



FireSafe Flathead Meeting Notes, April 28, 2022, via Zoom

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, May 26. Venue to be determined.

Our Mission: We are individuals, neighborhoods, organizations, and agency wildfire professionals working to create and support Fire Adapted Communities and resilient landscapes by providing leadership, technical assistance, and resources.

ARTICLES:

Living with Wildfire video (45 minutes) – [HERE](#)

Popular Science - Don't blame national forests for America's massive wildfires [HERE](#)

Flathead National Forest and NRCS Field Office Receive Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Project [HERE](#)

USDA Forest Service – Confronting the Wildfire Crisis [HERE](#)

"It's not always about what or how much you know, so much as it is about connecting the right people, at the right time, in the right place." -Richard Parrish, Bureau of Land Management

Action items:

- Need to determine the date for "June TBD – Living with wildfire, Montana House, West Glacier (Ali, Harker, HHGV, Lincoln etc.). Ensure this doesn't conflict with our June 28th event in Whitefish.**
- Ali needs to follow up with Allen re: the HIZ filming site that we discussed last summer.**
- Ali needs to follow up with Rick T re: fire history page on website**
- Status of Burn Permit system – Dylan Kopitzke**
- Short term rental information from Julia to share with the group (Richard, Ben, Monica, North Fork)**
- How can we better communicate w/landowners what funding opportunities exist at this time/place?**

0900 – Welcome & Introductions

Flathead National Forest – Mike West

- Fuel reduction goal is to get to 20,000 to 30,000 acres treated in the next 5-10 years. *This number is inflated by the way we account acres because acres may be counted more than once depending on the type of treatment and how it is funded.
- Of the afore mentioned goal 5,500-6500 acres treated annually through timber harvest which is approx. 100,000 ccf or 50 mbf of wood fiber.
- Minimum of 2 Good Neighbor Authority timber sales each year. There is a lot of great restoration work occurring across the forest with the revenue generated from these sales.
- Bootjack lake road/Farm to Market junction commercial thinning and shaded fuel break Good Neighbor Authority timber sale prep work is ongoing with plans to award the sale later this summer.
- Our forest would like to be 1-3 years ahead of implementation on our project planning.
- Joint Chiefs and other fuels contracts are awarded with work scheduled to begin May 9th. Projects include shaded fuel break, understory removal, pre-commercial thinning, fire line/fuel break.
- Meeting this spring with MT DNRC, Flathead County, and other stakeholders to delineate Potential Operational Delineation and Potential Control Lines.

Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) – Sean Johnson & Karli Becher

- Working on Targeted Implementation Plans (TIPs) and Joint Chiefs contracts. **October 2022 is the sign-up deadline for 2023 projects.**
- Requested \$1.8 million to fund everyone who has signed up for the first year of Joint Chiefs. Waiting to see how much of this request will be funded.
- Interest continues to grow for private forest health and fuel reduction work. Attributes this to grassroots collaboration between landowners, neighbors, homeowners' associations, American Forest Management, the DNRC, Flathead National Forest, and others.
- Three different MT DNRC foresters are helping NRCS with forest management plans.
- Still hope to hire an additional person however the position wasn't approved to fill this year.
- NRCS is discussing options for using prescribed fire on private lands in Montana. They use prescribed fires in other states primarily in the Southeast. Would need to contract or outsource prescribed fire implementation.
- **Planning to work with Ali Ulwelling (MT DNRC), and others to do general & targeted outreach for outyear fuel reduction and forest health work.**
- **Reference flyer below for NRCS Technical Service Provider (TSP) outreach in Kalispell May 11th.**

Northwest Montana Hazardous Fuels Program – Deb Starling, Lead Forester

- Lots of new requests still coming in for assessments. These have been in the Lion Mountain area (Whitefish), Foothill Rd and Bigfork area, and scattered in the valley. Stone Mountain Estates project and Ptarmigan Village are closing this month (April 2022). Lots of good work occurring on the ground.

North Fork Mitigation Committee – Allen Chrisman

- Reminder for two upcoming events:
 - **June 15th** North Fork Fire Hazard Reduction Field Trip, 9:30am-3pm (Allen Chrisman)
 - **July 13th** North Fork Firewise Day in the morning (Allen Chrisman, Sean Johnson, Andy Huntsberger, Lincoln Chute and others) followed by interlocal meeting in the afternoon.

Big Mountain Fire – Ben Devall, Fire Chief

- Organizing **June 11th brush pick up day** for the fire district. This enables landowners to do fuel mitigation work with convenient slash disposal.
- Around **July 21st they are planning an HOA picnic/firewise day** to increase interest in evacuation planning, home ignition zone and fuel reduction work for private lands.

Richard Hildner (Whitefish Area)

- Moving forward with planning a living with wildfire event at the O'Shaughnessy Cultural Arts Center in Whitefish June 28th. Would like to mirror event we did at FVCC this past March 22nd which was the 45-minute living with wildfire video followed by a panel discuss/Q&A. Event will be sponsored/hosted by FireSafe Flathead. Richard will work with Ali Ulwelling to identify who is going to be on the panel.
- Shared a fire publication from Ashland Oregon which can be found here.
<https://www.ashland.or.us/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=539>

Jan Cronin (Thanks for being here, Jan!!)

- Approx. 1 in 7 residences change in the Flathead area annually so we need to keep up our outreach efforts to reach the new folks who are moving into the area.
- Thinks that FireSafe Flathead has been and continues to do a great job with her firefighter and public safety focus/objective. Jan has been a part of our group for the past 4-5 years. Thanks, Jan! 😊

Many Lakes - Randy Sundberg

- This springs fire safe event went well however wasn't as well attended as past years. (Approx. 30)
- Lakes are very low and water quality is degrading, some of the lakes are low enough that helicopters won't be able to dip out of them when responding to a fire.
- Ongoing discussions with Flathead County Parks department to do fuel mitigation work on county parks within the subdivision. Lincoln Chute is optimistic they are getting traction and will get some work done in the area.

