

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 11th, 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 | | | |
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| 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 May Meeting Minutes – **m- Gasser, s – Kogge**, approved via online survey
4. Public Comment – none
5. Board Comment – none

New Business

1. Indian Valley Mapping Resource – Michael Hall from the Feather River RCD presented the recently developed [Indian Valley prioritization map](#). The RCD is compiling county-wide information about complete and proposed treatments, NEPA and CEQA status, land ownership, critical infrastructure, and sensitive resources. The RCD has a two-year timeline for the complete map, which will be hosted on the RCD website. It will be a platform for data sharing that will be continually updated. The Indian Valley map is a prototype for overlaying priority areas including CAL FIRE and Forest Service high hazard/high risk areas. Don Gasser commented that the parcel information will be helpful in determining if a project will involve relatively few or many individual landowners. Mr. Hall said that the information has been shared with the NRCS to outreach to landowners in high priority areas.

Old Business - None

Updates

1. Standing Reports and Discussion

CAL FIRE – Joel Goldman said that there is initial staffing at each station. There will be peak staffing toward the end of the month. Burning will be allowed in the Unit until June 29th. Captain Goldman said they are in the hiring process for Defensible Space Inspectors and inspections will likely start in July. He added that the department has been dealing with the COVID issue and has had some officers pulled away to address the civil unrest.

Mr. Gasser asked if there is going to be a CAL FIRE station in Chester. Captain Goldman clarified that the Quincy office will be moving to the old Chester courthouse.

Feather River Resource Conservation District (RCD) – no update

Feather River Stewardship Coalition – Hannah Hepner said that a steering committee meeting was recently held. Development of the Indian Valley project was discussed. A public meeting will be scheduled soon.

Firewise Communities – Mr. Reynolds commented that it has been difficult to conduct meetings and outreach as usual.

Industry – Timber – not present

Industry – Insurance – Sue McCourt asked if the coverage increased for the FAIR plan. Richard Stockton said yes, there has been an increase.

Industry – Utilities – not present

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – not present

Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District – Julie Ruiz said that Nevada and Sierra counties will have suspended burning as of Monday. Sue McCourt asked if there have been any changes to green waste options in the county. Mrs. Ruiz said that the Loyaltan biomass facility has been purchased. More information about that facility will likely be available in the future.

Plumas County Fire Chiefs Association – not present

Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES) – Mrs. McCourt and Ms. Hepner discussed Firewise communities and Fire Safe Council resources at a Plumas Board of Realtors meeting. Mrs. McCourt received positive feedback and interest from the agents about providing materials to individuals when they purchase a home. Mrs. McCourt has dropped off home hardening and defensible space brochures for their use. Mr. Reynolds added that communities with HOAs or CSDs have the opportunity to include Firewise information in a packet that goes to all new homeowners. Mrs. McCourt suggested that the Firewise leads share information about the handouts they are providing.

Mrs. McCourt continues to work with Quincy Firewise on the requirements for certification. She shared a resource called [Alert Wildfire](#) that provides access to fire detection cameras.

Plumas County Planning Department – Tracey Ferguson reported that the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan process included a successful two-day webinar meeting in May. Mitigation measure and projects were brainstormed and a list of over 60 ideas was generated. Wildfire was the priority hazard identified. Actions included fuel reduction, prescribed fire, defensible space, home hardening, forest health, undergrounding utilities, outreach & education, among other things. There are 17 items that include the Fire Safe Council. The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is a County document and the County will lead the effort, but will work closely with other entities. The projects within the LHMP will be eligible for FEMA grant money. The full draft of the plan will be available in July. It will go public in August. There will be an opportunity for feedback from community members.

Ms. Ferguson suggested that the Council consider protocols for meeting in-person in the future. She also suggested that the group consider a larger meeting space. Ms. Hepner said that she hadn't had success in securing a larger venue, but is open to suggestions for locations.

