

## November 19, 2015 Lincoln County FireSafe Council Meeting Minutes

**Attendees;** Ed Levert, Lincoln Co; Dawain Burgess, Trego, Fortine, Stryker RFD; Doug Turman and Wyatt Frampton, DNRC; Steve Lauer, Libby RFD; Bonnie Hudlet, Bull Lake RFD and Kootenai Valley Record; Kirk Kraft, Lincoln County DES and Fisher River FSA; Mike Sanders, Upper Yaak FSA; Lisa Osborn, Three River R.D; Ali Ulwelling, Kalispell DNRC; Lincoln Chute, Flathead County DES; Tim Bumgarner, Libby R.D.; Mike Frost, Whitefish FireSafe Council; Carol Daly, Bill Swope, Lou Kuennen, Flathead Economic Policy Center

We were honored by the delegation from the Flathead who were interested in observing our council in action. Their objective was to take away ideas that they could use to form their own council. I stated that I felt this was a two way street and I looked forward to hearing their ideas too.

### **Round Robin:**

**Frampton-** Wyatt said that Spencer's air curtain burner is doing a really nice job of complete disposal.

**Bumgarner-** District feels there is more flexibility for slash disposal through burning for the upcoming Flower Creek Timber Sale. Cost of air curtain burner is \$3500/day. Tim says he is using a leaf blower to get piles burning.

**Swope-** Lincoln County is contributing \$30,000 to continue the fuel reduction grant program. Lincoln-Sanders Western States grant will hopefully compete well this year.

**Chute-** Lincoln said that he is really impressed with one of the slash disposal methods being used by Plum Creek in the Flathead. They are using a Timco with a bucket and thumb to pile with.

**Kuennen-** Lou had 4 closeouts of grants. West Kootenai and Bull Lake grants are shutting down. They are getting good results in Pinkam Creek area thanks in part to Wayne Finch's work. He participated in a tour of Troy area with Bill, Ed and new DNRC grants person Eric Warrington looking at completed fuel reduction projects and proposed ones.

**Ulwelling-** Ali discussed her efforts in the Kalispell office. She is working with Crystal Beckman to revise the old DNRC Fire Assessment form. She is also looking at community fire assessments too. May 7 is the State's community preparedness day so be thinking of events and make sure we get fire departments on board. Grants are available though fire departments for RSG program. This probably includes more publications.

**Osborn-** Lisa is now able to work on some of her fire projects after a hectic summer fire season. She has been working on the calendar, education and assessments and will discuss further in educational committee report.

**Burgess-** TFS has 21 fire assessments to complete. No recent fires, but 2 mutual aid calls. TFS had their annual meeting. FireWise educational efforts were successful in reaching 104 elementary school children.

**Hudlet-** We need to contact her when we have issues we wish to have stories done on. There are still residents without power at some Bull Lake residences. No recent incidents for Bull Lake RFD although there were a few downed trees blocking roads.

**Daly-** Carol talked about improvements in the educational efforts. There needs to be more FireWise councils like ours.

**Frost-** Mike talked about the great cooperation in their council, but was looking at ways to improve. He came over today to look at how our council worked and wanted to take ideas back with him.

**Kraft-** Kirk's new role is Lincoln County Disaster and Emergency Management manager replacing Vic White who is now the county Human Resources manager. Kirk said that they will continue Vic's efforts to upgrade the county's communication system. They are continuing to apply for grants and working toward upgrades in South Lincoln County and the Yaak. He is working on Phase II of the Lincoln County Response Plan.

As Fisher River FSA's fire chief he said that they are evaluating priority fire hazard areas. Plum Creek's subdivision, Fisher in the Pines looks good.

**Lauer-** Libby RFD is working with the Red Cross in getting out smoke detectors. Planning on more FireWise assessments toward Fisher River FSA. Participated in the annual conference of Montana fire chiefs.

**Sanders-** Mike said they have not had much activity. South Fork Fuels project looking good and some of the small piles have been burned. Fire department lost a firefighter who moved. They could use a fuel reduction grant in the Yaak.

**West-** Tally Lake district has two sales in Griffin Creek. They are also working in Martin Creek south of Stryker.

**Turman-** Flower Creek Timber Sale sold to IFG. Clay Banks and Bobtail Cutoff are the next two priority timber sales. Two new county liaison foresters have been hired by the DNRC, one for the east side and one for the west side.

**Levert-** The Neils fuel reduction project is on hold until the timber market improves. I flagged in a pre-commercial thinning area for the Alvord Lake Community Forest in anticipation of a \$50,000 grant being made available from the DNRC. The money can't be spent until title closing this winter.

I participated with Paul McKenzie of Stoltze Lumber and Robyn King of the Yaak Valley Forest Council in presenting a program on the efforts of the Kootenai Stakeholder Coalition to the Flathead County Pachyderm Club. This was well received. The next general stakeholder meeting is on December 2. Several of our executive board met with the new Regional Forester in Missoula.

### **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 gave us a full report on the goals, measurable deliverables, potential applications, proposed location and proposed actions needed to implement the program. The decision at this time was that we move forward dependent on the cost of the project. There was some concern that if this was a pilot project proposed originally by Trimble than they should bear much of the cost. Hopefully we can make a final decision at our next meeting.

**Education Committee-** - Lisa passed around the draft calendar, which highlights fire pictures from this season's fires. (looks great) Lisa said that the schedule for the calendar was to have out the first week of December.

Discussed availability of FireWise trailer to Flathead visitors for their events. Concerned that we need to have someone committed to man trailer next summer and not just part time. We need to go through the trailer's educational materials next March and update.

Lisa discussed our web site and said that if anyone has subjects or input they need to contact her or Ed. Dawain said the web site should have a list of county fire chiefs. We discussed having a "hit" counter attached to see how much interest we are getting on web site.

There was a discussion on the virtual workshop being held in the Great Basin states on "one less spark-one less fire" by the fire prevention group.

We then had an interesting discussion on the value of the press and getting out articles of interest. Bonnie Hudlet gave us some of her thoughts on how we could make this happen. Tim suggested the need for an article from our council on the past fire season. He mentioned the fact that since the fire season was unofficially over there have been over 463 acres that have burned on the Klatawa Fire. Steve suggested getting facts from all agencies to incorporate into an article. Ali said the Flathead Beacon has periodic articles on fire. We discussed the need for seasonal articles next fire season. Lisa was asked by Ed to coordinate our efforts and she agreed to. Bonnie encouraged us to work with the Record on this effort. Mike Sanders volunteered to write articles.

**Lincoln County FireSafe Council-** We concluded our meeting with an invitation to our Flathead delegation to state if they had any questions on our meeting. They agreed that our meeting pretty well spoke for itself as to how we operated and they didn't really have any questions. We all agreed on the need to share information.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15

**Next Meeting- December 17, 2015**

**Ed Levert, Chair**