

February 19, 2015 Lincoln County FireSafe Council Meeting Minutes

Attendees; Steve Lauer, Libby RFD; Ed Levert, Lincoln Co; Dawain Burgess, Trego, Fortine, Stryker RFD; Jessie Grossman, Yaak Valley Forest Council; Lou Kuennen and Bill Swope, Flathead Economic Policy Center; Vic White and Lisa Oedewaldt, Lincoln County Disaster and Emergency Services; Mark Peck, Lincoln County Commissioner; Terry Peck; Kirk Kraft, Fisher River FSA and Lincoln Co. Sheriff's Department; Lisa Osborn, Forest Service

Round Robin:

White- Vic said that his number one priority for the coming year is communication improvements. Black Butte is ready to become operational. With the requirements to move toward narrow band communications there is a need for more repeaters.

Osborn- Lisa said that the FS was using a new hiring procedure and just picked up 7-8 new permanent fire people. They are working on temporary hires now. Katie Andreesen has now moved from fire prevention to recreation on the Libby District and no one has been hired behind her. The district will start burning on March 1. Lisa said that fire prevention messages that have been developed by the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group that will be available for our use.

Lisa said that our calendars have been well received. A teacher from Polson H.S. contacted her about using our calendars as a template for a fund raising tool.

Burgess- TFS has a new mutual aid agreement with Olney. They have been doing fire training. Jack Spillman is working on their radios.

Kraft- Kirk said that he is working on the county wide fire dispatch policy. The recently completed RIM report is a big help with this

Kuennen- Lou recently completed one verification of an existing fuel reduction grant agreement and signed up one new one. Lou discussed the recent signup near Troy where Allstate Insurance had threatened a home owner with the cancellation of his insurance policy if he did not complete several items. One requirement of interest is that a 1/8th mesh screen was required around the deck. Although the DNRC Home Evaluation Form recommends an enclosed deck it does not say how to do this. One comment questioned if that was a tight enough mesh to stop a spark. Another comment asked how do you stop sparks from coming in from the deck flooring itself.

Lauer- Steve said that two of Libby's firemen were attending a safety training course in Colorado on handling oil spills. Steve is leaving next week for Maryland to attend a course on fire in the Wildland Urban Interface. This will require him to prepare a CWPP.

The new fire engine is about ready for service. Participated in career day at the high school. Inspections are ongoing.

Grossman- Jessie discussed the implications of the 2014 Farm Bill and the Governor's Initiative on the Kootenai N.F. timber program.

Swope- Bill discussed our current grant situation. We have a new Stevens Bill Grant for the Eureka area in the amount of roughly \$90,000. This is somewhat tied to the Pink Meds Timber Sale Project that extends from Koocanusa to the Fortine/Trego areas.

Bill suggested that in our future advertising that we include some of our fire history, i.e. Houghton Creek Fire of 1994. A suggestion was made that we could use Dean Herried's alternative school computer class students to help with advertisements next summer.

I asked Bill about the status of FireSafe Montana. Steve and Vic both said that they had received membership requests from them. We agreed that our FireSafe Council would send \$150 in support.

Mark Peck- Mark discussed legislation that is ongoing regarding the fire funding problem the Forest Service is having. In bad fire years the agency has to use other appropriated funds to pay their fire bill, which has really crippled their organization. Mark also discussed his recent meeting in the Flathead with Senator Daines.

Old Business

Education Committee- Lisa Osborn discussed the fire prevention messages that are now available in the campaign, "One less spark one less fire".

The FireWise trailer should be available with Keith Kenelty manning it next summer. Dawain said that the Eureka Rendezvous would be a good place for the trailer.

Fisher River Fire Risk Rating System- Kirk discussed the Fisher River FSA's fire hazard analysis process. High risk areas are being mapped through aerial photo interpretation and the fire department is then focusing their FireWise assessments on these areas.

Evacuation Planning Lisa Oedewaldt showed us the newly completed county map showing primary and secondary evacuation routes. She and Kirk then demonstrated the Bulberry mapping system and how that will provide invaluable assistance in the event of a wildfire.

Title III Funding- I discussed my hope to authorize the use of \$30,000 from Title III to continue the fuel reduction grant program in Lincoln County since our grant request for South Lincoln County was unsuccessful. I said that I would have to present this request to the county commissioners for their approval. I also said that since SRS has not been reauthorized there will be a reluctance to spend these funds on less than top priority projects. **Note-** In a later discussion with Bill Swope and Lou it appears there is still enough funds from our current grant to carry on the program for a little while longer. So I do not plan on making any request at this time.

Fire Fighter Challenge- Terry Peck will once again be the head push for the next expo planned for June 6. We all agreed that we wanted to support the project. The first planning meeting is scheduled for 9AM, March 5th at the Libby Fire Hall.

Next Meeting- March 26, 2015

Ed Levert, Chair