

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Board of Directors

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Shane Vargas, CAL FIRE (18)
Dan Martynn, NRCS (18)
Julie Ruiz, NSAQMD (18)
Ryan Bauer, USFS (18)

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 14th, 2017 - 9:00 am.

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

1. Welcome & Introductions – Don Gasser
2. Review Agenda – **m – De Lasaux, s - Martynn**
3. Approve Meeting Minutes – **m – Sheehan, s – Reynolds.**
4. Public Comment – none

New Business

1. Loyaltan Biomass Update - Steve Mueller, American Renewable Power

ARP has recently purchased multiple closed or poorly managed biomass facilities. The decision to purchase the Loyaltan biomass facility was influenced by multiple factors:

- During the time that it was closed, the facility was well maintained by SPI.
- Jim Turner, a local resident, is overseeing operations.
- The Forest Service gave a resounding yes that material would be available.
- A contract with a utilities consortium gave assurance to investors that there would be a customer.

Material will come from within a 40 mile radius (which excludes some areas of Plumas County). The facility will utilize 165,000 bone dry tons of material per year, employ 22 full-time staff, and offer a milling operation for specialty logs. An Eco-tech campus for 30 tenants is under development.

Advance wood technology producers and manufacturers that can use biomass byproducts are being

solicited for tenancy. The facility is “destined not to die” because of its planned coexistence with industry.

John Sheehan asked if a range of prices had been established for material. Mr. Mueller explained that the price of fiber has been artificially inflated by the cost of power. He said that Loyalton will not be offering \$48-60/bone dry ton like other operations. \$20 for non-hazard and up to \$35 for Tier 1 & 2 High Hazard material is the going rate. The trade-off is that Loyalton offers more convenient access.

Chief Don Gordon reminded the group that there is a process in place for locally designating Tier 1 & 2 High Hazard Zones.

Don Gasser asked in what forms the material will be accepted. - Only processed material will be paid for. Unprocessed material will be accepted at no cost; stumps cost \$10/load. Logs will be accepted and utilized for their “highest use.”

Phil Oels asked if residents will be able to deliver pick-up loads of slash. - The system in place to deal with that material is through the regional landfills – which will then process and deliver to the biomass facility.

Mike De Lasaux asked if small chip vans will be accepted. – Yes, deliveries will be accepted from all designated program activities. Known parties will be registered.

Mr. De Lasaux summarized the opportunity by stating that PCFSC formerly produced fiber that allowed projects to treat an additional 25% acres with the commercial income.

2. AB 1712 Private Burning of Lands - Chief Gordon

This bill cleans up language for a process that has existed for some time, allowing landowners to burn their own property. It aims to increase the pace and scale of burning on all lands. CAL FIRE is not encumbered to provide support for private lands burning, but they can supply holding resources. Additionally, they provide guidelines for safe burning.

Mr. De Lasaux pointed out that most landowners will have to retain professional services due to liability. He foresees it becoming a cumbersome permitting process. Chief Gordon followed that, yes, liability rests on the landowner. It may be an easier permitting process if the landowner is part of a Vegetation Management Program (VMP).

Old Business – None

Updates

1. Plumas County Tree Mortality Task Force – next meeting planned for October.
2. Status of Current Grants – Hannah Hepner & Project Managers

262 – Feather River Stewardship Coalition: Held the SNC grant writing workshop in late August. Sixteen people attended.

275/276 – Senior/Disabled Defensible Space: 55 maintenance projects were completed with SRA fee funds this year. An additional 25 clients were treated with 2012 Stevens funds (259). These additional properties included some “heavy” work that our budget wouldn’t otherwise cover.

278 – Chipping Program: The Phase II RFP closes on Sept 15th. Gary Parque said that we need to address the timing of chipping because by mid-summer fires impact operators’ ability to get the chipping done. In the future we need to have the program underway in the spring. Mr. Sheehan pointed out that opportunities now exist for chips and that the chipping program should be restructured to accommodate these changes.

259 – Barry Creek: Project is complete with 59.4 acres (of a planned 555) treated.

East Quincy: Project is complete with 92 acres treated.

East Shore: The DM has been signed and Crossfire contracted to treat 9.4 acres.

260 – Hwy 70: Mastication & hand thinning is complete. Piles require burning in the fall.

273- Dixie Valley: Layout is complete. The project area covers 74.3 acres. A draft archaeology report has been submitted to PNF. Danielle Bradfield will have a completed Environmental Assessment in mid-October. Mr. De Lasaux asked if there is an opportunity for biomass on this project.

