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PLUMASFIRESAFE.ORG

# Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 - 10:00 am.

50 Church Street, Quincy

## Board of Directors

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Chair</b> , John Reynolds Firewise (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Vice Chair</b> , Sally McGowan Firewise (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Secretary/Treasurer</b> Mike Flanigan, Insurance (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ron Heinbockel Plumas Fire Chiefs (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joe Smailes Firewise (23)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don Gasser RPF (24)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jonathan Pangburn CAL FIRE (24)	<input type="checkbox"/> Trina Cunningham Maidu Summit Consort. (24)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chuck Bowman Firewise (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ryan Tompkins UCCE (23)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kathy Kogge Firewise (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Hall Feather River RCD (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracey Ferguson Plumas County Planning (23)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Julie Hunter NSAQMD (24)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ryan Bauer USFS PNF (22)

**Mission Statement:** "To reduce the loss of natural resources and human values caused by wildfire through Firewise community programs and pre-fire activities."

### 5-Year Strategic Plan

Program Strategy: Expand existing programs and establish additional projects:

1. Leverage and expand partnerships
2. Sustainably increase staffing
3. Establish robust monitoring systems & metrics
4. Increase public engagement
5. Develop County-wide community fuels and threat mapping assessment

Funding Strategy: Target sustainable annual budget increase of 20%:

1. Continue to produce competitive grant proposals that are based on funder's objectives.
2. Pursue approaches for non-competitive funding which reduce administration while increasing long term benefits.
3. Leverage charitable donations to increase public outreach, education, and participation.
4. Continue to pursue potential revenue-generating activities utilizing woody material.

Leadership Strategy: Ensure strong and functional systems are in place to facilitate ongoing organizational capacity:

1. Maintain a Board of Directors with strategically recruited membership.
2. Continue partnership with Plumas Corporation as fiscal agent.

## 10:00am Membership Meeting

1. Welcome & Introductions – Sally McGowan
2. Review Agenda – McGowan
3. Approve February Meeting Minutes – McGowan
- Motion: Ryan Tompkins, Second: Michael Hall**
4. Presentation of Certificate of Recognition to: None
5. Public Comment: None
6. Board Comment: None

## **New Business**

1. Gary Darling and Joseph Regnery presented on the [Aries Clean Technologies](#) Biomass Facility in Chester, CA.

After last year, Aries started pursuing funding opportunities to support the development of the project. They are supplementing the funding requirements for their engineering/design work, as well as permitting/developing with government support. Aries applied for grant funds through the California Conservation Group but was not awarded. Aries also applied for a grant through the U.S. Forest Service under their Wood Innovations program, which has yet to be announced. There are plans to apply for two more grants from CAL FIRE and the California Energy Commission.

The new biomass facility will employ 15-20 new employees paid prevailing and professional wages. It will be located on a 10-acre plot adjacent to the Collins lumber mill. The facility will process 540 wet tons/day (approximately 15-20 truckloads) of both burned and unburned biomass. The product is an estimated 0.8 megawatts of net electrical output, and 84 tons/day of biochar (a renewable carbon product that can be sold into the agricultural or industrial carbon markets). This is achieved through a process called gasification, with controlled levels of oxygen and/or steam into hydrogen, carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide gasses. Air permits for the facility will be issued by the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District. The projected emissions/greenhouse gasses from this facility are a fraction of that from open burning and over 90% less than traditional incineration technologies.

Don Gasser asked how much volume/day will be on the roads. Mr. Regnery answered with 84 tons/day being transported in their electric trucks – this equates to 4 truckloads per day. Aries is looking into the Freightliner eCascadia for their electric trucks.

Julie Hunter asked if Aries will be accepting green waste or chips from other locations besides Collins Pine. Mr. Regnery responded that yes, though Collins Pine will be the ones sourcing the material, they will be sourcing from all areas that they provide stewardship-based harvesting. Ms. Hunter responded with the fact that Portola is a nonattainment area, so though there are many green waste delivery sites, there are not many viable options for processing the material. Ms. Hunter proposed that collaborating with Aries would be a potential solution.

John Sheehan asked about how much will be financed from the Aries facility. Mr. Regnery indicated they are anticipating 60-70% financing, and roughly \$75-90 million.

