

## **July 23, 2015 Lincoln County FireSafe Council Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees; Wyatt Framton and Doug Turman, DNRC; Ed Levert, Lincoln Co; Dawain Burgess, Trego, Fortine, Stryker RFD; Bill Swope and Lou Kuennen , Flathead Economic Policy Center; Mike Sanders, UYVESA; Steve Lauer, Libby RFD; Dan Rose, Kootenai N.F.; Chas Vincent, Senate District 1; Bruce Vincent, CFGNW; Jessie Grossman, Yaak Valley Forest Council; Keith Kenelty**

### **New Business:**

**The Use of Drones in Lincoln County-** Bruce Vincent had arranged for his friend, Frank Best, of Trimble GPS to visit with us via conference call about the possible use of drones. Frank stated that Lincoln County could be the first counties in the U.S. to use a drone. Mesa County in Colorado has a drone that is currently in use. Following are some of the highlights of the conversation:

FAA regulations for drones is not completed. The commercial use within standards is all right. That would include multi-rotor and fixed wing(Trimble). Trimble offers a wide range of optics including oblique, infrared and lidar. They offer within the regulations low elevation flights of no more than 500' above the ground. Costs are less than fixed wing and the images are better than satellites. He mentioned that privacy issues do not pertain to aircraft. Many municipalities offer waivers for the use of drones and Lincoln County could apply for a waiver from the FAA, which is a 60 day process.

Options available are the outright purchase of the drone and computer system for around \$30,000 or to hire Trimble to bring their drone in with their operator/pilot. If purchased you would need to have a licensed pilot to fly it. Production figures are 400 acres/hour. The cost of doing 10 sq/miles is \$.30 acre. Frank said that there could be savings depending on the scope of the project.

Some of the applications and products mentioned by Frank and Tim(west coast engineer) were pre and post conditions, vegetative moisture content, changes over the years, Google base applications, possible fire suppression information depending on aircraft in the air. Bill Swope said that we should look closely at what we could use the drone for in OU-3 regarding fire pre-suppression. Frank said that the application was capable of incorporating weather information in interpreting fire behavior. Bottom line is that could be many applications depending on the situation.

Frank said that he would like Lincoln County to participate as a pilot project. He felt that we could receive funding assistance through grants, i.e. National Academy of Science. Trimble would like this project to take place this fall.

The steps we identified were to apply for the waiver first of all. The next step was to define what we want and possible cooperators and funding source. Wyatt Framton volunteered to chair a committee via conference calls to answer these questions. A report and decision would be made at the next FireSafe Council meeting. Dan Rose said that the Forest Service would participate depending on fire conditions. Bill Swope, Dawain

Burgess, Bruce Vincent and myself also volunteered. Anyone else interested should contact Wyatt or myself. **Note-**I think that Kirk Kraft should be on this committee.

### **Round Robin:**

**Rose-** There have been 42 starts on the forest so far. 3800 acres were burned under prescription this Spring. 900 acres were burned in Rocky Draw near Koocanusa Reservoir. The Fire Lab was involved in studies of this burn.

East Reservoir, Galton and Buckhorn are planned this Fall. Dan said many of the high elevation burns such as Buckhorn will be difficult to implement because of the narrow burning window. The Forest is currently seeking public input on the Young Growth EIS which is a programmatic document covering 400,000 acres of regenerated stands. The KNF has two Type II teams and a helitack crew from the Gallatin on the forest. All KNF fire crews are in place.

**Grossman-** Jessie is responding to the Young Growth EIS scoping from the YVFC and working with the Kootenai Stakeholder Coalition for their response. She has also been working with me in a stakeholder response to the fuels treatment in the South Fork Fuels Project. The next stakeholder meeting is on Sept 2 and it is open to anyone.

**Frampton-** The DNRC has delivered a new type 6 engine to the Eureka FSA. The old one will be refurbished and put back into use. The Fisher River is running at an all time low of 91 cubic ft/second. Not much fire activity yet and all crews are in place.

**Sanders-** The Upper Yaak FSA is pretty quiet with only 3 medical responses as of late. There have been 13 calls out this year and Mike is hopeful that they can get the commissioners to increase the building assessment. They have a new member of the fire department.

**Burgess-** Dawain has resigned/retired as chief of TFS, but will stay on as a fireman. Not much fire activity lately. He said that Cody White of the Rexford District reported that the district has had 3 power line fires and 11 fires all together.

**Kuennen-** Carolyn Peck's 63 acre logging/fuels reduction project is close to completion. He has several new agreements in the Troy area and a considerable number of interested folks in the Eureka area.

**Turman-** Doug said the logging in Iron Creek is down to the last 80 acres. The DNRC just sold a 160 acre sale in McGinnis Creek. They are finishing up their field work on the Flower Creek Sale.

**Lauer-** They have had 8 arson fires this summer. Working on new dry hydrants. Replacing the Pipe Creek dry hydrant with a water source at the Bob Fiscus property. Keeping all of their fire equipment here.

**Levert-** I reported that I am expecting the road use permit for the Neils property this week. I met with the commissioners this week to discuss the use of Title III funds and the FireWise program. I met with Brad Lord who is interested in seeing some FireWise efforts in the old Cabinet View area. Steve and I are willing to work with him. I also met with Clyde Miller at Bull River to discuss the fire risk from Doug fir beetle attack west of Bull Lake. We also looked at fuel reduction opportunities on the Majestic Ministry 40 acres.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00

**Next Meeting- August 20, 2015**

**Ed Levert, Chair**