

August 20, 2015 Lincoln County FireSafe Council Meeting Minutes

Attendees; ; Ed Levert, Lincoln Co; Dawain Burgess, Trego, Fortine, Stryker RFD; Lou Kuennen , Flathead Economic Policy Center; Mike Sanders, UYVFSA; Chas Vincent, Senate District 1; Bruce Vincent, CFGNW; Lisa Odewaldt, Lincoln County Emergency Management/Planning; Mike Frost, Whitefish FireSafe Council; Terry Peck, Lincoln County Red Cross; Kirby Maki; Mark Peck, Lincoln County Commissioner; Kirby Maki, concerned citizen;

Round Robin:

Terry Peck- The Libby Red Cross unit is ready to help out where needed in a fire emergency. If there is additional need, the Flathead and Idaho Red Cross units are also available.

Kuennen- Lou announced that the Libby Fire Grant is out of money. He has 10 agreements in the Pinkam Creek area from the community protection grant. He has obligated \$40,000 in agreements to treat 164 acres.

I mentioned that the 2016 Lincoln –Sanders Grant ranked 4th in the state and will now compete with grant requests from other western states. In the meantime there is a possibility that Title III funds could be used to continue fuel reduction work in the Libby-Troy area.

Burgess- The Rexford-Fortine District reported 17 fires. Fire camp at Ant Flat. Heliport at Crystal Lake. Staging area at Flanigan’s Ranch. Two Huey helicopters are working the Marston and Barnaby Fires.

Frost- Mike was visiting us as a representative of the Whitefish FireSafe Council and board member of FireSafe Montana. He mentioned the difficulty of keeping their council momentum going. Whitefish FSA is trying to get more funding, through an increase in house assessments.

Mike also discussed the current situation of FireSafe Montana, which does not have a director at this time. The board is looking for feedback on how to continue their state wide efforts. Flathead County is interested in visiting our council in October or November to see how we operate. I mentioned that this would be an agenda topic when they come.

Odewaldt- Vic White has left county emergency management and is now managing the county human resource department. Kirk Kraft and the sheriff’s department will now take over emergency management. Lisa said that there is now a site on the county web page where folks who have only cell phones may register. This information is considered confidential but the county can use it for helping with Code Red calls, evacuation notices, etc. Lap top computers are being distributed to fire departments and other emergency

personnel with Bulberry software capability. This should prove invaluable in the case of an emergency.

Sanders- Upper Yaak FSA will be getting a new property assessment rate of \$60 following a meeting with the county commissioners. Mike commented on the excellent communication he is receiving from the Three Rivers Ranger District. Following a phone call from an ISO representative there is a possibility that rural fire districts may qualify for a lower ISO rating based on their water capability.

Maki- Kirby joined us and reported on retirement life. He has been very involved with the Rotary and the kids fishing pond.

Chas Vincent- Chas mentioned that Bob Harrington, Montana State Forester is touring fires in the county.

Levert- The Pat Neils 30 acres should be logged this fall/winter, which will provide a good fuel break. The stakeholders are providing the Forest Service input on their Young-Growth thinning project, which includes possible treatments of 400,000 acres of regenerated forests. I met with Brad Lord who lives in the Cabinet area and is interested in promoting FireWise education to his neighbors.

Bruce Vincent- Bruce discussed the FireWise ads that are now running in the county newspapers. He is continuing the same ad as last week, which is the preparation list in the event of an evacuation. I suggested that Lisa Osborn may have some of her new ads that could be run in the future. A discussion then followed regarding the effectiveness of our ads, which no one knows. A suggestion by Lisa Odewaldt was that we maintain a Facebook site besides our current web site. Bruce was going to check with a woman from Lewistown who he says is very good and reasonably priced.

Old Business:

Drone Pilot Project- Wyatt Frampton was able to join us by phone to help lead the discussion on rather we wanted to pursue the offer by Frank Best representing Trimble GPS to do a pilot project this next fall or spring. Wyatt answered questions from the group and recommended that we pursue. His recommendation was that we concentrate our efforts on in OU-3(Rainy Creek). He has received the waiver requirement for the use of a commercial drone and thought it should be applied for in the name of the county.

There is a 60 day waiting list for approval so that may put us into a spring situation. Bruce said that he make an attempt to get the application in. Wyatt also said that he thought that the camera and software for the drone might fit better in a fixed wing aircraft because he was afraid that the drone would give too much detail. Chas suggested that we keep WR Grace, EPA, DEQ and other governmental agencies in the loop. I mentioned that the Libby District Ranger thought there was a possibility that the FS could help with funding. Wyatt estimated that the cost of the project would be around \$5,000. The feeling of the group is that the county, DNRC and FS should be cover this if we don't

receive a grant, which Frank Best had indicated may be available from the Academy of Science.

The decision of our group was unanimous that we wanted to pursue a pilot project.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30

Next Meeting- September 16(Wednesday)

Ed Levert, Chair