

# Plumas County Fire Safe Council



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 12th, 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Julie Ruiz NSAQMD (20)
<input checked="" 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 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
2. Review Agenda – Addition of Nominating Committee as item 4 under New Business.
3. Approval of October Meeting Minutes – Approved via survey
4. Public Comment – No public comment
5. Board Comment – No board comment

### New Business

1. Mapes Project Information – Keli Ward, NEPA Planner for the Beckwourth Ranger District, introduced the Mapes project and said that if she doesn’t have desired information it can be provided from one of the ten resource specialists working on the project. Comments for the project must be received by 11:59pm on November 19<sup>th</sup> to be incorporated into the planning documentation. Comments after this date will still be considered. The Mapes project covers 85,000 acres - a landscape level approach to protect forest health, wildlife habitats, and wildfire resilience. The existing forest condition has fewer large tree stands, many more smaller trees, less native species and historic conditions. There is a need to decrease competition in forest

stands, accelerate the growth of large trees and increase forest resilience in the project area. Mechanical and hand thinning treatments will be used to decrease stand densities with variable density thinning and create openings of .1-.75 acres in size. Shade tolerant species will be targeted for removal while sugar, ponderosa and Jeffery pine will be enhanced. Trees larger than 30 inches DBH will only be removed for safety reasons. The project will also improve the condition and sustainability of meadows and aspen stands. Treatment in aspen stands will focus on reducing conifer encroachment. All areas of the Mapes project will be considered for prescribed fire after initial treatment. Roads in the project area that interfere with natural drainage patterns will be decommissioned.

Dan Martynn asked how many acres of meadow will be restored and if treatment will include removal of conifers in buffer around the meadows. Ms. Ward responded that there are 600 acres of meadow in the project that have been identified for restoration, but more may be added in the planning process. She said that all conifers within meadows will be removed and that a 150 foot buffer to reduce seed sources will be created. Mr. Martynn added that the NRCS has a restoration project adjacent to the proposed project.

Don Gasser requested a ballpark cost for the project and asked which communities it will protect. Ms. Ward said that the cost is currently unknown. There are timber sales within the project that will fund herbicide contracts. The project will benefit residents of Lake Davis and provide a buffer for Portola.

John Reynolds asked if there was a timeline for implementation of the southern portion of the project and if priority will be given to WUI areas. Matt Waterston, acting District Ranger, said that the first project will be the Crocker timber sale on the eastern side of Lake Davis. It will be advertised in FY21, but the implementation timeline will depend on the contract. Typically the contracts are three years. While the market is flooded with salvage logs, it will likely be at least a year. The next project will be the Bagley Integrated Resource Timber Contract. From there treatment will connect into Red Clover and head north.

Mr. Martynn shared that there has been a lot of restoration done in Clover Valley and Last Chance Creek over the years. He asked if it will be acknowledged in the analysis. Ms. Ward said the restoration work was a factor in choosing the treatment areas.

Mike De Lasaux added that there was a lot of HFQLG work in the area. He would like to see how it juxtaposes with what is being proposed. He asked about the broader strategy guiding the efforts in choosing the project location. Mr. Waterston said that the project will reenter many of the QLG treatments with an Eastside pine prescription rather than thinning from below for fuels and forest health objectives. Mr. De Lasaux followed that the QLG projects were undertaken as triage to established DFPZs to be utilized for future restoration programs.

John Sheehan inquired if replacing OHV losses will be part of the analysis. Ms. Ward will follow up with more information.

Tracey Ferguson clarified that there will be a second comment period after the Environmental Analysis is completed in January. Ms. Ward said that specific comments are appreciated now, but there will also be another opportunity after the draft is released.

Trina Cunningham expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be involved in the project. She said that the whole area is sensitive tribally for various things other than archaeology including hydrology and timber.

2. Lake Almanor West Firewise Fuel Reduction – Kim Mullikin from the Lake Almanor West Firewise community shared photos from recent volunteer work days. There has been effort for about a year to hold a community project that involved volunteers, the fire department, and the Association. Ms. Mullikin mentioned that with COVID-19 there have been a lot of new neighbors working from home – several of whom have been affected by fire and are very aware of the hazards. There were 34 volunteers on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 36 volunteers on October 9<sup>th</sup>. Before the work days Fire Department volunteers prepped the sites. Maintenance did work in the golf course area. There were also opportunities for people with limited mobility to participate. The event totaled 600 volunteer hours and more than 60 cubic yards of material were taken to green waste. Some individuals paid the green waste fees as a donation. After the event a BBQ was held at the fire station for volunteers. The event will take place again in May.

The area was recently merged with Prattville to form the West Shore Fire District. In between the two communities there is Forest Service land that needs to be treated and clearance along roads.

Mr. De Lasaux commented that is rewarding to see the value of Firewise community efforts.

