

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 14th, 2021 - 9:00 am.

Via Zoom

Mission Statement: "To reduce the loss of natural and human made resources caused by wildfire through Firewise Community programs and pre-fire activities."

Board of Directors

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair , John Reynolds Firewise Community (21)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vice Chair , Kathy Kogge Firewise Community (21)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secretary/Treasurer , Dan Martynn, Retired (22)	<input type="checkbox"/> Lindsay Wood, Plumas Audubon Society (22)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don Gasser, RPF (22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trina Cunningham, Maidu Tribal Rep. (22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Callaghan, Firewise Community (22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chuck Bowman, Firewise Community (21)
<input type="checkbox"/> Jim Hamblin, Citizen (21)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ryan Bauer, USFS PNF (22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brad Graevs, Feather River RCD (21)	<input type="checkbox"/> Richard Stockton, State Farm (21)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ryan Tompkins, UCCE (21)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracey Ferguson, Plumas County Planning (21)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ron Heinbockel, Plumas Fire Chiefs (21)	

1. Welcome & Introductions – John Reynolds
2. Review Agenda – No changes.
3. Approval of December Meeting Minutes – Approved via survey
4. Presentation of Certificate of Recognition Program - Mr. Reynolds presented certificates to two program nominees:
 - Kathy Wells
 - Sue McCourt
4. Public Comment – No public comment
5. Board Comment -

Chuck Bowman thanked the group for the recognition award last month. He plans to continue to do more work in the future.

Mike Callaghan – Shared comments about Sue McCourt’s retirement. A video of photos and comments was shared. Mr. Callaghan called it a “video group hug.”

New Business

1. Final Report from the Nominating Committee: John Reynolds –

Six members terms end at the end of 2020

- Don Gasser – approved
- Dan Martynn – approved
- Mike Callaghan – approved
- Trina Cunningham – approved
- Ryan Bauer – approved
- Lindsay Wood – approved

Officers

- Chair – John Reynolds self nominated - approved
- Vice Chair – Kathy Kogge nominated by John Reynolds - approved
- Secretary/Treasurer – Dan Martynn nominated by John Reynolds – approved

Goals review – Hannah Hepner shared the 2020 goals and commented that the Council has not placed an emphasis on the goal to identify non-grant sources of funding. She recommended accepting the 2020 goals for 2021 if there were no changes suggested by the Council. Dan Martynn seconded the recommendation.

Firewise MOA – Ms. Hepner provided a summary of the draft Memorandum of Agreement for Plumas Corporation/PCFSC to act as the fiscal agent for Firewise donations received. There will be a Resolution for the Board at February meeting.

Old Business

Updates

- **CAL FIRE** – Joel Goldman said that the Unit transitioned to open burning at the end of last month. They are operating at low winter staffing. Currently email is the best way to get a hold of Captain Goldman.

Shane Vargas said that the Governor is proposing the new budget: money to go to Cal OES and state Fire Marshall to develop residential structure retrofit grant program. Some of the budget is dedicated to creating new Defensible Space guidelines including the 5 foot zone. There will be associated educational material and outreach. Additional money will be used to increase the number of months of Defensible Space inspections and the number of inspectors.

John Reynolds asked for clarification about the need to have a Defensible Space inspection prior to the sale of a home. Captain Vargas responded that the inspection must be completed by a recognized department. It is desirable to have the inspection recorded on the LE 100 form. It is a local unit decision which other entities can utilize the LE 100. Part of increase in Defensible Space inspection funding is to make inspectors available for this requirement. Captain Goldman said he can be called or emailed to personally do an inspection when there are no Defensible Space inspectors available.

Don Gasser said that 15 years ago the State Fire Marshal developed a program to train citizen inspectors. He completed the training. He hasn't heard anything about it since his retirement and asked for an update. Captain Vargas will look into that program.

Sue McCourt asked if there is a single location for updated information about current legislation. Ryan Tompkins provided a link to the [Board of Forestry](#). Captain Vargas will share any relevant resources as well.

Brad Graevs asked about the status of CAL FIRE grant program. Captain Vargas said that the state is transitioning to a new web-based grant process that they will trial with the smaller grant programs starting in February. Other grant programs will be rolled out subsequently.

- **Feather River RCD** – Brad Graevs said the RCD is seeking more funding for PUC Coordination, the current CAL FIRE grant expires mid-March. The RCD just initiated a project along Hwy 89 between Greenville and Canyon Dam and is working with the Fire Safe Council on developing some larger scale projects on the East Side.
- **Feather River Stewardship Coalition** – Notes from recent meetings are available on the website.
- **Firewise Communities** - Bethany Rouse is stepping into organization of the monthly Firewise lead meetings.
- **Timber** – not present
- **Insurance** – Richard Stockton said the insurance industry is quiet at the moment, which is “a good thing.”
- **Utilities** – not present
- **NRCS** – Dan Martynn updated that they have interviewed for the position opening as a result of his retirement. It will likely be March before the role is filled. There is an additional entry-level position open at the Quincy office. It is listed on the USA jobs website. Currently there are 10-12 potential EQIP contracts, which is good for this time of year. Mr. Martynn encouraged contact the agency now if there is an interest because there is a lot of funding available.
- **NSAQMD** - Melissa Klundby reiterated that CAL FIRE lifted the permit requirement. However, an air district permit may still be required for burns and it is always required to check the burn day status. It is updated on the NSAQMD website by 3pm daily.
- **Plumas Fire Chiefs Association** – Not present
- **Office of Emergency Services** – Ms. McCourt thanked the Quincy Firewise committee for starting the non-profit MOA discussion. She also shared that since last meeting, Lake Almanor Peninsula and Nelson Point have been recognized as Firewise.

