

# Plumas County Fire Safe Council



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 10, 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 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 – No changes
3. Approval of November Meeting Minutes –approved via survey monkey.
4. Presentation of Certificate of Recognition Program - Mr. Reynolds presented certificates to the first four program nominees:
  - Steven Sandford
  - Chuck Bowman
  - Tiana Bradley
  - Mike & Sally Yost
5. Public Comment – No public comment
6. Board Comment – No board comment

## **New Business**

### **1. Quincy Firewise non-profit status discussion**

Hannah Hepner shared that Quincy is establishing a Firewise community and considering pursuing 501(c)(3) status to receive tax deductible donations. Plumas Corporation, the fiscal agent for the Fire Safe Council, can act as a pass through entity. This arrangement would only be for donations, not grants. All expenditures would be subject to 10% in overhead. The service would be available to all Plumas Firewise communities.

Jim Wilcox, Plumas Corporation Executive Director, added that it is something Plumas Corporation can do, it has a history in incubating groups so they may move forward with service efforts.

Firewise members described that some communities utilize an HOA or CSD to receive and utilize funds. However, more of the newer Firewise communities don't have a central financial entity to leverage. Many Firewise efforts have been paid for out of the pockets of volunteers.

Support was expressed by several individuals. Concerns were expressed over decision making authority for expenditures and how donations would be split among Firewise communities. It was mentioned that Nevada County Firewise has an existing program that can be used as a model.

The Board requested a resolution for a vote. Mr. Reynolds requested volunteers for a committee to address program mechanisms and to develop a resolution and MOU.

- Committee consists of: Hannah Hepner
- Dan Martynn
- Mike Flanigan nominates Richard Stockton, State Farm Insurance
- Bethany Rouse

The committee will convene after the holidays.

### **2. North Complex Success Stories - no comment**

### **3. Report from the nominating committee**

Ms. Kogge reported that there are six board members with terms expiring. Trina Cunningham, Mike Callaghan, Dan Martynn, and Don Gasser will all be continuing. Julie Ruiz is ending her tenure due to the time commitment. There are two open spaces, if anyone is interested in joining the Board.

Mr. Reynolds added that the treasurer, chair and vice chair will be appointed at the January meeting. If anyone would like to jump in and take any of those three positions, let the nominating committee know.

Mike Callaghan commented that it is not just the number of directors that is important, but that the groups represented are important to the Council's mission. Mr. Callaghan expressed concern that there is currently no board member from the USFS or CAL FIRE. He offered to outreach to those two organizations.

## Old Business

### Updates

#### 1. Standing Reports and Discussion

- **CAL FIRE** – Not present
- **Feather River Resource Conservation District (RCD)** - Michael Hall shared that the RCD Has updated a SNC agreement that will help to support the PUC coordinator at 25% time for a year. The hope is that this agreement will initiate larger scale underburns instead of just individual landowners. The RCD just completed a Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP) CEQZ equivalent through CAL-FIRE which was a smooth process.
- **Feather River Stewardship Coalition** - Ms. Hepner announced that the North Complex tour has been postponed due to COVID.
- **Firewise Communities** - Ms. McCourt said that all 22 communities have renewed. For 2020, Plumas Community invested \$2.2 million in fire protection. \$7 million total have been invested in fire protection since 2010, which speaks to the efforts undertaken this past fire season. Ms. McCourt and Bethany Rouse have been working with the Lake Almanor Peninsula Firewise community to become a recognized community.  
Quincy -Mr. Flanigan said that Quincy had a meeting recently finalizing action items. He thanked Sue McCourt for her help in that process.  
LACC - Barbara McAurthur shared that property owners increased their reporting of lot cleanup by 50% over last year. She expressed excitement about the rest of the Peninsula becoming Firewise recognized.  
Taylorsville – Sally Yost said there is excitement to be moving a project forward with assistance from Sue, the Fire Safe Council, and NRCS.
- **Industry – Timber** - Not present
- **Industry – Insurance** - Mr. Flanigan reported that the Insurance Commissioner’s moratorium reinstates policies back to August 18<sup>th</sup>, but the premium isn’t the same - at least 3 to 5 times more. The market of last resort, the FAIR plan, had a 15% growth increase. Mr. Flanigan feels confident about resources in his business to reach out to the insurance industry. The insurance industry is undereducated on Firewise and what small counties are doing.  
Ms. Hepner added that there are still attempts to non-renew but policy holders have the ability to contact the state Commissioner’s office to have an investigation of non-renewals. The moratorium is not having the effects that intended to, there is still a need for more advocacy in this area.
- **Industry – Utilities** – Not present
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)** - Dan Martynn will be retiring next month. There has been an increase in fuel reduction work due the recent fires.
- **Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District** - Julie Ruiz reminded the group that open residential burning is shut down for the Quincy area until March 16<sup>th</sup> to reduce smoke in the air during the winter months. There have been high levels of particulates with wood stoves. FRC intends to burn on campus this weekend. The large green waste pile in Chester is planned to light on Monday.
- **Plumas County Fire Chiefs Association** - Not present

