

January 19, 2017 Lincoln County FireSafe Council Meeting Minutes

Attendees; Ed Levert, Lincoln Co Forester; Kirk Kraft, Lincoln County EMA/Fisher River FSA; Doug Turman, DNRC; Mike Sanders, Upper Yaak FSA, Steve Lauer, Libby RFD; Tim Bumgarner, Libby RD

Round Robin:

Sanders- It has been very quiet in the Yaak. Thankful to get though temperatures down to -34 F with no chimney fires. Having a problem with inference on the county radio channel. New tender running well. One new firefighter started.

Kraft- Fisher River working on truck chassis. Montana Machinery is having tank engineered. They hope to have ready this summer. Kirk said that Keith Kenelty was retiring so they needed someone else to do assessments. I mentioned that Chain of Lakes had lost its FireWise Community status along with Em Kayen Village. I was working with Em Kayen to get their status renewed in 2017.

EMA continues to work on radio issues. Hopefully, EMA will have three radio zones in county by next fall.

Turman- Normally they are doing seasonal hiring about now, but it looks like fire crew will all be returning. At the regional level the DNRC is struggling with how to fund prescribed fires. The expected timber sale activity includes Colonite which is not completed and possibly Flower Creek if IFG decides to start harvest. Clay Bank is to sell this summer. Smoke-Brulee to sell following year. Bobtail is 2 years out. This years' budget is still iffy.

Bumgarner- Allen Osborn will be the new fire management officer for the Three Rivers District. There are 5 openings on the forest to fill in fire positions. One is for the Libby fuels position and the others are entry level. Tim said the district would like to have a use agreement in place to allow use of this equipment for DNRC or county use, possibly working through our firesafe council.

Lauer- Ninety nine fires last year, which is about normal. They have had good response time. ISO rating for rural is going from a 7 to a 4 since they have been able to double their water supply. Eventually it will be going to a 3. Working on grants for fire equipment.

Levert- The South Libby Grant should be ready to begin signing up applicants. Steve said that he was going to take out a ½ page ad regarding the free firewise assessment program.

Tim said we should be sending out a post card announcing the assessment program throughout the county too. That led to a discussion regarding the upcoming forest stewardship workshop that will be held in Libby on June 15, 16 and 23. I said I thought

Tim had a good idea and that we could also have something about the workshop. Steve said that the addresses could be listed through the county. **I said that I would get something organized on this, rather as a postcard or a fold out.**

Another discussion then ensued regarding the level of sub-division activity in the county and the current and planned sub-division rules regarding Firewise assessments and fire department involvement. **Decision is to have Lisa Odewaldt discuss this at the next meeting.**

Old Business

Education Committee- I enquired about the calendar and no one there had received one. I mentioned that it was my understanding that arrangements had been made for the distribution. Kirk said he would check on the status.

FireFighter Challenge- Wyatt was unable to attend today, but sent me the current status of the planned auction of the donated gifts for the event that did not occur in 2016. The date of the auction at the Cabinet Mtn Brewery has been changed to March 30th. Wyatt and the brewery will handle all advertising.

The consensus of our group today based on our observations and firefighter comments is that the event has run its course. Perhaps Flathead County would be willing to put something together next year? We all agreed it was for a good cause.

New Business

Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire Grant- I explained that I had found that these grants were free to communities that qualified through Headwaters Economic Group. They did something like 18 across the U.S. in 2016 with two of them doing a full fire modeling of risk(Missoula was one) and the others providing recommendations that pertained to needed or recommended planning. I was expecting to hear from Dr Barrett, who heads up the program, next Monday regarding the possibility of Libby becoming a study area.

Libby Community Wildfire Awareness Conference- I asked the group what their thoughts were on doing another conference at the Memorial Center in 2017. The response was basically, let's not do one at this time, maybe in a couple of years. Although we all thought the program was good, the attendance was poor. However, as a result of the conference we were invited to the Yaak where there was an excellent attendance and interest in the subject. Kirk mentioned the success of the Fisher River open house last summer.

The general consensus was, let's focus on smaller areas this year like Swede Mountain. The Swede and Farm to Market area includes proposed DNRC and USFS projects too, which could be incorporated into the presentation. **(action item for follow-up discussion)**

Next Meeting- February 16, at 9:30 AM

Ed Levert, Chair