

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 10th, 2021 - 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"/> Chair , John Reynolds Firewise Community (21)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vice Chair , Kathy Kogge Firewise Community (21)	<input type="checkbox"/> Secretary/Treasurer Dan Martynn, Retired (22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lindsay Wood Plumas Audubon Society(22)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don Gasser RPF (22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trina Cunningham Maidu Summit Consort. (22)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mike Callaghan Firewise Community (22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chuck Bowman Firewise Community (21)
<input type="checkbox"/> Jim Hamblin Citizen (21)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ryan Bauer USFS PNF (22)	<input type="checkbox"/> Brad Graevs Feather River RCD (21)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Stockton State Farm (21)
<input 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 (24 participants)
2. Review Agenda – no changes
3. Approval of May Meeting Minutes – approved via online survey
4. Presentation of Certificate of Recognition Program - Mr. Reynolds presented certificates to May’s nominee:
 - Gary Parque
Mr. Parque was nominated by Brad Graevs. Joe Smailes commented that Gary Parque is a great team player and worked right next to him on a firing team.
5. Public Comment: None
6. Board Comment:

Kathy Kogge - wondering if the strong winds this season are abnormal? Gary Parque responded that it seems like the winds this year are abnormal and concerning. Don Gasser added that nothing we are experiencing this year in terms of weather is normal.

Lindsay Wood - When will we be able to do in person meetings? Hannah Hepner responded that meetings will be in person hopefully as early as next month. Working on options to combine virtual meeting elements at the PCFSC office.

New Business

1. White Sulfur Springs Cost Share Waiver – Hannah Hepner

White Sulphur Springs non-profit requested a waiver for the landowner cost share for Hazardous Fuel Reduction. Board approval required to waive the cost share for treatment of White Sulphur Springs Ranch.

Mr. Gasser - do we have enough money in the budget to waive this cost? Ms. Hepner responded that this project is not funded yet. The ask is for 5.8 million dollars. The grant budget assumed that many large landowners would not be able to cover the entire cost-share.

John Reynolds - does this grant fund require match? Ms. Hepner - no it does not.

Vote - Ayes: John Reynolds, Lindsay Wood, Don Gasser, Kathy Kogge, Trina Cunningham, Chuck Bowman, Richard Stockton, Tracey Ferguson, Mike Yost

Absent - Mike Callaghan, Ryan Bauer, Brad Graevs

2. PCFSC 2020 Annual Goals Review – Hannah Hepner

-Implement and amend as necessary the Plumas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP);

- Information, Education, and Planning

Ongoing coordination, Maintenance of website, Workshops: How to Prepare your Land for Fire, Firewise community assessments, Secured \$2,328,650 in grant funding

- Reducing Structure Ignitability

Treated 101 properties for compliance with PRC 4291 through the Senior Disabled Defensible Space program

- Enhancing Suppression Capabilities and Public Safety

No action

- Hazardous Fuel Reduction

Approx. 341 acres of private HFR treatment, 3,171.6+ acres of public lands fuels treatment, County wide chipping program

Amend:

- CWPP Project List updated

-Increase public knowledge and awareness of hazards associated with wildland fire and inform the public about efforts that can be made to reduce their vulnerability to wildland fire;

Despite limited outreach events due to COVID-19, participated in:

Realtor's Association Meeting 5.20.20, Virtual Town Hall 7.7.20, UC Cooperative Extension Forest Stewardship Workshop 10.14.20

- Increase community-based involvement in fuels reduction and facilitate the development of additional Firewise Communities in Plumas County;
 - 2 new Firewise communities in Plumas County in 2020, 23 Firewise communities total
- Identify, develop and implement community hazardous fuel reduction projects;
 - 12 unfunded projects under development
- Develop a strategy to provide for sustainable and renewable project funding and reduce the Council's dependence on grant funding;
 - No action
- Support green fuels utilization and community chipping options for all communities in the County;
 - Funded 346.3 acres of biomass removal on the Franks Valley project, County wide chipping program
- Assist local fire departments in meeting their mission and goals.
 - 2 Basic 32 courses offered

Mr. Gasser - Did the Franks Valley project benefit any communities? Ms. Hepner - some private in-holdings did benefit, the project is on the boundary of the WUI.

