

September 16, 2015 Lincoln County FireSafe Council Meeting Minutes

Attendees; Ed Levert, Lincoln Co; Dawain Burgess, Trego, Fortine, Stryker RFD; Dan Rose, Kootenai N.F.; Doug Turman and Wyatt Frampton, DNRC; Steve Lauer, Libby RFD; Jessie Grossman, Yaak Valley Forest Council; Terry Peck, Lincoln County Red Cross; Kirby Maki, concerned citizen;

Round Robin:

Turman- Doug reported his fire overhead team was in California for 19 days and finished up in the Choteau area.

Maki- Kirby gave us an update of his involvement as a board member looking at institutional standards being proposed by the EPA in the future.

Rose- Dan reported that the Kootenai had 154 fires which burned over 33,000 acres. All teams had left the forest and most of the activity on the fires was rehab work of fire lines, etc. Not much burning planned this fall on forest. Most fires in Cabinet Wilderness since 1910. Some closures still in place. Little effect on the general timber base other than 3 MMBF affected on the Marston Fire. Dan suggested that our active fire season allowed us a good time for educational efforts with the public. Dan also mentioned that the overhead fire teams were all excellent. There were no serious injuries or private property damage as a result of the fires.

Lauer- Steve said that the Libby RFD structure protection plan for Libby was well received by the Goat Rocks team. The second week of October is fire protection week. The most recent arson fire was at Tim Linehan's property on the Kootenai River, but they had no idea of who might have started it.

Burgess- Dawain is no longer chief of the TFS RFD, but only a member. Dawain's observations of the Marston fire was that the Forest Service did a great job and there was a great liaison with the local fire departments.

Frampton- Wyatt reported that the Libby DNRC had an active fire season with 30 fires burning 300 acres. They received lots of support and most of the fires were lightning caused. Rehab work of the fires was on-going.

Terry Peck- Terry reported that their Red Cross unit had set up an evacuation shelter at the Assembly of God Church, but they had little activity.

Grossman- Jessie gave a brief summary of the activities of the Kootenai Stakeholder Coalition with the next meeting being November 11.

Levert- I gave a brief update on the Kootenai Forest Stakeholders including attempts to refine the WUI boundaries and treatments adjacent to potential Wilderness area I reported that the 60 acres of logging on the Carolyn Peck property south of town had

been completed. This is essentially a fuel reduction project with grant funding to help finish the work. The Neils 30 acre project is expected to be started this fall.

Old Business:

Drone Pilot Project- We continued our discussion on the offer by Trimble Corporation to do a pilot drone application in Lincoln County. Wyatt led our discussion and stated “let’s try the pilot project”. That being said he went on to say that there is a limited application. There is only 2 hours of battery life, which limits you to about 600 acres of coverage. You can’t look at the entire forest. He discussed the legal permitted to pilot above 150’. Every flight must have a flight plan although they can be simple. You must have a waiver of variance up to 500’ for commercial applications. That process requires 90 days. The waiver must include the scope of the project, what you will do and who will conduct the project.

We must still decide who will apply for the permit although it appears that the county would probably be the best applicant. Jessie brought up a concern of human work versus technology or collecting data for the sake of collecting data. Wyatt said that using the technology in a fixed wing is cost prohibitive. I brought up the article this summer in the Kalispell Daily Interlake regarding local drone use. I told Wyatt that I would give him the information.

Dawain suggested using the pilot project to collect information in OU-3 or the old vermiculite mine area. Dan Rose said that the data that the Forest Service has in this area is outdated so new information would be helpful. We need to coordinate with the EPA. Wyatt suggested flying the perimeter of the WUI. Other sites in OU-3 that could be legitimate targets are the roads, holding pond and a fuel loading analysis.

This discussion will be continued at our October 15 FSC meeting.

Education Committee-

We had a limited discussion with Lisa Osborn not able to attend. I mentioned that Lisa had mentioned to me that we need to get fire pictures and or activity pictures from the fire departments as we had decided that we wanted to highlight individual fire departments each month. I said that I would remind the fire departments to send their photos to Lisa.

I mentioned that the Montana Wilderness Association was having a celebration at Riverfront Park in Libby and had requested the FireWise Trailer. Lisa, Keith and myself were not going to be available to do this and I suggested that we not do it. However, I was overruled and Wyatt offered to set up the trailer. Dan Rose was going to help Wyatt get an up to date map of the fires from this summer for the trailer. (Thanks Wyatt and Dan)

The meeting adjourned at 11:30

Next Meeting- October 15, 2015

Ed Levert, Chair