

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Board of Directors

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Don Gasser (17)
Jim Hamblin (17)
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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, August 11, 2016 - 9:00 am.

Plumas County Planning & Building Services Conference Room
555 Main Street, Quincy, CA

1. Welcome, Introductions & tribute to Andy Anderson - Mike Callaghan
2. Review Agenda - **no changes**
3. Approve Meeting Minutes – **m- Hamblin, s-Sanders, passed.**
4. Public Comments – **none**

Old Business

1. Plumas Tree Mortality Pre-planning Meeting scheduled for August 25th. Mike Callaghan distributed flyers and made note that the event is jointly sponsored by Plumas County Office of Emergency Services. The goal of the meeting is to create a task force for the creation of recommendations, with the ultimate outcome being a Board of Supervisors declaration of emergency. Attendance is by invitation to selected forestry, government, and community stakeholders. Currently 130 stakeholders have been invited. Chuck Bowman commented that there were 47 attendees at the Lassen TMTF meeting. Sue McCourt suggested that insurance company representatives be invited. Mike De Lasaux noted that there are no insurance reductions for removal of trees around the home. He mentioned that “Equip” is a resource for homeowners. Additionally the Forest Stewardship Helpline is a professional resource available at 1-800-738-TREE.

New Business

1. Transition of Mission of Feather River Stewardship Coalition – Mike De Lasaux provided background on the project. After a year and a half of Coalition efforts, the initial grant funding is coming to an end and Rachael Norton, the Outreach Coordinator, has resigned. Additional funds

are available, requiring a 20% match. Mike De Lasaux expressed that public land issues should not be a burden that the Fire Safe Council takes on and that working with the Forest Service can be a time consuming process. It was his hope that a group other than the FSC would continue the QLG role for public lands.

-Rachael Norton pointed out that 70% of Plumas County is in public land and the work of the Coalition meets the FSC mission by protecting public lands that surround communities. Additionally, the large grants that the coalition can secure financially benefit Plumas Corporation. These grants are available every 6 months and proposals are likely to be successful.

-Ryan Tompkins added that the Forest Service has a Categorical Exemption for 3,000 acres of HFR treatment prioritizing WUIs. However, projects have a collaborative requirement. Ultimately if the Coalition's work is discontinued the Forest Service sees it as a lost opportunity. Grassroots community involvement has proven difficult, but soliciting a group of land management organizations, with paid staff, could provide the collaborative needed with minimal investment. Ryan believes that the match requirement for funding may be flexible and commented that the Coalition hasn't had issue meeting its match requirement to date.

-Nick Bunch added that the Coalition's project at Buck's Lake has been a model for streamlining all SNC projects. He commented that funding is required to get projects done and funding comes from collaborative work.

-As Deputy Forest Supervisor, Barbara Drake offered that there should be open communication with the Forest Service. She noted that collaboratives also have the role of assisting with community acceptance of proposals, acting as "interveners" to potential objections and moving forward Forest Service projects. Additionally, she suggested that participation has been limited because there haven't been recent high profile projects. She intends to initiate large-scale restoration projects and anticipates that a collaborative will be useful at that point.

-Don Gasser expressed desire for the Coalition to continue, to which Mike Callaghan questioned whether the council is "in support" of a collaborative or if it wants to take on the role of "becoming" the collaborative.

-Claude Sanders questioned to what extent Cal Fire and SNC have been part of the collaborative. Lynn Campbell has represented the SNC. Claude commented that more stakeholders are needed for a collaborative.

-There is time to make a decision and the issue will remain on the agenda.

2. Air Curtain Burner Alternatives for Plumas County –Skip Dieter suggested that an air curtain burner operator has the potential to address biomass issues in Plumas County. However, there are several Federal "roadblocks."

-Barbara Drake worked with air curtain burners on the Rim Fire recovery. They can generate electricity if stationary, provide 2 jobs per burner, and have a broader window for burn days than open burning. For the scale of the biomass to be addressed, small units are not sufficient and multiple tools are needed.

