

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 10th 2022 - 9:00 am.
Combination of in-person and zoom meeting

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"/> Chair , John Reynolds Firewise Community (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vice Chair , Kathy Kogge Firewise Community (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secretary/Treasurer Mike Flanigan, Insurance (23)	<input type="checkbox"/> Michael Hall, FRRCD (23)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sally McGowan, Firewise Community (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joe Smailes, Firewise Community (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chuck Bowman, Firewise Community (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ryan Tompkins, UCCE (23)
<input type="checkbox"/> Tracey Ferguson, Plumas County Planning (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trina Cunningham, Maidu Summit Consort. (22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Callaghan, Firewise Community (22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dan Martynn, Retired (22)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lindsay Wood Plumas Audubon Society (22)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ryan Bauer USFS PNF (22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don Gasser RPF (22)	

1. Welcome & Introductions – John Reynolds
2. Review Agenda – No changes
3. Approve January Meeting Minutes – **m – Trina Cunningham, s- Kathy Kogge**
4. Presentation of Certificates of Recognition to:
 - Andrea Irving
5. Public Comment - None
6. Board Comment: Don Gasser reminded the group that the PCFSC Board will meet at the Fire Safe Council offices on February 24th @ 9:00 am to discuss the Strategic Plan.

Ron Heinbockle asked what can be done with extra green waste material. Chief Heinbockle encouraged the PCFSC Board to pursue PG&E to fund a co-generation plant and focus on biomass disposal. This group should take advantage of the criminal charges filed against PG&E for the start of the Dixie Fire and turn those funds into sustainable resources.

Lindsay Wood added that there may a point where we run out of “green waste” and co-generation plants may contribute to pollution.

Jason Moghaddas suggested that Gary Darling give a presentation for biomass use. The main issue is finding a location.

Mr. Darling answered that H2O Consulting has been in conversation with PG&E and the USFS and is looking for an opportunity to start a gasification project in Plumas County. He added that he works with a company that looks for opportunities to generate sustainable energy and produces gasification equipment as a solution to biomass accumulation on the landscape.

Mr. Gasser added that Collins Pine and SPI are producing biomass energy and both are opportunities to expand into gasification. This council doesn't need to start from scratch.

New Business

1. Spatial Informatics Group - Jason Moghaddas presented "Evaluating Treatment, Longevity and Maintenance Needs for Fuel Reduction Treatments Implemented in the WUI of Plumas County" that was developed for the California Board of Forestry (BOF) and Fire Protection Effectiveness Monitoring Committee.

Project Background: The BOF Effectiveness Monitoring Committee conducts monitoring to assess whether management practices are achieving the various resource goals and objectives set forth in the California Forest Practice Rules (FPR), and other natural resource protection statutes and laws, codes and regulations. Monitoring is a key component of adaptive management. The focus of this project was initially on treatment of slash for projects conducted under the CA Forest Practice Rules. FPRs require slash <4" diameter to be lopped to less than 30" in depth. This project also includes North Complex and Dixie Fire-Post Fire Evaluations.

Methods:

- Compile treatment locations (online map)
- Site Visits, past photo points, 360 ground photos, UAV imagery
- Landowner discussions
- North Complex and Dixie Fire Properties-Post Fire Severity Assessment

Key Findings: In terms of logging slash and hazard reduction, all projects met or exceeded standards described for (14 CCR § 917). This includes projects not completed under a THP (i.e. mastication, hand thinning). All projects met minimum stocking standards (14 CCR § 932.7) after completion. Projects were completed using whole tree harvest, with post treatment slash generally minimized or removed compared with traditional lop and scatter. Within both fires, areas that were treated by FSC generally had a higher percentage of "unchanged" or "low severity" fire than the adjacent areas 500 and 1,000 feet from the treatment. Treatments were used by firefighters to establish hoselays, defend structures, and conduct burnouts (La Porte Road, Genesee Valley). Treated areas required less patrol after burning. Treatments were used by landowners to defend property in Indian Valley.

Recommendations: Talk with firefighters who used FSC treatments during recent fires – what worked, what didn't, what can be improved. Integrate treatment maintenance into annual funding efforts – a lot can be done with hand tools, raking, or underburning. Work to expand existing "clusters" of treatment or

treatment continuity between ownerships. Use follow up treatments to keep masticated fuels to <3" depth; masticated fuels can result in high mortality during wildfire, even with lower flame lengths. Manage residual tree density for resilience to future periods of prolonged drought. Explore more expansive green waste programs, especially for forested lots in town where burning is not allowed.

Mr. Gasser asked what should be done in past project areas. Mr. Moghaddas answered that areas that were thinned in late 90s and early 2000s did not regrow significantly, but did accumulate litter. The recommendation is to help landowners to consistently reduce fuels through maintenance. A commercial thinning operation is not necessary if maintenance is consistent.

