

## **May 17, 2018 Lincoln County FireSafe Council Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:** Ed Levert, Lincoln Co Forester; Dawain Burgess, Mike Sanders, Upper Yaak FSA; Steve Lauer, Doug Turman, DNRC; Trevor Pelling McCormick RFD; Doug Turman and Logan Sandman, DNRC; Bill Swope, Flathead Economic Policy Center; Dan Rose and Jeff Stevenson, USFS; Kip and Connie Buegge, McCormick Firewise Community; Paige Hageness, Libby Ranger District; Jerry Bennett, County Commissioner.

### **Round Robin:**

Rose- Dan said the forest has completed 2500-3000 acres of prescribed burns. They have 100 firefighters signed up for the summer. Guard school will be in the Yaak on June 4 and cooperating agencies may contact Jeff Stevenson to sign up.

Hageness- Paige said that their prevention program is on-going.

Sandman- Logan said that the dispatcher position will close on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The engine academy is scheduled June 11-15 in the Swan. Steve Tiegan and Rick will retire on June 1. S215 will be held at Island Lake and is open to more folks.

Burgess- Cody White at the Eureka R.S. is wrapping up his school program.

Sanders- Mike said they had a fire a couple of weeks ago and a recent practice drill.

Lauer- They completed a practice exercise with the FS in OU-3. There will be annexation meeting next week to discuss the Big Horn and other areas annexation.

Pelling- Responded to a Yaak campground fire. Two of their firefighters will attend the S215 training.

Conny Buegge- Conny gave us a summary of the McCormick Firewise Community event held at the Curley Creek Idaho community center. Not as well attended as hoped for but still considered successful. Swope, Kuennen, Sandman, Levert, Pelling helped with the event.

Swope- Bill talked about his efforts to get some coordination set up Idaho Forest Management regarding grants, etc. for the Curley Creek and McCormick areas. Bill said that the South Lincoln County Grant has been spent out in just 15 months. Kuennen has over 75 agreements. I mentioned that Bill and I will be meeting with the commissioners on May 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss the possibility of using Title III funds to continue the fuel reduction grants.

Bill attended a meeting/workshop in Butte conducted by the DNRC on the grant program, etc. Bill described the agreement that the Flathead Firesafe Council has with the Flathead Beacon to provide timely fire related articles. Logan said that if anyone had articles for the newspapers they should contact him.

Turman- Doug announced that Sonya German was appointed as the new state forester. The new Good Neighbor Authority forester position has been advertised. Mike Justus may extend his employment through fire season. Flower Creek Sale will continue in early July. The Clay Banks sale will be logged later this summer. There was a discussion about possible grant funding for the Eureka area for parcels greater than 18 acres. I thought this was probably a targeting project in cooperation with the Tree Farm program.

Bennett- Jerry said that the job description for the county forester position was out and they would first look at current county personnel to fill the job, before advertising.

Levert- I have spent a considerable amount of time preparing a timber sale/fuel reduction project for the City of Libby in Flower Creek. The sale is 270 MBF and bid packets will be going out as soon as we get a road use permit from the FS.

I was involved with others in the McCormick Firewise Community Day on May 12. I have also been working on projects of the Kootenai Stakeholder Coalition.

### **Old Business-**

Lincoln County Firesafe Council vice Levert-

This being my last meeting as the chair of the council I wanted to thank everyone for their participation and friendship over the years. Yes, I think we made a difference. The discussion was open and we discussed different alternatives. Doug, Steve and others thought that it was important to keep the council going. Doug suggested having agencies like the DNRC and Forest Service take the lead for up to 2 years. Dan Rose stated that having the council along with the county CWPP was critical for the Forest Services' work. The Forest Service could take the lead according to Dan, but it was very difficult for the agency to cooperate financially if that were the case.

I handed out draft by-laws that I suggested might be a good starting point. Although we have operated without by-laws for 14 years, folks generally agreed that by-laws were probably in order. As the county forester I have been able to handle any expenses through the county's Title III funds. This made it very simple for everyone. There is

certainly the possibility that my successor could continue this role even if they weren't the chair.

I mentioned that I had left out any reference to being a non-profit organization although that was certainly a possibility in the future. The Tri-County group in Helena, does operate as a non-profit and solicit grant and administer fuel reduction projects. The group was not excited about being a non-profit.

Jerry Bennett mentioned the possibility of forming a district with taxing authority. I asked Steve about the possibility of being tied in to the Libby RFD? Another possibility was through the Lincoln County Conservation District.

**Doug graciously offered to take the lead on future discussions to be held at the DNRC office on May 29<sup>th</sup> at 9AM. All interested parties are encouraged to attend this critical meeting**

**Next Meeting- June 21, 2018 9:00 AM**

Ed Levert, Chair