**7-26-18 FireSafe Flathead Meeting Notes**

**Attendees**: Mike West (facilitator/notes), Lincoln Chute, Bill Swope, Ali Ulwelling, Jan Cronin, Randy Sundberg.

**Introductions and additions**

* Add fire restrictions discussion per Lincoln Chute.

**Fire season** and what we expect to accomplish during (ads, billboards)

* Lincoln Chute thinks we should add additional fire danger rating signs along main travel and/or at fire departments located along these travel corridors. The group agreed, and FireSafe Flathead has funds assuming the signs aren’t really expensive. Ali’s replacement preventions specialist Erie Nace may have time to dedicate to this project and/or local firefighters could pitch in on the installation labor. Potential locations include; Lakeside (Hwy 93 S), West Valley (F to M rd.), Creston (Hwy 35), Smith Valley (Hwy 2 W) etc. Mike Frost and Randy Sundberg may also be interested in purchasing and/or posting some signage in their neighborhoods.
* Lincoln also recommended folks using large very visible no fire signs in problem areas to augment the small restrictions order we tend to post on a small not very visible piece of paper. They had good success with this strategy last year… if anyone knows of a problem area we have some of these larger more visible signs available and/or we could purchase some.
* Mike Frost mentioned working with our friends at the Flathead Beacon and/or KOFI radio for prevention/education messaging.
* The DNRC is working to replace dilapidated/missing portal signs for public info sharing, Tally Lake Ranger District invested in new portal signs in the last few years… now we need to use them.
* Montana Department of Transportation reader boards may be an option for posting fire danger/activity information if needed.
* Ali is going to check into Gas Station (Fuel) TV for prevention/education messaging. Jan mentioned Town Pump does public service advisory donations at their stations and thought we should reach out to their headquarters in Butte to see if they would be interested…
* Mike Frost plans to reach out to Fire Safe Montana to see what their plans are for prevention/education messaging in the area and get the info out to the group so we can be complimentary and/or not be redundant.
* Lincoln Chute offered local 501C3 status if we need assistance paying for stuff.

NW MT Haz-Fuels Program update– Bill & Carol

* They anticipate being out of $ by December… maybe even sooner. They are in the process of applying for a grant however that could take 18 months assuming they get funded.
* Bill is working on a Many Lakes specific grant however that could take 18 months also.
* They are not taking applications in the SW corner of the county due to funding shortages.
* They have obligated what would have historically/typically been 3-4 years’ worth of in less than 1 year which is good and bad… good because our messaging and outreach seems to be working… bad because the money is gone.
* Bill is frustrated by mixed messaging when we are talking to the public… Cohen’s research targets the home ignition zone and ignores the rest of the property as an example. Treating 1-2 acres around the home is not always going to be effective and/or be helpful at the landscape/fuel break scale. We should strive to be as consistent as possible within our group and the local area. Bill thinks Byron Bonny has a better message that we should listen to and key in on from recent past experiences in the Bitterroot. Bill also thinks we should target to treat all or as many acres as possible sighting the Bootjack area as an example. The group agreed with Bill on all points and suggested drafting a FireSafe Flathead/local stance on the matter.

Fuels Geodatabase for Flathead. Looking for a GIS contractor.

* Ali has reached out to a local GIS expert to build a comprehensive fuels map for all state, federal, county and private fuels treatments in the greater area. We are planning to spend Forest Service/DNRC FireSafe Flathead funds on the project since it will benefit everyone. Stay tuned… we are hoping to have a product sooner rather than later.

Parade of Homes – Old Montana has a home where we can highlight ignition-resistant construction concepts, have information available.

* Manny Mendoza put Ali in touch with Old Montana Builders to showcase firewise construction during the Parade of Homes September 7th-9th… Ali has reached out to them and is working out the details of how we can help and what that could/should look like. Jan mentioned providing handouts and it being pretty low maintenance however the deadline is probably fast approaching for their publications so we should get in sooner rather than later.
* Mike Frost would like Old Montana Builders contact info… Mike West will forward that along.
* Bill Swope also mentioned Gregg Daggett’s home in Glacier Hills as a great example of firewise construction.

**CWPP (& Many Lakes Parks)** – Lincoln

* The last of the updates are being finalized… preventions/educations section will probably provide links and/or locations were the public can find existing information.
* Anticipate a final draft out for review in early September and public meetings/collaboration in late September/early October.
* DNRC & County visited Many Lake subdivision… the parks needing treatment seem to be economically feasible (the wood fiber should offset the cost of the treatment).
* The county road department is planning to start treating fuels along the roadside easements in Many Lakes… the parks department is not being as active/proactive treating fuels in Many Lakes county parks/open space.
* The county road department may also clean out/open up their gravel pit in the area for use as needed.
* All of this work will help NW MT Haz Fuels grant application for the Many Lakes area.

**Bootjack, Many Lakes** – any changes or targets

* **Bootjack:** Not much has moved forward on this project other than a draft map showing competed fuels treatments and proposed treatments on FS and private lands. Ali continues to engage Ben Devall and may move towards a simpler project in this area since we are having a difficult time finding the capacity locally to take on this project specifically without ignoring our day jobs and/or other obligations.
* **Many Lakes**: A subcommittee has been created to address fire/fuels concerns, they are also working on comprehensive evacuation maps/plans. Randy is working with adjacent landowners to create two alternate egress routes for emergency use only.

**FNF, Joint Chief’s Funding**– Mike West

* Considering a Joint Chiefs Funding proposal for the greater flathead area. This funding could be spent on Federal, State or Private Lands to reduce hazardous fuels and increase forest resiliency/health. The proposal due date is in mid-October. I’ll send a copy of the paperwork to Bill Swope so they can see if it may provide some gap funding while they wait for their grant proposals to be funded.

“**The Smoke Column”** ideas, Daily Interlake, & Flathead Beacon, County Website to house info

* Mike Frost plans to send Ali an article in the near future. Please send any articles and/or ideas to Ali.

Review of past & upcoming events. Plan anything for this fall or next spring?

* Mike West plans to engage Bambi and the Haskell Basin area regarding the planned prescribed fires which with the right conditions could start this fall.
* Bill thinks we should have **Byron Bonny** come up for a presentation this year… maybe even as early as this fire season.
* Bill also mentioned the need to have a meeting to revisit our mission statement, past accomplishments and future plans.

Misc.

* Lincoln had mentioned a proposal to by a Fire/Disaster Simulation table for local use… that is no longer an option for them since the price and annual commitment has gone way too high.
* Randy Sundberg would like clarification on the legality of fireworks in forested areas locally… he has been looking into it and is finding conflicting information. Randy plans to send out an example so the group understands and may be able to provide clarity and/or interpretation.
* Add a link from the Flathead County Building site to FireSafe Flathead’s and FireSafe Montana and/or firewise construction sites.
* Lincoln plans to send Randy Sundberg the evacuation info we are including in the CWPP.
* Need mechanism for reporting out FireSafe Flathead accomplishments and Bill proposes having a meeting this coming winter to specifically address this and revisit our mission statement/objectives etc.
* Our grant proposals should be created organically from the ground up since we are more in tune with the local capacity/issues/probability of success.