- **Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES)** - Ms. McCourt shared that Chief Pini with Lake Almanor Peninsula Fire is retiring and has been replaced with Andy Courtwright. The Tahoe Network of Fire Adapted Communities is hosting a webinar on home hardening/retrofitting for professionals and educators on Dec. 15th. Ms. McCourt announced her retirement Feb. 1st.
- **Plumas County Planning Department** - Tracey Ferguson said the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) has been sent to Cal OES and FEMA. Cal OES comments were minimal and complimentary. There are a few opportunities for improvement. Awaiting FEMA comments. Once the comments are integrated it will be submitted to the Plumas County Board of Supervisors for adoption.= The California Board of Forestry is moving forward based on SB 901 and will need to amend fire safe regulations. This affects the State Responsibility Area (SRA) and the high severity fire zones within the Local Responsibility area (LRA). There are some areas in Plumas County that are LRA. There is a draft on [BoF website](#). Regulations will have a significant effect on rural counties. Final proposal will go to BoF meeting in January and Feb/March will be public comment period. Ms. Ferguson will bring information to PCFSC at that time.
- **Plumas Underburn Cooperative** - Matt West shared that the TREX event was a huge success, although there was not a big underburn. The event did burn piles and completed a lot of training. Partnerships were developed with Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve (BCCER) who conducted an underburn this week and 3 Plumas County folks participated. BCCER will be coming up to burn with us. PUC is hoping to assist with a burn at FRC tomorrow. Trina Cunningham is planning to burn her parents' property in Genesee.

Ms. Cunningham said that the area is small but is a hazard identified by the Homeowners Association.

Fire doesn't carry well out there, but we will burn piles if we need to.

Mr. West added that there will be another TREX event in Spring.

Mr. Gasser asked if COVID protocols have been developed for burning events.

Mr. West responded that TREX had strict protocols, but that the upcoming burns are not being planned through PUC.

- **Tree Mortality Update** - Not present
- **Tribal Representative** - Ms. Cunningham continues collaborations. There are many different tribal communities. Working with tribes means working with tribal entities and individual families - this can be quite a big undertaking. Meanwhile tribal knowledge is being lost.
- **UC Cooperative Extension** - Not present
- **USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction** - Not present

## 2. Status of Current Grants

- **Senior/Disabled Defensible Space** - Mike McCourt hasn't been in the office for a month. There will be applications waiting when the program resumes next year.
- **Chipping Program** - Gary Parque thanked the community volunteers for their assistance with outreach. The program has been completed for 2020. There was a great turn-out. Incoming applications will be contacted in the spring.
- **Hazardous Fuel Reduction** - Mr. West updated that all public land project areas in lower elevations is just about complete, except one unit on the backside of Mt. Hough in the Empire project. Not much work being done in the snowy season for high elevations.

Ms. Hepner said that the American Valley project is waiting from the Decision Memo from the Forest Service. It is possible that the project will be implemented this winter. Mohawk valley layout is on-going. No maps have been received from the forester for that project.

Mr. Gasser asked how it's looking to contract foresters for the three outstanding projects.

Ms. Hepner responded that a RFP for a Forester for the Portola/Chester/Quincy project will go out within the next month. Right now there are nearly 1,500 acres across the three communities of. There may not be a local Forester willing to take on a project of that size. However, the Mohawk Valley project is contracted through an entity out of Auburn. They may be interested in expanding their relationship with the Fire Safe Council. The Greenhorn project is still awaiting an executed grant agreement before moving forward.

3. Status of Grant Budgets - Mr. Gasser reported that one project ending at the end of the month. Most of the rest are ending in 2021. There is some concern , as the state has no budget and there is no funding through CAL-FIRE.

4. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities - Ms. Hepner reiterated that that the RCD has funds to support PUC. While there are currently limited funding opportunities, it is likely that there will be more funding available in the future. This gives the Council opportunities to put together desirable proposals in the meantime.

5. Other Updates & Upcoming Events - No comments

Adjourn - Next meeting January 14th, 2021