

June 18, 2015 Lincoln County FireSafe Council Meeting Minutes

Attendees; Wyatt Framton, Tanner Columbo, DNRC; Ed Levert, Lincoln Co; Dawain Burgess, Trego, Fortine, Stryker RFD; Lou Kuennen , Flathead Economic Policy Center; Terry Peck; Mike Sanders, UYVFA; Steve Lauer, Libby RFD; Jason Sunell, Libby USFS; Kirk Kraft, Lincoln County Sheriff's Dept.;

Round Robin:

Lauer- The FireWise trailer awning mount has been fixed. Met with Jeremy Nelson regarding the large scale fire plan for OU 3. Met with Smith Valley RFD on structure protection training. Last Thursday did structure protection exercise. Will work with Grant's crews for mutual training. Worked on Bobtail and Cedar Creek fires and stated the great relationship they have with Forest Service crews.

I asked Steve to give us some feedback to the seven day WUI training he received at the national academy. They emphasized the need for a community "sparkplug" to keep the work going. Steve felt that our community was already doing most of things that they suggested. Will be doing helicopter training with Sanders County. Test burning of slash piles was conducted last week in OU-3 to determine the levels of asbestos in the smoke. These results should be available in 6-9 months.

Sanders- Their tender is now up and running. Anybody have a hose cleaner they don't need? The made \$1850 at their rummage sale.

Kuennen- Completed one closeout and 8 agreements last month. Have made 12 visits this month. Picking up quite a bit of interest in the Pinkam Creek area, which is a part of the Stevens Bill grant that FEPC received approximately \$75,000 in funding.

Burgess- Had another down power line fire, which is their third one this year. Received new turnouts. Asked Kirk if there was any news on the new Bulberry computer system. Kirk said they were in and Lisa was making appointments to turn over to fire departments.

Dawain showed the group a new Forest Service map of the Pink-Meds project area, which includes much of northeast Lincoln County. This map shows all areas that have been affected by wildfire or harvesting in the last 15 years. The real value is identifying where effective treatments might occur on private lands.

Frampton- Wyatt is detailed into Doug Turman's vacated position. DNRC had two fires of about 15 acres each in the Fisher River country. Fire hazard is very high for this time of year. There was a response to a smoke in the Harris Creek fire from last month. There was a 47 year low for water flow in the Fisher River. County assist funding for equipment will be available to fire departments after July 1.

Kraft- Fisher River FSA donated an engine to McCormick RFD. Keith Kenelty is doing FireWise assessments. The department is gearing up for a bad fire season.

From the sheriff's office, the recent table top exercise went well. This exercise was intended to engage public and agency officials in a large fire simulation prior to a real one. Kirk said that he wished that there were more management level officials present instead of so many "worker" types. He felt that this was the time to dust off the communication and emergency response plans. Folks need to take the radio test. Pleased that there were two commissioners at the exercise.

Sunell- Guard school is completed. The district has 24 fire fighters. By June 28 they will have 7 day a week coverage. Swede will also be manned by the 28th. The district is training exercise with Libby RFD today. The

district will be doing another 1/10 acre test burn in a non-slash pile control burn in OU-3 to test for amphibole asbestos.

Dan Rose reported via email that the forest had burned over 3800 acres this past spring.

Lauer- Replacing the dry hydrant along the Kootenai River Rd. at Pipe Creek. The replacement hydrant will be drawing via a more flexible system that can react to changes in the stream channel. Two firefighters completed a railroad disaster training in Colorado. The department has done a lot of training on structure protection in the event of a wildfire. All hydrant tests have been completed. There was a Lifeflight training. Steve attended a Montana fire department convention in Ennis. Brought back the new mutual aid manual. Four new fire men have signed up with the department.

Levert- I reported on the status of the Pat Neils Fuels project in Libby, which is a 27 acre timber sale/fuels reduction project planned for this coming summer. At this time we are waiting to get a road use permit to haul out by the old Libby Ranger Station. The 63 acre fuel reduction project on the Carolyn Peck property has begun with Mark Decker and Gary Cooper doing the logging. We have a supply "Ember Aware" handouts in the FireWise Trailer. The Kootenai Stakeholder Coalition is planning on seeking intervention status along with Lincoln County on the lawsuit filed on the East Reservoir Project.

Old Business-

Firefighter Challenge- Terry gave us a summary of results from the expo held on June 6. The event went much smoother than last year thanks to Terry and all the great help she had. Financially it was a success and the challenge events were of much more interest to the public than last year since they were conducted in the arena. I said that I did not see that much interest in our demo house and it seemed like attendance was down considerably from last year. Other events such as graduation and the archery shoot competed with our event. I speculated that we might have reached our saturation point with the public and wondered if we might be better off concentrating more on the challenge events. Our council gave this subject a very thorough discussion and the consensus was that we felt that the event should get back to the basics of the challenge. It was pointed out that there were other voices to be heard on the subject, but this was where we stood.

A motion was made by Steve Lauer to have Title III funds cover the challenge team entry fees up to a maximum of \$3,000. Dawain Burgess seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion. This would result in a scaling down on advertisements, but there would still be a FireWise presence(probably in the form of the trailer). We felt that the entry fees were a big factor in limiting the number of entries.

There will be more discussion on this subject Saturday night at the closeout BBQ.

Education Committee Report- Without Lisa Osborn in attendance we didn't discuss in any detail. I just remarked that Lisa had some ideas on the advertisements this summer that promoted the campaign of "One less spark, one less fire".

The meeting adjourned at 11:30

Next Meeting- July 23, 2015

Ed Levert, Chair