Flathead County - Lincoln Chute, Fire Warden

- Planning to begin a thinning project in Herron Park this spring that will double as chainsaw training. Need to keep pushing the parks department to plan and support thinning projects on county parks.
- **Check on DNRC's Forest Health grant opportunity to be spend on non-federal public lands - [HERE](#)**
- Super busy time of the year with fire season preparedness, training, updating plans etc.
- Attending State Fire Warden Conf. this May (Lincoln is the western rep for the state). Plans to discuss/plan for assisting the state with prescribed fire and cross boundary work.

MT DNRC

- Continuing to support NRCS and the Flathead National Forest with forest health and fuel reduction work. Service foresters helping NRCS with private land forest management plans. Good Neighbor Authority foresters and employees helping the Flathead National Forest administer timber sales and restoration contract.
- Discussion occurring statewide on how to increase the amount of prescribed fire on private lands.

General Discussion

- Insurance companies are doing more home inspections in the area which may be increasing interest in home ignition zone and fuel reduction work.
- Need to continue to encourage folks to do both home ignition zone and property wide fuel reduction work to make a landscape scale reduction in fire behavior.
- ***Need to determine the date for "June TBD – Living with wildfire, Montana House, West Glacier (Ali, Harker, HHGV, Lincoln etc.). Ensure this doesn't conflict with our June 28th event in Whitefish.***
- ***Need to add Rick Trembath fall burn/fire season recap event at FVCC to our calendar once he sets a date.***



United States Department of Agriculture



Forestry Consultants

Are you a consultant working with private landowners on forest conservation? Are you interested in learning more about how you can work with NRCS and what your clients need to qualify for financial assistance? Attend one of the two upcoming outreach events to learn about how to become an [NRCS Technical Service Provider \(TSP\)](#) and how you can help your clients plan for forestry conservation.

Presentations by (NRCS):

Lorraine Vogt, Missoula Area Resource Conservationist,
Celie Borndal, State Forester,
Jason Glenn, Missoula Area Forester,
Greg Cain, Business Tools Specialist and TSP Coordinator

For More Info, Contact:

Celie Borndal; (406) 587-6821 / Celie.borndal@usda.gov
Greg Cain; (406) 587-6950 / Gregory.cain@usda.gov

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**Tuesday,
May 10th,
2022**

**12:30 – 3:30 pm:
Outreach Event**

**Located at:
Lubrecht Experimental
Forest, 38689 MT-200,
Greenough, MT
(Pavilion)**

OR

**Wednesday,
May 11th,
2022**

**12:30 – 3:30 pm:
Outreach Event**

**Located at:
Lone Pine State Park
300 Lone Pine Rd,
Kalispell, MT (Picnic
Shelter)**

NRCS provides reasonable accommodations for all persons to participate in NRCS programs and activities. If you require special accommodations, please contact Celie Borndal at celie.borndal@usda.gov by Tuesday April 26th, 2022.

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nrcs.usda.gov

Events coming up:

~~March 22 — Preparing for Fire Season, FVCC AT139, 6-8pm~~

~~March 29 — Pile burning workshop, FVCC AT139, 6-8pm (Rick Trembath & Ernie Nace)~~

~~April 14 — Era of Megafires, Dome Theatre in Libby 6:30pm (Marcel Getz, FAC Coordinator)~~

~~April 16, 23, or 30 (TBD) — Living with Wildfire — Many Lakes (Randy, Rick C, Holly M, Ernie/Ali?)~~

~~April 22 — Pile Burning Workshop, [Swan Valley Connections](#), 9-1 Registration required~~

~~May 4 — Preparing for Wildfire in the Swan, 6pm Zoom with Swan Valley Connections (Ali, Jack, Mike M.)~~

~~May 7 — Family Forestry Expo (table?) and risk assessment training in Lincoln County (Marcel, Ali)~~

May 14 — Women in the Woods Workshop at Lone Pine State Park (Holly, Ali, Ashley, arborist, MCC)

May 24 — Forest Management, Holly McKenzie, FVCC 6-9pm

June 11 — Big Mountain Fire brush pick up day being planned

June 15 — North Fork Fire Hazard Reduction Field Trip, 9:30am – 3pm (Allen Chrisman)

June TBD — Living with Wildfire — Montana House, West Glacier (Ali, Harker, HHGV, Lincoln, ?)

June 28 — Living with Wildfire Event in Whitefish (Richard Hildner, Ali, Rick Connell, Mike West, Ben, Joe Page?)

July 13 — North Fork Firewise Day (Allen Chrisman, Sean Johnson, Huntsberger, Lincoln..)

July 21 — Big Mountain Firewise Day! Details to come...

July 14-15 & 22 — MSU Forest Stewardship Workshop, Kalispell (Register [HERE](#))

August 4-5 & 12 — MSU Forest Stewardship Workshop, Eureka

Fall TBD— Fall burn & Fire Season Recap — Rick Trembath and Co.

Don't forget, I have a lot of these here in my office so give a call if you'd like a stack:

[Be Ember Aware!](#)

[Wildfire Home Retrofit Guide](#) (home hardening)

[Wildfire Evacuation Checklist](#)

[Ready, Set, Go Montana](#)

[Fire-Resistant Landscaping Considerations for Montana's WUI](#)

[Protecting and Landscaping Homes in the Wildland Urban Interface](#)

Thanks for being here and we'll see you next month!

5/10/22 aau