

August 18, 2016 Lincoln County FireSafe Council Meeting Minutes

Attendees; Ed Levert, Lincoln Co Forester; Dawain Burgess, Trego, Fortine, Stryker RFD; Bill Swope and Louis Kuennen, Flathead Economic Policy Center(FEPC); Kirk Kraft, Lincoln County EMA/Fisher River FSA; Wyatt Frampton, DNRC; Erik Warrington, DNRC(Missoula); Tim Bumgarner, USFS; Jeff Stevenson, USFS; Mike Sanders, Upper Yaak FSA, Lisa Osborn, USFS; Jake Mertes, Lincoln County Environmental Health Dept.; Brian Ressel, Natural Resource and Conservation Service.

Round Robin:

Frampton- The Libby Unit has had 15 fires this year. Fuel moistures are higher since the recent rains. Working with citizen group on Flower Creek trails.

Bumgarner- Libby Ranger District fuel moistures are really up. Fire Situation is looking good for this time of year. Plan on having Flower Creek Timber Sale Project NEPA complete by October 1.

Swope- Bill discussed the South Lincoln County/Sanders County grant which should be available in September or October. There is now \$30,000 available for the North part of the county through Title III funds. Pink/Meds funds about spent for Pinkam-Meadow Creek areas.

Kraft- Working on the emergency management plan. Involved in the OU-3 plan, which needs work on the public information portion. Meadow Peak radio system should be operational next week.

Fisher River FSA is having their 30th year anniversary on August 27 starting at 2PM. A program will be presented including Ali Uwelling and Ed Levert discussing the Ready-Set-Go and FireWise programs.

Warrington- Erik discussed his role in the state with the grant programs. Erik mentioned that he had reviewed Lincoln Co. projects with Bill, Lou and Ed the previous day. He explained the process for selection of the Western States Grant. He also discussed a recent review of the Roaring Lion Fire out of Hamilton and the study Byron Bonney is doing of the effectiveness of past fuels treatments in the wake of the fire. The results of this study are forthcoming.

Kuennen- Lou said he is trying to wrap up projects, which is mainly incumbent on completing the burning.

Osborn- Lisa said the Troy area has only had a few small fires. Lots of folks went off forest for fire assignments. Preparing for prescribed fire program affecting wildlife and habitat. Expect the Oly NEPA Record of Decision to be signed the first of September. Lisa said she will be going out with Bonnie Hudlet of the Kootenai Record to look at the effects of the 2015 fires.

Burgess- They had one house fire and two ambulance calls.

Sanders- There was a small wildfire in the South Fork of the Yaak near the Turning Winds Academy. They responded and dumped 500 gallons of water on it. The fire department has had 2 medical calls this year.

Mertes- Jake mentioned his involvement with a proposal for a “Fuels for Schools” project in Libby.

Ressel- Brian gave our group a run down on the NRCS grant program in Lincoln County and included an accomplishment map. 3,000 acres have been accomplished in the past 10 years and \$2,000,000 spent. This year’s program will accomplish 400 acres at a cost of \$300,000. Brian’s map led to a long discussion on the need for an all agency coordination effort to identify fuels accomplishments in the county. This would give us all a much better idea of where to concentrate our efforts. **Erik agreed to find out more at the DNRC on their GIS efforts. It was agreed to put this on the agenda next month for a much more detailed discussion.**

Brian also discussed briefly efforts with the Regional Conservation Partnership Program which can match funding with eligible partners. **A meeting has been set up to discuss this in more detail with the FEPC and Ed on September 8.**

Stevenson- Jeff mentioned the Lolo Hot Shot Crew fatality and the ceremony in Missoula next Saturday. This is a below average fire season for the Kootenai N.F. There were 13 fires last week as a result of the lightning strikes, but there was also lots of rain with that. Many firefighters are off forest on assignment. Forest is preparing for prescribed fires this fall.

Levert- The county commissioners approved the 2017 Title III proposed budget. The Kootenai Forest Stakeholders executive committee met with the Regional Forester on Tuesday to discuss successes and challenges with our collaborative efforts on the Kootenai N.F. I spent a day in the Yaak looking at fuel reduction projects.

Commissioner Peck mentioned on Wednesday that he had discussed having fuel reduction work done at the Libby landfill with Kathi Hooper supervisor of Lincoln County Environmental Health department. I had started work on the project in 2009, but it had not gone anywhere.

Old Business:

FireWise Education Committee- Lisa said she is beginning to work on the 2017 calendar. Needs pictures A suggestion was having more graphics i.e. show the effects of weather conditions causing inversion layers in an effort to educate folks on when not to burn. Jeff suggested having a picture of the camp 32 fire in order to show how dramatic the change in fire behavior was once it hit the treated area. Lisa said the problem with

that is the picture quality is not good. Tim mentioned looking at the Treasure Mtn Fuels treatment as a great example of how the Klatawa Fire was partially contained. **Wyatt volunteered to help Lisa with the calendar.**

Dawain said he would bring the FireWise trailer to the Harvest Festival in Libby on September 16 from 2PM to 8PM.

I said that Bruce Vincent had come up with our current newspaper ad, but I needed another one. Lisa said she would send me more if Bruce can't come up with one. **I also mentioned that I would review Mike Sander's FireWise article for inclusion in the Kootenai Record.**

New Business-

Air Quality- A discussion was held led by me regarding the use of a Libby Airshed chipping contract and the use of kraft paper to help reduce air pollution. This proposal really didn't get much support. Educating the Libby public on the right way to burn and the rationale for doing so seemed to have the most support. **However, I said that I would identify the details of when we might want to use a chipping contract.**

Mark Peck stopped by during this discussion and he and Jake suggested that when we burn the Neils piles we should have an airshed smoke monitor. Nick Raines would be the lead on this. **(Jake should contact Nick)**

FireWise Signs- I said that I saw a need for a good sign program that would help demonstrate areas that we thought were good examples of fuels treatment. Some suggestions were thrown around regarding the kind of sign and where to place. **I said that I would work on coming up with a proposal.**

Next Meeting- September 15

The meeting adjourned at 12 PM.

Ed Levert, Chair