3. North Complex Success Stories – Mike De Lasaux recently published a map of treatment areas within the North Complex to Plumas News. During the Claremont Fire Mr. De Lasaux was curious if the fire suppression was utilizing fuel breaks established by the QLG. The map showed significant areas of overlap. The DFPZs were not expected to be effective in every case, but to act as “speed bumps” giving suppression forces the ability to adjust suppression tactics. What Mr. De Lasaux found ‘has the appearance of success.’ He would like to see that the successes are documented and publicized. He encouraged focus on a strategic plan prior to restoration and the need for maintenance in some areas. He closed by highlighting the success of structure protection in Plumas County.

Don Gasser said that the future is in sharing success stories and learning from the unsuccessful.

Ms. Cunningham said that during her involvement with the Incident Management Team, she saw that the IC and Ops were looking at opportunities for how to fight the fire. There were incredibly sensitive tribal areas that were included in a 4,000 exclusion area.

Hannah Hepner shared that the forest management at Massak was instrumental in stopping the fire in that area.

4. Nominating Committee – There are six individuals with terms that expire at the end of 2020. The committee will determine if those members want to continue or if there are other interested parties. The Nominating Committee consists of Dan Martynn, John Reynolds, and Kathy Kogge.

## Old Business

1. Recognition Program Update – Kathy Kogge shared the outline for the Certificate of Recognition program:

### Goal

- To publicly recognize/honor a person, business, community that performed an act or acted in a manner that helped to reduce the loss of natural and human made resources caused by wildfire and or implement the Plumas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).
- Increase public knowledge and awareness of the wildland fire hazard and efforts they can make to reduce their threats.
- Develop more Plumas County community-based involvement.

### Who

- Any person, business or community action that impacted the wildfire safety of Plumas County.

### How

- Any person, business or community can submit a nominee to the Plumas County Firesafe Council website or subcommittee for review. Included should be name of person, business, community, date of event and brief description.

### Considerations

- No limit number of awards per month.
- Limit time on when an event occurred. (e.g. a year ago?) maybe 90 days once established
- Subcommittee member to advise those who have received the recognition certificate. Have certificates ready at monthly meeting.
- Advise newspaper on monthly honorees-Kogge

### Certificate

- Certificate to be designed and maintained by Plumas Fire Safe Council subcommittee

### Personnel

- Subcommittee to initially be comprised of Hannah Hepner, Bethany Rouse, John Reynolds, Kathy Kogge

### Schedules

- Fire Safe Council to monitor the nominee submissions and distribute to subcommittee 11 working days prior to Monthly board meeting.
- Subcommittee to hold meeting to review nominee submissions 10 working days prior to Monthly Board Meeting.
- Nominees sent to Board members for vote 8 working days prior to Monthly Board meeting.
- Board vote 7 working days prior to Monthly Board meeting and results sent to be included in Board Meeting Notice.

Mr. Martynn suggested that quarterly recognition at the meetings could be an alternative to monthly. Both Ms. Kogge and Mr. Reynolds commented that the program will evolve as it is implemented.

General support for the guidelines of the Recognition program were shown by “raise of hand.”

## Updates

## 1. Standing Reports and Discussion

- **CAL FIRE** – No update
- **Feather River Resource Conservation District (RCD)** – Brad Graevs said the RCD is working on a program that will assist private landowners with fuels reduction under a short timeline, which will require a cost to the landowner. The RCD will be acquiring biochar kilns for landowners to dispose of chip and slash while producing soil amendments.
- **Feather River Stewardship Coalition** – The next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> at 3pm. There is a North Complex Fire Tour scheduled for Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> [postponed at the time of this writing].
- **Firewise Communities** –
  - Quincy – Richard Stockton said that a Facebook page has been established and they are in the process of doing an action plan.
  - Taylorville - Mike Yost announced that the community has received recognition. There was an article and picture on Plumas News. The community has been active on the action plan.
  - LACC - Sue McCourt said that on November 4<sup>th</sup> LACC had voluntary evacuation drill with 25 participants. The Sheriff's office utilized the event as a functional exercise. There was an article on Plumas News.
  - The Pines – Sue McCourt shared that areas of the Lake Almanor Peninsula that are not part of a Firewise community, will become part of an expanded community with The Pines.Plumas County currently has 22 Firewise communities.  
Upcoming communities: Clio, Nelson Point, and Genesee Woods.
- **Industry – Timber** – Not present
- **Industry – Insurance:** Richard Stockton announced that the California Insurance Commissioner put a moratorium in place for non-renewals for a one-year period in fire affected zip codes. This action will stabilize the market but can backfire.
- **Industry – Utilities** – Not present
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS):** Dan Martynn is currently working with 10 clients. Two of them are wildfire recovery clients. The NRCS will potentially be treating about 250 acres in contracts this year. Mr. Martynn made a personal commitment to restart Butterfly Valley Firewise. He announced his retirement will be Feb 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District:** Julie Ruiz said that CAL FIRE has lifted the burn suspension. She is working with the RCD and Feather River College for a permit to do underburning on campus.  
Ryan Tompkins asked about the reason for the no burn status on Veteran's Day. Ms. Ruiz said that it is a legacy from having limited fire resources on federal holidays and that more people are home who could be affected by the smoke.
- **Plumas County Fire Chiefs Association** – Not present
- **Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES):** Sue McCourt said that CAL FIRE has released updated tree removal and exemption information. It is available on the Fire Safe Council website.
- **Plumas County Planning Department:** Tracey Ferguson updated that the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) has been submitted to Cal OES and FEMA for official review. It is available on the [Plumas County webpage](#). There are 44 mitigation actions within plan. The Fire Safe Council is a partner on several of them. Formal adoption will go through the Plumas County Board of Supervisors.

