

# Plumas County Fire Safe Council



## Board of Directors

**Chair**, Don Gasser, Citizen (20)  
**Vice Chair**, John Reynolds, Firewise Community (19)  
**Secretary/Treasurer**, Julie Ruiz, NSAQMD (20)  
Dan Martynn, NRCS (20)  
Trina Cunningham, California Indian Water Commission (20)

Chuck Bowman, Firewise Community (19)  
Jim Hamblin, PC Fire Chiefs Assoc. (19)  
Ryan Bauer, USFS (20)  
Mike Callaghan, Firewise Community (20)

## 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, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - 9:00 am.**

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

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1. Welcome & Introductions – Don Gasser
  2. Review Agenda – No changes
  3. Approval of August Meeting Minutes – **m - Reynolds, s – Bowman**
  4. Public Comment – none

## New Business

1. Walker Fire Briefing – Ryan Bauer, Forest Fuels and Prescribed Fire Program Manager for Plumas National Forest, said that the weather has allowed for direct suppression. The fire made a strong southwest run on the first day. On the second day a thunderstorm cell collapsed over the fire, scattering the fire and pushing it to the south. There was a critical loss of containment when the fire spotted across Red Clover Creek and then Last Chance Creek, which was followed by two days of large fire growth. The east side of Plumas County is known for wind driven fire events, which triggered the evacuation in Milford. CAL FIRE resources were used to put dozer line around the finger headed in that direction. The other finger burned through the Wheeler and Antelope fire burn scars and has done good work consuming ground fuels in those areas. Firefighters have been firing along road systems and helicopters are being used on the north end of the fire. Local volunteer engines have been providing structure protection. The subdivisions in Genesee have done a significant amount of fuels reduction. CodeRed was used for the evacuation orders. The fire was not a lightning start. There have been several research teams on the fire because it's currently the largest fire in the nation.

Julie Ruiz added that there has been an air resources advisor on the fire and that Indian Valley and Quincy air quality has been monitored.

2. Title III Update – Don Gasser attended a recent Plumas County Board of Supervisors meeting to make a proposal for Title III funds. However, the Sheriff’s proposals for communications upgrades was already on the agenda and was supported for for the full amount of funds available. Support for the Office of Emergency Services Fire Prevention Specialist was discussed by the BOS. The Fire Safe Council will make regular updates to the BOS to keep them aware of the Council’s efforts.

Mike Callaghan asked if there will be Financial Year 18/29 Title III funds available. He also asked if the Fire Safe Council should make comment about the Sheriff’s proposal during the 45-day comment period. Don Gasser said he would write a letter.

3. Board Chair Vacancy – Don Gasser announced that he is stepping down as the Board Chair. John Reynolds, Vice Chair, will be in the role until the end of the year. Mr. Gasser asked Council members to consider running for the office in the new year.

## Old Business

1. Final CWPP Presentation – Mike Callaghan has completed the CWPP update, which integrated new information learned in the past five years. Don Gasser signed the final document.

2. Mapping Update – Jason Moghaddas and 34 North will present the maps that have been developed to the Plumas County Board of Supervisors in October. Natural Resources Conservation Service treatments were not on the previous map, but SIG has the information to incorporate. A publically accessible link will be available soon.

## Updates

### 1. Standing Reports and Discussion

- **Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES):** Sue McCourt continues to work with Firewise communities. There are new communities developing in parts of Quincy and on La Porte Rd.
- **CAL FIRE:** Sean Delacour said that things have been relatively slow and that he will be retiring December 18<sup>th</sup>. Glen Schall is the new battalion chief for the Vegetation Management Program. In the future he will be attending meetings to develop projects and assist with VMP burning. Al Klem has taken a promotion to work on the CFIP program out of Redding, which means that Quincy is down two positions and vacancies have been hard to fill. Defensible Space inspections have been taking place, but it was hard to find people to fill those jobs because of the qualifications required. Discussion followed about the ability of Firewise coordinators or independent contractors to become certified to do Defensible Space inspections. Chief Delacour said that employees of a fire protection district can become certified through a week-long training, but that volunteer departments aren’t eligible. In this area Chester Fire and Peninsula Fire have been certified.
- **UC Cooperative Extension:** Ryan Tompkins said that he’s submitted a grant to provide NFPA Home Ignition Zone assessment training certification through a national curriculum. It’s a program to educate homeowners to work with their neighbors to identify and mitigate risks. The proposal was partially funded, but it wasn’t enough to cover the level of training that provides certification. Mr. Tompkins is turning to partners to supplement funds to support the certification. The UC Cooperative Extension is hosting a Prescribed Fire on Private Lands workshop on October 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> in Meadow

