

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Board of Directors

Chair, Don Gasser, Citizen (20)
Vice Chair, John Reynolds, Firewise Community (19)
Secretary/Treasurer, Julie Ruiz, NSAQMD (20)
Dan Martynn, NRCS (20)
Trina Cunningham (20)

Chuck Bowman, Firewise Community (19)
Jim Hamblin, PC Fire Chiefs Assoc. (19)
Ryan Bauer, USFS (20)
Jan Fletcher, Plumas Association of Realtors (19)
Mike Callaghan, Firewise Community (18)

Mission Statement:

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

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 10th, 2019 - 9:00 am.

Plumas County Planning & Building Services Conference Room
555 Main Street, Quincy, CA

1. Welcome & Introductions – Don Gasser
2. Review Agenda – no changes
3. Approve December Meeting Minutes – **m – Hamblin, s - Reynolds**
4. Public Comment – David Popp suggested that the Fire Safe Council consider a larger venue for meetings. William Jacks would like to see the Fire Safe Council support building for fire lines in Butterfly Valley in preparation for prescribed burning.

New Business

1 & 2. Final Report of the Nominating Committee and Election and Seating of PCFSC Board Directors – Chuck Bowman listed the members with expiring terms: Don Gasser, Dan Martynn, Julie Ruiz, Mike Callaghan, and Ryan Bauer. He said that all of those individuals were interested in continuing on the board. Additionally, Trina Cunningham was nominated for the board. Board member nominations passed unanimously.

3. Election of Board Officers

Chair: Don Gasser
Vice Chair: John Reynolds
Secretary/Treasurer: Julie Ruiz
Officer nominations passed unanimously.

4. Review of Council Goals for 2019:

- 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;
- Assist local fire departments in meeting their mission and goals.

Motion to recommend continuing 2018 goals – Martynn, s - Hamblin

5. CWPP Revision – At the December meeting Mike Callaghan asked how often the Council is required to do a periodic update of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. After doing some research he reports that there are no specific requirements for updates. The 2008 publication “Community Guide to Preparing and Implementing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan” provides guidelines for monitoring and evaluation. Mr. Callaghan has reviewed the existing CWPP and doesn’t see a strong need for revision. The 2013 revision primarily updated the definition of the WUI boundary. The Hazardous Fuel Assessment is excellent and its recommendations should be revisited. Don Gasser noted that prescribed fire should be incorporated and Trina Cunningham said she looks forward to incorporating tribal input for cultural burning, pretreatment, and maintenance.

Council members were asked to review the CWPP and send comments to Mr. Callaghan before the February Meeting.

In addition to the CWPP, projects need to be in the CAL FIRE Unit Plan to be eligible for the Fire Prevention or Forest Health grant programs.

6. Goats for Land Management – Emily Bryant introduced herself as the former garden education teacher at Quincy Elementary. She is starting a business called Limb in Aide to use goats to assist elderly and disabled residents around American Valley with thinning of hazardous fuels from their properties. She is currently identifying locations and securing fencing. Ms. Bryant would like to see her business incorporate underburning at some point in the future.

7. Debbie Franco from the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research introduced herself and colleague Nuin-Tara Key, Resilience Program Manager. Ms. Franco said that good policy at the state level ensures that locals have what they need. She is evaluating the “right” economic drivers to create healthy forests. Ms. Key would like to see a support network throughout the state for information sharing across regions. They solicited comments and feedback.

- Mr. Gasser said that one of the Fire Safe Council’s goals has been supporting the opening of more biomass facilities. There used to be a robust logging industry that employed young people. Business

opportunities are needed, particularly in tree work and prescribed fire. The latter involves the state because of concerns over liability.