3. State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations – Tracey Ferguson

Ms. Ferguson - State Board of Forestry Proposed State Minimums Fire Safe Regulations. Section 4290 requires the Board of Forestry to “adopt regulations implementing minimum fire safety standards related to defensible space applicable to the perimeters and access to all residential, commercial and industrial building construction”. In 2018, legislation was passed to expand the applicability of the regulations under PRC 4290 to include Local Responsibility Area Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and the existing State Responsibility area. SB 901 revised PRC 4290 to require the Board of Forestry to more frequently update regulations relating to fuel breaks and greenbelts near communities to preserve undeveloped ridgelines to reduce fire risk and improve fire protection.

Mr. Gasser - what does undeveloped ridgelines mean? Ms. Ferguson - keeping these undeveloped ridgelines free from construction and buildings.

Geography - much of the urbanized or developed area of the county are within the State Responsibility Area (SRA). Other outlying forested areas are within the Federal Responsibility Area (FRA). Areas around Quincy, Chester, and Portola are in the LRA VHFHSV.

Purpose/scope - building construction in the SRA after July 1, 2021 the LRA VHFHSZ shall provide for minimum Wildfire Protection standards as specified: emergency ingress and egress, signing and building numbering, private water supply reserves for emergency use, vegetation modification, fuel breaks, greenbelts and measures to preserve undeveloped ridgelines. The purpose is to limit building construction in those areas where minimum wildfire protection standards are not satisfied in order to reduce the risk of wildfire in these areas. The scope of the regulations applies to all building construction except those repairing structures.

Details regarding word definition in the legislature. Details on ingress and egress regarding roads and driveways in Plumas County.

All buildings must provide a 30 foot set back from property lines, roads and driveways.

Ridgelines are no longer considered for construction and development.

Comment period is underway. 45 day comment period information can be found on the board of forestry website and closes on June 22, 2021.

Richard Stockton - insurance companies are looking to these regulations. Implementation of these regulations will affect insurance security down the road.

Julie Ruiz - will these new regulations effect home heating? Ms. Ferguson - not to my knowledge. I will provide these slides and other information to the PCFSC board.

Old Business

None

Updates

- **CAL FIRE:** Glen Schall - Timber operations are done for the spring. We are in the fuels reduction portion of the season. We are preparing CEQA documents for fall implementation.

Don Gasser - Is there any report from the state on the remote controlled masticator utilized by CAL FIRE? Glen Schall - no information on that topic. CAL FIRE does not have control of a large portion of the state's forest. Ms. Hepner - There has been mastication equipment demonstrations that cost about \$300 per acre compared to \$850-1,200 an acre.

Don Gasser expressed concern that Plumas County is receiving little attention from the state.

Mr. Parque thanked Glen Schall for doing his best to answer questions regarding the state's fire management.

- **Feather River RCD:** Michael Hall – The RCD crew is working on thinning the 89 corridor near Canyon Dam area. Forest Service land to come soon. Mohawk Valley SNC grant was recommended for board approval and will be voted on July 15th. This project is adjacent to the State Park and includes Plumas Eureka CSD land. Waiting to hear back from three CAL FIRE grants, one will help fund PUC.
- **Feather River Stewardship Coalition:** Ms. Hepner - North Complex tour was successful with 20 participants. Photos on Facebook. Looking to schedule next meeting soon.
- **Firewise Communities:** Bethany Rouse - Greenville and Greenhaven will have assessments in July. Next Firewise Leads meeting will be on June 17th at 6pm. Details to come.
- **Timber:** Camille Swezy - limited by compromised log market and a waning chip and biomass market.
- **Insurance:** Mr. Stockton - no update.

