

Lincoln County Firesafe Council Meeting Notes

Location – Teams Conference Call

Date- March 17th, 2022

Time-9:00 AM-09:45 AM

Note Taker: Jacob Jeresek

In Attendance: Jacob Jeresek, Ali Talbot, RJ McDole, Gary Kedish, Matt Chumbley, Harmony Burow, Cory Farmer, Marcel Getz, Jeremy Rank, Steve Lauer, Brian Ressel, Derek Luchik, and Dean Whitney

*Red font indicates action items.

New/Old Business:

- PODs Update– Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) discussion (Jacob)
 - The Forest Service Regional Fire Director has asked all forests that are currently in the process or beginning the process of PODs development to take a pause as there is more formal guidance on PODs development coming out soon. Background is other forests across the country developed PODs without collaboration from cooperators and partners which created tension. PODs are designed to be an all-lands approach at looking at large fire and what geographic boundaries fire is likely to stay within.
 - Part of the Infrastructure Bill includes language about PODs being developed across the country. There is a desire to have this effort completed in 2022 across all national forests in Forest Service Region 1. **Once the CWPP is finalized, the Firesafe Council will need to pick up this effort.**
- Burn Permit Website Update (Marcel and Jacob)
 - The burn permit website is live for residential burning within the Libby Outdoor Burning Control Area formerly known as the Libby Air Pollution Control District. The goal is to test the system this season in this area and add the rest of the county next year. As of right now, several burn permits have been entered by Dustin with people calling in but not many permits have been issued with the use of the website.
 - There was a question as to why some of the suggestions the burn permit website subcommittee provided such as name of insurance company and latitude/longitude were not incorporated in the rollout. Marcel looked at the email chain and saw that these suggestions could not be included as they impacted every county's system in the State of Montana and may not meet their needs.
 - The county is working on getting word out to the public on this system through radio and newspaper advertisements. **When an official Lincoln County press release is out, Dustin will notify Marcel and Jacob to repost the press release on agency and Fire Adapted Kootenai social media platforms.**
 - The website can be found at: <https://app.egovmt.com/burnpermit/>
 - For burn permits outside of the Libby Outdoor Burning Control Area in 2022, agencies will need to continue utilizing hardcopy burn permits.

- Grant Updates (Brian)
 - NRCS has four tip areas that are currently active which include Glen Lake, Fire Adapted Fortine, Edna Creek, and Libby Surround Joint Chief's. They've received the first round of funding for all four projects. However, they only received a portion of funding for the year which does not cover all landowners that expressed interest.
- Joint Chief's Update (Brian and Gary)
 - NRCS with lots of help from the DNRC has fuel breaks identified on certain properties which were identified as Primary Lines of Defense in the 2022 CWPP revision. They are currently including this in the forest management plans. In year one, NRCS had 17 landowners that expressed interest within the tip area.
 - The Forest Service received Joint Chief's funding last week. Libby District is currently working on IDIQ fuels contracts and hope to have these submitted by 04/15.

Round Robbin:

- The Era of Megafires will be shown at the Dome Theater on April 14th with free admittance. Doors open at 1830 with information tables in the foyer, the movie begins at 1900, and a question-and-answer panel will follow the movie showing.
- The DNRC is working with the Bureau to make a large mailing campaign for McGuiness Meadows, Elk Creek, and Chain of Lakes areas for free home assessments.
- Marcel is taking drone pilot school with hopes of being certified by the end of spring. Once certified, the DNRC can purchase a drone and begin utilizing it for different needs.
- The Libby Unit is working with the Bureau to put on a home assessment training for Lincoln County fire departments. The date of this training is May 7th. More details yet come.
- The Rabbit Tracts video is finished and currently in Helena awaiting approval from the MT DNRC Director's Office.
- The DNRC State Forester, Sonya German, is working on standing up a cross boundary coordinating group. The goal of the group is to help funnel resources to groups such as the Firesafe Council. This is a statewide effort.
- GNA is busy and looking at adding capacity through an additional forester on the Kootenai.
- The Kootenai National Forest is currently going through changes with the NFDRS plan. NFDRS is moving to version 4 in May which will create a different ERC graph and run cards. More yet to come on the plan.

Adjourned