

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Board of Directors

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| Chair , Don Gasser, Citizen (18) | Julie Ruiz, NSAQMD (18) |
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| Secretary/Treasurer , Dan Martynn, NRCS (18) | John Reynolds, Firewise Community (19) |
| Chuck Bowman, Firewise Community (19) | Jan Fletcher, Plumas Association of Realtors (19) |
| Jim Hamblin, PC Fire Chiefs Assoc. (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, February 8th, 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 **m – Martynn, s – Hamblin**
3. Approve Meeting Minutes – **m – Martynn, s – Reynolds**
4. Public Comment – none

New Business –

1. Richard Stockton, 30 years with State Farm Insurance, fielded questions from the Council. In summary: Fire protection (fire department, hydrants, etc.) is required for State Farm insurance eligibility. Eligibility and premiums are separate issues. Third parties use computer modeling to determine eligible areas based on various factors including fire department ISO rating and tree density. Each insurance agency uses a different provider for this information. Therefore, at the local level, it is not known exactly which factors tip the balance for particular areas. Ryan Bauer noted that an insurance policy won't be written if there is an uncontrolled wildfire in the area. He asked if large Forest Service projects adjacent to communities had the potential to play a role in insurance availability. Mr. Stockton said that it could be accounted for in the modelling, but that the quality of the fire department is very influential. State Farm has some grandfathered properties around Bucks Lake. State Farm uses a vendor to evaluate homes in the WUI for non-renewal issues. So far they have not cancelled anyone for these reasons. There is no State Farm discount for mitigation measures. Insurance companies generally don't have an interest in financially supporting mitigation, but they have [foamed](#) neighborhoods during fire events. Don

Gasser noted that State Farm in Napa had purchased a chipper.

Recent fires will not necessarily cause premiums to increase, but more insurance companies will likely pull out of California.

John Sheehan suggested expansion of the [FAIR plan](#). Mr. Stockton explained that the FAIR plan is funded by private insurance companies. It doesn't offer much coverage – essentially just enough for home loan approval.

To ensure that a property is adequately insured, it is the responsibility of the homeowner to talk to a contractor about the replacement cost for the home. Contractors, however, will not generally know about cleanup costs – which come out of the replacement value. Supply and demand for contractors and materials can also cause costs to skyrocket after large events. However, it is not possible to over-insure a home for potential disaster.

Barbara MacArthur asked if people in Napa are choosing not to rebuild. Mr. Stockton said that you can only get the full value of a policy if you actually rebuild, though it doesn't have to be in the same location.

2. Leslie Wall introduced Plumas Rural Service's Community Connections program. It has been operational in Plumas County for 10 years. The program promotes people as our communities' greatest asset – allowing people to offer their skills in return for the services of others. There are over 400 members in Plumas County. In 2018 the program's goal is 20,000 hours of service exchanges. The program is influenced by the demographic of Plumas County and, as a result, services often cater to the needs of seniors. For \$100/year PCFSC could be a program sponsor – allowing the organization to make as many requests as needed.

Mr. Gasser asked if a team could be put together to perform clearing around homes. Leslie Wall said that yes, "SWAT teams" can be organized to tackle projects of that nature. Community Connections has a \$1m liability policy. However, she noted that some things are best left to professionals and that some activities (chainsaw use, etc.) would be excluded.

Mike McCourt suggested that cleanup of fire-hazard "treasures" may be a better option for Community Connections volunteers, since that service is not covered by the Senior/Disabled Defensible Space program. Additionally, Senior/Disabled D-Space participants who are members of Community Connections could volunteer time for the service rather than paying the cost share.

Old Business

1. Addition of 2018 annual goal of "assisting local fire departments in meeting their mission and goals" – **m – Gasser, s – Reynolds**, passed.

Mike Callaghan asked how the Council anticipates supporting this goal. Mr. Gasser said that he will meet with the Fire Chiefs in the future to discuss where collaborative efforts might take place. Gary Parque pointed out that funds come out of the departments' budgets when we make requests of them. Sue McCourt suggested that the PCFSC be on the next Fire Chief's Association meeting agenda and to come prepared with ideas. She said it is not clear to the departments how the Council can be of assistance.

2. Community Fuel Treatment Maintenance Workshop Committee – Michael De Lasaux summarized that the committee formed in December to organize an educational workshop focused initially on the La Porte Rd community. A strategy is still in progress. Indian Falls may be the next focus area.

Updates

1. Status of Current Grants –

Senior/Disabled Defensible Space: Mike McCourt said he will start calling clients in 5-6 weeks. There is \$55,000 in grant funds to cover implementation this year. Mr. Gasser asked if we have means for advertising to new participants. Mr. McCourt said there is not much room in the budget to accept new clients. Last year the program had a waiting list and was only able to treat those on the list because unexpected funding became available late in the season. Dan Martynn asked what percent of clients are maintenance compared to new clients. Last year there were 50 maintenance properties and 25 new clients. Ryan Bauer interjected that we may be able to use excess Stevens funds from the Dixie Valley project to supplement the Senior/Disabled program this year.

