



FireSafe Flathead Meeting Notes – Thursday, January 24, 2019. 9-11am

In attendance: Ali Ulwelling, Jeremy Pris, Jan Cronin, Ben Devall, Randy Sundberg, Dick Haberkern, Lincoln Chute, Zach Miller, Rick Trembath, Deb Starling, Bill Swope, Allen Chrisman, Rich Blaney, and Aaron Hughes.

Next Meeting: February 28, 9-11am in the DNRC Conference Room. Please send updates, events, articles, agenda items!

9:00am - We had a few new faces join us:

Rich Blaney who has been a contractor doing fuels mitigation work, is on the FireSafe Montana Board, is currently a real estate agent, and will be moving from Polson to the Flathead this summer. He is excited to get involved and facilitate outreach and education to the real estate community.

Aaron Hughes Vice President / Manager of First American Title Co. He is interested in using their space and audience for training & education opportunities. Thank you both!

Zack Miller, Forester & log purchaser for Weyerhaeuser and Chair of our local Society of American Foresters (SAF) Chapter helped explain the role of industry foresters.

Jesse Ressel with Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). **Jesse** helped us understand the role of the NRCS and how their engagement efforts are shifting to more geographically focused areas, just as we are seeing a shift nationally, statewide, and locally. The NRCS offers financial and technical assistance and they are eager to coordinate with partners on projects.

Allen Chrisman talked about the [Montana Tree Farm](#) program and the forest management and stewardship he has been doing this winter up the North Fork. I had the opportunity to travel up there with Service Forester Rick Moore and Stoltze Forester Mark Boardman to check it out and captured this proud moment:



If you are on FaceBook, check out Montana Tree Farm's page & follow the progress of Allen's project!

Allen and Rick are teaching the Wildland Fire course at FVCC this spring. If anyone is interested in learning more about this class and the course itinerary contact Rick at trembath@centurytel.net .

Many Lakes, Randy Sundberg – Put **Saturday, April 20th** on your calendar as Randy has coordinated the second Community Wildfire event for Many Lakes and the surrounding HOAs. This will be held at the **Creston School from 10-12:30**. Randy is looking for the same presenters (or to at least cover similar information) as last year: Rick Connell to demonstrate the fire behavior, Lincoln Chute- evacuations, Ali Ulwelling, NW Montana Hazardous Fuels, Gary Mahugh, Randy to introduce and conclude. We should address the focused efforts in Many Lakes, report on the number of people that have been working on fuels reduction and highlight the successes in the past year. Consider the “bring a friend” message. Randy is also planning for a spring chipping day and will work with Lincoln to schedule & coordinate the chipper. Randy and Zack also talked about the possibility of Zack looking at the County Parks in Many Lakes to check the feasibility of completing work there.

CWPP update, Lincoln Chute – Lincoln put a date on the calendar and the group has since met to move forward on the CWPP. There were a couple of very productive meetings and the CWPP is moving along! Still deciding on a date for the community meeting and presentation by Byron Bonney but will get that out as soon as we can.

NW MT Haz Fuels, Deb Starling – Typically the grants last 2-3 years, but this cycle the money was obligated in about 1 year. There has been a lot of interest in the North Fork, Many Lakes, Bootjack, Foothill Road...

Family Forestry Expo, Deb Starling – 30th annual Family Forestry Expo! May 6-10 for kids, May 11 for families. FireSafe Flathead should have a table there on the 11th. (Yes!) Let’s coordinate times when people can staff for an hour or two.

Era of Megafires Preview night was scheduled for Monday, February 5th at 5:30. It was a cold and stormy day with winter weather warnings, but we still had a strong turnout with 20 people from many of the departments. Several have joined forces and committed to bringing the presentation to their community! **We are hosting a second preview on Tuesday, February 26th at OES** if a community “spark plug” is interested in joining us to preview then follow up to host a presentation in their community.

Interested Communities/Departments: Lakeside & Somers; Bigfork, Creston, Ferndale; HH and Martin City; West Valley & Smith Valley; Marion; Olney; North Fork, Columbia Falls & Badrock.

Pile burning workshop for fall of 2019 – Rick Trembath is taking the lead on this and has been in contact with Peter Kolb to identify a site and coordinate.

Open burning season is coming up in March – Lincoln Chute will (?) invite the media to a “safe pile” and talk about open burning season.

Forest Stewardship Class – MSU extension hosts [Forest Stewardship](#) classes each year. See link and attachment for more information.

The Smoke Column – We are ON for another season so please write and submit your 125-word entries to me! (Topics: Ignition-resistant construction, insurance, pile burning, what is a CWPP? Rx fire, next door app, community websites...)

Other publications – Is there a “Welcome to the Flathead” booklet/site for new residents of the Flathead? What does the Chamber of Commerce offer new home and landowners? Can we work on or support a *Living with Wildfire* update?

Smokey/Fire Danger Signs – Ali is still working with the sign shop. This is a complicated project and they are starting from scratch but will be giving an update soon. Let’s confirm the number and locations/departments and inquire whether this is something the departments would like and be able to maintain. It was \$3000+ to order from out of state and have shipped, so we are looking this in-state, no shipping option.

Upcoming events:

March 1 – April 30: Open burn season

TBD: CWPP Community Meeting & Byron Bonney

Saturday, April 20: Many Lakes Community Wildfire Event **and** Earth Day in Whitefish

May 11: Family Forestry Expo!

May 4 or 19: Lakeside Era of Megafires presentation

June 6th: West Glacier Community Conversation

11:00 adjourn

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