

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 14th, 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 | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Chair , John Reynolds Firewise Community (21) | Vice Chair , Kathy Kogge Firewise Community (21) | Secretary/Treasurer Don Gasser, RPF (20) | Julie Ruiz NSAQMD (20) |
| Dan Martynn NRCS (20) | Trina Cunningham (20) Watershed Research Center | Mike Callaghan Firewise Community (20) | Chuck Bowman Firewise Community (21) |
| Jim Hamblin Citizen (21) | Ryan Bauer USFS PNF (20) | Brad Graevs Feather River RCD (21) | Richard Stockton State Farm (21) |
| Ryan Tompkins UCCE (21) | Tracey Ferguson Plumas County Planning (21) | Ron Heinbockel Plumas Fire Chiefs (21) | |

1. Welcome & Introductions – John Reynolds
2. Review Agenda – no changes
3. Approval of March Meeting Minutes – approved via online survey
4. Public Comment – none
5. Board Comment – none

New Business

1. Fire Safe Council Operations – Hannah Hepner provided an overview of the structure, staffing, and operations of the Fire Safe Council
2. 2019 Firewise Community Accomplishments – Sue McCourt presented a summary of efforts of each of the 21 Firewise communities in Plumas County.

Graeagle Fire Protection District:

- Community fuel reduction days
- Home Ignition Zone training
- Insurance event and Wilder than Wild screening

West Almanor:

- Fire Department purchased a chipper
- CalTrans clearing along right-of-way
- Wilder than Wild screening

Gold Mountain:

- Evacuation exercise

Lake Almanor Country Club:

- WUI wildfire exercise to test systems of all fire response agencies in tandem with Firewise outreach
- Wilder than Wild screening

Greenhorn:

- Fuel reduction starting around mailboxes

Grizzly Ranch:

- Coordinated outreach with Homeowners Association meeting

Mohawk Vista:

- Fuels treatments completed

Plumas Eureka CSD:

- Outreach and volunteer tracking

Sloat-Cromberg-Camp Layman:

- Defensible Space/Home Ignition Zone information days

Galeppi Ranch:

- Individuals doing home hardening
- “Preparing Your Land for Fire” Plumas Underburn Workshop

Lake Almanor Pines:

- Promoting reflective address signs

Portola:

- Facebook page
- Fuel reduction projects

Chester:

- Wildfire Preparedness Day grant
- Outreach and work day

Smith Creek Ranch:

- Fuel reduction along evacuation route

Johnsville:

- Information on utility district website

Old Highway:

- Fuel reduction and underburn

River Valley Estates:

- Establishing fuel breaks with mower

Feather River College:

- Incorporating into Environmental Studies program
- Fuel reduction and structure hardening on campus

Meadow Valley:

- Sub-committees for “pod” leadership

Hamilton Branch-East Shore:

- Door-to-door and event outreach

Seneca:

- Evacuation planning

\$2.3 million in Firewise investments in 2019 (57,000 hours of fuel reduction)

\$5.3 million lifetime Firewise investments in Plumas County

Firewise communities in progress: Taylorsville, Clio, Nelson Point, and Quincy

Old Business - None

Updates

1. Standing Reports and Discussion

CAL FIRE – not present

Feather River Resource Conservation District (RCD) – Brad Graevs said that PUC is moving forward to the extent possible. The RCD is looking at developing more projects addressing fuel reduction and forest health. They are investigating utilizing the CAL FIRE VTP EIR to streamline the CEQA process.

Feather River Stewardship Coalition – Ms. Hepner said that a steering committee meeting was in the process of being scheduled.

Firewise Communities – no update

Industry – Timber – not present

Industry – Insurance – Richard Stockton said the insurance industry is still non-renewing homeowner policies and increasing premiums. He commented that the efforts of the Council are significant to support the insurance industry. Mike Flannigan attended a webinar about the California FAIR plan, the market of last resort. The maximum policy coverage will increase from 1.5 million to 3 million on June 15th. The FAIR plan will continue to be available, but may suffer capacity issues if fires continue to impact the industry.

Industry – Utilities – not present

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – not present

Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District – Julie Ruiz reminded the group that CAL FIRE has required burn permits as of May 1st and that they can be obtained online. She said that burns larger than 1 acre require a call to the NSAQMD regarding a pollution permit.

