

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 14th 2022 - 9:00 am.

Combination of in-person and zoom meeting

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 (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vice Chair , Kathy Kogge Firewise Community (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secretary/Treasurer Mike Flanigan, Insurance (23)	<input type="checkbox"/> Michael Hall, FRRCD (23)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sally McGowan, Firewise Community (23)	<input type="checkbox"/> Joe Smailes, Firewise Community (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chuck Bowman, Firewise Community (23)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ryan Tompkins, UCCE (23)
<input type="checkbox"/> Tracey Ferguson, Plumas County Planning (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trina Cunningham, Maidu Summit Consort. (22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Callahan, Firewise Community (22)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dan Martynn, Retired (22)
<input type="checkbox"/> Lindsay Wood Plumas Audubon Society (22)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ryan Bauer USFS PNF (22)	<input type="checkbox"/> Don Gasser RPF (22)	

- Welcome & Introductions – John Reynolds
- Review Agenda – National Fire Prevention Education Team with Gwen Beaven added to New Business.
- Approve January Meeting Minutes – **Motion - Sally McGowan, Second - Claude Sanders**
- Presentation of Certificates of Recognition to: John Reynolds
- Public Comment -
Gary Darling with Aries Biomass Solutions updated the group that Aries is still looking for a location in Plumas County to build a biomass energy plant using excess forest biomass. Aries has been in discussion with Collins Pine, the Loyalton Biomass Facility and others to develop the facility. Aries Biomass does not want to get into logging and is looking for a supplier.
Dan Martynn asked if Aries Biomass had contacted Sierra Institute about this project. Mr. Darling answered yes. SI is a possible partner.

Trina Cunningham expressed interest in working with Aries Biomass.

Mr. Sanders asked if there was an update on the Loyalton Biomass facility. Mr. Darling answered that Aries did a site visit to this location and it seems they are in startup mode. The wood boiler was not working at the time. It is a private development.

Bill Davies shared with the group that Seneca Firewise is hosting a potluck on July 29th. All are welcome.

New Business

1. HFR Cost Share Waivers - Rachel Wehrman reported that there are two landowners on C-road (Eastern Plumas Wildfire Protection Project) that require cost-share waivers. One unit is 8.5 acres and the other is 2.5 acres. Treating both properties would contribute to protecting the community against catastrophic wildfire.

Mr. Reynolds asked if these landowners needed full or partial waivers. Ms. Wehrman answered that one landowner can contribute \$20 and the other cannot contribute. Cost share is \$250 an acre.

Mike Flanigan asked if this will come out of our budget. Mr. Reynolds answered that it will come out of the grant funds allocated to the Eastern Plumas WPP. It will not be a significant cost to the project.

Motion - Mike Flanigan , Second - Dan Martynn

None opposed

2. National Fire Prevention Education Team (USFS) - Gwen Beavens explained that the National Fire Prevention Education Team is a larger USFS effort to educate PNF and surrounding communities on fire prevention. The number one cause of wildfire ignitions in Plumas County is debris burning. The team's goal is to be on the ground speaking with people about the issues - visiting communities, campgrounds, etc. The Prevention Team is using social media and outreach letters to communicate ways to reduce risks. This team defines risk as the potential for ignition. Community Mitigation Assistance Teams focus on getting the home and property prepared for wildfire. The Prevention Education Team would like to make their resources available to PCFSC. The team is developing guidelines for equipment, mowing, chainsaws, etc. Mr. Reynolds asked if there is information that can be shared with Firewise communities. Ms. Beavens answered, yes, she will share via Hannah Hepner.
Mr. Reynolds asked if there are members of the team that can meet with Firewise communities. Ms. Beavens answered that the Prevention Education Team is leaving Plumas County, but PNF should have available resources.

Old Business - None

Updates

1. Standing Reports and Discussion
 - Green Waste Working Group: None

- CAL FIRE: Alan Thornhill reported that Defensible Space Inspectors have been in Graeagle for 6 weeks and will be moving on to Modoc and Lassen. 1,000 inspections total have been done with receptive community members.

