

# Plumas County Fire Safe Council



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 11th, 2020 - 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"/> <b>Chair</b> , John Reynolds Firewise Community (21)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Vice Chair</b> , Kathy Kogge Firewise Community (21)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Secretary/Treasurer</b> Don Gasser, RPF (20)	<input type="checkbox"/> Julie Ruiz NSAQMD (20)
<input type="checkbox"/> Dan Martynn NRCS (20)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trina Cunningham (20) Watershed Research Center	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Callaghan Firewise Community (20)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chuck Bowman Firewise Community (21)
<input type="checkbox"/> Jim Hamblin Citizen (21)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ryan Bauer USFS PNF (20)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brad Graevs Feather River RCD (21)	<input checked="" 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 (43 participants)
2. Review Agenda – No changes.
3. Approval of January Meeting Minutes – Approve via
4. Presentation of Certificate of Recognition Program - Mr. Reynolds presented a certificate to February's nominee:
  - Ryan Bauer
5. Public Comment: Tony Taylor from LACC Firewise asked about the status of the Lake Almanor Peninsula project. The HOA's proposal for a FEMA grant was unsuccessful. Ms. Hepner said the Peninsula project does not have funding, but is targeted for the next CAL FIRE grant cycle this spring/summer.
6. Board Comment: Kathy Kogge - certification recognition program has been seen by Senator Dahle and they are proud of what we are doing here in Plumas County.

Brad Graevs commented that Hannah Hepner’s job title of “Coordinator” is confusing outside of the organization. A committee consisting of John Reynolds, Brad Graevs, Kathy Kogge, and Trina Cunningham was formed to discuss alternatives.

## **New Business**

1. Firewise MOA Resolution – read through by Mr. Reynolds.

Kathy Kogge clarified that Firewise Communities can opt in or out at any time.

Ms. Hepner added that 10% of donation expenditures are invoiced to overhead costs *when the money is spent*. Donations can be retrieved in full. Donation envelopes for Firewise communities are being designed and printed.

Richard Stockton asked if there a general donation fund for individual Firewise Communities to draw funds from. Ms. Hepner said yes, it will be up to Firewise Community Leads to make expenditure determinations. Mr. Reynolds clarified that the MOA stipulates that Firewise will need to select a board for participating communities.

Vote to approve Resolution 2021-01 to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with Plumas Corporation to provide financial administration on behalf of Firewise sites.

Ayes: John Reynolds, Kathy Kogge, Trina Cuningham, Mike Callaghan, Chuck Bowman, Ryan Bauer, Brad Graevs, Richard Stockton, Ryan Tompkins, Tracey Ferguson

Noes: none

Absent: Dan Martynn, Lindsay Wood, Don Gasser, Jim Hamblin, Ron Heinbockel

2. UCCE Wildfire Preparedness Survey – Ryan Thompkins

The UC Cooperative Extension conducted a survey that covered 5 counties. There were 600 participants total, 203 participants from Plumas County. The CAL FIRE CFIP program has a 20 acre minimum limit, which only has the potential to serve 7% of landowners in Plumas County. The NRCS EQIP program has no minimum size, but does prioritize larger projects. Therefore, the Fire Safe Council has an important role to play for smaller landowners. Mr. Tompkins explained the difference between the Wildland Urban Interface vs Intermix. 57% of respondents reported their home insurance was impacted by fire risk, primarily by premium increases (50% more than doubled). The majority of homes were built before 2008 WUI codes. 23% said they have initiated home retrofit projects. 47% said they were considering home hardening retrofits. The majority listed cost as a limiting factor.

Home Hardening:

Good:

Roofs are not a problem in Plumas County.

Firewise participation is significant

34% clear 0-5 ft

Not that Bad:

88% have multi-paned windows

53% have “a little” combustible vegetation 0-5 ft

45% do not have gutters, 55% of homeowner have gutters but 70% are metal

Needs work:

Fire resistant siding

Fire resistant skirting

Attached wooden structures – decks (education about how to make decks less prone to ember ignition)

Defensible Space:

Some is maintenance, some is changing structure

Burning is primary means for disposal of material – CAL FIRE permits important

70% burning in piles

22% using underburning

Most people burning 3-5 days per year, more in Plumas than other counties

There is interest in community green waste disposal

Barriers: cost, time, physical ability (37% of county over 60 years old)

71% said neighbors' property impact their defensible space. Even in Plumas County, the vast majority responded that the neighboring lands impacting their defensible space were private residential lands.

