most impaired air basins in the County. She hopes to help to modify policy such that funds from the Cap and Trade budget to support woodstove change out programs.**
6. Other HFR updates-**PC FSC is working to develop the Highway 70 and American Valley Projects. They are also working with the Maidu Cultural Development Group (MCDG) to engage landowners in the Williams/Pecks area in Indian Valley.**
7. Implementation of the Plumas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), fuel reduction projects, local Firewise Community activities, community events-
Lake Almanor Country Club: Planning a tour with group to develop LACC CWPP, Nils has connected Gold Mountain and the LACC Firewise group. They will be meeting and will work to leverage Gold Mountain's experience.
Lake Almanor West: Recent Firewise activity day was held on August 8 and included numerous educational activities.

Mohawk Vista: PC FSC has received requests from landowners there to treat 103 acres of lands. Landowners there have self organized and spent nearly \$20,000 on road repairs and street signs, there are now 22 landowners that have entered into contract with the Greagle Fire Protection District.

Greenhorn: Working to coordinate CWPP meeting in order to move the process forward; Firewise day included a presentation by Sue McCourt on wildfire preparedness.

Dixie Valley: Funding to treat ~70 acres was just received from the USFS Stevens program.

Plumas Eureka: Firewise assessment has been completed

Whitehawk: Their HOA will begin to assess properties and will be enforcing landowners to provide fuel reduction work on their lands, fees will be levied on those landowners that refuse to complete the work.

Gold Mountain: Fuel Reduction is ongoing; the HOA is not fining violators; after the assessment was completed, 56 lots were listed in critical condition; they provided landowners with dates to achieve implementation, now there are 23 properties that remain in critical condition.

The NRCS is developing contracts with numerous landowners in GM through their Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), this will help the community to work toward their fuel reduction goals.

American Valley: In addition to the PC FSC projects that are being developed, the NRCS has secured funds to support a unique partnership with Feather River College and the Greenville Indian Rancheria to perform fuels reduction, oak enhancement and stewardship of Maidu ancestral lands.

Upcoming events

Quincy Volunteer Fire Department Pancake Breakfast, August 15

Feather River Stewardship Coalition meeting, Quincy Library August 19

Feather River Integrated Regional Watershed Management Integration meeting, Plumas County Fairgrounds, August 21

LACC CWPP field tour, August 27

Genesee Woods Firewise Community Assessment, August 29

Grizzly Ranch Firewise Activity, September 5

Adjourn, next meeting September 10, 2015