Valley. It consists of a one-day classroom based workshop followed by a field day of underburning if conditions allow.

- **USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction:** Ryan Bauer said that all of the Forest's contracts and sales are awarded except for one Lakes Basin project sale – the Fraiser Creek sale right around Graeagle didn't get a bid. There is a problem unit that will be dropped and incorporated into a proposal to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for grant funds. The Forest Service is working on a grant application for Little Grass Valley and helping with the Lakes Basin application. The Regional Office has funded most of the additional work proposed for fiscal year 2020. The base funding usually gets the Forest about 60% of the way to targets. There hasn't been an update about Stevens funds, but it should be announced shortly. There is one timber sale shut down due to the Walker Fire. The Forest is prepared for a fall prescribed burn season.
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service:** Dan Martynnn said that six EQIP projects were funded last year. There will be funds available again in October for fuel reduction projects.
- **Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District:** Julie Ruiz introduced Melissa Klundby who is a new employee in the Portola office. There is an air quality monitor in Taylorsville and results are available to the public. The Portola stove exchange program is ongoing.
- **Industry Representatives:** Not present
- **Tribal Representatives:** Trina Cunningham is working on continued collaborations at the state and federal level. She is also working on the Walker Fire to protect resources and plan the recovery effort. She is partnering with organizations to develop future project to reduce fire risk and is working on building workforce development in tribal communities. She said that Mooretown and Greenville Rancherias are active in Plumas County and that Susanville Rancheria is active in their local area. She pointed out that the Rancheria crews don't necessarily have knowledge of place. Therefore it's critical to consult local resource users to close the gap between prescribed fire and cultural fire.
- **Feather River Stewardship Coalition:** There will be a Wildlife Forest Treatment field tour on September 27<sup>th</sup>.
- **Plumas Underburn Cooperative:** There is a liability workshop with a Sierra Nevada Conservancy attorney scheduled for September 13<sup>th</sup> at 10am.
- **Firewise Communities:**

**Graeagle** – Chuck Bowman reported that Whitehawk continues to remove dead trees. They are also working along roadways to clear potential obstructions. In Valley Ranch the community's Hazardous Fuel Assessment report is being submitted to the HOA board. Once it has been discussed it will be released to the community. Mohawk Meadows is establishing a rules document that includes more Firewise language which will be tied to the existing fine structure that the HOA has. Sierra Estates has had Home Ignition Zone consultations on all by two properties. Home Ignition Zone consultations have also been continuing in Graeagle. There are insurance issues across all of the communities. There will be a homeowners' insurance presentation by Ted Dobbs on Sept 20<sup>th</sup>. Clio continues to work towards becoming a Firewise community.

**Smith Creek Ranch** – Andrea Irving said that about 60% of landowners are doing fuel reduction work. There are still some large properties where nothing has been done. A lot of progress has been made along the road. Sue McCourt pointed out that the community has come a long way in a short amount of time.

**Gold Mountain** – Judy Clot said that people have signed up for the second round of chipping. The Fire District will be writing letters to property owners who are out of compliance. The community has

developed projects, but there haven't been operators available to do the work. The HOA has been leaned on to assist with funding projects. Ms. Clot said that insurance companies should have a more sophisticated policy for denying coverage than simply zip code.

