



## FireSafe Flathead Meeting Notes, August 26, 2021

**NEXT MEETING:** Thursday, September 23, 2021 9-11 at the Tally Lake Pavilion. Bring a lunch as we will plan for a walking conversation through the prescribed fire project area afterwards. More to come!

**Meeting Attendance:** Mike West (Fuels AFMO, Tally Lake Rd of the Flathead NF), Deb Starling (NW MT Hazardous Fuels program), Karli Becher & Sean Johnson (NRCS), Lincoln Chute (Flathead County Fire Services Area Manager), Ali Ulwelling (Forestry Assistance, DNRC), Ben Devall (Chief of Big Mountain Fire Department), Ernie Nace (Community Preparedness Specialist, Kalispell Unit DNRC), Joe Page (Chief Whitefish FD), Monica Jungster (Montana House, Apgar), Mike Frost (Elkhorn Firewise Community & more), Tye Sundt (Weyerhaeuser), Bill Mulholland (Tally Lake District Ranger), Jane Mandala (Montana Tree Farm), Diane with Black Swan Analytics, LA, CA.

### EVENTS coming up:

**Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup> from 9-12** – Jane Mandala is coordinating a Montana Tree Farm Peer Network event with a landowner in Kila. Holly McKenzie will talk forestry and Tree Farm, others will present as well. All are welcome! RSVP Jane at 406-274-2030 or [jlsmandala@gmail.com](mailto:jlsmandala@gmail.com)

**October 4-8** - National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Workshop (Virtual) More [HERE](#)

**Tuesday, October 19<sup>th</sup> from 12-1:30pm** the National Forest Foundation, DNRC, and Montana Forest Collaboration Network are hosting a Zoom webinar/panel discussion about Wildfire Science with Dr. Mark Finney, Dr. Jack Cohen, and NIMO IC Bea Day, hosted by Dr. Colin Hardy. More to come!

**Check it out:** August 20 [KGEZ interview](#) with Flathead National Forest FMO Rick Connell

Outside Magazine on fires in the North Fork [HERE](#)

Washington Post Storymap on Prescribed Fire [HERE](#) . Scroll to see video of Tony Harwood and Germaine White, information and education specialist with the CSKT.

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*"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*

0900 – Welcome & Introductions –

*Ali Ulwelling* - This morning was an informal round-robin with participants, a chance to catch up and offer thoughts on the season, how it went/is going, what we wish we had in place, what we can work on together in the coming months. It was busy but the relationship & partnerships are so valued, and a solid foundation is in place to keep building and growing together.

*Ernie Nace* – Busy with prevention, restrictions/exemptions, Hay Creek as PIO, and starting to do more home risk assessments again. Had a new Smokey sign built & installed at Woody's at the junction of Hwy 35 and 206!  
**Ernie and Ali will work on more signage specific to restrictions ("No Campfires") and will be part of the post-season restrictions' conversation to, optimistically, make some procedural improvements.**

*Mike West* – Back in planning level (PL) 2 and moderate fire danger, days are getting shorter, multiple bands of significant moisture from the past couple of weeks has moderated fire season substantially. These busy back-to-back fire seasons will continue to build interest on wildfire, preparedness, fuels reduction so we'll keep the traction and find funding to keep doing the work. Moving forward with contracts and work near Olney, Good Creek, Stove pipe and Jackknife. We'll find out about funding for fuels reduction on federal and private lands with the infrastructure bill and talk about that more next month. Should be finding out about the Joint Chief's proposal in October. As of now the FNF will likely not be conducting any prescribed fire this fall unless the situation changes nationally. It's cooler here but CA, WA, and OR haven't received the moisture and are still in active fire season. All is well and busy, let's just keep doing what we're doing.

