



## FireSafe Flathead Meeting Notes, December 3, 2020

Next meeting: Thursday, January 28, 2021 9-11am via Zoom

**Attendance:** Wyatt Frampton (MT Forest Action Plan Program Manager), Deb Starling (NW MT Hazardous Fuels program), Sean Johnson and Karli Becher (District Conservationist, NRCS), Rick Trembath (fire historian and more), Lincoln Chute (Flathead County Fire Services Area Manager), Allen Chrisman (North Fork Fire Mitigation, MT Tree Farm and more), Lorrie Woods (forester, consultant, private landowner advocate), Chris Dowling (Flathead NF Swan Lake District Ranger), Marlee Ostheimer (National Forest Foundation), Eric Hoberg (Northwest Management), Mike Frost (WAFSC and more), Ernie Nace (Community Preparedness, Kalispell Unit), Jeremy Harker (FMO GNP), Keith Van Broeke (Deputy Fire Staff, Flathead NF), Ali Ulwelling (Forestry Assistance, DNRC), Bridget Mancini (Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator, Bitterroot)

*"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*

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0900

**Ali** - Thank you for making the time to be here! Welcome to Bridgit Mancini, Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator for the Bitterroot. What we do is happening in other places and we are sharing and learning across boundaries—ideas, products, creativity—through Fire Adapted Montana Learning Network. Julia is hosting an Insurance Round table in January and will send out more info closer to the date. We are sharing more with the Lincoln County Fire Safe Council—website development, Smoke Column articles, smoke and air quality educational ideas, and more.

**Wyatt Frampton** – Forest Action Plan Request for Proposals – 4.5 million from the State's suppression fund to be spent on the ground. Proposals from \$50k-500k. Think cross-boundary, collaborative, shovel-ready, outreach and education, or in conjunction with other spending authorities. More information [HERE](#) and info sessions scheduled.

**Spencer Plumb** – National Forest Foundation (NFF) – Is a partner non-profit group of the Flathead National Forest. They are working with Mike West and other collaborators on a proposal for work connecting projects in the Taylor-Hellroaring area. Work will include thinning on USFS and private ground, prescribed fire, and provide connectivity between past projects in the watershed.

**Sean Johnson** – NRCS - Not expecting to hear anything about the Joint Chief's proposal until the end of the year or early January. If we do not get the funding, take the comments and resubmit. May pull out areas for TIPs. Working on the TIP in Ashley Lake and there is growing interest. Been working through the ALPOA network, Eric Hoberg of Northwest Management has sent direct-mail information to people that has worked well to gain interest. Also working on an irrigation-based TIP for Valley farmers. Interest around Foy's Lake and Little Bitterroot. Working on a TIP in the North Fork (Wedge Canyon/Red Canyon) area.

Sean also shared the "What's available in my County" link to projects. **Ali will get this posted on the FireSafe Flathead website.**

**Keith VanBroeke** – Flathead National Forest

- Sold Good Neighbor Authority Timber Sale this November... Salish Good GNA \$430,000 in bid premium which can be spent planning and completing other work on the forest including fuels work.
- Should know whether West Valley Joint Chiefs' proposal is funded sometime this month... otherwise we'll have around \$400,000 in HF funds to complete standalone fuels work.
- Oettiker Creek Fuel Reduction planning & implementation is on track for this coming field season... still need to discuss funding options... depends if joint chiefs comes through or prioritization of forest fuels dollars
- FNF Timber & Fire Management received DNRC Partnership Award... thank you...
- Fire season update... multiple long duration incidents however nothing got really large (Garnett, Drumming, Lion Creek)... successful initial attack, Started early with folks to Australia and Tennessee in January and last resources home just before Thanksgiving. Extended seasonal firefighters that would normally be furloughed to help nationally.
- Prescribed fire update... no landscape or broadcast burns due to severe fall fire season and all hands on deck suppression mandate... otherwise we completed the majority of our usual brush disposal and hand pile burning. Accomplished around 8,000 acres of fuels treatments.
- Plan to start broadcast burning in the spring if weather and fuel conditions are suitable.
- Let's keep up the cross-boundary fuel reduction coordination... let any of us know and we'll get you in touch with the right person.
- Working with National Forest Foundation... MT DNRC Forest Action Plan Grant Funding Application to complete remainder of Taylor Hell Roaring fuels units.
- Seeking input on Lake Five project proposed between Coram and West Glacier, Frozen Moose project up the North Fork, Bug Creek project near Crane Mountain.

**Chris Dowling** – Swan District, FNF – A lot of fuels work going on in the “March Madness” blow down areas of the east shore of Flathead Lake, 6-mile and more. Getting together with partners in the Swan (Swan Unit DNRC, Swan District, Swan Valley Connections, NW MT Haz Fuels) to discuss potential projects for the RFP.

**Jeremy Harker** – Glacier National Park – Is working on an interagency “Recreate Responsibly” campaign. Had zero lightning fires last summer, working with folks on the West Glacier Resilience plan. Hired the MCC crew to get fuels work done-- GP Conservancy paid for crews, GNP staff provided leadership, all positive comments about the work that was completed and potential for more.

**Deb Starling** – 10-12 landowners have called with interest in the Little Bitterroot area, Overlook-2 Hazardous Fuels grant has been approved, submitting a Haz Fuels application for the Haskill Basin area. There was an article in the Daily Interlake about spring burning that was inaccurate and led to confusion. (Ali tried to hunt this down but was unable to find, think that it got removed.)

**Lincoln Chute** – Flathead County OES – Has been busy with public health work. Juanita Nelson has been hired as the emergency planner (Rick Sacca's old position). Will get back to the [CWPP](#) that is hosted on the County website for public review.

**Randy Sundberg** – Many Lakes HOA – Has been working with Dave Prunty of the County roads department on getting roadsides thinned.

**Mike Frost** – Says thank you for the work and for hosting via Zoom! Allows us all to connect and provides a new way to participate and learn via webinars. Consider hosting educational presentations?

**Ernie Nace** – Kalispell Unit Community Preparedness – Working on the prevention plan, starting to teach county co-op classes in January and incorporating home assessments. **Will take the lead with Rick Trembath on a virtually hosted spring pile burning presentation.**

**Ali Ulwelling** – Forestry Assistance, DNRC – Is working on a few products generated from the last meeting: a consolidated contractor list, an overview of grant/funding opportunities (deadlines, amount available, parameters, competitive application guidelines...), and a list of programs and contacts in the NW.

We have also committed to a “Forestry Plus” series on KGEZ radio where we will talk about seasonally relevant topics. She will be asking you to participate! And she will be asking you to contribute to the Smoke Column this year... We are starting to coordinate a landowner handout for people in Flathead County and are coordinating with the Flathead Conservation District and others on this project. Also, in touch with Paul Neff re: video, slowly working with GuRoots on adding content to the website and working more closely with Forestry staff to coordinate efforts across the area.

**Dates coming up:**

**Wildfire and Insurance Webinar** – January 27<sup>th</sup> from 10-11am – Hosted by Fire Adapted Montana Learning Network ([FAMLN](#))

**PODs: Collaborative Fire Planning Workshop**, February 24-25, 2021 - Hosted by the Wildfire Risk Management Science ([WRMS](#)) Team

1100 adjourn

See you next month!

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