

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Board of Directors

Chair, Don Gasser, Citizen (20)
Vice Chair, John Reynolds, Firewise Community (19)
Secretary/Treasurer, Julie Ruiz, NSAQMD (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, April 11th, 2019 - 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
3. Approve March Meeting Minutes – **m – Hamblin, s - Reynolds**
4. Public Comment –

Emily Bryant suggested formation of a smoke campaign collaboration to prepare the public for smoke impacts and provide information about the benefits of prescribed/managed fire. Further discussion will take place at a future meeting.

Rob Gimble commented that he would like to see home consultations provided through fire districts and supported with grant funds. He said that it provides landowners with an idea of how to improve fire safety around their homes and is often more welcome than CAL FIRE's defensible space inspections.

Randy Wilson described the function of the Plumas County Coordinating Council and said that there are vacancies on the Board. He suggested that a Fire Safe Council member could be appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. A nomination will be considered at the next Fire Safe Council meeting.

New Business

1. Tree Mortality Treatment Priority Map – Danny Cluck informed the group that there was continued tree mortality in 2018, but that after the 2017 winter mortality is declining. The state Tree Mortality Task Force has transitioned to the Forest Management Task Force. There is a new [webmap](#) that highlights areas throughout the state that are susceptible to mortality. The map incorporates data that

includes areas that experienced high levels of mortality in past droughts, areas of high stand density, and other parameters. The model was developed for Lassen National Forest and has been expanded to all of California. The intent is to show areas where there is potential to take preventative action. It excludes wilderness areas, Protected Activity Centers, and areas with slopes greater than 30% in order to highlight the areas that have few barriers to getting things done. The map can bring in other layers such as CAL FIRE's high hazard areas and WUI maps. It is being made available to cooperators for use as a landscape planning tool.

2. Chip Procurement for Biomass Boiler – Camille Swezy said that the Sierra Institute is able to accept wood chips for use at the Quincy annex biomass facility. The boiler system is working well; managing the fuel piles and keeping them dry is the largest challenge. Ideally the material for this facility will come from fuel reduction projects. In the coming year chips from the Fire Safe Council's chipping program can be directed to Dave Sims in Quincy. The chipping program material will need to be mixed with cleaner chips, which can be provided by the chip processing equipment in Crescent Mills.
3. Post Fire Vegetation Monitoring – Jason Moghaddas explained that his company, Spatial Informatics Group (SIG), uses public dollars to create information systems that are available to the public for free. For example the [CPUC FIREMAP](#) was built for the Public Utilities Commission. SIG ran fire threat models for the whole state under severe wind conditions and determined the highest fire threat areas in the state. The outcomes were then ground trothed by local review. The [Post Fire Vegetation Recovery System map](#) was developed to address the fact that the traditional method of GPSing vegetation types is too slow. The map integrates google earth imagery and drone flights and allows users to pan back and forth across the map to see vegetation change. It can be access at no-cost online. Users can upload their own polygons and run land cover statistics.

Old Business

1. Mapping Update – Jason Moghaddas said that SIG is additionally working on Northern Sierra project mapping. Jim Crane is integrating all of the data collected from local implementation organizations. It is expected that the map will be completed in May, go through a review process, and be available to the public in July. At that time Plumas Corporation will take over ongoing maintenance of the data. There is a need for non-federal agencies to agree to a standard structure for data reporting. Mr. Moghaddas suggested formation of a GIS collaborative to determine a long-term plan for what information is needed, who is going to use it, and how to format it. He added that there are a lot of information systems available and it would be good to have a training to understand what is available, since it represents millions of dollars of public investment. Lori Simpson expressed concern that the map will not be available to the county Board of Supervisors before the start of the fire season.

2. Rule 318 Update – Don Gasser explained that Rule 318 shuts down burning in the American and Thompson Valleys between November 15 – March 15 each year. A meeting was held with Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District representatives. Mr. Gasser said that the rule is not going to change but that there is discussion going on at the state level to facilitate burning. Julie Ruiz followed to say that the rule targets residential burning but that a permit can be issued to allow for agricultural forest management burning during that period.