Chipping Program: Gary Parque said that he has been receiving calls about the program this year. Mr. Gasser asked if we can contract with a variety of operators this year. Gary said that we have had local bids but that many operators aren't interested in the program. Mike Callaghan suggested that we get the RFP issued as soon as possible – even before we have landowner applications. John Reynolds added that the program needs target dates for piles. He said that Grizzly Ranch would ideally like chipping in late July and late October. The Board requested a list of participating communities be available for the next meeting.

Hannah Hepner reintroduction the HFR Project Schedule document. It will be used to summarize activities of the Council's HFR projects.

2. Status of Grant Budgets – Dan Martynn

Cost center 259 (East Shore Lake Almanor, Barry Creek, East Quincy) has closed.

Cost center 274 (Coordination) has nearly been fully expended. Additional coordination funds will come from RAC funds – the agreement is in progress.

3&4. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities – Hannah Hepner

USFS Stevens funds – submitted April 14

C Road - 90 acres, \$180,570 - now part of existing Mohawk Vista Stevens project

Grizzly Ranch – 130 acres, \$270,275 – landowner is unable to pay the cost share

American Valley Phase II – 100 acres, \$285,970

Genesee Woods/Red Clover – 100 acres, \$178,970 (for 2019) – included in CAL FIRE CCI proposal

SNC Prop 1 – submitted November 1st – anticipate award decision in June

Little Grass Valley Reservoir Watershed Protection Project – 480 acres, \$500,000

Butterfly Twain Fuels and Forest Health Project – 455 acres, \$500,000

CAL FIRE California Climate Investments Forest Health grants – concept proposals due February 21st

\$200 million available, with no match requirement. Grantor is prioritizing large collaborative projects that have completed planning documents. The Feather River Stewardship Coalition has identified a project that includes ~7,000 acres of various treatments on both public and private lands.

NFPA Wildfire Community Preparedness Day grants – due March 2nd

\$500 grants available for community projects taking place on May 5th.

Information at: <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Campaigns/National-Wildfire-Community-Preparedness-Day>

Other potential projects: Landowners at LACC's northern boundary are interested in a HFR project. LACC member Carlos Espana asked if the cost share can be waived. Mike DeLasaux voiced concerns about potential problems for the Council if we take a different approach to the cost-share. The topic will be revisited at a future meeting.

4. Standing Reports and Discussion

- **Plumas County Tree Mortality Task Force (TMTF):** State map has been updated.
- **Feather River Stewardship Coalition (FRSC):** Held a meeting last week. Developed CCI proposal and discussed activities for the coming year.
- **Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES):** No update.
- **CAL FIRE:** Quincy's new Captain, Mark Hillskotter, was introduced to the group. He works Tues/Wed/Thurs and spends one of those days in Susanville. He is in the process of hiring defensible space inspectors and would like to promote the position locally. There are currently two hires who will start in April.
- **USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction:** Ryan Bauer – Plumas National Forest has been directed to combine with neighboring forests for their program of work. In 2018 this will be beneficial for PNF because the other forests don't have the kind of "shelf stock" NEPA projects that PNF does.
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS):** Dan Martynn - Five projects have been approved this year for the EQIP program. They total 40 acres across Meadow Valley, Clarks Creek area, and Greenville. Additional projects in Sierra Valley are anticipated in the next funding cycle.
- **Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District:** Julie Ruiz – the weather has not been cooperative for open burning. December only had 8 days of open burning. There will be no burning in American Valley until March 16th.
- **Firewise Communities:**
 - Grizzly Ranch** – No update
 - Graeagle** – Chuck Bowman – Whitehawk is working with Danielle Bradfield to update the development's assessment. They are also in the initial phase of a thinning project.
 - Sloat/Cromberg/Camp Layman** – No update
 - Gold Mountain** – Judy Clot, Gold Mountain CSD's Fire Coordinator Manager, was introduced.
 - LACC** – Working with adjacent large landowners about creating a fuel break. Their annual meeting will include an insurance discussion and insights from a Santa Rosa fire chief.
 - Lake Almanor West** – Not present
 - Plumas Eureka** – No update
 - Gallepii** – Assessment scheduled for this week
 - Portola**- Planning a March assessment
 - Chester**- Planning a March assessment
 - Feather River College** – Also has a March assessment. Will be the second college in the nation to receive Firewise recognition. Bridget Tracy is leading the effort with the environmental studies department.

The Pines – Has conducted an assessment, has a Firewise day scheduled for June.

Chilcoot/Vinton – In initial planning phase.

- **Industry Representatives** – Not present
- **Tribal Representatives** – Not present

6. Other Updates & Upcoming Events:

Adjourned – The next meeting, March 8th, 2018, will bring together land managers to identify cross-boundary priority areas for project development.