- The challenges of the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District's Rule 318, which limits burning in American Valley according to calendar dates, were discussed.
- David Popp said that all plans should be made in accordance with nature. The desired condition should be in mind when making policies.
- Kevin Danaher mentioned private foundations supporting resilient cities and suggested that there should be something similar for rural counties.
- William Jacks expressed concern that these conversations lack urgency. He said that we can't wait for infrastructure changes, people need to take action now.
- Ms. Franco said that new executive orders have been issued by the Governor and that forest management will be an area of focus.
- Claude Sanders added that National Forest management can't be expected to generate income for the government. He said that removing the canopy is not the solution.
- The state is interested in removing small diameter, non-merchantable material from the forest. There will need to be local economic drivers to do so. Ms. Franco asked if there is capacity to develop businesses that have the ability to capture value out of every part of the process.
- Trina Cunningham said she would like to see more investment in building local capacity. Including training people on accessing grant funds, investing in people who are already doing the work, and tapping into the large amount of existing expertise.
- Jason Christian said that the solution has to be long-term and it needs to address National Forest management.
- Dave Kinatader said that Forest Service timber sales can cost just as much as service work and that many of the timber sales are small diameter, restorative treatments.
- Gary Parque said that it is not just an issue of forest management, people need to be valued as a resource. Even if there is no merchantable product, the work can positively impact people.
- Mr. Danaher added that there is a large difference in the valuation of timber locally and in places that aren't forested.
- Ryan Tompkins said that we struggle with markets because of transportation and isolation. He said that we can't grow our capacity or made a vibrant program with "soft money."
- Leah Wills said that catastrophic losses start a cyclical level of financial drain on communities. She asked what the conversation is at the state level about supporting communities after a disaster.
- Ms. Franco responded that after a fire it is too late. There should be conversation at the local level about how to rebuild, but the goal is to prevent the catastrophic loss. She said that where businesses choose to locate is determined at the local level when workforce and properties are identified. She directed meeting attendees to think about what they want their communities to look like and the state will direct policy around that.
- Ms. Cunningham said that it requires a two-way conversation because communities don't always know what opportunities are available.
- Ms. Franco offered Council members the option of participating in a state working group.
- Emily Bryant pointed out that a lot of homes can't have wood stoves, which limits locals' ability to utilize the resource around them.
- Leah Wills said that there needs to be ongoing coordination support for Fire Safe Councils so that programs don't start and stop with funding cycles.

- Mr. Kinatader asked for the state to cut red tape.

Old Business

1. Prescribed Burn Committee Report – David Popp said that the committee meeting would be held after the Fire Safe Council meeting. A group of people burned piles on his property. He wants to keep the momentum going. Mike Callaghan said that it is important that CAL FIRE stay involved in the prescribed burn association because some of the bottleneck issues fall under their purview. Mr. Danaher said that he is participating in an NRCS program that provides funding to utilize prescribed burning. Phil Noia said that CAL FIRE is adding fuels crews statewide and that if areas are pre-treated that CAL FIRE will burn them. Silas Rojas from CAL FIRE clarified that generally a VMP agreement is required, which keeps the liability with the landowner.

2. Mapping Committee Report – the mapping committee has not officially met. Hannah Hepner distributed a mapping update that outlines next steps.

Updates

1. Standing Reports and Discussion

- **Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES):** Sue McCourt detailed some of the information in the Governor’s Executive Order, which focuses on emergency preparedness, response and recovery. Plumas OES Chief Nick Dawson is part of the Alert Warning Task Force. On May 1st there will be a WUI drill on the Lake Almanor Peninsula. Mrs. McCourt added that she is a resource for Firewise Communities and that last year there were five new Firewise Communities recognized in Plumas County. She said there are 23 wildfire evacuation maps for the county and that they are available from the [PCFSC website](#).
- **CAL FIRE:** Mr. Gasser asked who is going to be responsible for Defensible Space inspections. Silas Rojas said that the Unit is hiring a new person for the Quincy office. In the meantime the Susanville office is responsible for inspections. In the Local Responsibility Area there is no enforcement for defensible space, it would require a County or Municipal Code. In the State Responsibility Area landowners get three chances to make progress on their defensible space. It is a criminal violation and they can get a citation, which goes to the District Attorney for review. However, the first step is to simply talk to your neighbor about concerns. Randy Wilson said that there are updated fire wise codes for new developments but there is no County program that addresses inspections. There are some people who simply don’t have the resources to do the work. Captain Rojas said that CAL FIRE’s grant program provides resources for local identified service programs. It was noted that insurance coverage is going to start to be an issue. Randy Wilson suggested that we learn from the property description issues that we’re seeing in Paradise.
- **USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction:** Ryan Tompkins said that the federal government is still furloughed but that the vegetation management and hazardous fuels program are eager to get back to work. Dave Kinatader said that he is putting together a contract for Mooretown Rancheria on the Butterfly project and will focus on getting the biomass material to a facility.
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service:** Not present
- **Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District:** Not present.
- **Industry Representatives:** Cade Mohler of SPI said that they have just finished up a mastication and thinning project around Butterfly Valley. They are working on a 450 acre fuel break outside of Chester that should be complete before the fire season.

