

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Board of Directors

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Dan Martynn, NRCS (18)	John Reynolds, Firewise Community (19)
	Jan Fletcher, Plumas Association of Realtors (19)

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, October 11th, 2018 - 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 September Meeting Minutes – **m – Hamblin, s - Sanders**
4. Public Comment – Brian Morris introduced himself and shared that he, along with other local representatives, went to Sacramento ten years ago to talk about the state of the Feather River Watershed. He is glad to see that restoration work is gaining traction.

New Business

1. Potential Greenhorn Project – Steve DeBonis said that SPI is in the process of reviewing past fuel breaks and identifying management needs. Greenhorn Creek has been identified for work. They are reaching out to partners to develop a project. There is no Timber Harvest Plan for the area, so working with the Fire Safe Council is ideal. Grant funds are requested, but SPI can provide the required cost-share. Cade Mohler added that SPI owns the entire western and northern boundary of the community. One hundred and twenty acres of past fuels work is 10-25 years old. Additionally, 75 acres along the community access road has never been treated. Greenhorn CSD/Firewise representatives voiced their support for the work. They said they would like to target CSD and absentee owned parcels for participation in a project.
2. Resolutions to enter agreements for CAL FIRE Fire Prevention awards

Community Chipping Program, **m – Bauer, s – Reynolds**

Ayes: Reynolds, Hamblin, Bowman, Callaghan, Gasser, Bauer. Absent: Fletcher, Ruiz, Martynn

Portola Hazardous Fuel Reduction, **m – Bowman, s - Hamblin**

Ayes: Reynolds, Hamblin, Bowman, Callaghan, Gasser, Bauer. Absent: Fletcher, Ruiz, Martynn

3. Prescribed Burn Association – David Popp discussed ecological repercussions of fire exclusion as well as possible cost benefits utilizing fire for land management. He introduced the idea of a prescribed burn association, which contracts a burn boss with insurance and who develops a burn plan. Don Gasser followed that Bob Beckwith suggested a tool trailer for citizen use. Mr. Gasser requested that Ryan Bauer and David Popp spearhead a committee. Lindsay Wood, from Plumas Audubon, was the only volunteer to join the committee. They will bring a proposal to the November Council meeting.

4. Legislation Update – Sue McCourt provided an overview of some of the recently passed legislation and emphasized that Firewise communities are more likely to be prioritized for grant funds. Chief Packwood contributed additional information including:

SB 901 provides exemptions for fuel breaks for small landowners,

SB 1260 addresses increased pace and scale and establishes a burn boss certification program,

SB 824 is an insurance bill that protects homeowners from cancelation. However, after the Carr Fire, insurance companies are issuing specific requirements to policy holders. Policies may be cancelled if the homeowner doesn't comply with the requirements,

SB 1079 will allow for advance payments on grants.

Additionally, AB 2551 allows CAL FIRE to enter into agreements with landowners to conduct joint prescribed burning operations, and AB 1079 provides grant funds for prescribed burning.

Old Business

Don Gasser requested additional contributors for press releases. The schedule will be:

December – Ryan Bauer

January – Don Gasser

February – Sue McCourt

Updates

1. Standing Reports and Discussion

- **Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES):** Sue McCourt announced that it is Fire Prevention Week. Firewise communities are communicating that to members.
- **CAL FIRE:** Chief Packwood said that fire restrictions have been lifted by the National Forests in the LMU and that the burn ban has ended. Burn permits are required. LMU is the first unit in the state to lift the ban and fire weather may change, so please burn with caution. The next round of grants have been posted on the CAL FIRE website. \$155 million will be available for Forest Health and Fire Prevention projects. CAL FIRE is considering hiring an ecologist, who would be available for consultation. CAL FIRE intends to have six fuels crews in the northern region, however, not many applications were received. With the training required, we shouldn't expect the crews to be available

before next summer. This program may additionally be able to help with planning. Peak staffing has been funded through the end of the year.