Mr. Moghaddas added that UAV monitoring is helpful in gathering forest health data.

Kyle Felker encouraged the group to learn about the drone technology SIG uses. This technology can be used to illustrate the effectiveness of fuels treatments.

Joe Smiles commented on the effectiveness of QLG treatments in the Seneca area during the 2008 Rich Fire. These same treatment areas were not effective in the 2012 Chipps Fire and the 2021 Dixie Fire. Maintenance is key and should be included in new projects and grant applications.

Mr. Moghaddas added that in 1999, an EIS was written for all QLG projects and may be useable for maintenance on QLG projects. Mr. Mogahaddas asked Johnathan Pangburn if CCI funding can be used for treatment maintenance. Mr. Pangburn answered that the priority is not to fund maintenance. Some of these projects are old enough that they could be considered a new treatment. Including language in grant applications for a "multi-phase project" is more effective.

3. Approve CWPP Project List - Tabled to March meeting

4. Annual Report – Hannah Hepner walked through the content included in the 2021 Annual Report.

Mike Callahan added that this report should be presented at the BOS meeting and distributed to all PCFSC partners

Ms. Cunningham agreed that presenting this report to the BOS in person would highlight that resources for fire protection are available.

5. Resolution 2022-01 – Almanor Peninsula Wildfire Protection Project - approved

6. Resolution 2022-02 - CAL FIRE Fire Prevention, Wildfire Mitigation Assistance Programing - approved

Old Business

PCFSC Goals have been postponed to the March 10th meeting.

Updates

1. Standing Reports and Discussion

- Green Waste Working Group: [Biomass Report](#)

Mr. Callahan asked that this report be distributed to the PCFSC Board of Directors or posted on the website. PG&E can help to subsidize co-generation plants through the use of green waste.

Gerd Ebeling added that biomass can be dealt with through burning in a way that reduces the amount of smoke released into the atmosphere. Biochar can be used as a soil amendment and there are ways to dispose of this material locally.

- CAL FIRE: Alan Thornhill updated the group that CAL FIRE is hiring for Defensible Space Inspectors. CAL FIRE has made 25 offers out of 75 applicants. Two applicants have accepted the position.

Sue McCourt asked what areas the defensible space inspectors will be working in. Captain Thornhill answered that they will serve the Lassen, Modoc and Plumas areas for 9 months out of the year for the next 4 years.

Chief Pangburn has forwarded information regarding CCI funding for biomass use. There are also IBank funding opportunities through the state of California for all entities to expand or create businesses. There are multiple sources for funding at the state and federal government levels. Air-curtain burners, incinerators or biochar kilns are portable and can reduce air quality concerns. Biochar kilns could be of use to the Green Waste Group. CAL FIRE is looking to work more closely with Plumas County and aims to be more involved with local fuel reduction projects.

- Feather River Resource Conservation District (RCD): Julia Sidman reported that EForT is partnering with PCFSC, the Sierra Institute, UCCE, MSC and others to offer cost-free treatments to landowners with private non-industrial fire damaged lands. FRRCD is actively searching for landowners for this project.
- Feather River Stewardship Coalition: Ms. Hepner shared that most of the FSC's federal partners were unable to attend this meeting because a PNF partner meeting was scheduled for this same date and time.
- Firewise Communities: Ms. Rouse shared that the next Firewise Leads meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 16th at 6:00 pm. We will be discussing the Firewise Strategic Plan and the Firewise Annual meeting.

Mr. Smailes updated the group that Seneca FW has been working on a fuels action plan. Seneca is working with Lake Almanor FW and will be submitting an action plan to USFS and CAL FIRE. If anyone is interested in the Fire Line Retention Initiative you are encouraged to check on the lines near your home/community.

