

Lincoln County Firesafe Council Meeting Notes

Location – Teams Conference Call

Date- January 20th, 2022

Time-9:00 AM-10:45 AM

Note Taker: Jacob Jeresek

In Attendance: Jacob Jeresek, Jeremy Rank, Marcel Getz, Logan Sandman, Dustin Webb, Gary Kedish, RJ McDole, Steve Lauer, Brian Ressel, Cory Farmer, Jennifer Nelson, Russ Gautreaux, Kris Newgard, Harmony Burow, Ali Ulwelling, and Mark Peck

*Red font indicates action items.

New/Old Business:

- Era of Megafires Presentation (Russ and Kris)
 - The Kootenai Climate Group formed in 2019 and consists of 8 board members and approximately 60 people on their mailing list. The group meets monthly at the Libby High School. Their mission is to increase climate change awareness and take local action. The group is trying to be more integral in the community. For example, the group attends farmers markets, participated in the Rabbit Tracts project proposal, and recently worked with Flathead Electric on securing a car charging station in Libby.
 - The group is showing Paul Hessburg's Era of Megafires movie at the Dome Theater on April 14th at 7:00 PM. Lincoln County is paying for the venue. They plan to have tables with information in the foyer for the public. Although the movie begins at 7:00 PM, they want to encourage people to arrive earlier to see the materials. At 7:00 PM, a short introduction will be shared followed by the movie showing with a question-and-answer session afterwards. It was recommended from previous events to have a facilitator to steer conversations and prevent grandstanding.
 - The group's goal of the movie showing is to present how we've moved into a new era of wildfire by displaying the link between climate and wildfire. The group would like the Firesafe Council to help provide the link between climate and wildfire.
 - Next steps are to have a smaller group determine logistics. At this time, the Dome Theater will complete their advertising. **Marcel volunteered to help advertise using social media networks. Marcel and Ali will also coordinate with Russ and Kris next week to start planning the event.**
 - Jacob stated that he would like these events to continue county wide to help raise awareness and potentially boost landowner fuels treatments. The Firesafe Council has a 20-minute version that they show at other events such as the Forestry Fair. After the April event, we will evaluate the success and determine if future events are warranted.
- Burn Permit Website Update (Jennifer)
 - Jennifer visited with NIC and they are working on the burn permit website again. For the rollout, NIC is focusing on the air pollution control district but has address information county wide. NIC plans to have a demo version of the website available by the end of the month. Jennifer hopes to have a small group trouble shoot the demo

website when available. The original burn permit subcommittee consisting of Jennifer, Logan, Marcel, Steve, Dustin Webb, Jacob, and Ali will complete this task. Marcel will coordinate a date with the group. The end state goal is to have the site active on March 1st.

- Lincoln County Subdivision Regulations Discussion (All)
 - Jennifer was approached by the planning board about some deviations from the subdivision regulations by current and existing developments. The main deviations include: the placement of structures so as to minimize the potential for flame spread and to permit adequate access for firefighting equipment; the presence of adequate firefighting facilities on site, including an adequate water supply and water distribution system; and the availability, through a fire protection district or other means, of fire protection services adequate to respond to fires that may occur within a subdivision.
 - When a developer proposes a subdivision, and the proposed subdivision is not in a fire protection district, the developer needs to follow the regulations. It is up to the fire protection agency that would respond to determine the adequacy of the development plans. Steve emphasized that the regulations should not be a blanket set of rules for every new subdivision due to numerous factors such as proximity to the responding agency facility, water sources, etc. and each subdivision proposal should be evaluated independently. Steve also believes it should be up to the fire protection agency to determine the fire protection mitigations, if any. Steve developed a guideline checklist regarding the adequate water supply and water distribution system requirements for new subdivision proposals that he would like to see incorporated within the subdivision regulations and utilized county wide for proposed subdivision evaluations.
 - A question was raised that if a developer is planning a subdivision, do they submit the proposal to fire protection agency? The answer is yes. It is up to the fire protection agency to determine if the organization can facilitate fire protection or if additional mitigation measures need to be taken.
 - The Firesafe Council was working on the fire risk assessment and vegetation management plan but tabled these tasks due to progressing the CWPP. The Council agreed to pick these tasks back up after the CWPP is completed this spring. Jennifer will investigate who was on each subcommittee.
- Grant Updates (Jennifer and Brian)
 - NRCS: They are currently planning their projects beginning this spring by going through the NEPA process and putting contracts together. NRCS has a capacity building agreement with DNRC which has some money left over. They used this money to bring in Marcel and Vicky to help plan Joint Chief's projects. They also will assist with inventorying data and creating forest management plans.
 - The Libby Surround Joint Chief's will likely be funded as it was the number one proposal. Joint Chief's funding was not included in the current budget continuing resolution. The government was looking at prior year obligations to help fund these projects, but this status remains unknown. The current continuing resolution expires on February 18th where either the government will be funded or another continuing resolution will be enacted. If the government is funded, we can expect to see Joint Chief's funding within 30-60 days.
 - The County is currently winter logging approximately 60 acres through KFRI. The KFRI money arrived in three lump sum payments with the first completed and closed, the second will be completed and closed out this summer, and the third expires in another year. Jennifer is trying to get the money out on the ground quickly. Jennifer is also trying to secure a contract with Montana FWP to complete fuels reduction work around the chain of lakes. Western States will focus on the Swede, McMillan, and Farm to Market areas which Jennifer will be pushing.

- DNRC will be working on the J Niels project in March and the Rabbit Tracts project in April. Currently, Logan does not have the workforce to complete the Rabbit Tracts project due to several vacancies. However, the DNRC hiring events are upcoming and he hopes to bridge the gap. Jennifer also stated that Amy Gannon reached out last fall and she has some additional money to help fund the J Niels project.
- Fire Adapted Kootenai Update (Marcel)
 - Marcel created 27 advertisements to display in the four newspapers within the county. Every two weeks, every newspaper will publish a small advertisement with reminders on fire preparedness. All advertisements will also have a QR code and link to the Fire Adapted Kootenai website.
 - Within the Rabbit Tracts Montana Forest Action Plan project, there was funding to create a video on the importance of the project. The video is currently in draft form and will be finalized soon so we can link it to Fire Adapted Kootenai resources.

Round Robbin:

- A question was raised on if the Lincoln County WUI Roadmap committee and Firesafe Council are the same or different? The answer was they're different groups but tie together with focusing on priority treatment areas.
- Due to some recent concerns, there is a request to have home ignition zone material included within the CWPP. **If you have ideas of how to outreach this material or what should be included in the CWPP, get those to Jennifer.**
- The Rexford Fortine Ranger District recently hired Ally Talbot as the new prevention tech. Ally will reach out to Ali Ulwelling soon on how and what a successful prevention program looks like.
- Jacob Jeresek was recently hired as the Kootenai National Forest Assistant Fire Management Officer. Although he is in a new position, his role with the Firesafe Council will not change.

Adjourned