

Lincoln County Firesafe Council Meeting Notes

Location – Teams Conference Call

Date- April 21st, 2022

Time-9:00 AM-9:45 AM

Note Taker: Jacob Jeresek

In Attendance: Jacob Jeresek, Ally Talbot, Dean Whitney, Gary Kedish, RJ McDole, Tom Lane, Steve Lauer, Cory Farmer, Dustin Webb, and Brian Ressel

*Red font indicates action items.

New/Old Business:

- Era of Megafires Movie Update (Jacob)
 - The Era of Megafires Movie was shown last Thursday, April 14th in Libby at the Dome Theater. This was provided through a combined effort with the Kootenai Climate Group, Society of American Foresters, Lincoln County Firesafe Council, and Fire Adapted Kootenai. The event began at 6:30pm with brochures and pamphlets available in the movie theater foyer, movie showing at 7:00pm, and a half hour question and answer session beginning at 8:00pm.
 - Initial thoughts were the movie has valuable information that the public needs to hear but the question and answer session provides a venue for people to grandstand and continue to beat up on the Forest Service. Some ideas to help minimize this for future events is to have each presenter speak for a few minutes on a prepared message they would like the group to hear prior to a question and answer session, have a robust media campaign prior to the showing of the movie highlighting the successes in the area, and/or to have a more one on one question and answer session versus an entire audience question and answer session.
 - The Eureka area would like to host an Era of Megafire movie showing. There was quite a bit of hesitation amongst the group and it was decided to ramp up a media campaign and revisit whether it is constructive to host the Era of Megafires later.
- Burn Permit Website Update (Dustin)
 - The transition to the online burn permit system has been relatively smooth. To date, 783 permits have been issued with 610 burn permit activations. Of these activations, 329 were completed via the phone system, 276 via the online burn permit system, and 5 through admin support. Overall, the health department has seen a reduction in the number of people coming in or calling with questions.
 - Some issues Dustin noted with the system is you cannot see multiple activation locations per permit and you cannot assign daily burning times within the system. Dustin completes the latter by inputting daily burning times within the comments section and by updating the air quality hotline daily with this information.
 - Some initial feedback from the public was pushback from the community that we are trying to force people to use the internet. Additionally, there was some confusion from people outside of the Libby Outdoor Burning Control Area, but this has since smoothed

out with counseling and one on one assistance.

- Grant Updates (Brian and Gary)
 - The three grant areas (Fire Adapted Fortine, Glen Lake fuel reduction, and Edna Fortine project) are working on obligating 2022 contracts. So far, NRCS has about \$1.1 million obligated which is the most in history.
 - The Kootenai Complex Bipartisan Infrastructure Law project was awarded last week. The Kootenai National Forest is looking at seeing a large influx of money over the next 3 years along with needed positions across the forest. Most of the funding requested will be used to add capacity across the forest to help meet the expectations outlined in the 10-year Wildfire Strategy.
 - There has been some criticism about the cost per acre when people look merely at the money received and the additional above base target commitment. If people hear these comments, please relay that the majority of the funds expected is to build capacity to meet doubling of acres treated in 5 years and tripling of acres treated in 10 years.
- Joint Chief's Update (Brian and Gary)
 - NRCS is currently obligating contracts for 2022 projects. 620 acres are approved and under contract adjacent to the Clay Day GNA project. On June 16th, a professional videographer is coming to complete some drone footage of pre-treatment conditions. Currently, there is no plan to complete landowner interviews. These will likely be completed next year when projects are being implemented or completed. There is a desire to coordinate with Jodi Turk to capture some pre-treatment footage of the Clay Day GNA project. **Gary will reach out to Jodi to help coordinate this effort.**
 - The Forest Service is wrapping up 2022 contracts this week to meet the acquisition deadline of May 1st. Libby Ranger District staff is currently working on identifying and assembling FY23 Joint Chief's contracts.

Round Robin:

- Dustin noted that the State meteorologist has accepted a new position. She will finish forecasts for the spring burning season and summer fire season but will be in her new position this fall. This may have impacts for major burners during the fall burning season.
- A question was raised on the status of the Lincoln County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).
 - There are several efforts that rely on the completion of the CWPP such as the Lincoln County WUI Roadmap, Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) development which is a requirement of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the Forest Service Regional Office desire to have a regionwide GIS layer of the wildland urban interface to be consistent and assist with litigation.

Adjourned