-Sue McCourt mentioned that Plumas County has a non-operational unit. Wet fuels are a problem and there are still significant burn day limitations.

-CalFire has purchased 10 air curtain burners to deal with tree mortality, which has not been sufficient.

- Mike Callaghan suggested that a mobile unit that travels to communities would be beneficial.
- Mike De Lasaux says there needs to be an industrial solution that addresses the benefits of wood based energy, which is a political process.
- Claude asked what the cost comparison is with chipping. Skip said that chipping is marginally cheaper.
- Chuck pointed out that air curtain burners do not require clean material to burn, while a cogen plant does. However, the two are not mutually exclusive. Cogen plants are not designed for homeowner use.
- Rachael questioned if power companies would pursue a contract. Barbara pointed out that small scale operations would not be driven by the price paid by power companies.

3. Request for proposals for PC FSC Forestry Contractor(s) – Mike Callaghan announced that the PC FSC requires a Registered Professional Forester for existing grant projects. The RFP will be released Aug, 15th, with applications due by Aug, 29th. Assuming there is a pool of applicants; submissions will be reviewed on Sept, 1st. Outreach methods suggested were email, a newspaper ad, distribution to the California licensing officer, and the CLFA website.

Updates

1. Status of Current Grants – Hannah Hepner updated that the Greenhorn CSD CWPP is complete and that there are funds still available. The Senior/Disabled program is exhausting the balance of one funding source and moving on to the next. The Cutler Meadows project will be completed with the return of the LTO from the Soberanes Fire. Work is completed on the Dwyer Tree Farm; remaining funds will be unused. The East Shore Lake Almanor project requires a Forester. There is no extension beyond Sept 2017 for the work to be completed. Dixie Valley also requires a Forester. The American Valley contractor bids have been awarded. Nick Bunch updated that Hwy 70 is waiting on NEPA approval, which has been streamlined by an effort of the Mt Hough Ranger District. Sara will begin work on this project after American Valley. The MOU for Wolf & Grizzly Creek is finalized. Ryan Tompkins noted that the collection agreement between the Forest Service and Plumas Corporation is still outstanding. Mike De Lasaux suggested that the FSC not take on any additional SNC grants until we have seen the successful completion of one.
2. Status of Grant Applications in Process - There will be a decision on the Bucks Lake SNC grant in early September.
3. Standing Reports and Discussion
 - Website Development Committee - Sue McCourt updated that the website is roughly halfway done. Photos are needed. Chuck suggested that visuals of the progress will be available at the next meeting.
 - Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance Program - Mike McCourt reported that 75 residences were treated and that the co-pay waiver increased participation. CalFire inspections also generated some participants. The High Sierra Fire contract

was extended to Aug 15th. Overall they were very accommodating with changes in the contract.

- Plumas County Fire Prevention Specialist – Sue says the animal evacuation guides have been popular. The Firewise assessment for Cromberg/Sloat/Layman will take place on Sept 1st. Genesee has an evacuation plan meeting on Aug 17th. Butterfly and Dixie Valley communities have lost momentum for Firewise recognition.
- CAL FIRE – SRA and Tree Mortality grants will be available online on Aug 22nd. Ideas for potential proposals included Mohawk Vista (which was listed as a priority for the next round of Stevens Funds) or a chipping program for communities.
- USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction – Nick reported that 500 acres across the district are being treated. The under-burn program is getting ready for winter. Outreach is needed regarding burn plans. The Fire Safe Council is a desired conduit for that outreach.
- Firewise Communities – Chuck announced that there will be a Graeagle Firewise day in Sept and replanting day. The 19 landowners who received letters completed the work on their lots. On behalf of Gold Mountain, Mike C announced the Firewise Day on Sept 3rd that will address tree mortality and provide homeowners with insurance reviews. There are still 22 lots needing treatment by December.

4. Other Updates & Upcoming Events – Tree Mortality Task Force Meeting, Aug 25th

Adjourn - Next meeting September 8, 2016