

# Plumas County Fire Safe Council



## Board of Directors

<b>Chair</b> , Don Gasser, Citizen (18)	Chuck Bowman, Firewise Community (19)
<b>Vice Chair</b> , Mike Callaghan, Firewise Community (18)	Jim Hamblin, PC Fire Chiefs Assoc. (19)
<b>Secretary/Treasurer</b> , Julie Ruiz, NSAQMD (18)	Ryan Bauer, USFS (18)
Dan Martynn, NRCS (18)	John Reynolds, Firewise Community (19)
	Jan Fletcher, Plumas Association of Realtors (19)

## 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 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 - 9:00 am.

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

---

1. Welcome & Introductions – Don Gasser
2. Review Agenda – no changes
3. Approve July Meeting Minutes – **m – Callaghan, s - Reynolds**
4. Public Comment – Gary Parque thanked Forest Service representatives for being “gung-ho.” Don Gasser shared a thank you card that the PCFSC received from Mike De Lasaux.

## New Business

1. Forester Proposals – Don Gasser noted that funding opportunities are likely to increase and that the PCFSC can build its capacity to take advantage of these opportunities by having a relationship with several foresters. Four proposals were received by the PCFSC. They were from: Rachael Norton, Mike De Lasaux, Jason Moghaddas & Gary Roller representing the Spatial Informatics Group (SIG), and Dudek. The Council will let them know that we appreciate their applications and that we will issue quotation requests as projects become available. Mr. Gasser foresees that this process will provide a rapid response and low-cost options.

David Popp voiced concerns about prioritizing low-cost over the qualifications of an individual forester. He is not satisfied with the work done on his property and would like to see the PCFSC undertaking projects with long-range forest health benefits.

Kyle Felker said that the Council has recently been visiting past projects to evaluate if we did the “right thing” with our treatments.

Mr. Gasser followed that it requires site-by-site evaluation to determine the appropriate treatment for each project. He suggested that we continue to evaluate the Fire Safe Council's prescriptions to improve our projects' outcomes over time.

2. QLG Website – Hannah Hepner asked the Council if they would like to continue to financially support the QLG website. The resounding answer was yes - the QLG site is a historic resource and should be preserved as is. It was suggested that the only change should be insertion of text stating that “this historical website is paid for by the Plumas County Fire Safe Council.” **m – Callaghan, s - Bowman**

## **Old Business**

1. Membership Program Committee Selection – Don Gasser and Sue McCourt met to discuss the merits of a membership program. The goals of a membership program would be to increase outreach and fundraising opportunities. They looked at the Butte County model and determined that Plumas County's population would not likely support such a program and that it would require a dedicated volunteer. Mr. Gasser asked if that volunteer existed. He received no response.

2. Community Fuel Treatment Maintenance Workshop Committee – Hannah Hepner reported that the committee visited Indian Falls on Monday to evaluate a project that was implemented in 2006. The overwhelming finding was that additional work is needed, not just in previously treated areas, but more so in those areas that haven't been treated yet. Mr. Callaghan added that goats and underburning can be eliminated from the possibilities for maintenance in the area. The Forest Service is concurrently working on defining an area for treatment that surrounds the community. Mr. Gasser asked if continuation of the maintenance committee is worthwhile. The response was yes, not just for the initial purposes of assisting residents with follow-up treatment and showcasing them in a public workshop, but to learn from previous projects to improve future PCFSC project design. Claude Sanders cautioned that opening up areas with more aggressive treatments can introduce opportunities for invasive weeds. Mr. Popp commented on the lack of incentive from insurance companies to encourage people to clear around their homes. Conversation followed about the current status of insurance company involvement.

3. Light Burning Presentation Proposal – Hannah Hepner announced that the presentation will take place at 6:00pm on Tuesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>. The venue will be on the Feather River College campus. There will be two presenters: Eric Knapp, Research Ecologist with the Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Research Station, with a slideshow of the “history of light fire,” and Trina Cunningham sharing perspectives on cultural burning. The presentations will be followed by a question and answer panel that will additionally include Ryan Bauer and a private landowner.

## **Updates**

1. Standing Reports and Discussion

- **Plumas County Tree Mortality Task Force:** Mike Callaghan provided written notes from the July 12<sup>th</sup> TMTF meeting. A crisis situation never eventuated in Plumas County, but the County will be in a good position to respond if/when an outbreak occurs in the future. At the meeting Danny Cluck provided information about the current status of mortality in Plumas County and Joanne Drummond talked about the steps that PG&E is taking to decrease the risk of ignition from their lines. The outcome of the meeting was that the business of the task force would be included in the PCFSC agenda. The

group's objectives to observe tree mortality outbreaks, advise residents on mortality issues, and strategically work to thin forested areas within the WUI will continue. The handout "[Bark Beetle in California Conifers](#)" from the USFS was noted as having valuable information.

