

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



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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, September 13th, 2018 - 9:00 am.

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

1. Welcome & Introductions – Don Gasser
2. Review Agenda – addition of a Forester Update under New Business
3. Approve August Meeting Minutes – **m – Hamblin, s - Sanders**
4. Public Comment – Randy Wilson thanked the Fire Safe Council for the donated projector screen. Trina Cunningham gave an update on the work that she is doing to promote urban investment in headwater communities. She said to keep an eye on water policy – specifically with regard to water rights.

New Business

1. Forester Update – Letters were sent to the four foresters from which proposals were received. The letters thanked them for their interest in working with the Fire Safe Council and described the process moving forward: as projects require the services of a Registered Professional Forester the Fire Safe Council will issue a bid request to the four foresters as well as the Fire Safe Council’s retained forester. This approach should significantly streamline the proposal process for individual projects.

Old Business

1. The Culture of Light Burning will take place at 6:00pm on Tuesday, October 2nd on the Feather River College campus. Individuals who RSVP will be entered into a raffle. The presenters will be followed by a Q&A panel discussion that includes Paul Violett (Soper Wheeler), Ryan Bauer (PNF), and Bob Beckwith (private land owner).

Hannah Hepner proposed that the Fire Safe Council co-host a public showing of [Wilder than Wild](#) in November. Costs will be shared among PCFSC, the Feather River Land Trust, and Spatial Informatics Group. Council members expressed support for the event.

Updates

1. Standing Reports and Discussion

- **Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES):** Sue McCourt reported that 8,000 individuals have signed up for [CodeRed](#) in Plumas County. Alerts can be issued via text, mail, or phone. She encouraged Fire Safe Council members to promote CodeRed in their communities. Mrs. McCourt has been keeping informed about homeowners insurance issues in the State. She suggested that all policy holders regularly review their policy to make sure that they are not underinsured. September is [National Disaster Preparedness Month](#). This year's theme is "Disasters Happen. Prepare Now. Learn How." The NFPA's Fire Prevention Week is October 7 – 13th.
- **CAL FIRE:** Mark Hillskotter reported that the Defensible Space Inspection program is still in operation through mid-October. More than 2,000 inspections have been completed. Non-compliance is low. As of September 2nd there had been 4,587 fires in the State, which burned 613,710 acres. The number of acres burned is significantly higher than at the same time last year. Don Gasser announced a CAL FIRE program that will train fuel reduction crews in multiple locations in northern California. Dave Kinateder said that the California Conservation Corps (CCC) may also have crews available in the area for fuels projects.
- **USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction:** Marty Senter said that the Forest is gearing up to burn this fall. They will underburn and then pile burn. It has been a slow fire season locally, but resources have been supporting fire suppression efforts all summer. The Beckwourth Ranger District managed another lightning ignited fire this summer. It burned 90 acres. Mr. Senter has been assured that there will be Stevens funds awarded for FY 2019. Ryan Tompkins provided an update on the Lakes Basin project, which includes two timber sales and a proposal to SNC that is in progress to complete the service work. PNF is supporting SNC proposals by Plumas Audubon for project planning in Boyle Ravine between Quincy and the Minerva fire, by the University of California for project planning around the UC Forestry Camp in Meadow Valley. There are current timber sales around Frenchman/Dixie Valley, Plumas Eureka, Butterfly, and Bucks. Dave Kinateder reported that in FY 2018 the Mt. Hough Ranger District accomplished 2,937 acres of fuels treatments (which doesn't include timber sales). He compared this number to the 36,000 acres that would have historically burned on average each year. Mr. Kinateder provided a map of a proposed Indian Falls project. Claude Sanders asked about the status of the chip market and how prescribed fire dovetails with biomass utilization. Mr. Kinateder said that chips from the Bucks project have gone to Loyalton. The proposed Indian Falls project utilizes prescribed burn only treatments on steep slopes. Mr. Tompkins added that, at a minimum, the Forest attempts to cut, skid, and deck all timber sale biomass. Operators may be paid to chip and haul it. There is some uncertainty in the market as the biomass incentive power purchase agreement will expire after five years. This has made it difficult to sell timber projects that have a biomass component.
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service:** not present
- **Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District:** no report
- **Industry Representatives:** Steve DeBonis reported that SPI is planning on masticating their Butterfly Valley fuel break as soon as conditions allow. They will return to their project north of Chester in November and will likely masticate there in the spring.