*Sean Johnson* – It's been a busy spring and summer with year 2 of Ashley Lake TIP in the works. Both Wedge Canyon and Little Bitterroot are considered "investment ready for FY22" (nice work!) and so they will be balancing the need to gather interest with securing the potential funding. Applications for project areas are due by mid-October and **we can talk more about supporting outreach.**

*Deb Starling* – Has had a few calls about insurance being dropped, homeowners given a list of improvements, then needing an official Home Ignition Zone inspection from Firesafe Flathead. She has been doing those for Allstate. **(Let's follow up on this.)** Finding that landowners on fixed income or disability are getting the work done, but it's pushing them out of the bracket for assistance, so the process tends to discriminate against individuals in certain situations. **(Ali will follow up on this with the stewardship program.)** They have been busy— moving ahead with Haskill Creek, Notta Road needs another landowner, Dower Draw, and Ptarmigan Village (just got a new contractor, so continuing now). There continues to be a lot of interest in Lakeside/Angel Point area so would like to explore funding opportunities as they arise (Forest Action Plan...) working on a Western States WUI application for Foothill Road area east of Kalispell so not an option in this area now. Would really benefit from the JC funding as there is interest throughout that area. Highland Meadows (Paul O) will benefit from the Tally Lake RD work along the roadway and Ernie is working on the Firewise application for the community.

*Lincoln Chute* – Was working on the Hay Creek Fire and then the Boulder 2700 Fire. Back to work and talking with the new Flathead County Parks Director Christopher Maestas about getting work done on County Park lands.

*Allen Chrisman* – (sent notes to Ali) Hosted a very successful fire training with Gary Mahugh in June. Had an excellent Firewise Day in July with [Todd Lando from Marin County Fire](#) who presented on preparing for evacuations. (Todd assisted with evacuations on the Camp Fire that burned through Paradise, CA in 2018 and has hosted presentations on the Fire Safe Marin website.) The Hay Creek Fire started a week later and was managed by the local Type 3 Team who did an excellent job given the extreme lack of resources. Appreciative of the blading and abatement on the n fork road. **Would like more support for the NRCS Wedge Canyon Tip and to talk about how to make that happen.**

*Ben Devall* – Will be sending out the new homeowner packets shortly, they will include firewise, district info, in the event of wildfire info, and important numbers. 2/3 of homeowners are signed up for the Big Mountain Community website! This will allow them to push out emergency messages, share Firewise links and info. **They hauled 12 trailers of brush to large burn piles on their community Firewise day!** They have been working with Elk Highlands to strengthen HOA guidelines regarding defensible space. And there is more...

*Joe Page* – Has been working through restrictions exemptions with Ernie, has been receiving an increase in calls regarding insurance. (Thanks for being here, Joe!)

*Mike Frost* – Just turned in the Elkhorn Firewise Community Renewal and really recommends that neighborhoods and communities work on getting Firewise certified. While it doesn't mean that each and every home has done work, it does mean that there is a commitment by the community to host an outreach event, to invest in reducing risk, to create an action plan and update every 3 years, to have a [community risk assessment](#) completed every 5 years. ([Firewise USA](#)) And this CAN help homeowners to keep insurance.

*Jane Mandala* – Is also interested in what it means to be a Firewise community and sees how this may fit into the [Montana Tree Farm](#) conversation. (**Ali will meet with Jane about this.**) Jane is hosting a Peer Network event in Kila on September 17<sup>th</sup> from 9-12, all are welcome. We will add Jane to the FSF website contact list!

*Diane* representing Tammy Schwartz of Black Swan Analytics – Check out the website and fabulous slider tool [HERE](#).

*Ali Ulwelling* – A few requests have come in including the need for post-fire/recovery information and that has started a library of resources on Fire Adapted Montana Learning Network Podio platform and, perhaps, the need for something Montana-specific. A handout for renters and rentals in the area (North Fork, West Glacier...) so that short-term renters are aware of situations, where to get information, and what to do in the event of a fire.

Also talking again about the all-in-one fire publication with inserts for specific areas and program contacts, the Welcome to Wherever You Are Landowner Guide that touches on wildlife, weeds, fire and more with the Conservation District and other partners. Working on capturing the restrictions issues for the post-season discussion, raising the Burn Permit issue again, and building landowner packets of wildfire information for ANYONE to share.

[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](#)

I have a lot here in my office so call if you'd like a stack--

Thanks all! We'll meet again in September.  
au 08/26/21



**Montana Tree Farm System**  
**Peer Mentor Network**  
*Sanders, Flathead & Lincoln Counties*

MT Tree Farm is coordinating a network of forest landowners to share their experience, knowledge, and resources with one another.

**No matter where you are on your forest management journey, we want you to join!**

This is an opportunity to learn and stay connected through informal one-on-one visits, group field days, and more!



If you would like to participate or if you have questions, please contact Jane Mandala: [jlsmandala@gmail.com](mailto:jlsmandala@gmail.com)  
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