

March 18, 2017 Lincoln County FireSafe Council Meeting Minutes

Attendees; Ed Levert, Lincoln Co Forester; Steve Lauer, Libby RFD; Tim Bumgarner and Grant Rider, Libby RD; Dan Rose, Kootenai N.F.; Lisa Osborn, Three Rivers R.D.; Bill Swope and Louis Kuennen, Flathead Economic Policy Center; Dawain Burgess, North End Representative; Ali Ulwelling, Flathead FireSafe Council.

Round Robin:

Bumgarner- Hiring of new fire positions is now complete.

Rider- Grant is currently filling in for Nikia as the district fire management officer. Nikia is on assignment in Russia.

Osborn- Lisa reported on the Northern Rockies Fire Prevention Group's meeting. Lisa is on other district assignments and limited to how much fire prevention she can do. Starry Goat DEIS due in June.

The selection of the Kootenai N.F. as the provider of the Nations Christmas Tree is creating a lot of work. Tree must be between 60'-70' tall. Need 10,000 ornaments. Need 75 smaller trees from state lands.

Swope- \$270,000 South Lincoln County Grant is now approved for expenditures. Smaller portion will go to Sanders County. Coverage of grant area in Lincoln County primarily focused on Highway 2 and areas south, but has flexibility to address other areas too. Management plans are a new requirement for project and will be a challenge. FireWise assessments are also a target, which is new. There remains \$30,000 available for the north end of the county through the Title III funds.

Burgess- Dawain asked me if we wanted to take the FireWise trailer to the Eureka Rendezvous on April 29. I told him yes and that I would take care of the parking fee. TFS had one shed burn down near the fire station that was engulfed by the time the alarm was sounded. TFS has been doing training and working on equipment. They are in the process of having a surplus 2 ½ ton truck converted to a water tender.

Kuennen- Lou reported that he had 6 agreements with 52 completed for 245 acres. He has 15-20 current applicants for grants that he can now process. In the discussion it was mentioned that it would be helpful for Steve in particular if he could have a list of the fuel reduction grant participants. Lou will provide this.

Lauer- Steve has been involved with the ice removal on Flower Creek the past week. They have 6 new firefighters. Two firefighters are doing rail road training. Fire department will have a booth at the April health fair. Highway 37 corridor north is current emphasis area for FireWise assessments with Bobtail area next. Steve is looking for good before and after fuel treatment pictures. Lisa said she had lots of them.

I mentioned the need for Libby to have an event to maintain their Wildfire Community status. The Roaring Lion Fire presentation by Byron Bonney was mentioned.

Rose- Dan said that Allen Osborn had accepted the FMO job at Troy. Vicki Stevens has accepted a fire ecologist position at Dillon. Regional level equipment contracts have worked well, requiring only task orders to implement. There is lots of burning scheduled this spring, but because of the wet fall and winter it is doubtful much will be accomplished. A national NEMO team(Houseman) will be on the forest in April to do landscape level risk assessments.

Levert- I mentioned a message I had received from Jake Mertes, county environmental health specialist, that all burning in the Libby Airshed is being postponed until April 10 because of wet fuel conditions. The burning season will then extend 10 days into May conditions allowing.

The FireSafe Montana board meeting will be held in Bozeman on March 27. I will not be able to attend. Em Kayan Village has renewed its FireWise Community status, but Chain of Lakes has not as of this date. I reported on the grant status of Alvord Lake Community Forest. There are still funds remaining from the grant and thinning to complete if weather and road conditions allow.

I asked Ali if she had any insight into the DNRC replacement FireWise assessment process. She said she was not prepared to discuss it. Steve Lauer expressed concern with changing the form as he feels the current form works very satisfactorily.

Flathead FireSafe Council report(Ali)- Their council is now one year old. Usually have 10-12 in attendance. Currently working on getting a logo, web site and fuels management mapping. Their council is helping with the presentation, “Era of Megafires” which will be presented at the Flathead Junior College on April 25. I mentioned that we had offered mileage reimbursement to Lincoln County fire fighters to attend. The presentation will also be offered in Sandpoint. Their council has decided to do an internal county CWPP rather than contract it out. Byron Bonney will be presenting his slide show on the Roaring Lion Fire at the North Fork FireWise program on July 19.

New Business-

Air Curtain Burner MOU- Tim said that their new burner was portable and they would like to see it utilized across agency boundaries. There will be no charge for using the burner although they will need to come up with a MOU that spells out the maintenance and operations requirements. Tim mentioned using the burner on a fuels project such as the Neils slash piles next to the ranger station. I said these piles were slated for burning, however if that didn’t happen the burner would be another alternative. Seems like a great opportunity for our community with air restrictions.

- Because of the limited time available for discussing potential ideas and project priorities I handed out a draft list of ideas I had and asked for feedback and other ideas.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00.

Next Meeting- April 20, at 9:00 AM

Ed Levert, Chair