## **Old Business**

None

## **Updates**

1. Standing Reports and Discussion
  - CAL FIRE: Pangburn cautioned those at lower elevations of flooding. For those at mid-high elevations, Pangburn cautions of snow loading, and advises community members to reference the snow loading information sheet put out by Chuck White from Plumas County Building. At CAL FIRE, things have been standard and there are currently no plans to increase staffing for at

least a few months. In regards to fuel reduction, CAL Fire is at a signature phase for the Butterfly Valley Prescribed Fire Project. CAL FIRE is making active efforts to interface with landowners to get documentation to fully implement the project.

- Feather River College: John Sheehan provided an update. The new Bachelor's Degree program in Ecosystem Restoration and Applied Fire Management has been approved by the Community College Board of Governors.
- Feather River Resource Conservation District (RCD): Michael Hall said FRRCD has been coordinating tree planting, which could start anywhere from April-June depending on elevation. The seedlings are primarily yellow pine (*ponderosa & jeffreyi*). There is 20% incense cedar and 15% Douglas fir. There is a shortage of sugar pine. They also recently received a grant to implement work on Collins Pine land near St. Bernard Lodge – this will be approximately 1,100 acres of tree mortality removal, which will mostly consist of chipping. The treatment will take place exclusively on Collins Pine property. FRRCD has begun hiring field techs, some of whom have started working on Plumas Underburn Cooperative Projects.
- Feather River Stewardship Coalition: Ms. Hepner said FRSC sent out a survey to coalition members about meeting structure. Some responses have been received. FRSC leads will soon meet with Friends of Plumas Wilderness to gauge their interest in helping facilitate the group going forward. Michael Hall added that Friends of Plumas Wilderness has capacity to engage in more community organizing. Joe Smailes requests that a date is established for the next meeting. Mr. Smailes suggests that setting an earlier date will yield more opportunities for increased participation.
- Firewise Communities: No update.
- Industry – Timber: Not present.
- Industry – Insurance: Mike Flannigan said the California Fair Plan does not contain a weight of snow coverage. Mr. Flannigan referenced an article from Plumas News by Ted Gains: [Where I Stand: Insurance Commissioner Must Act Now to Prevent Crisis](#). Safeco is not writing any more business in California.
- Industry – Utilities: Not present.
- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS): Not present
- Northern Sierra AQMD: Julie Hunter said burning in the seasonal portion of Quincy will be opening on March 15<sup>th</sup>. The Air Pollution application is now available online. Permits are issued once Northern Sierra AQMD receives payment. Ms. Hunter hopes to start conversations about the strictly no-burn areas of Quincy – there was a recent approval from their APCO to start considering projects in that area because of the hazardous fuel buildup in those locations.
- Agriculture Department: Jenny Wiley provided an update. They are working with the Plumas Underburn Cooperative to coordinate an underburn on the Ganzner field. Ms. Wiley has approximately 380 weed sites she visits annually. She also runs a Scott's Broom removal program that is operated during the Winter months.
- Plumas Corp: Scott Corey provided said that Plumas Corp is actively looking into water content. Groundwater recovery will be a longer prospect. Plumas Corp will be involved with projects in the Southern Sierra Nevada in the coming years. A new Project Manager has been added to the Plumas Corp team, starting in April. Bethany Rouse has also been hired by Plumas Corp on the watershed side. Mr. Corey has been spending time regarding PCFSC corporate norms, etc.