277- Wolf/Grizzly: Bids have been received by PNF and they came in high. The operator is Imperial. The Forest will be looking for ways to finance the acres that will not be covered by grant funds. There will probably be action on the project before winter.

280 - Bucks Lake: An offer has been made to the CCC for \$50,000 to treat 50 acres. Nick Johnson is coming out to look at the units.

279 - Mohawk Vista: Signed agreement received.

281 – Gold Mountain: Signed agreement received.

3 & 4. Status of Potential Projects/Grant Opportunities – Hannah Hepner

USFS Stevens funds – submitted April 14

C Road - 90 acres, \$180,570

Grizzly Ranch – 130 acres, \$270,275

American Valley Phase II – 100 acres, \$285,970

Genesee Woods/Red Clover – 100 acres, \$178,970 (2019 Stevens funds)

CA FSC Grant Program – submitted May 10

Requested \$11,350 for Senior/Disabled Defensible Space program. Application was unsuccessful – awaiting feedback.

FEMA Fire Prevention & Safety Grant – submitted May 18

Requested \$56,168 for Senior/Disabled Defensible Space program

One year implementation period, 5% cost share - \$2,808

Plumas RAC Title II – submitted August 11

\$500,000 available. No match requirement.

Submitted an application for the Senior/Disabled Defensible Space Assistance Program for \$65,300 and six months of PCFSC Coordination for \$27,500. RAC will meet to deliberate on Sept 30th. Proponents are encouraged to attend to answer questions.

SNC Prop 1 – pre-applications submitted Sept 1st

No match requirement. Pre-applications made for Little Grass Valley Reservoir and Butterfly Twain.

CAL FIRE SRA FPF – to be announced soon.

5. Standing Reports and Discussion

- **Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES):** Sue McCourt – A Firewise assessment for The Pines on the Lake Almanor Peninsula has been completed. The National Firewise program now has an online program that will provide more localized data. There are new [research fact sheets](#) available on National Firewise website, with new ones coming out monthly. Dale Knudsen was recently recognized with a special award.
- **CAL FIRE:** Captain Shane Vargas reported that Defensible Space Inspectors have completed 520 inspections. There has been a 95% compliance rate. Chief Sean Delacour has been busy with fires but will prioritize burning of the American Valley piles once crews are back. PIO Gabriel Lauderdale said that the Sacramento communications office has developed evacuation brochures. An evacuation map has been developed for Quincy and will be mailed to 5,500 residents by the end of the month. Sue McCourt added that Chester is the next opportunity of developing an evacuation map. Scott Rosikiewicz said to keep monitoring the CAL FIRE website for the SRA grant announcement. Chief Don Gordon noted that it has been a busy fire season. He provided an update on the status of Cap & Trade funds and suggested that Plumas County is well positioned to take advantage of the opportunity. Mr. De Lasaux asked if defensible space inspections will continue in the absence of SRA fees. Chief Gordon said that, in fact, there may be an expansion of fire prevention activities and staffing. The education component has made a notable difference and defensible space contributes to climate change adaption because it can reduce the occurrence of unwanted fires.
- **USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction:** Dave Kinatader, Mt. Hough – There has been timber sale activity by Bucks Lake and Round Valley Reservoir. Settlement dollars from the Moonlight Fire have not been prioritized for WUI projects. Contracts with the Forest Service have kept the Mooretown Rancheria working year-round.
- **Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District:** not present
- **Firewise Communities:**
 - Lake Almanor West** – no update
 - Graeagle** – Held a Firewise Day that had 50 people in attendance.
 - Gold Mountain** – Did a pancake breakfast event over the holiday weekend.
 - LACC** – Participated in The Pines’ Firewise assessment.
 - Grizzly Ranch** – 25-30 property owners (of 300) have cleaned up their properties.
 - Plumas Eureka** – Most of the defensible space inspections were done in these neighborhoods and they have had a positive impact. One landowner was not able to get insurance for a new home until they discovered a company that would insure because of the community’s Firewise recognition.

Sloat/Cromberg/Camp Layman – Firewise recognition signs have been installed on the highway. Forms have been distributed for fuels reduction tracking.

Gallepii – no update

Portola- Held a booth at the Railroad Days. Portola will renew their assessment in October.

- **Industry Representatives** – none present

6. Other Updates & Upcoming Events

Adjourn - Next meeting October 12th, 2017