

4-19-2023 Fire Safe Flathead Notes

Next meeting is Wednesday, May 17th 9-11am at the DNRC Conference room and on Zoom:

Zoom link - <https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/88277512217?pwd=ek9aK1UrSzhJYkNpc3A5Q3N5RUo1Zz09>

Meeting ID: 882 7751 2217 Password: 864128

In attendance: Karl Weeks (Columbia Falls), Ben Devall (Big Mtn Fire), Juanita (Flathead County OES), Lincoln Chute (Flathead County Fire), Randy Sundberg (Many Lakes HOA), Mike Frost, Scott Countryman (Goosehead Insurance), Henry Deluca (FAMLN), Richard Hildner (North Fork), Allen Chrisman (North Fork), Ali Ulwelling (DNRC), Mike West (Flathead NF), Colten (AFM), Cole AFM, Ernie Nace (Kalispell Unit, DNRC), Mark Freidline (Flathead Builders Association), Randy Brodehl (Flathead County), Paul Okerberg (Highland Meadows), Sean Johnson (NRCS), Rick Trembath (fire historian), Parker Olson (new NRCS forester).

Following up:

- ***NEW* Burn Permit System here:** [Burn Permit and Notification Service \(egovmt.com\)](https://egovmt.com/burnpermit/)
- **Predictive Services Fire Season Outlook for the Northern Rockies:** <https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/outlooks.htm> (look at National Monthly / Seasonal Outlook or other products)



FLATHEAD COUNTY BURN PERMITS

BURN PERMITS ARE FREE & REQUIRED YEAR ROUND WHENEVER LIGHTING A FIRE TO CONSUME VEGETATION. THERE IS NO BURNING ALLOWED IN JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER DUE TO FIRE SEASON.

 OBTAIN A PERMIT AND SAVE THE PERMIT NUMBER. THIS IS WHAT YOU WILL RENEW ANNUALLY AND ACTIVATE EACH DAY YOU BURN.	 PERMITS WILL NOT BE ACTIVATED IF VENTILATION IS POOR OR FIRE DANGER IS ELEVATED.	 OUTDOOR BURNING IS THE TOP CAUSE OF WILDFIRES IN THE FLATHEAD. HAVE ENOUGH WATER, TOOLS, & HELP ON SITE.
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<https://app.egovmt.com/burnpermit/>

Dates and events:

- **May 13, 9-3pm - Family Forestry Expo** – <https://www.familyforestryexpo.org/>
- **May 15th, 6pm Rick Trembath at the Central School Museum presenting on the 1929 Half Moon fire for the “Northwestern Montana Posse of Westerners.”**

- **May 25 - Fire Adapted Montana Learning Network tour of the Joint Chiefs' funding area**
- **June 22 9:30 to 3pm North Fork Basic Fire Training** –with a field trip and onsite evaluation of Home Ignition Zone treatments.
- **July 12 9:30 North Fork Firewise Meeting** –at Sondreson Hall. This year is the 20th anniversary of the Wedge Canyon Fire. Presentation by Rick Trembath and Larry Kinsolving.
- **West Glacier Montana House** – date TBD but coming up in May or June

FireSafe Flathead mission review and welcome ... Ali.

Fuel reduction coordination meeting coming up this spring... Mike West will coordinate.

Sean Johnson NRCS... uptick in private land interest in fuel reduction program... glad to have a new forester (Parker) to help with forest management plans... have relied heavily on DNRC to write management plans in the past. AFM has also developed forest management plans for NRCS... all hands on deck. In the middle of contracting 2023 funding... taking a step back on the number of contracts we are taking on this year due to an anticipated doubling in budget. Getting mentally prepared and staffed up for large increase in funding... earmarked for climate smart practices i.e. thinning.

MT NRCS is going to focus on Flathead and Lincoln County next year. Ashley Lake Targeted Implementation Plan (TIP) has 1 year left... Little Bitterroot & Wedge 3 years, Joint Chiefs' funding has 1 year left... planning to apply again for funding in 2025. NRCS also does a lot of agricultural work... forestry is the large workload. Continuing to grow... due to FireSafe Flathead. Joint Chiefs' video coming up this spring... highlight our work, before & after drones etc. end of three years professional highlight video.

Mike West... Joint chiefs and other project update.

Grant funding program... NWMT Haz fuels program went away at the end of 2022... looking for new non-profit... Randy Brodehl suggested [Montana West Economic Development](#) (MWED)... we met with them this January and multiple times since to start a new grant funding program. Foothills Western Wtates WUI grant... 2 years of Joint Chiefs' funding also. MWED is planning to attend next month's meeting. Still TBD... stay tuned for May.