Plumas Underburn Cooperative – Matt West said that he has received approval to put on a Basic 32 training for the volunteer fire departments. It may be open to members of the public as well. He said that participants may be able to take the pack test through the Forest Service to get red carded. Mr. West will also be organizing outdoor workshops to keep momentum.

Tree Mortality Update – Kathy Kogge said that there are landowners in Gold Mountain concerned about trees that are browning at the top. Judy Clot has been doing site visits to evaluate the issue. Discussion followed about potential mitigation actions for beetle attacks.

Tribal Representatives – Trina Cunningham said she has been focused on educational projects with Sierra Nevada Journeys on the Grizzly Creek Ranch and the Feather River Land Trust. She will be assisting with location of old trails in the Walker Fire restoration. She is also working on ensuring a more robust tribal consultation process that integrates particular areas of knowledge and interest of different groups and individuals.

UC Cooperative Extension – Ryan Tompkins said that a paper summarizing information from the prescribed fire workshops had suggestions for improving the CAL FIRE permitting process. He said that the Lassen-Modoc unit was used as an example of the permitting process going well.

On June 30th there will be a free Home Hardening webinar with Dr. Steve Quarles. Dr. Quarles worked for the University of California and the IBHS doing research on how homes catch fire from ember ignition.

Mr. Tompkins and his colleagues have developed a [wildfire preparedness survey](#) that will be deployed throughout northeastern California. The survey takes 15-20 minutes to complete and includes questions about home hardening, defensible space, and emergency preparedness. It also includes demographics information to help evaluate populations who may not be served by existing programs.

There will be a Forest Stewardship Workshop this fall for forestland owners interested in developing a cooperative management plan. The workshop will guide participants through the process and link them with resources.

Mr. Tompkins added that the tree mortality areal detection flights usually take place in August when mortality starts to present itself. He urged people to deal with slash in-order to reduce Ips pini beetle activity.

USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction – not present

2. Status of Current Grants –

Senior/Disabled Defensible Space: Mike McCourt said the program went out to bid yesterday. One bid has already been received. There are 95 clients on the list. There are about 20 more that will be added once the contract is awarded. The grant agreement with CAL FIRE should be signed by the end of the week. There may also be \$15,000 available for the program from Plumas National Forest.

Chipping Program: Gary Parque reported that there are currently 169 clients that have submitted applications, with more expected. There will be additional chipping done to address community piles in Grizzly Ranch and Portola.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction: Matt West said that hand thinning and mechanical work is done on the Butterfly project, there are masticators working on Mt. Hough right now, Little Grass Valley is ready for work to start, and the Franks Valley prospectus will go out this week and will be contracted in July. Hannah Hepner added that layout will start soon on the Lakes Basin project. Ms. Hepner reported that mastication in Portola is wrapping up, an archaeology request for proposals just went out for the American Valley project, the Mohawk

Valley forester request for proposals will to out soon, and the Greenhorn agreement with the Forest Service has been received and the project has a forester contract in the works.

3. Status of Grant Budgets – Mr. Gasser indicated that things are moving along nicely and that contracts are being implemented. He said that payments from the CAL FIRE CCI grant can be expected to increase. He asked if the Living with Fire publication has been delayed and how it will be distributed. Ms. Hepner said that it was supposed to be distributed in May for Wildfire Preparedness Month, but that the graphic designer expects it to be done by the end of this month. It will be available as a pdf on the website so we may opt to send postcards with a link. It will also be available at post offices and fire departments.

Mrs. McCourt added that there will be several Public Service Announcement advertisements on the Plumas News website.

4. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities – Ms. Hepner said that she submitted a proposal to CAL FIRE for Prop 68 funds to treat 720 acres in Chester, Quincy, and Portola. She is also waiting to hear back about \$43,000 requested from PG&E for the Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance program. She described several other opportunities open right now.

5. Other Updates & Upcoming Events

Ms. Hepner shared a mock-up of a potential t-shirt design.
She also shared an updated fire history map compiled by Kyle Felker.

Adjourn - Next meeting July 9th, 2020