

Fire Safe Council Meeting June 14th

The Plumas County Fire Safe Council has worked to create fire-resistant communities since 2002. Using minimal staff while working with local organizations, contractors, and volunteers, millions of dollars have transformed thousands of acres into safer and healthier forests. Logs, biomass, chips, and burn piles have been developed and the forest changes are providing longer sight distances and more open terrain. “With ground and ladder fuels removed, along with small dead and sick trees, the forest is healthier and has made us much safer from wildfire” says Don Gasser, Board Chair of the Fire Safe Council. While chainsaw and ax modified many of these forests, more recent efforts have included the use of masticators (picture) which literally grind up the forest and leave the remnants for further decomposition. Gasser adds “most of these thinning efforts appear ugly at first, changing through time to places preferred by humans, and many animals as well. The open forest is a safer forest, and provides many environmental benefits.”

Don Gasser sees the situation this way: “The sheer volume of altered Plumas County forest acres - particularly when coupled with those treated by the Quincy Library Group - has created challenges for future efforts by the Fire Safe Council, as well as for federal, state, and local fire departments and other committed citizens. Trees

grow, and forests must be managed wherever we live. The development of safer forest conditions does not last forever, and the march of time produces not only more trees and more dead trees, but more forest fuels. As branches fall and trees succumb to normal mortality, the fuel problem grows, and with it our need to respond. The need to maintain and expand the forest openings will require vigilance to changing forest conditions as well as different operational techniques. Wood is not worth much in small forms, and labor and equipment will still be needed, so economics is an important issue. Prescribed fire may help to lower costs, but we need to get very good at the practice in order to use it confidently. To wait is to let the problem grow, so it behooves us to continue to search for ways to meet our fuel reduction goals.”

Perhaps you live in one of the nine Firewise communities that have been established throughout Plumas County. These are volunteer organizations that can always use interested help to work for greater education and involvement. A look at the website (<https://www.plumasfiresafe.org/firewise-usa.html>) shows each Firewise community. In addition, the website details other programs of the Council - assistance for senior and disabled residents, county-wide free chipping, and ways to increase the fire safety around your home. It is law that homeowners are responsible for the fuels 100' around their home, and many resources are listed for ways to

accomplish that fuel reduction. The best way to become fire safe is to be involved, and many will find neighbors who feel likewise. Come join us in the Fire Safe Council to explore additional answers for wildfire preparedness.

Plumas Fire Safe Council meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month and are attended by citizens, business owners, and representatives from local, state, and federal agencies that share common interests in preventing loss of life and minimizing loss of property from wildland fires. The PC FSC will meet June 14th at 9:00am in Quincy in the Planning and Building Services Conference room, 555 Main Street Quincy.