Juanita Flathead County Hazard Mitigation Plan... hired a contractor to update plans within the state of Montana... our last plan expired in 2019... allows us to apply for hazard mitigation funds. These plans require an annual review so we should expect to hear from her. Tied mitigation plan to CWPP... its pretty broad and includes all CWPP project/priority areas. Can identify projects... locally for FEMA grant funding. Multiple projects submitted... fire engines, training etc. Opens up opportunities for multiple sources of funding. Public meetings late summer/early fall... shooting for Oct./Nov. to finalize... if projects are identified... should identify project. **Who is eligible for this funding? Are private individuals/industry eligible? Process? Timing?**

- Public education
- Support controlled burns

- Ingress/egress fuel reduction
- Utility & infrastructure fuel reduction (Flathead Electric is partner with Foothills road grant)
- Weed control & Mowing all roads...
- Chipping and harvest instead of burning support.
- Anex subdivisions into fire department boundaries
- Convenient access to subdivisions for emergency vehicles
- Multiple access points to subdivisions
- Defensible space for subdivisions
- Subdivision review... with DNRC recommendations.
- Update CWPP
- City and planning
- Sprinklers
- Support fuel reduction programs
- Improve fire training, communication for fire departments
- Subscribe to lightning detection programs
- Severe weather/tree risk to powerlines
- Monitor Drought conditions
- Water conservation
- Support drought programs
- Public education for emergency preparedness
- Promote NOAA weather
- Storm ready communities
- Red cross facilities for WUI fires

Ernie Nace, DNRC Community Preparedness and Prevention ... Keep MT Green art project wrapped up... **Olney/Bissel student won statewide contest** (see below)... lots of interested schools and good participation to reduce human caused fires. Doing a lot of prepping for education... did Glacier Hills presentation and walk through... Many Lakes Wildfire Community Preparedness presentation this weekend... Elmo fire video etc. Ernie has a 45min presentation if Scott is interested. 5 fires to date on Kalispell Unit 1-5 acres. Hiring... struggling with applicants. Burn Permits... optimism it will be up and running by May 1st for permits. Will send events to Richard Hilner to help with outreach.



Ali Ulwelling, DNRC... update on events... ref. the agenda... planning to do next years Home and Garden show... Ali did attend this year's event and spoke with the folks. Need to move on [Home and Garden](#) show soon it's 95% booked... would love to have you there. Need to sign us up and pay for it... \$650. Forestry Expo booth... if folks want to staff let us know May 13th. Finalizing home ignition zone training... hopefully ready for next meeting. FVCC events went well... 20-30 people each night. [Swan Valley Connections](#) is hosting a pile burning workshop this weekend. West Glacier event date TBD. North Fork also has a couple of events coming up this summer.

Flathead Building Association (FBA), Mark Friedline... want to do education for our local builders 150 members would benefit from education from this group... come to next board meeting... lots of questions so need to discuss and tailor discussion to meet the need. **May 23rd 0700-0830...** 20-30 minutes for roads we can go down. Elmo video? Glacier Bank downtown south building conf. room.

- Kalispell student-built home project... Flathead & Glacier... could talk to the group to educate these future builders. May 10th open house... super cool project.
- Denman construction has robust apprenticeship program... would be a group to reach out to.

Rick Trembath... **1929 Half Moon Fire Presentation Monday, May 15th 6pm.** Working with MLA for annual fire refresher training 1200 fire contractors. Also working with Flathead Lake Lodge to help folks learn to build and burn piles.

Richard Hildner, North Fork... ref. agenda for dates... Ali has map for Allen to show completed work. Richard Hildner... building new cabin... **home risk assessment checklist for participants so they can critique the structure, defensible space** etc. Explore doing a video for this event... Scott Countryman was interested June 22nd and recommended getting in touch with Will Friedner and Living in Montana (<https://www.youtube.com/@LivinginMontana1/videos>)

Big Mountain Firewise group got together and added two new members. Previous meeting ingress/egress assessment for the fire district... planning to submit FEMA grant proposal to mitigate fuels along road and powerlines that cross main road 9 times. A new development going in called Village East up to 150 lots with restaurants etc. timeline TBD. **Community event 1st week of July... combo HOA/fire event. Ben will reach out for support.**

Karl Weeks, Chief Columbia Falls... attended NFPA Structure Ignition training and wants to get more involved. Interest from Meadow Lake HOA in CFall... he's planning to attend the Many Lakes event this weekend. Pass along contract info.

American Forest Management... pretty apparent everyone is working together... provides forestry contract assistance.

Mike Frost... Fire season prediction? Ali will send out predictive services info. Ali feels bad about the architecture idea because it's still in the works... would still like to pursue this project.

Richard Hildner... has Bio char ideas... community use of bio char operations... will like Scott Snelson's info for bio char info... interested in portable to thin right of way along roads.

Randy Brohdel... says thanks good work/good meeting. (Thanks for being here!)

Scott Countryman... good response from realtors for training... still intending to do something in May for home inspectors... wildfire assessments. **Would like to get a list of firewise landscapers.**

Also talking to home inspectors about including an exterior inspection to their home inspection process.

- ✓ Ali send Richard the link for the youtube video
- ✓ Mike will send Scott Jackknife Map... Lucas Kopitzke project Olney Fuels project?

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