90% paying totally out of pocket

9% received grant funds in total or in part, which was higher than other counties, but underscores need to serve residents who own 5 acres or less.

Evac planning: 77% signed up for code red.

24% have household plan

18% have go bag

26% have important documents organized

<16% have household inventory

Where help is needed:

Fuel reduction on private lands

Home Hardening/retrofit assistance

Green waste disposal options

Over 60% need assistance with animal evacuation

State budget has movement towards funding. Working on bill that would add additional \$500 million to CAL FIRE through CCI/GGR funds. Acres are the metric, but treating within the WUI may warrant a different metric. Private landowners are shouldering burden of cost: insurance, home hardening and defensible space. Barriers are not equal across the community. Policy considerations: block grants to FSCs,

RCDs and Counties being able to fund organizational capacity to think strategically beyond project to project approach. Tax incentives for retrofitting. Grant programs aren't reaching a large number of people. Regulatory framework – cost can be a burden to permitting. State funding requires CEQA and dilutes effectiveness.

### 3. Christopher Rivera – Forest Fire Lookout Association

The Forest Fire Lookout Association (FFLA) is a national non-profit that conducts historical research of sites and establishes programs to support restoration efforts.

Purpose of visit to Argentine Rock Lookout in October was to see if it was restorable. The structure and foundation are in very good condition for repair. Mr. Rivera has met with Forest Service personnel, and developed a plan. They are in the process of getting an agreement signed to repair the lookout

Leslie Edlund, USFS said the partnership has been valuable and that NEPA is almost complete.

Ryan Bauer suggested adding restoration of the deteriorating look-out tower at Plumas County Fair Grounds.

## Old Business

1. CWPP Appendix B Project list approval. General approval was received via hand raising.
2. Tree Mortality Task Force – Mike Callahan

At the January Fire Safe Council meeting there was a renewed concern about drought cycle. Mr. Callaghan provided a summary of the past Tree Mortality Task Force efforts in Plumas County, and explained the Incident Action Plan (IAP) that was developed. He said that the group can be re-initiated. Threats from drought and bark beetle are a concern unless Spring 2021 delivers above average precipitation. There was no aerial flight from 2020.

Mr. Tompkins will be tied in with UC tree mortality data collection network and can provide an update in April. He added that tree mortality is now in the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) which increases opportunity to apply for funds for planning to get ahead of the issue.

Tracey Ferguson is involved with implementation of the mitigation strategy of LHMP. Tree mortality will be one of the items annually reviewed.

3. American Valley Contribution Waiver – Ms. Hepner said there is one landowner who is a part of American Valley East project owns 16 acres and is not able to provide the \$4,000 cost-share.  
**m – Reynolds, s – Kogge** General support via raise of hand from PCFSC Board.

## Updates

- **CAL FIRE** – Chris Christopherson – The LMU has hired a new forester for Plumas Office, John Panghorn. He will be starting in April and will be working out of the Quincy office. He has a GIS background. The Unit has lost one fire prevention officer, which leaves a gap for staffing and will draw Joel Goldman away from the Plumas area. **Ryan Danielson** transferred in as local Battalion Chief, Westwood office. He is available to answer questions throughout Plumas County.
- **Feather River RCD** – Brad Graevs is working with PNF to provide crews for Forest Service pile burns. It creates a foot in the door for the underburn cooperative to do more Forest Service burning.
- **Feather River Stewardship Coalition** – no update.
- **Firewise Communities** – Evening zoom meeting scheduled for next Wednesday at 5pm. Ms. Kogge - within next couple of weeks Gold Mountain Firewise will hold a meeting about AB 38 that has passed. Want community members to understand what that will mean for residents. Effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, must give potential buyer of retrofits done or not done. Barbara MacAurthur – AB 38 and others are published on community website to notify community members. Kyle Felker said it is costing \$15,000 to remove trees around his house on 1/3 of acre; people are going to be shocked about costs. Gutter caps are over \$4,000. It's going to be a huge hit to members of the community. Chief Christopherson has made a list of changes that he will share
- **Timber** – no update.
- **Insurance** – Richard Stockton - Governor and insurance commissioner entered into partnership to reduce risk and make insurance more available and affordable. Firewise is vital moving forward for finding funds and educating communities.
- **Utilities** – no update.
- **NRCS** – no update.
- **NSAQMD** – no update. Chief Christopherson thanked Air Quality; they have been stopping illegal burning in Plumas County. A \$500 fine was issued. Don't want to lose opportunity to burn because of pollutants.
- **Audubon Society** – Ms. Hepner said the PCFSC and FRSC provided a letter of support for the Quincy Watershed Improvement Project in Boyle Ravine area.
- **Plumas Fire Chiefs Association** – no update.
- **Office of Emergency Services** – no update. Ms. Hepner will be contacting the Sheriff about the remaining Title III funds that covered the contract Prevention Specialist position.
- **Plumas County Planning Department** – no update.
- **Plumas Underburn Cooperative** – Ms. Hepner PUC is involved in a TREX event in late March. There will be two additional Basic 32 classes in Graeagle and Chester. Matt West can be contacted for details
- **Tree Mortality Update** – see above.
- **Tribal** – Trina Cunningham – Accepted new position and interim director of the Maidu Summit Consortium (MSC)s She will continue with her current contracts until she is no longer the interim director. She is trying to get up to date with partnerships and requested that partners reach out to her in this role. She would like to distribute CAL FIRE regulation updates when available.