Mr. Flanigan asked if the Defensible Space Inspectors are associated with AB 38 inspections. Mr. Thornhill answered no, AB 38 inspections are for real estate transactions only. DSI inspections are routine for defensible space and the goal is to have each home in the SRA inspected.

Mr. Reynolds asked if there are different teams for the different inspections. Mr. Thornhill answered yes, there are two different teams.

Glen Schall added that \$120 million for Fire Prevention and Forest Health grants are coming out in the fall.

- Feather River Resource Conservation District (RCD): Julia Sidman reported that the EForT Project is going well and the RCD will have a bid out for contracted work soon.
- Feather River Stewardship Coalition: Hannah Hepner shared that FRSC would like to schedule a field tour. FRSC is taking suggestions for locations and is focused on the Dixie Fire.
- Feather River Tourism Association: Not present
- Firewise Communities: Ms. Rouse shared that the next FW meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 27th @ 6pm. There are a few new communities forming, one on Grizzly Ranch Road and another in Red Clover Valley.
- Industry – Timber: Not present
- Industry – Insurance: Mr. Flanigan shared that all communities affected by wildfire are suffering and insurance policy prices have increased 1000% for some businesses. Indian Valley CSD lost everything in the fire and does not have adequate insurance to rebuild with updated building codes. Most companies do not want to write insurance for the region and the only option for many is the California Fair Plan which is slow and inefficient. Because of the issues with IVCS, Mr. Flanigan was contacted by a few media outlets for insight on insurance in the area. The issue is getting some attention and the exposure is good. Hopefully this attention will reach the Insurance Commissioner as the insurance moratorium will expire on July 22nd, 2022 and policies will be dropped.
- Industry – Utilities: Not present
- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS): Not present
- Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District: Not present
- Plumas Corporation: Scott Corey reported that Brad Bodenham, Plumas Corp's new hire, is working on a rebrand for Plumas Corporation. Plumas Corporation offered their open Project Manager position to an applicant, but the applicant did not accept. Two Sierra Nevada Alliance Forestry Fellows will start in August - one for PCFSC and one for the watershed side. Construction on the Red Clover Valley (Thompson Meadow Project) starts on Monday. This is Plumas Corporation's 100th project. The 101st project implemented by Plumas Corporation will be the Mattley Meadow Project in the Stanislaus National Forest. Implementation continues with the Yellow Creek Project in Lassen National Forest. Continuing work with PNF on a planning project on the East Side of the County including project development and NEPA. Several projects are planned for the Sequoia NF and private land. Noxious weed surveys are planned for the Sequoia as well as grove enhancements.

Mr. Martynn added that housing is an issue when it comes to hiring and keeping new hires on board. If anyone has a rental available, let Plumas Corporation know.

- Plumas Audubon Society: Not present
- Plumas County Fire Chiefs Association: Not present
- Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES): Pam Courtright reported that the Dixie Fire recovery and debris removal is almost 100% complete. 66 residences have been identified to have lead in the soil. Some of these properties will qualify for a state “dig-out”. Work should be done by October. OES has also been looking at road damages and work will not begin on the roads until FEMA does another assessment. Plumas County Sheriff’s Office (PCSO) has secured the Zone Haven Program (will be moving away from Code RED) and it should be a fast system. PCSO had to change the zones for the County as it was too confusing for residents. A “Know Your Zone” campaign is coming soon. Trying to streamline zones for better understanding. PCSO has been working on disaster response and identified 18 essential emergency functions and 5 recovery support functions. Trying to utilize the talent of the local community and develop a long-term recovery plan after this process is finished. Plumas County is short staffed. All County mid-level and department heads should be trained with the Incident Command System. PG&E now has a Power Safety Shut-Off Safety measure that shuts off power if a tree falls on a line. This can shut off power to large sections of the power grid to prevent wildfire starts from infrastructure.

Kyle Felker asked what happened to OES trailers for debris removal next to the Plumas Corporation offices. Ms. Courtright answered that the debris cleanup work is done in Plumas County and crews have moved on to Lassen.