3. Project Manager Update – Hannah Hepner introduced Matt West the new public lands project manager.
4. Plumas Underburn Cooperative Report – PUC meets following the Fire Safe Council meetings. The Dutch oven cook-off was a successful event that raised \$900.
5. CWPP Revision Update – Mike Callaghan is working on the third draft of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan update. There are no funds supporting this activity. Mr. Callaghan has a list of individuals from whom he plans to solicit input. He requested participation from the group in a CWPP review meeting after the Fire Safe Council meeting.

Update

1. Standing Reports and Discussion

- **Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES):** Sue McCourt said that there will be a WUI operational exercise on the Lake Almanor Peninsula, May 29th. May is Wildfire Awareness month and the Plumas County Board of Supervisors will be making a proclamation at their next meeting. Mrs. McCourt has been working on an evacuation map for Meadow Valley. Additionally she recently held a Firewise coordinators meeting. There are currently 14 recognized Firewise communities and 8 potential communities. Mrs. McCourt reminded people to sign up for CodeRed, the reverse 911 system for Plumas County.
- **CAL FIRE:** Not present. Don Gasser expressed concern about the lack of CAL FIRE involvement since Don Gordon left the unit. Julie Ruiz said that CAL FIRE's burn permits are now available online but can also still be issued by the Forest Service. Karen Lichti said there will not be a CAL FIRE engine in Chester this summer after all because the contractor that was going to be working on the Westwood station backed out.
- **USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction:** Ryan Bauer said that the Forest has submitted most of their contract packages. There were two Graeagle area stewardship timber sales that didn't get any bids; those contracts will be repackaged. The Districts are still pile burning but will transition to underburning when conditions allow. Dave Kinateder said that they've been burning lots of piles on the Mt. Hough District. The Beckwourth District is still too impacted by snow to burn piles. Rob Gimble asked if the piles along Spanish Creek in Meadow Valley are going to be burned this year. Mr. Bauer responded that it's not a priority at the moment and that those piles may get burned at the same time that they do the underburning. Don Gasser asked how many piles remain unburned on the Feather River District. Mr. Bauer said that they have few piles other than what they are currently creating. The District is currently focusing on the Pendola project. Supervisor Simpson asked where the logs from the Camp Fire are going. Mr. Bauer responded that CalTrans is chipping the logs. He said their work hasn't been closely coordinated with the Forest.
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service:** Not present
- **Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District:** Julie Ruiz reported that they had a stove fair in Portola. She gave out information about the stove change-out program and Fire Safe Council resources. There is a substantial waiting list for the county-wide exchange program.
- **Industry Representatives:** Cade Mohler from Sierra Pacific Industries said they will start their three fuel break projects when the areas are accessible. Chips from the projects will likely go to Honey Lake. SPI has been working with CAL FIRE on the Martin Ranch project, which is in the CAL FIRE 45-day report.