- **UC Cooperative Extension** – Mr. Tompkins - Working with Quincy Firewise on developing a web-based survey tool to enter their volunteer hours or investments and it auto populates to a database that can be queried at the end of the year. Contact Mr. Tompkins if you would like to be a “guinea pig.”
- **USFS** – Ryan Bauer - Making progress with prescribed fire, primarily on Mt. Hough around Butterfly Valley. Will likely move out to Genesee. The Feather River Ranger District (FRRD) is also doing burning in Butte and Yuba counties. Beckwourth is looking to start burning in the next week as well. Planning is underway on big projects: Claremont behind Quincy, and Mapes north of Portola. Lost a fire station in the North Complex at Brush Creek. Found a place to house resources for fire season. Going through temporary fire hire getting seasonal workforce sorted out. Then permanent fire hire to fill vacancies.

Lee Anne Schramel – There are Secure Rural School RAC – FY 19 and 20 funds to distribute. The don't need to be distributed until next year, pushing to get project outreach letter out for implementation in 2022. Don't know when proposals will be due. Need to be coordinated with District contacts. There is about \$450,000 available in this round. Be on the look-out for Plumas RAC outreach.

Kristin Winford – Beckworth RD – great work going on with Plumas and Lassen Fire Safe Council's. Contract will be going out this spring for Lakes Basin. Bootsole Tompson Peak area with Lassen FSC.

- **State Parks** – Rich Adams – Plumas Eureka State Park has a few projects on CWPP list. Their status has not changed – on “wish list.” Made progress last fall dealing with tree mortality in campground. Assistance from Plumas County to maintain work on county roads in the area. Want to staff up a State Parks fuel crew again; haven't had one for about 10 years. Will ramp up effort and do more prescribed burning at the park.
- **Sierra Nevada Conservancy** - Kristy Hoffman– looking at two protentional pots of funds. First \$20 million for fire resiliency projects. Goal is to put that money into motion very soon. Second pot of money of \$50 million to be distributed to partners. Brad Graevs was contacted about the success of the fall TREX training and the program is being highlighted by SNC during a California Senate hearing

#### 1. Status of Current Grants

- **Senior/Disabled Defensible Space** – Mike McCourt – no updates at this time. Program will begin again in the middle of March.
- **Chipping** – Gary Parque – Gold Mountain and Nakoma aim to work on absentee properties. Strong response from all areas concerning chipping program.
- **HFR Project Schedule** – no update.

#### 2. Status of Grant Budgets: No update

#### 3. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities:

- Ms. Hepner – Submitted two projects for Stevens Funds. Submitted a quick proposal to California FSC for a trailer and \$10,000 stipend. This will hopefully be a great resource for Firewise communities. Submitted an application to PGE to treat 102 acres around Radio Hill. Ties into County land and FRRCD will also submit application.

Mr. Reynolds asked what tools will be in the trailer. Ms. Hepner responded that the \$10,000 stipend will be used to purchase chainsaws and hand tools. The trailer can be checked out by Firewise communities.

#### **4. Other Updates & Upcoming Events:**

Adjourn - Next meeting March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021