

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Board of Directors

Acting Chair, John Reynolds, Firewise Community (19)
Secretary/Treasurer, Julie Ruiz, NSAQMD (20)
Don Gasser (20)
Dan Martynn, NRCS (20)
Trina Cunningham, California Indian Water Commission (20)

Chuck Bowman, Firewise Community (19)
Jim Hamblin, PC Fire Chiefs Assoc. (19)
Ryan Bauer, USFS (20)
Mike Callaghan, Firewise Community (20)

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, November 14th, 2019 - 9:00 am.

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

1. Welcome & Introductions – John Reynolds
2. Review Agenda – no changes
3. Approval of October Meeting Minutes – **m – Sanders, s – Ruiz**
4. Public Comment – Richard Stockton commented that the Firewise communities are one of the best answers to the insurance issue. Mr. Stockton summarized the meeting with the insurance commissioner, including information about new legislation that will require a 70 day notice for non-renewals. Mr. Reynolds said that he has been getting a lot of requests for copies of Firewise certification for homeowners to provide to their insurance companies.

New Business

1. Report from the PCFSC Board Nominating Committee – Chuck Bowman reviewed the process for elections. He said that the Board nominates members at the December meeting. The bylaws allow for 5 to 15 directors. Mr. Bowman has been working to expand the number of directors over the last few years to include a broad representation of interests. The nominees will be voted on at the January meeting. Officers are nominated by the Board at that time. Mr. Reynolds added that there is no specific time investment required. Although Board participation doesn't take a lot of time, board input is valuable in decision making.
2. Firewise Update Discussion – Mr. Reynolds explained that, with the growing number of Firewise communities, there is a significant amount of time at Council meetings dedicated to Firewise updates. Sue McCourt has suggested that Firewise representatives meet following the Council meeting to share details. The Fire Safe Council meetings will be a venue to highlight significant updates.

Trina Cunningham commented that she would like to continue to hear a synopsis at the Fire Safe Council meetings because Firewise participation is so valuable at the state level.

Barbara MacArthur said she is in favor of consolidating Firewise information through a single representative. Mr. Reynolds summarized by stating that Firewise reporting representatives will be determined after the Fire Safe Council meeting and that future reports to the Council will be more efficient. He noted that some months have little Firewise activity while otherwise will have more robust reports.

Old Business

1. Mapping Update – Hannah Hepner reported that SIG and 34 North presented the updated map and platform to the Plumas County Board of Supervisors in mid-October. She said that it was uncertain from the meeting if the County intends to take on any role hosting or updating the data.

Judy Clot asked if there is a place someone can go for all of the information, as it would be very helpful in the grant writing process. Mr. Reynolds said that the Fire Safe Council is also interested in the data for project prioritization purposes and for strengthening grant proposals.

Updates

1. Standing Reports and Discussion

- **Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES):** Sue McCourt said that there are several retirements at the Sheriff's office including Nick Dawson and Sheriff Hagwood. The acting Sheriff has been appointed. Mrs. McCourt will be working under Carson Wingfield. Mr. Dawson plans to volunteer with the fire department to coordinate with OES. Mrs. McCourt reported that the California FAIR plan provides a 10% discount for Firewise communities. She said that a certificate needs to be provided to the insurance broker. Mrs. McCourt provided a handout that summarized the investments made by Firewise communities in Plumas County since 2010 which totaled \$4.9 million. She said that the Feather River College has been certified as a Firewise site.
- **Plumas County Planning Department:** Tracey Ferguson said that the county is approaching the five year Hazard Mitigation Plan update. The Planning Department is working with OES. She anticipates that there will be a stakeholder kick-off in mid- to late-January. California requires that the General Plan Public Health and Safety Element be evaluated concurrently. She said that Fire Safe Council involvement will be valuable in the process.
- **CAL FIRE:** Sean Delacour said that the unit will not down staff any positions until December 22nd. He had just returned from the Kincade Fire, which he said was generally the same footprint as the 2017 Santa Rosa fires. He commented that if the electrical grid hadn't been shut down the fire would have been significantly worse because of wind damage to the lines. Chief Delacour said that the unit is trying to get Defensible Space Inspectors back in Plumas County and would like to fill the vacant Area Forester position, but they cannot find applicants. On his battalion alone they are down three captains and two engineers. Chief Delacour announced that he will be retiring in two weeks and that much of the upper management on the unit will be retiring in the next year or two. He reported that the Martin Ranch project was recently completed.
- **USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction:** Ryan Bauer reported that several mechanical fuels treatments are still operating. The prescribed fire program is on hold by decision of the Regional Office. There have been two prescribed burns this season: Lee Summit and Little Grass Valley Reservoir. Mr. Bauer has spent the last 60 days working on a "confine and contain" fire on the Feather River District. He said that that these fires in the high country are usually successfully managed when there are wildfires "going

wrong” in other parts of the state. He emphasized the importance of discussion about the fact that California is a diverse state. Mr. Bauer reported that the Forest Service has laid off their temps and are currently short staffed. He said that makes prescribed fire difficult. He is hoping to use TRES for extra resources if the Spanish Ranch burn takes place next week. Meadow Valley has been within prescription for the past two-weeks. Mr. Bauer shared that the Forest Service has a new budget prioritization process that will create more competition for funding. He said that the Wildlife Conservation Board has recommended the Forest Service’s proposal to finish the Little Grass Valley project.