- **Feather River Stewardship Coalition:** Hannah announced that the Plumas Collaborative Forest Health project was awarded \$6.6 million to treat 7,800 acres, including the communities of Meadow Valley, Genesee Woods, and Red Clover Creek Recreation Association. She also shared that Plumas National Forest has executed an agreement to provide another \$25,000 for coordination funds in support of the FRSC.
- **Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES):** Sue McCourt reported that Plumas County's local fire departments are continuing to support fire suppression efforts in the State. She reiterated the need for residents to sign up for [CodeRed](#) and shared some suggestions from Marin County Fire Safe Council: have an evacuation "buddy," backup battery power for garage doors and other critical items, and a generator for power outages. The Firewise program has been getting support from Feather River Publishing. Plumas County has three of the 15 new Firewise communities and is fifth in the State for number of recognized communities. Mrs. McCourt also noted that CAL FIRE has expanded their Structure Protection Exemption from 150 feet around a structure to 300 feet with an RPF signature.
- **CAL FIRE:** Mark Hillskotter said that they are busy on both the enforcement and suppression side. The Defensible Space inspectors have been doing some work on the fires, but they are back and are prioritizing work in areas that have never been inspected. There have been a lot of human caused fires this summer and the season started earlier than usual. Captain Hillskotter has been at the Carr Fire for accident investigations. He said that the impact to the lakes in the area is unlike anything that he has seen before. He also announced that Scott Rosikiewicz retired.
- **USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction:** Dave Kinatader said that on the Mt. Hough District there has been timber sale activity on Bucks along with the SNC funded service work. Thinning has started at Little Grass Valley Reservoir and will be continued with additional SNC funds. Additionally, the Butterfly Twain contract is in progress.
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service:** not present
- **Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District:** not present
- **Firewise Communities:**
  - Graeagle** – Chuck Bowman reported that they had a successful Firewise day in Valley Ranch. Seventeen residents thinned a vacant lot and created piles for the chipping program. Mr. Bowman is working with Mohawk Meadows and Whitehawk Meadows to do similar projects. He is also working with Smith Creek Ranch to become their own Firewise community. Whitehawk is in the process of removing shrubs around townhomes and their thinning project starts on August 20<sup>th</sup>.
  - Gold Mountain** – nothing to report
  - Grizzly Ranch** – John Reynolds said that their Firewise day had a great turnout and included a demonstration of the use of fire extinguishers and discussion of the Home Ignition Zone. Grizzly Ranch is down to 14 lots in the community that are still considered high hazard. Mr. Reynolds encouraged the Council consider making the prescribed fire presentation available to residents of the southern part of the county.
  - Plumas Eureka** – Dennis Lincoln reported that the Fire Department's new Chief is John Sea. The community will have a Firewise day in two weekends.
  - Sloat/Cromberg/Camp Layman** – Mike McCourt said they continue to track volunteer hours and that Mr. Sanders has been doing fuels reduction work in the area.

**Galeppi Ranch** – Dave Kinatader is working on organizing chipping for the community.

**Portola** – Phil Oels announced that they have officially received Firewise recognition and that the signs have been installed. They will have an information booth at Railroad Days. The community received a CAL FIRE award to implement the 192 project.

**Chester** – Karen Lichti has been gone on the Ferguson Fire, but she said that they have been tracking hours and have nearly enough to submit their application. There was an unsolicited write up in the paper about the value of the Firewise efforts in their area.

**Not present/no update:** LACC, Almanor Pines , Mohawk Vista, Lake Almanor West, Feather River College, Plumas Eureka, Greenhorn Creek, Chilcoot/Vinton

- **Industry Representatives:** Steve DeBonis reported that SPI has started a saw-log and biomass fuel reduction project north of Chester. Operations have suspended, but the project should be complete this fall. The treatment will be followed-up with mastication. Their next priority is mastication of a parcel that adjoins the Butterfly Valley subdivision.
- **Tribal Representatives:** Trina Cunningham is working on interagency agreements for the reintroduction of fire at the landscape scale incorporating cultural burning training and capacity building for the tribes. Greenville and Mooretown Rancherias are working on the fires in the State. An IRWM project in Butte County received funds for fire prevention planning.

## 2. Status of Current Grants –

**Senior/Disabled Defensible Space:** Mike McCourt – The program is nearly complete for the year. There is still green waste hauling that needs to be completed as well as four residences at Lake Almanor.

**Chipping Program:** Gary Parque – Participation in the program has increased considerably over last year. Three years of additional funding have been awarded by CAL FIRE.

**Hazardous Fuel Reduction Schedule** – Hannah Hepner – Several more funded projects have been added to the schedule. The operator for Dixie Valley will be starting shortly. The developer of the Portola 192 property has contributed \$15,000 to treat 20 acres. In light of this, a cost-share waiver was approved. **m – Oels, s - Hamblin**

3. Status of Grant Budgets – Hannah Hepner – Newly funded projects are also reflected on the budget spreadsheet.

4 & 5. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities – Hannah Hepner – Secure Rural Schools Title III funds will be on the Plumas County Board of Supervisors agenda in the near future. The California Fire Safe Council granting program applications are due August 30<sup>th</sup>. They require a 1:1 match.

## 6. Other Updates & Upcoming Events - none

**October 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Prescribed fire presentation at FRC, 6:00pm

Adjourned – Next meeting scheduled for September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018