

MINUTES

Fire Safe Sierra County

5/26/2022 @10:07am | Meeting called to order by D.Bradfield

In Attendance

Patty Hall, Jim Turner, Danielle Bradfield

Approval of Minutes/Agenda

Lack of quorum prevented approval of May Agenda and April 2022 Minutes.

Board

Public comment was provided by Sandy Kendall of Sattley. Ms. Kendall described the lack of grant-funded fuel reduction on the north side of Hwy 49 in Sattley because prior fuel reduction efforts focused on the portions of the community south of highway 49, where no one/fewer people live. Ms. Kendall expressed that for 20 years she has attempted to get her community recognized as being “in need” of fuel reduction with little to no response. Danielle Bradfield indicated that the testimony of Ms.Kendall warranted placing the untreated portions of Sattley on the Fire Safe Sierra County Program of Work for grant-funded fuel reduction since an obvious void in fuel reduction treatment as been identified.

LeTina Vanetti with Sierra County Public Health provided public comment regarding the importance of the Zone Haven tool that has been refined by Sheriff Fisher and soon to be rolled out.

Chris Campbell of Sierra County Land Trust reported that their forester will be assessing which portion(s) of the Land Trust ownership are in need of fuel reduction this year. Mr. Campbell indicated an assessment of the road to Volcano Lake will specifically be included this season.

Speaking on behalf of the Sierra City Fire Protection District, Mr. Campbell also noted that the Sierra City Firewise Community will hold a clean-up day this coming Saturday with an open house following.

Paul Cueto of Sierraville Firewise Community indicated that Sierraville has now been formally recognized as a Firewise Community.

Via email, Dolly Chapman indicated that Calpine has now been formally recognized as a Firewise Community.

Sandy Kendall indicated she is not aware of Sattley belonging to either the Calpine or Sierraville Firewise Community. Danielle Bradfield offered Fire Safe Sierra County’s assistance with Sattley being amended into an existing neighboring Firewise Community if that is possible.

The nomination and voting to approve prospective Board Member Paul Cueto was tabled due to lack of quorum.

Al Petrie, assistant Fire Safe Sierra County Coordinator, provided a summary of Resident Wildfire Preparedness Surveys received thus far. UC Extension forester Ryan Tompkins indicated 196 surveys have been received so far, with the bulk of the surveys being submitted from Loyalton (42%), 20% from Sierraville, and 12% from Allegheny. According to the surveys:

- Most Significant Concern = fire resistant structures/attached structures.

- Regarding hazardous fuel reduction: vast majority have done their own, paying out of pocket, using green waste disposal to the dump, with backyard burning 2nd method of slash abatement.
- Barriers to effective fuel reduction include: 1) Time, 2) Cost, and 3) Lack of Ability
- Priorities = 1) Defensible Space, 2) Evacuation and Evacuation Preparation, and 3) Home Hardening.
- Programs most desired to meet priorities: 1) Grant funded fuel reduction, 2) Elderly assistance with defensible space and evacuation, and 3) Defensible space consultation.
- Wildfire Preparedness Priorities: 1) Defensible Space, 2) Hazardous Fuel Reduction on Public Lands, and 3) Evacuation.
- The wildfire preparedness resources that benefit your community = grant funded hazardous fuel reduction.

Danielle Bradfield provided an update on the next steps for the County Coordinator grant, which is creation of a draft Program of Work, informed by the results of the Resident and Agency Surveys, informal public input, and the various Firewise (and aspiring Firewise) Community Action Plans. The draft Program of Work will be discussed at the June FSSC Board Meeting.

Danielle Bradfield presented the idea of holding Fire Safe Council Board Meetings in the evening during the summer and fall months to provide a more feasible time for increased public participation as important topics such as the county wide Program of Work, grant application strategy, and Community Wildfire Protection Plan are discussed. Meeting attendees expressed interest and agreement that evening meetings will help those employed during the day to attend, and to provide time for a deeper discussion on key topics as Fire Safe Sierra County moves forward. The consensus was to devote the bulk of the meeting to the key topic, with only necessary and brief updates otherwise/as needed to keep the meetings focused. It was noted that though the next regularly scheduled meeting date is Thursday, June 30th, 2022 @ 10am @ Sierraville School, the time may be changed to evening as discussed and will be announced ahead of time.

Agency Reports

Sierra County: Brandon Pangman of Sierra County indicated that the County has been the recipient of an evacuation planning grant through the CA Fire Safe Council. Mr. Pangman explained that the grant will assist existing evacuation planning efforts of Sheriff Mike Fisher, support expansion, refinement, and utilization of the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) as it relates to evacuation planning, and assist with upgrading the existing Master Street Addressing Program (MSAG) system. The subject grant was just awarded this week so a meeting with the pertinent parties will occur June 1 regarding achieving the grant objectives.

Tahoe National Forest: Gabe Foster of the Yuba River Ranger District provided updates on US Forest Service staffing, fuels projects, and current funding streams. Mr. Foster indicated that Engines 31 and 32 are staffed and operational, with one 7-day Engine planned for White Cloud and one 5-day engine planned for Big Bend.

He also mentioned that the Tahoe Hot Shots are already on, as is the White Cloud crew with the helicopter arriving on June 1. Mr. Foster indicated that with the recent Golden Fire, Zone Haven performed very well. Mr. Foster also described that due to the fire in New Mexico, there is a 90-day pause on all prescribed fire within the US Forest Service. Mr. Foster explained that the Tahoe National Forest was chosen for the Cooperative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) funding which provides a 10-year funding stream for fuels projects. He also mentioned that the Non-Federal Lands Grant Funding is now able to be utilized on lands that are not adjacent to US Forest Service lands provided such projects are identified in the County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Related, Mr. Foster indicated it is strongly recommended that Fire Safe Sierra County have potential fuels projects "in the que" (meaning acres for treatment, related constraints and opportunities identified) so that should funding open up we are ready to apply.

Fire Safe Sierra County: The Sierraville WUI Fuel Reduction project is currently being advertised, with mandatory bid tour on June 1 and bids due June 8. This project entails 52.7 acres of mechanical mastication on various ownerships along West Willow, Amodei Ranch Rd, and Dante Rd in Sierraville, made possible through Non-Fed Hazardous Fuels Funding. This work will be implemented this spring/summer following bid award.

Sierra Valley RCD: The Sierra Brooks-Smithneck Fuels Reduction project has been awarded with operations slated to start approximately June 2. The RCD will circulate a press release with additional information.

Firewise Community Updates:

Sierraville Firewise: Paul Cueto indicates that there will be another Sierraville Firewise Community Meeting this fall, date TBA.

Downieville/Goodyear's Bar: A meeting was held Monday May X to conduct the assessment required to become a Firewise Community. Members of US Forest Service, Cal Fire, UC Cooperative Extension, Fire Safe Sierra County, Sierra County Sheriff's Office, and community members were in attendance. The assessment was completed and will be formally documented, followed by a 3-year action plan as Downieville and Goodyear's Bar aspire to gain formal recognition as Firewise Communities.

Budget

No budget update was provided.

Committee Reports

Not applicable.

Announcements

Not applicable.

Next Meeting

Thursday, June 30th, 2022 @ 6pm @ Sierraville School

Meeting was adjourned at 11:23am.