- **Tribal Representatives:** Trina Cunningham said the California Indian Water Commission is looking at building capacity and leveraging partnerships to do cultural trainings and expand the use of cultural fire. She is working on educating the people who live in the Maidu homeland.
- **Feather River Stewardship Coalition:** The Feather River Stewardship Coalition's next quarterly meeting is scheduled for February 5th at 3:00pm.
- **Firewise Communities:**
 - Portola** – Phil Oels said that their Firewise committee meets the third Thursday of each month at 6pm. The committee has a Facebook presence.
 - Galeppi Ranch** – Ryan Tompkins said they are looking at bringing in a masticator of a community project. They have a winter meeting scheduled. Dave Kinatader said that air quality restrictions are an issue for the management that needs to get done.
 - Graeagle** – Chuck Bowman said that the area of Graeagle proper is getting involved in Firewise. He has been collecting more applications for the Mohawk Valley HFR project.
 - Taylorville** – Mike Yost reported that their committee had an initial meeting before the holidays and that there is a lot of enthusiasm to get started.
 - Genesee Woods** – Leah Willis said that members of the community are participating in the Fire Safe Council's large CCI project. She is pushing to see integration of cultural burning. There is an area of severe burn that needs to be re-burned and that could be used as a demonstration of how to re-burn.
 - Sloat/Cromberg/Camp Layman** – Sue McCourt said that the national Firewise program has changed their process and that the report format has changed.
 - Not present/no update:** LACC, Almanor Pines, Mohawk Vista, Lake Almanor West, Greenhorn Creek, Grizzly Ranch, Gold Mountain, Chester, Plumas Eureka
 - Potential Communities:** Paxton Lodge, Feather River College, Chilcoot/Vinton
- Several landowners in Seneca composed a letter to the Forest Service requesting fuel reduction in the area of the Chips fire. They are interested in assistance with Hazardous Fuels Reduction.
- **Tree Mortality Update:** Mr. Oels said that he is seeing pine beetle between Portola and Graeagle.

2. Status of Current Grants –

Senior/Disabled Defensible Space: Mike McCourt said the program is on hiatus and there is no update.

Chipping Program: Gary Parque said that applications are starting to come in. The program will start chipping in late spring/early summer. Mr. Callaghan requested that there be continuity between the Phase I & II operators. Mr. Sanders suggested that the program be available outside of the regular chipping schedule for individuals who have urgency in removing the material.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction Schedule – There were no questions about the HFR schedule.

3. Status of Grant Budgets – There were no questions about the grant budgets.

4. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities – Hannah Hepner directed attendees to the handout for information about upcoming projects and opportunities.

5. Other Updates & Upcoming Events

January 15th – Prescribed Burn Association Workshop, Quincy Library, 1-5pm

January 26th – Pile Building Party, Genesee, 10am

February 5th – Feather River Stewardship Coalition Meeting, 3:00pm

February 11th – Wilder Than Wild Screening, Chester, 6:00pm

Adjourned – Next meeting scheduled for February 14th, 2019