Plumas County Fire Chiefs Association – Ron Heinbockel said that most local departments have put all trainings and meetings on hold. He said the plan this year for wildfires is to depend heavily on air tankers. Paul Mrowizynski added that despite the deficit in the State budget this year, there will be increased financial support for firefighters.

Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES) – Mrs. McCourt shared that May is Wildfire Preparedness Month. The Plumas County Board of Supervisors signed a proclamation. Plumas News has been posting online banners and small advertisements. Through the Firewise group Mrs. McCourt has been sharing information about online resources including NFPA webinars and Fire Safe Marin seminars. She said that the Sheriffs office now has text capabilities and that information is available on the Sheriffs website. She is watching AB 3074 that will legislate an ember-free zone around homes.

Plumas County Planning Department – Tracey Ferguson said that the department continues to work on the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. There is a two-day event planned May 19 and 20 to look at risk assessment data that has been collected and mitigation strategies.

Plumas Underburn Cooperative – Matt West is considering moving workshops online to keep momentum. A plan has been established to implement an underburn safely with respect to COVID-19.

Tree Mortality Update – none

Tribal Representatives – not present

UC Cooperative Extension – Ryan Tompkins said the Home Hardening workshop was cancelled. He is looking to reschedule an in-person workshop in August. In the interim he may offer a remote option in July. Mr. Tompkins will be deploying a wildfire preparedness survey in June. UC Berkeley and UCCE received a SNC grant to work on the Claremont project. He will be collaborating with the Feather River RCD and Fire Safe on that project. He is working with colleagues who have been delivering forest stewardship trainings and will be offering a Plumas based one in the fall. The training will be directed at small landowners wanting to develop a forest management plan for their lots.

USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction – Ryan Bauer said that the Forest went through an analysis of critical work and that all vegetation and fuels work will continue. Planning continues as well. The Butterfly East timber sale is underway and one contract crew is still working. The crews are living in the county and continuing to work on projects. The National prescribed fire shut-down was lifted. However, it doesn't look like any burning will be done this year by the Forest Service. Fire resources are currently being trained. A contract has been awarded to Firestorm for prescribed fire support for pile burning, but it could also be used for underburning. The response to the situation with COVID-19 has been rapidly changing. Currently there will be full staffing on all engines (5 to a truck). Crews will be working 4/10s with staggered engine shifts. There will be 7-day coverage. Aviation assets are being amped up this year. The Forest Service will aggressively initial attack all starts.

Mrs. McCourt asked about the North Ops predictions. Mr. Bauer said that the seasonal forecasts are not particularly accurate, but he did say it's looking like California is going to be hot and dry. There have already been some high fire danger days this year.

2. Status of Current Grants –

Senior/Disabled Defensible Space: Mike McCourt said that the program is on hold until the CAL FIRE grant agreement is signed. This year's list of clients has been developed and the proposed contract is ready to send out to potential bidders.

Chipping Program: Gary Parque said the chipping program has about 125 applicants so far and he is expecting more. The program starts May 26th.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction: Matt West updated that the Corridor, Elizabethtown, and Genesee projects are nearly complete aside from some existing Limited Operating Periods. There are contract crews on the Butterfly project currently. That work should be done in 2-3 weeks. The roads are clear to Little Grass Valley Reservoir, so operations may begin there soon.

Hannah Hepner said the mastication operator in Meadow Valley has moved to Portola. The Portola project should move quickly and they will return to Meadow Valley.

3. Status of Grant Budgets – Don Gasser said that he's looked at the Council records and the Council has never been over budget on any project. He said that the forestry field has been expanded to include Rachael Norton. He expressed concerns about the number of contractors from out of the county on Fire Safe Council projects.

4. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities – Ms. Hepner said that proposal for a CAL FIRE Prop 68 grant opportunity are due by the end of the month. The PCFSC will submit a proposal for \$800,000-900,000 for hazardous fuel reduction in Chester, Quincy and Portola. Additionally, PG&E recently requested proposals. The PCFSC requested \$43,000 to support the Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance program.

Mike Callaghan noted that a bill in the California Assembly 2693 that will create Shasta, Trinity, and Oroville Watershed Restoration Administration that will create a five-person board to set priorities in the watershed. It may present some opportunity in the future.

5. Other Updates & Upcoming Events – none

Adjourn - Next meeting June 11th, 2020