- **Utilities:** Not present
- **NRCS:** Not present
- **NSAQMD** – Julie Ruiz – no updates
- **Plumas Audubon Society:** Lindsay Wood - no updates
- **Plumas Fire Chiefs Association:** Not present
- **Office of Emergency Services:** Not present
- **Plumas County Planning Department:** Ms. Ferguson - the adoption of LHMP is going to the board on June 15th and then will be sent to FEMA and will wrap up the process. Thank you to everyone who participated in the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment focus group and comments are due June 18th. The CaFSC is offering \$175,000 to counties that may be available to Plumas County for outreach purposes.
- **Plumas Underburn Cooperative:** Ms. Hepner - Matt West is in the field today. Scheduled meetings will continue next month.

Mr. Gasser - has Matt West's reduction in time caused issues for PCFSC? Ms. Hepner - It is apparent that PUC needs a full-time employee. The RCD applied to CAL FIRE to fund a full-time position.

Mr. Gasser - can CaFSC funding be used for these purposes? Ms. Ferguson - we will have to check on that.

Joe Smalles - the underburn in Butterfly Valley organized by Bill Jacks was successful with 15 participants.

- **Sierra Nevada Conservancy:** Not Present
- **Tree Mortality Update:** No updates
- **Tribal Representatives:** Trina Cunningham - MSC is moving forward with the Landscape Scale Emergency Response Plan that includes ancestral lands. We are not completely funded for this project, but are working with partners to secure funding. Working to protect culturally valued sites. We have received funding from California Department of Conservation and SNC to develop planning tools for restoration. We are planning aerial flyovers of the area in the next month or so.
- **UC Cooperative Extension:** Not present
- **USFS:** Dan Patterson - Bucks and Haskins Valley burn piles are being rebuilt to be burned in the fall. Meeting with Bill Jacks to write a Butterfly Valley underburn plan that will include federal and private land. In this fall and spring we plan to use our masticator on the east end of American Valley to treat 110 acres that will tie in to private mastication projects.

- **State Parks:** Not present

1. Status of Current Grants

- **Senior/Disabled Defensible Space:** Mike McCourt - we have contracted High Sierra Fire to complete work. Next week the program will start with 150 people signed up. One client has a house up for sale because she could no longer afford her home owners insurance, hopefully instances like this won't continue to affect the program.

- **Chipping:** Mr. Parque - Chipping Program is going well, small glitches with software that are being worked out. Lost piles were found and chipped.

Ms. Hepner - Chipping program is finishing up its 3rd week. 90 locations chipped. 60 people signed up for next week which will be tight. We will contract one more week of work to complete the people signed up for next week, if needed. We have had 27 reviews of the program and all have been positive.

- **HFR Project Schedule:** Ms. Hepner - Matt West is leading the bid tour for the Lakes Basin project. Little Grass Valley implementation just began again. Plumas Collaborative Project has been doing some small amounts of mastication throughout the winter and hand thin crews have resumed work in Genesee. American Valley East mastication is complete and hand thinning work will need a new contractor. Mohawk Valley layout is underway. Greenhorn layout is almost complete and surveys are underway. PDC project layout is underway. Not all communities can be treated this year and we will have to prioritize project areas.

2. Status of Grant Budgets:

Mr. Gasser - what do we know about cost center 293? Ms. Hepner - 293 is fully spent.

Mr. Gasser - will we see replenishment? Ms. Hepner - we are currently using Plumas Corp. discretionary funds to compensate for time. Beth Rouse is working on a RAC application for coordination.

3. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities:

Ms. Hepner - Quincy Wildfire Protection Project proposal submitted to SNC has been recommended for board approval. We are working on having that project ready to go when the agreement is signed. CAL FIRE Fire Prevention program has two applications for the Community Chipping Program and the Eastern Plumas Wildfire Protection Project. There is a grant opportunity through the CaFSC that is due June 15th. No plans to apply. RAC application for coordination is due in September.

4. Other Updates & Upcoming Events:

Paul Mrowczynski - June 16th Emergency Food Access meeting for in the case of fire. This is in the effort to have a one year plan in the case of transportation issues during wildfires.

Ms. Cunningham - MSC would like updates on this process.

Mr. Parque - Chester Fire Dept will have an open house on June 12th at 9:00am at the Chester Airport.

Ms. Cunningham - MSC is hosting a tribal celebration in September to commemorate regaining lands from PGE. Partners are welcome to come.

Adjourn - Next meeting July 8th, 2021