- **Tribal Representatives:** Ben Cunningham said that their properties are going into escrow. Once they take control of the properties in the spring, work will be initiated. Trina Cunningham is applying to do inter-tribal work with the Karuk to develop a cultural burning program and to certify burn bosses.
- **Plumas County Tree Mortality Task Force:** Mike Callaghan said that final public outreach in the local newspapers is forthcoming. He also plans to make public comment at an upcoming Board of Supervisors meeting.
- **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.
- **Firewise Communities:**

Don Gasser encouraged Firewise communities to identify projects for which the CAL FIRE fuels crews may be utilized. Sue McCourt pointed out that those projects will still require CEQA compliance.

Grizzly Ranch – John Reynolds said that their Firewise day was in August and the community has done everything required for recertification. Community members have been building piles for the chipping program.

Portola – Phil Oels said that they are waiting on funding for the 192 project, but have been working on smaller projects in the meantime.

Galeppi Ranch – Dave Kinatader said that the chipping program has been a great opportunity to get to know neighbors. Ryan Tompkins added that the community received Firewise recognition in July. There are a lot of people interested in the chipping program and other grant opportunities. The CC&Rs are being reviewed and will incorporate fuels objectives.

Gold Mountain – Judy Clot hosted a luncheon to talk about a community protection plan and to get more members involved in the Firewise committee. She has met with potential contractors for several projects in Gold Mountain. A few of the community’s critical lots have complied with the fuels reduction requirements, but letters have gone out to those that have not complied. There are about 20 applicants for the chipping program.

Plumas Eureka – Dennis Lincoln reported that the community had a cleanup day to create defensible space around the fire house. On the whole defensible space is good, however, undeveloped lots are an issue. There is support among the five area HOAs to make changes in their CC&Rs to support work on those lots. The HOAs will meet on Oct 17th.

Sloat/Cromberg/Camp Layman – Mike McCourt said they continue to track volunteer hours, that Mr. Sanders has been doing fuels reduction work in the area, and that a few individuals have signed up for the chipping program.

Lake Almanor West – Sue McCourt reported that the Firewise day had fifty people in attendance.

Graeagle – Mrs. McCourt also reported that Chuck Bowman has been working with Smith Creek Ranch on Firewise recognition.

Not present/no update: Chester, LACC, Almanor Pines, Mohawk Vista, Feather River College, Greenhorn Creek, Chilcoot/Vinton

2. Status of Current Grants –

Senior/Disabled Defensible Space: Mike McCourt – The program is complete for the year and over 100 clients’ homes were treated for defensible space. About 35 of the participants were new this year. He has received several thank-you letters.

Chipping Program: Gary Parque – The second round of chipping has nearly 100 participants signed up already. The chipping program compliments the Senior/Disabled program and provides benefits for air quality. Mr. Sanders asked to clarify how piles should be constructed. He pointed out that more material can be piled within the dimensions of the program guidelines if trees are limbed. However, it is easier for both the landowner and the chipping operator if the limbs remain on the trees.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction Schedule – Mike Callaghan voiced concerns about the ability of one forester to accomplish the layout for the Plumas Collaborative Forest Health Project in the required time frame. Alternatives were discussed.

3. Status of Grant Budgets – Julie Ruiz gave an overview of the current grant budgets.

4. 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 and the process for Title II funds will be announced soon. Mr. Callaghan said that the Council should again consider requesting coordination funds through the RAC.

5. Other Updates & Upcoming Events

October 2nd – Prescribed fire presentation at FRC, 6:00pm

Adjourned – Next meeting scheduled for October 11th, 2018