- Plumas County Fire Chiefs Association: Matt West shared that the next meeting is Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am -12:00 pm at fire station 1.
- Plumas County Office of Emergency Services (OES): Not Present. However, John Sheehan used this time to comment on the role of the Federal Government in receiving funding. After research, Mr. Sheehan believes that FEMA will be a viable funding source and advocates for the role of the Federal Government in wildfire mitigation endeavors.
- Plumas County Planning Department: Tracey Ferguson shared that the CAL FIRE updated Fire Safe regulations will be fully implemented within the coming month. In May, Ms. Ferguson will provide a high-level presentation on the state responsibility area and the Very High fire severity zones of LRA, which the State fire regulations are within. The presentation will answer the question: how does this affect the property owner? Plumas County is working on its comment letter for the fire hazard severity zone map. They will bring that letter to the board of supervisors meeting on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Ferguson invites the community to participate in the long-term recovery plan process for the Dixie and Beckwourth Complex Fire. The Vinton East County meeting is now on March 21<sup>st</sup> from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm at the Sierra Valley Grange. Plumas County Planning Department is looking for public comment. If you can't attend, community members can see the Plumas County website – at the very bottom of the home page, there is a link to the 2021 wildfire long-term recovery plan. There, community members can research the total 54 projects, and participate in online surveys. There will also be upcoming workshops in April.
- Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship: Not present.
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy: Not present.
- Tree Mortality Update: Ryan Tompkins shared that the USFS aerial detection survey was released for tree mortality. This was a substantial year for tree mortality. The areas most affected in Plumas County were Lakes Basin. There were high levels of mortality for white fir and Douglas fir. Along with fir mortality, there were high levels of post-fire delayed tree mortality. Mr. Sheehan asked if the aerial detection survey produced project-level maps, and Ryan Tompkins responded with yes, explaining the details of the survey. As tree mortality increases, we are continuing to generate a fuel load for future fire seasons.
- Tribal Representatives: Not present
- UC Cooperative Extension: Mr. Tompkins announced that UCCE hired a new Staff Research Associate, Nic Dutch. Nic is part of a statewide team coordinating post-fire resilience workshops. These workshops are primarily focused on nonindustrial private forest landowners who have been impacted by fire. UCCE will be doing research quantifying the impact these programs have on nonindustrial private forest landowners compared to agency programs as well as other similar emergency forest restoration team pilot programs throughout the state. UCCE submitted a paper on fuel treatment resilience, researching fuel treatments installed 20 years ago, and determining their effectiveness. UCCE will be bringing on a graduate student likely next year. Mr. Tompkins has been contributing to a GTR on post-fire restoration interventions. Mr. Tompkins acknowledged that much of UCCE is funded by the Farm Bill.
- USFS Hazardous Fuels Reduction: Joe McGinn said operations came to a halt due to the weather. USFS was able to treat a little more than 100 acres in the WUI around Butterfly Valley and Genesee doing pile burning. USFS is currently coordinating their Spanish Ranch Underburn Plan. They are coordinating other projects in Meadow Valley, near Taylorsville, and by Boulder

Creek. Joe Smailes commented on the demand for the Protect project and the Post-Fire project. Mr. Smailes requests an update at the April PCFSC meeting.

## 2. Status of PCFSC Programs

- Public Lands Projects – Matt West: Most projects are currently under snow. PCFSC anticipates getting grant funding for QWIP, but that won't be solidified until June.
- Private Lands Projects - Rachel Wehrman is assisting with the Emergency Forest Restoration Team by reaching out to landowners and gauging interest in herbicide application. She is also working on getting permits for the no-burn zone to implement 81 acres of the Plumas Disadvantaged Communities project.
- County Coordination – Liam Galleher has been speaking to Fire Safe Councils throughout California about Fire Safe Home Visits. He also spoke on a panel at the Wildfire Resilient Structures conference in February. He will be attending a legislative walk in April to get continued funding for the County Coordinator grant.
- Senior Disabled Defensible Space – Tommy Brenzovich: Starting the process of reaching out to landowners. Mr. Brenzovich is looking into funding opportunities for a Home Hardening Incentive program. He is also pursuing opportunities to have an Automated External Defibrillator on hand. The chipping dates have been set for the year, and the dates can be found on the PCFSC website.
- Plumas Underburn Cooperative – Logan Krahenbuhl: Received funding for the HEPA filter program, which is now active. Filters are provided on a no-cost loan basis. PCFSC will be working with Plumas Crisis Intervention to assist with a county-wide wildfire preparedness message. Terra Fuego, a nonprofit from Chico, will be assuming liability and burn boss credentials for the pile burns behind Quincy High School. TREX is postponed to the weekend of March 24<sup>th</sup> - there are multiple training opportunities for community members. PCFSC is considering an in-house fuels module. PUC burned 5 acres in Butterfly Valley. The next PUC meeting is Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm.
- Outreach: Living with Fire is currently being printed. The PCFSC Annual Report is available in the PCFSC office, and copies will be brought to the April PCFSC meeting.

## 3. Other Updates & Upcoming Events: None

Adjourn - Next meeting April 13th, 2023