**Lake Almanor Country Club** – Barbara MacArthur said that insurance has also been an issue for LACC. Peninsula Fire District did inspections this year using CAL FIRE's LE 100 standards. They sent out notices to 434 lots with structures and 111 unimproved lots. The Firewise committee is asking the Board to fund a Hazardous Fuels Assessment for the community. Currently the road right-of-ways are a significant hazard. Mrs. McCourt asked if there has been a noticeable increase in awareness in the community as a result of the wildland fire exercise. Mrs. MacArthur said that in a small area it was well received, but that there wasn't much awareness beyond that. Chief Delacour pointed out that West Almanor and the Peninsula are largely vacation rentals where visitors don't get CodeRed notifications. There has been discussion about posting evacuation information in each rental. Mrs. MacArthur added that Peninsula Fire has received grant funding to install sirens.

**Grizzly Ranch** – John Reynolds reported that the committee had a Firewise meeting in August. They are working on an early warning/street captain system and are putting together information for rentals and new homeowners. The community is working towards participation in the chipping program in October.

**Galeppi Ranch** – Ryan Tompkins reported that the community had good participation in the chipping program.

**Old Highway** – Sally McGowan said the community is doing site prep for a possible underburn in the fall or spring. Chris Coen contacted 32 insurance companies regarding homeowners insurance. He received four quotes – one local and three out of area companies. All four quotes were offered in conjunction with the FAIR plan. They ranged from \$1,895 to \$3,200/year. He said a major factor in getting coverage was the community's Firewise certification. Mrs. McCourt added that the FAIR plan is now providing a discount to Firewise communities.

**Sloat/Cromberg/Camp Layman** – Mike McCourt said that the committee hasn't met since June but there has been a lot of work going on in the community, which has been incentivized by the free chipping available.

**Chester** – Wanda Floyd said that the committee has gone door to door in Martin Ranch. The fire break behind the community has had all of the hand piling done. A mastication operator is being contracted to complete the project. PG&E is clearing on either side of the powerlines behind 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Chester Fire is hosting an open house at the fire hall on October 12<sup>th</sup> and they will be recruiting more Firewise involvement.

**Hamilton Branch/East Shore/Seneca** – Bill Davies said the committee has mail information about Firewise to everyone on the East Shore. There has been illegal dumping of brush in the woods because of the lack of green waste options.

**Not present/no update:** Almanor Pines, Mohawk Vista, Lake Almanor West, Plumas Eureka, Johnsville, Greenhorn Creek, Portola, Taylorsville

**Potential Communities:** Paxton Lodge, Feather River College, Genesee Woods, Meadow Valley, Clio, River Valley View

- **Tree Mortality Update:** Mr. Gasser noted that there are tree tops dying in high-elevation, small fir and cedar. Ryan Tompkins said that there is a forest health collaborative effort between CAL FIRE, UC Cooperative Extension and the Forest Service and it would be good to report to them where mortality is occurring.

2. Status of Current Grants –

**Senior/Disabled Defensible Space:** Mike McCourt reported that the program is done for the year and treated 115 properties. There were more on the waitlist that could have been treated with additional funding. Some of the work was done to help people with insurance issues.

**Chipping Program:** Gary Parque said that he has been leveraging the program to support the Defensible Space Assistance program and Firewise communities.

**Hazardous Fuel Reduction Schedule** – Hannah Hepner said that there are several projects currently being implemented. The operator will be leaving the Gold Mountain project and the grant will require an extension to allow the work to be completed next year.

3. Status of Grant Budgets – There were no questions about the budget spreadsheet.

4. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities – The Fire Safe Council is waiting to hear from the Forest Service about the status of several Stevens proposals. Proposals to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy are due October 14<sup>th</sup>.

5. Other Updates & Upcoming Events

September 20<sup>th</sup> – Homeowners Insurance Workshop, Graeagle

October 12 – Chester Fire Open House

October 18/19<sup>th</sup> – UC Cooperative Extension Prescribed Fire on Private Lands Workshop, Meadow Valley

Adjourn - Next meeting October 10th, 2019