- **USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction:** Ryan Bauer said that some areas of the Forest have received over an inch of rain, making leadership comfortable coming out of fire restriction. This year the districts had the ability to start prescribed fire before the restriction was lifted. However, they haven't started yet. The Beckwourth District will start with the Dixie project. The Forest is under a severity project right now, which means they are fully staffed and resources are available. There is a TRES burn planned on the Brush Creek project. There has not yet been an announcement of Stevens funds awards.
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service:** not present
- **Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District:** not present
- **Industry Representatives:** Steve DeBonis said that conditions are favorable for mastication on the Butterfly Valley project and they will start soon. The project north of Chester is waiting on the operator. The weather forecast suggests that operations may be possible through mid-December.
- **Tribal Representatives:** not present
- **Plumas County Tree Mortality Task Force:** Updates from the TMTF will be removed from future agendas. Mr. Sanders and Mr. DeBonis gave an overview of some of the mortality they've been seeing.
- **Feather River Stewardship Coalition:** The FRSC is hosting a field tour of the Bucks and Spanish Ranch projects on October 12th.
- **Firewise Communities:**
 - Portola** – Phil Oels said it is pine needle season and people are focusing on dealing with the material.
 - Gold Mountain** – Mike Callaghan commented on the amount of work completed by the chipping program.
 - Grizzly Ranch** – John Reynolds said the chipping program is complete in the community. Three of the high hazard lots were treated because of the service.
 - Chester** – Karen Lichti announced that the community's Firewise paperwork was submitted on Oct 10th.
 - Graeagle** – Chuck Bowman put in a special chipping request to address the material generated by the Smith Creek Ranch Firewise workday. Whitehawk has an active thinning project and are removing junipers around the townhomes. Mohawk Meadows had a demonstration work day along the roadway. Valley Ranch had a Firewise workday in July and they have another one scheduled for October. Mr. Bowman is working with Firewise leads in the Mohawk Valley to collect applications for a large Hazardous Fuel Reduction project.
 - Sloat/Cromberg/Camp Layman** – Mike McCourt reported that about a dozen people took advantage of the chipping program.
 - LACC**- Carlos Espana said that they are interviewing contractors to conduct a hazard assessment of lots. They intend to do as some of the other Homeowners Associations have done and strengthen their CC&Rs to enforce lot clearing. The community is working on developing two large fuel breaks. One of the landowners has agreed to participate if the HOA pays the cost-share. That landowner is additionally considering a timber sale.
 - Greenhorn Creek** – Representatives said that they are not making much progress due to a lack of leadership and the number of absentee landowners. Residents utilize the community burn pile more than the chipping program.

Not present/no update: LACC, Almanor Pines, Mohawk Vista, Galeppi Ranch, Plumas Eureka, Lake Almanor West

Potential Communities: Taylorsville, Paxton Lodge, Feather River College, Chilcoot/Vinton

2. Status of Current Grants –

Senior/Disabled Defensible Space: Mike McCourt – The program is complete for the year and 104 residences were treated for defensible space. He handed out applications at the Senior Summit a few weeks ago. The program will resume in late March, with calls to applicants.

Chipping Program: Gary Parque – The program is wrapping up. It has been a successful season. Hannah Hepner added that 210 locations were chipped this year, 50% of survey respondents said that they otherwise would have burned the material, 25% would have taken to the transfer station, and 17% would have left it on site. Mr. Sanders voiced concerns about how the program deals with quantities that exceed the guidelines.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction Schedule – Dixie Valley is nearly halfway complete.

3. Status of Grant Budgets – Hannah Hepner gave an overview of the current grant budgets.

4. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities – There are two current grant opportunities: Plumas RAC and CAL FIRE CCI. The group discussed potential projects to submit for these funding sources. It was decided that Hannah would email recommendations to the Board for approval.

5. Other Updates & Upcoming Events

October 27th – Sierra Valley Fire Protection District Fall Festival fundraiser, 5:00pm

November 3rd – Greenhorn volunteer fire department fundraiser, 6:00pm

November 14th – Wilder Than Wild screening at West End Theatre, 7:00pm

Adjourned – Next meeting scheduled for November 8th, 2018