Maurice Huynh said that the Mt. Hough Ranger District is working on emergency action in the Walker Fire to clear roads. The Silviculturist on the Beckwourth District is looking at salvage. There may be sales in late spring/early summer. Meanwhile they are trying to continue the green program, including working on the Claremont project planning.

- **Natural Resource Conservation Service:** not present
- **Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District:** Julie Ruiz said that open residential burning will shut down on Sunday or Monday for the American Valley. She announced that there will be a Burn Wise Workshop in Portola on November 23rd at the Veterans Hall. It will include home safety information, flue fire demonstrations, wood and pellet safety and more.
- **Industry Representatives:** Cade Mohler said that SPI has accomplished a lot of fuel reduction work around Chester this year. There are about 80 acres left on a project in the area. There are also fuel breaks on Warner Road and Juniper Lake Road that tie in with a CAL FIRE project. There is about 400 acres left of a shaded fuel break from Hahn Meadow to the east side of Lake Almanor. The Cutler Meadows shaded fuel break has about 120 acres left and will resume in the spring. Butt Lake has 45 acres treated as part of the West Shore project.

Richard Stockton said that the fire issue isn’t just affecting home owners’ insurance. Operators have also been non-renewed. Hannah Hepner added that the Fire Safe Council’s liability insurance was non-renewed.

- **Tribal Representatives:** Trina Cunningham reported that she’s been working on water rights and water issues through the IRWM, advocating urban investment in headwater communities. She said that it is important when discussing forest health for ecosystem benefit that we use language that is synonymous with increasing forest “hydrograph” rather than discussing increased yields for downstream users. She has been highlighting Plumas County organizations as a model for collaboration at the state level.
- **UC Cooperative Extension:** not present
- **Feather River Stewardship Coalition:** Hannah Hepner said she submitted an application to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for Phase II of the Lakes Basin project. She said there will be a FRSC meeting on December 5th.
- **Plumas Underburn Cooperative:** Matt West said the burn ban has lifted and that an underburn is being planned for Old Highway. The community is currently burning piles but will need permits before the underburn.
- **Firewise Communities:**
Gold Mountain – Kathy Kogge said that the Firewise committee held a second evacuation drill with the intent of conditioning people to react instead of stop and think. Their next meeting will focus on what to do when there is no power. Chief Delacour added that power outages are going to be the new normal. One of the big issues is going to be having enough fuel to evacuate. When the power is out

everywhere there is no fuel available regionally. Sue McCourt said that Feather Publishing has a list of locations with generators.

Hamilton Branch – Bill Davies said that they are in the process of educating absentee landowners. All East Shore landowners have been mailed paperwork.

- **Tree Mortality:** No update

2. Status of Current Grants –

Senior/Disabled Defensible Space: Mike McCourt said that applications continue to trickle in.

Chipping Program: Gary Parque reported that the program is done for the year, but that there were fantastic results. He said that communication is improving. It continues to be a challenge to get to communities like La Porte.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction Schedule – Matt West said that the Bucks Lake project is complete. Wolf/Grizzly is complete for all but two units. Both of those grants are closing out. The Little Grass Valley project is in progress, and the Butterfly project is moving quickly. Corridor/Elizabethtown/Genesee won't start until Imperial is snowed out of Little Grass Valley. The Franks Valley prospectus is complete and will go out for bid early next year.

Hannah Hepner said that there is increasing uncertainty in the HFR project schedule as we head into winter.

3. Status of Grant Budgets – there were no questions about the budget sheet.

4. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities – The Fire Safe Council is waiting to hear from the Forest Service about the status of several Stevens proposals. A proposal was submitted to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy in October. Ms. Hepner is working on a proposal to CAL FIRE for funding to support the Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance program.

5. Other Updates & Upcoming Events

November 23rd – Portola Burn Wise Workshop, 2-4pm at the Veteran's Hall

December 5th – Feather River Stewardship Coalition Meeting, 3-5pm at the PNF Supervisors Office

Adjourn - Next meeting December 12th, 2019