



FireSafe Flathead Meeting Notes, February 15, 2023

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, March 15, 2023, 9-11am at DNRC Office and Zoom

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.

Recent news & events:

- GRANT APPLICATION PERIOD OPEN! Wood products infrastructure assistance to facilities that purchase and process byproducts of ecosystem restoration projects - <https://www.fs.usda.gov/science-technology/energy-forest-products/wood-innovation>
- Montana Wildland Fire Preparedness Guide - <https://www.fireadaptedmontana.org/resources>
- The Big Burn Podcast - <https://laist.com/podcasts/the-big-burn>

"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:

- *A spreadsheet of grants, opportunities, dates and deadlines, max & min, parameters. – Ali*
- *Status of Burn Permit system – Dylan Kopitzke- next meeting for this is Friday, March 17*
- *How can we better communicate w/landowners what funding opportunities exist at this time/place, when opportunities are evolving? This is an ongoing issue, and we are working on it!*
- *Pile burning workshop – will plan for spring 2023 with Lincoln taking the lead at Herron Park and fall of 2023 with Rick Trembath taking the lead at FLL.*
- *Lincoln with Henry (Fire Adapted Montana Learning Network) about creating the sprinkler handout that would benefit more people across the state.*
- *Mike Frost has suggested a Landscape Architecture approach to managing the HIZ. This is a fabulous idea, but we will need time and a few people to commit to make it successful. Ali is talking with Henry at FAMLN about this, too.*

0900 – Welcome & Introductions: Mike West (Flathead NF Tally Lake RD AFMO), Ali Ulwelling (DNRC Forestry Assistance Henry DeLuca (Fire Adapted Montana Learning Network coordinator), Scott Countryman (Goosehead Insurance), Mike Frost (sparkplug!), Ben Devall (Chief, Big Mountain FD), Lincoln Chute (Flathead County OES, Fire Warden), Logan Sandman (Libby Unit FMO, NF landowner), Dylan Kopitzke (DNRC NWLO FMO), Sean Johnson and Karli Becher (NRCS), Ernie Nace (DNRC Community Preparedness), Mark Friedline (Flathead Building Association), Allen Chrisman (NF Mitigation Committee), Randy Sundberg (Many Lakes HOA), Ally Lula (Prevention and Mitigation, Kootenai NF), Katie Mast (Marion FD), Paul Okerberg.

Ali Ulwelling, DNRC –

- Working with DNRC GIS to support geospatial representation of the work going on, at least as much as we can understanding that we'll never see it all.
- Elmo Fire video is here to share in person, but DNRC communications has not yet been able to approve for wide distribution. UPDATE: They are working on improving some of the sound in the important parts of the video so that it is easier to understand.
- DNRC Stewardship Program grant RFPs are due March 15 for anyone with ideas they'd like to pursue.

- Partner update: Conversations and meetings continue with optimism for Montana West Economic Development (MWED) to take this on. We are also talking with the National Forest Foundation about a partnership, and we'll see how it all shakes out.
- We will have access to air filters for distribution to vulnerable members of our local population. Ali put in for a grant and we will receive funding, but she'll have to learn more.
- We are still working on contributing to the Welcome to the Flathead guide and website that will share all sorts of information with current, existing, and future landowners interested in forest health, wildfire, invasive weeds, living with wildlife, septic health... and all the topics that come with living sustainably and responsibly.
- Landscape Architecture project for the Home Ignition Zone – This is a project that Mike Frost has suggested, and we support but with all that is going on right now it may have to wait just a bit. We'd like to get a small group together (Ali, Mike West, Mike Frost, Bruce Boody, architectural student friend of Mike Frost) to work on this.
- We have Mark Friedline with the Flathead Building Association here today and it seems a natural fit to a lot of what we talk about. We will plan to participate in the Home and Garden Showcase 2024. Thanks for being here!

Ernie Nace, Community Preparedness - Kalispell Unit DNRC

- Working together with others in the DNRC and Flathead County to find a solution for the burn permit system. We are optimistic that we'll have a solution in place for May 1.
- Assisted with County Co-op training for 80+ firefighters.
- Has been planning and developing presentations for the Pile Burning and Preparing for Wildfire sessions scheduled for FVCC.
- Starting the judging for the Keep Montana Green art contest!
- Open burn season starts up March 1 – April 30. No burn permits required.

Mike West, Flathead National Forest

- Is starting to work on agenda, dates, location for the cross boundary coordination meeting—plan for late April or early May
- Working with the National Forest Foundation (NFF) on an agreement to help get work done on private lands with some adjacency to forest lands.
- Put forward 2 projects to see about WO funding for PCT on Tally and Glacier View Districts.

Sean Johnson and Karli Becher, NRCS

- Continues to have interest in the Joint Chief's funding area and the TIPs. Ranking applications and contracting will begin mid-March.
- Interest in Ashley is tapering off.
- They are excited to announce that they WILL be hiring a new forester!
- They are considering drafting a few Joint Chief's proposal for FY 2025—stay tuned on what that will look like.

Alen Chrisman, North Fork Fire Mitigation Committee

- Will be meeting March 7 to plan their two annual events: Fire training in June and Firewise Day after the Interlocal in July.
- It is the 20th anniversary of the Wedge Canyon fire and others in the North Fork so will be telling those stories, inviting Rick Trembath to present on the fires of 2003.
- They would like to show the new Elmo Fire video during their events once it is approved for sharing.

Ben Devall, Big Mountain Fire Department

- They did have the meeting about the secondary egress, but there is no secondary egress so they will look at completing more fuels reduction.
- Working on emergency planning and messaging for residents and visitors to the mountain.
- A new Risk Manager on the Mountain (Josh Whit).
- Fire wise meeting on March 6th and will be organizing another defensible space meeting later in March. Asking for Mike, Ernie, Lincoln for support.
- Treatments are planned for Bootjack Lake area.

Scott Countryman, Goosehead Insurance

- The 3-minute presentation at NMAR (Northwest Montana Association of Realtors) happened and there will be follow up with a brown bag lunch-n-learn.
- Insurance is increasing on the Mountain because it's >5-min away from Whitefish City fire station and not in fire district.
- Will be presenting in Bozeman Mar 17-19
- **Will Friedner** on YouTube 67,000 followers and presents on considerations when buying land in Montana. Would like to film + and – of homes and communities that are “Firewise” or not. We should find a few examples, start to engage re: this. (Great idea, Scott!)

Random –

- **Wildfire Community Preparedness Day – May 6th, 2023 – More about it [HERE](#) & menu of ideas [HERE](#)**

Events coming up! (Some dates yet to be finalized and more to come)

Saturday, April 8th from 10-12 – Glacier Hills Firewise Day

Saturday, April 22nd – Many Lakes Community Wildfire Preparedness Day

West Glacier – TBD

North Fork Fire Basic Fire Training (for NF folks) – June 22

North Fork Firewise Day – July 12 - **20th Anniversary year of Wedge Canyon Fire**

<https://dailyinterlake.com/news/2009/dec/27/2003-a-monster-year-for-fires-6/>

Swan Valley Connections – Dates to be determined.

Past events:

Flathead Valley Community College Wildland Fire Series

Feb 23 – Pile Burning Workshop (Rick Trembath, Ernie, Ali)

March 2 – Intro to Forestry for Landowners (Holly M, Jack, Caleb)

March 9 – History of Fire in NW Montana – Rick T.

March 16 – Prepare for Fire Season (Ernie, Jeremy, Mike, Lincoln)

Thanks!

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