- Industry – Timber: Not present
- Industry – Insurance: Mike Flanigan reported that those seeking insurance are still looking for affordability and availability. Firewise Community value is increasing and 5 companies now offer discounts. The insurance commissioner issued 2 years of coverage for people who have lost homes. The FW initiative is working, but it will take a while to see these effects.
- Industry – Utilities: Not present
- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS): Not present
- Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District: Not present
- Plumas Audubon Society: Not present
- Plumas County Fire Chiefs Association: Chief Heinbockle added that Plumas Fire Chiefs will be meeting this spring. All 17 fire departments in Plumas County have been involved in fire suppression and support for the North Complex, Beckwourth and Dixie Fires. Plumas Fire Chief's objective is to bring in more County support for local FDs.
- Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES): Not present
- Plumas County Planning Department: Not present
- Plumas Underburn Cooperative: Matt West shared that low precipitation this winter has brought lots of burning opportunities. 2-3 acres have been burned in Buffalo Ranch and one burn (3.8 acres) is planned for today on Chandler Road. Thanks to Bill Jacks and Greg Kinne for organizing PUC outreach and site preparation. There is a group in Genesee Woods that is interested in underburning and has requested a PUC member to go out and meet with landowners. TREX is scheduled for the last weekend in March and the first weekend in April. Registration is open this Friday and closes on March 4. Training is inclusive for both private and public lands.
- Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship: Not present
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy :Kirsty Hoffman reported that SNC received 4 Plumas County applications for the Wildfire Recovery and Forest Health grant program and will know more on the status of these applications in April. The Watershed Improvement Summit is focused on wildfire recovery strategies and invites community leaders to attend on Wednesday March 2nd from 1-4 pm. There will be great presenters and time for public comment. Please register on the SNC website to receive a zoom link. The SNC Board will meet on March 3rd from 9am - 12. The Sierra Spotlight newsletter is available and you can sign up on the website.

- Tree Mortality Update: None

- Tribal Representatives: Ms. Cunningham shared that MSC is hosting the first annual Big Time Logging Show Jamboree highlighting indigenous people's involvement in logging over time. Date announcement to come. Working with the Long Term Dixie Fire Recovery Group with efforts focused on rebuilding Greenville. MSC is part of the Water Framework Network, a state-wide group bringing forward some of the concerns this community has regarding fire and water. The emphasis is on healthy fire and healthy water and how the two are not separate. There is a disconnect between urban water use and rural water sources. The Upper Feather River Watershed provides water to 27 million water users in California and a stronger urban investment in rural water systems is imperative. MSC would appreciate support in some of these conversations. MSC is in the process of developing a recovery team of technical experts and own 2,800 acres of property in the Lake Almanor Basin. MSC is trying to figure out what to do with 600-1,100 of burned acreage in terms of portable milling and biomass utilization. Supervisor Gallagher in Lassen County said that the co-generation plant in Westwood has been purchased and is in the permitting process. There may be an opportunity to use the rail system to export biomass to Loyalton and Westwood. MSC is also looking to hire one part-time person through the EFoRT group to help build capacity.

- UC Cooperative Extension: Ryan Tompkins shared that UCCE has published a study on wildfire resilience and is receiving positive support. This paper focuses on how resilience is quantified in dry, mixed-conifer systems primarily in PNF. UCCE is hoping to do some summer outreach to public and private foresters as well as industry regarding this study's results. UCCE is in conversation with USFS and the timber industry to bring land management skills to some of the larger landowners in Plumas County. EFoRT team has secured \$10 million in funding to help private, non-industrial landowners restore their property post-fire. UCCE is working with partners to develop ideas for post-fire relief in communities.

- USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction: Chris Voelker shared that pile burning has come to a halt due to the warm and dry weather trend. This winter has been dry and opened the window for underburning. Mt. Hough RD is looking to underburn at Spanish Ranch and Beckwourth RD has plans to burn Big Hill and Jackson. USFS plans to start burning sometime in March with the focus on the WUI.

2. Status of Current Grants

- Senior Disabled Defensible Space – Mike McCourt: None
- Chipping Program – Gary Parque: None
- HFR Project Schedule – Mr. West shared that crews will return in mid-March and will start working in the Lakes Basin Area. Ms. Hepner added that both Greenhorn and Mohawk Valley have decision documents awaiting approval. The Plumas Disadvantaged Communities and Eastern Plumas projects are both being laid out by the forester.

3. Status of Grant Budgets – Mr. Reynolds reported that \$30,000 has been spent from Cost Center 2002, Plumas Corporation's coordination account. This is \$10,000 over budget, but more coordination funds are being budgeted. PCFSC has \$7.6 million in active grants right now and \$1.5 million from the CCI grant has been modified for post-fire restoration.

4. Status of Potential Projects & Grant Opportunities – Ms. Hepner reported submitting two proposals, one \$152,000 request to SNC for planning on 750 acres of the Lake Almanor Peninsula, and one \$3.8 million request to CAL FIRE Fire Prevention. The CAL FIRE application includes 3.5 years for the Chipping Program, 3.5 years for the Senior and Disabled Defensible Space Program, equipment and a full-time coordinator for PUC, 1 year of a 5 person hand crew for the FRRCD, and seed funds for a home hardening incentive program. PG&E announced they are accepting applications for their Vegetation Management program in the range of 15-50k. Beth Rouse will be looking into what is appropriate for the application.

Gary Parque asked if PCFSC had any ideas for show-casing homes with exceptional home hardening and defensible space. Ms. Hepner answered that the home hardening incentive program will be available across Plumas County.

5. Other Updates & Upcoming Events

Adjourn - Next meeting March 10th @ 9am.