- Plumas County Planning Department: Not present
- Plumas Underburn Cooperative: PUC will meet next Thursday @ 4:30 at PCFSC offices. Starting planning with Butte County TREC for fall. Mr. West shared that he put together a “What is PUC” presentation and will present it to Quincy FW.

Mr. Parque asked what Ryan Tompkins had planned for the UC Forestry burn workshop? Mr. West answered that the workshop is hopefully planned for next spring.

- Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship: Not present
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy: Not present
- Tree Mortality Update: Mr. Darling asked if a tree is dying on a property, is it best to remove it immediately. Mr. Sanders answered that it depends. This can be a case by case decision.

Mr. Reynolds reminded the group to cover slash or fallen trees to prevent beetle spread.

- Tribal Representatives: Ms. Cunningham shared that Maidu Summit Consortium has been working to partner with many different agencies, both local and state wide. We are approaching the anniversary of the loss of Greenville and on August 4th, 5th and 6th there will be an event dedicated to recovery. There are a number of people who are not planning to rebuild. IVCS is struggling to rebuild so that the community can move back in. MSC is applying for some funding to acquire property in the effort to provide space for people to live. Ms. Cunningham expressed appreciation for Pam Courtright attending this meeting to fill us in on the progress OES has made. The Dixie Fire affected our County's leadership in many ways. We did receive a bid for the fir on Maidu Lands and MSC applied for biochar units though a USDA grant to find other solutions on our properties. Ms. Cunningham expressed thanks for the work all partners of PCFSC are doing.
- UC Cooperative Extension: Not present
- USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction: Not present

2. Status of Current Grants

- Senior Disabled Defensible Space – Ms. Hepner announced that Tommy Brenzovich will be starting as the new project manager on Monday.

Ms. Rouse shared that all landowners on the East Side (Portola area) will be treated by Friday. The crew is currently in Greenhorn and will move west - Meadow Valley is next to receive treatment.

- Chipping Program – Gary Parque shared that round 1 has finished. The work is going well. The crew experienced some trouble with communication and chipper breakdowns. Some landowners have been confused about the size of piles, schedules, etc. All locations will receive treatment even if some people are on the waitlist. Changes can be made to the language on the website to prevent confusion.

Mr. Flanigan asked how many rounds are in a season. Mr. Parque answered that there are two rounds - one for spring and one for fall. Some special projects have been approved.

Chuck Bowman added that the chipping crew accomplished more work than the original amount. Good work.

Mr. Parque added that we have a good crew and work has been satisfactory. Mr. Parque also shared that Fire Watch for Quincy Wildfire Protection Project has been ongoing. Project looks good.

Jeff Greef asked where the chips go after being treated by the chipping program. Mr. Parque answered that the chips stay on the properties.

Kevin Danaher asked if the chips can be used for soil. Mr. Reynolds answered that using chips for compost or soil is expensive in terms of transportation.

- HFR Project Schedule: Ms. Wehrman shared that the Mohawk Valley prospectus is being developed. The Hamilton Branch Clear Creek VMP needs more work for treatment type and layout. The Eastern Plumas WPP is in layout and will go out to bid in October. The EForT bid with the RCD will be ready in the next few weeks. The botany surveys for The Plumas Disadvantaged Communities project is almost complete. Stevens American Valley project requires an agreement with the forest service.

Matt West reported that the hand thin work for the Lakes Basin project is complete aside from areas that have to be avoided. Most work is complete. Chipping is complete around the lodges and has received good feedback. The grapple piler will start next week.

Ms. Hepner reported that the Greenhorn bid tour is scheduled for next week and will be contracted soon. The use of equipment might be impacted by fire risk.

- Status of Grants Budgets: Mr. Reynolds added that PCFSC is available for questions about the status of grants budgets.
- Status of Potential Projects & Grant Opportunities – Ms. Hepner added that PCFSC is working with Bill Davies on a large cross-boundary project for the East Shore of Lake Almanor. LNF announced an award of \$823,000 for the Almanor Peninsula project which will be moving forward. This is a Steven's award and is a larger amount than we have received from the federal side in the past.

3. Other Updates & Upcoming Events: None

Adjourn - Next meeting August 11th @ 9am.