- **Tribal Representatives:** Not present
- **Feather River Stewardship Coalition:** The FRSC has an upcoming steering committee meeting. The FRSC recently hosted a tour of the Camp Fire. Ryan Bauer said that there was a national and regional tour of the Camp Fire where there was discussion about the Forest Service role in such a fragmented landscape. The conclusion is that any one landowner can't change the outcome, so the value of coalitions and cooperatives was highlighted. He added that public attendance at collaborative meetings is larger than at Forest Service directed events.
- **Firewise Communities:**
 - Plumas Eureka** – Dennis Lincoln said that they will host a pancake breakfast on Memorial Day and show Wilder than Wild the following day. The community has a small committee that has been putting together an evacuation plan that addresses what they will do before emergency services arrive.
 - Grizzly Ranch** – John Reynolds said there is still snow at Grizzly Ranch. Their committee will meet the first week of May to develop a plan for the year. The first week of August is the homeowners' meeting and an opportunity for outreach.
 - Gold Mountain** – Kathy Kogge said Gold Mountain will also have a pancake breakfast Memorial Day weekend and the Firewise committee will provide outreach on their evacuation plan.
 - Graeagle** – Chuck Bowman reported a successful showing of Wilder than Wild at the Graeagle fire station. Graeagle has had an ongoing program for Home Ignition Zone consultations. They will be training additional people to do the consultations. Valley Ranch will have a fuels assessment on April 25th. There will be a Firewise demo workday in Graeagle on May 4th. Outreach continues for the Mohawk Valley HFR projects, which is waiting on funding.
 - Smith Creek Ranch** – Andrea Irving explained that in a community of 19 property owners that comprises 300 acres it gives landowners a lot of control. She has been encouraging people to take advantage of the Mohawk Valley HFR project. The community will have a work day along the road easement on May 4th.
 - Galeppi Ranch** – Ryan Tompkins pointed out that there are not many Firewise communities in Quincy and challenged the group to get more Firewise activity underway in the area.
 - Sloat/Cromberg/Camp Layman** – Sue McCourt said that for Wildfire Preparedness Day they will have two activities: an evening presentation on emergency preparedness and a Saturday morning defensible space demonstration. She has been working on a newsletter with the CSD.
 - Chester** – Karen Lichti said there is a schedule of monthly informational meetings leading up to the summer. On May 4th they will hold a defensible space workday at two different homes.
 - Portola** – Phil Oels said that they have been doing a little bit of outreach, but that they are waiting on accessibility to get work done. The City Council is making moves to require PRC 4291 for new construction.
 - Taylorville** – Mike Yost said they will be reviewing their assessment report at an upcoming Firewise leadership meeting.
 - Geenhorn Creek** – Mrs. McCourt said that Greenhorn received one of the Wildfire Preparedness Day grants to clear along the roadside.
 - Old Highway** – Mrs. McCourt said that they will be doing their Firewise assessment next week.

Not present/no update: Almanor Pines, Mohawk Vista, Lake Almanor West, LACC

Potential Communities: Paxton Lodge, Feather River College, Chilcoot/Vinton, Genesee Woods, Meadow Valley, Hamilton Branch

- **Tree Mortality Update:** Claude Sanders asked if the Camp Fire has affected what is happening with dead trees in the Sierra. Mr. Cluck said that there are target areas identified for tree removal, but he's not sure about the status of the work. Mr. Mohler said that SPI lands were hard hit in the southern Sierra and that they haven't had a green sale in years.

2. Status of Current Grants –

Senior/Disabled Defensible Space: Mike McCourt said that he has 90 returning clients this year and 25 new clients on a wait list. He plans to get the list of 90 out to bid to determine if there are funds remaining to treat the rest. In late-May he will start conducting site visits.

Chipping Program: Gary Parque said that there are currently about 60 chipping applications received. The chipping schedule was published in the newspaper this week.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction Schedule – There were no questions about the HFR schedule.

3. Status of Grant Budgets – Julie Ruiz said that cost center 278 is fully expended and that chipping program funds will now be coming from 289. She also said to expect the budgets for 279 (Mohawk Vista/C-Road) and 281 (Gold Mountain) to come down in the future since work is getting underway.

4. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities – Hannah Hepner said that CAL FIRE Fire Prevention grant awards are expected to be announced this month.

5. Other Updates & Upcoming Events

May 4th – Wildfire Preparedness Day

May 8th – “Wildfire Preparedness and Your Evacuation Plan” presented by Cromberg Firewise

May 11th – “Could your Home Survive a Wildfire?” presented by Cromberg Firewise

May 14th – “Evacuation and Communications Plans” presented by Chester Firewise

May 29th – Lake Almanor Peninsula WUI drill

Adjourn - Next meeting May 9th, 2019

<https://usfs.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=3a2dab80192741808d635461b05a2216>

<https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/firemap/>

<https://postfirerecovery.com/map>