- **Plumas County Planning Department** – Tracey Ferguson said that both CAL OES and FEMA have approved the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. It will be presented to BOS for adoption within the next 60 days. Now the real work begins on mitigation strategies. The Board of Forestry is moving forward with changes to state fire safe regulations per SB 901, expanding their applicability to include high fire severity zones in the Local Responsibility Area (LRA). Public Comment period in March. The changes have a significant effect in rural counties and there have already been many comments received. Captain Vargas added that the changes should be complete by July. There may be a request for an extension to “get it done right.” A private consultant has been hired by the state to move the process forward.
- **Plumas Underburn Cooperative** – Matt West hopes to offer two more Basic 32 classes before March, potentially in Graeagle and Quincy. Planning for a spring TREX will likely get underway soon. There should be a better burn window for the spring event. Right now PUC is assisting with pile burning. Ryan Tompkins shared [a link](#) regarding perceptions of risk associated with prescribed burning activities.
- **Tree Mortality Update** - Ms. Hepner shared comments from Jim Wilcox that, with the current drought conditions, it would be prudent to consider reconvening the Plumas County Tree Mortality Task Force. Ryan Tompkins shared that Tree Mortality was included in the County’s LHMP. Mike Callaghan shared comments about what was accomplished by the past Tree Mortality Task Force efforts. John Reynolds requested that a task force recap be presented at the February meeting. Ryan Tompkins shared [a link](#) to an upcoming tree mortality network meeting.
- **Tribal** – Trina Cunningham continues to work on projects and partnerships that have been started. The overarching issue is building capacity of the tribal community in order to be able to work with agencies and organizations. Tribal expertise can bring a depth and richness to projects and winter is a good time to work on these issues.
- **UC Cooperative Extension** - Ryan Tomkins is participating in a National Climate Science Adaptation workshop. The program funds post-doctorates to do climate science. This year they are working on Cultural Burning with Beth Rose Middleton and Hugh Stafford out of UC Davis. It could bring opportunity to Plumas County in the future. Assemblyman Gallagher doing stakeholder outreach for \$480 million for Forest Health and Fire Prevention Projects. Tax incentives have been proposed for forest industries that enhance fire resilience.
- **USFS** – Ryan Bauer said that pile burning season is well underway, primarily on the Mt. Hough District. The Feather River District is working on burning piles from the salvage. However, their heavy equipment is out on mandatory recall. COVID is heavily impacting fire resources for burning. Plumas National Forest has two contracts with Firestorm for pile burning and it is going well. There are also crews working on projects where conditions allow. Planning is ongoing on the Mapes project (Beckwourth RD) and the Claremont project (Mt. Hough RD). The Feather River District is looking at how to respond to the North Complex. The USFS budget should be issued soon and it should include announcements about Stevens projects.

2. Status of Current Grants

- **Senior/Disabled Defensible Space** – Mike McCourt said that based on the number of applications that came in last fall, it's going to be a busy season.
- **Chipping** – Gary Parque has been receiving a lot of applications and has been tabling them for the time being. The program will continue and he will be calling applicants around April 1st. They will be added to the next round of chipping.

3. Status of Grant Budgets:

- Don Gasser asked about the status of 292 (Living with Fire Outreach). Ms. Hepner responded that most of the remaining budget is for newspaper ads which will be pre-paid for 2021 before the grant terminates in March. Mr. Gasser asked for an update on the status of 279 (Mohawk Vista). Hand units were dropped but \$17,000 is still in the account. Ms. Hepner said that they have been working on securing a hand thin operator. We weren't able to secure a hand thin operator before the grant expired. He also enquired about the deadline for 293 (Coordination). Ms. Hepner said that she has requested an extension. Ms. Hepner does not expect the grant to go away before April 1st.

4. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities:

- Matt West reported that the Butterfly SNC report should be complete by the end of this month. Significant reduction in piles as we continue to burn. Ms. Hepner reported on the private lands projects that a few hand thin projects will be contracted again. Should be wrapped up by May. American Valley is waiting on the decision memo from Mt. Hough district so that the operator can get started. The Mohawk Valley project is moving forward and there are potential CAL-FIRE funds (working with RCD) to incorporate in that area for implementation. There is a renewed interest in Greenhorn and the project is moving forward there with significant resident interest. Portola/Quincy/Chester project outreach has closed and a Forester will be contracted soon.

5. Other Updates & Upcoming Events:

- Ms. Hepner said that there are funds from the state that will be funneled into multiple different programs including CAL-FIRE and SNC.

Adjourn - Next meeting February 11th, 2021