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research has issued a fire planning tech advisory document that is available for local cities and counties in California as they update their General Plans. Plumas County will be looking if there are helpful elements for the General Plan Safety Element update.

The California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection has started the process of making significant changes to the State's Fire Safe Regulations as required under SB 901 (Dodd 2018). Changes to the current regulations are likely to include:

- Expansion of applicability from beyond the State Responsibility Areas to include Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ), including in VHFHSZ in Local Responsibility Areas (LRAs)
- Changes to road standards for emergency access and egress
- Changes to signage practices
- Changes to rules around private water supply reserves and regulations for fuel breaks and greenbelts.

Two [public workshops](#) will be held, Nov. 18 and Nov. 24, to acquire input from the public on proposed changes. Draft changes to be presented to the Board on Dec. 8, 2020. Final Draft regulations to be presented to the Board on Jan. 19, 2021. A 45-Day public comment period is anticipated Feb. 5 - Mar 23, 2021. Ms. Ferguson will present updates to the Fire Safe Council.

- **Plumas Underburn Cooperative** – Ms. Hepner reported that PUC members are participating in the TREX prescribed fire training event. TREX has not yet been able to burn, but PUC may be able to take over some of the burning after the event. A Basic 32 class in Greenville has just wrapped up. There will be another one offered in Quincy soon. Matt West is working with the Maidu Summit Consortium to do some planning for prescribed burns at Tásmam Koyóm.
- **Tree Mortality Update** – No update
- **Tribal Representatives:** Ms. Cunningham expressed that she is impressed and grateful for the work that so many people have done. She said the importance of the work is phenomenal. When she was assigned to a fire in Colorado this fire season, the IC showed her a Rocky Mountain National Park treatment that was used to protect a community. Ms. Cunningham said that we are part of a national effort and emphasized that the more we collaborate the better we all are. She said efforts to integrate tribal knowledge are very powerful.
- **UC Cooperative Extension:** Ryan Tompkins shared that one day of the North Complex fire made a run that covered as many acres as have been treated by Plumas National Forest over the past 20 years. Mr. Tompkins is currently working on statistics for the wildfire preparedness survey. He will share results with the Fire Safe Council. As a preview he shared that regionally 90% of people said that they were doing hazardous fuel reduction around their homes; 93% of those people said that there are paying for the work out of their own pocket. 20% of people said they have done home hardening retrofits; 50% said they'd like to but are inhibited by costs. 22% of people had evacuation plans.
- **USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction:** Chris Voelker from the Beckwourth Ranger District said there are no plans to pile or underburn until after the first of the year due to resources staffing and lack of moisture.

## 2. Status of Current Grants

- **Senior/Disabled Defensible Space:** Mike McCourt reported that this season has had several challenges. The program got a late start due to funding, the North Complex impacted operations because one of the contractors sent crews to work on fires, and road closures and heavy smoke impacted the program. Regardless 101 properties were treated; 40 of them were new properties. The program didn't complete 24 properties before the weather changed. The program was a major factor

in saving the home of a program participant on La Porte Rd whose property had been treated over the years. The program has continued to receive many applications; they will be put on the list for next year.

- **Chipping Program:** Gary Parquer has been receiving applications for next season. The program has one more year of funding and is on target with the budget.
- **Hazardous Fuel Reduction:** Ms. Hepner said that Mr. West was in the field evaluating completed units ahead of the snow. The SNC Butterfly Twain project is complete. The Lakes Basin Forest Health project will issue a prospectus soon. The Plumas Collaborative Forest Health project mastication on private lands will be complete this week. The Mohawk Vista project mastication work has been complete for some time, but there hasn't been a willing hand thin operator. The grant will expire at the end of the year. The American Valley East project is ready to execute operator contracts. Winningham will be doing mastication and GE Forestry will be doing hand thinning. The project is waiting on a Decision Memo from district before beginning.

3. Status of Grant Budgets: No update

4. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities: Ms. Hepner said that Taylorsville has been added to the potential projects list. There are currently no CAL-FIRE grant programs due their post-fire season budget.

5. Other Updates & Upcoming Events: None

Adjourn - Next meeting December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020