



FireSafe Flathead Meeting Notes for January 18, 2023

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 9-11am at DNRC Office & 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.

0900 - Welcome and any introductions: *Mike West (Flathead NF Tally Lake RD AFMO), Scott Countryman (Goosehead Insurance), Deb Starling (NW MT Hazardous Fuels Program and more), Ben Devall (Chief, Big Mountain FD), Lincoln Chute (Flathead County OES, Fire Warden), Toby Thompson (Flathead NF AFMO-fuels), Holly McKenzie (DNRC Service Forester), Karli Becher (NRCS Conservationist), Ali Ulwelling, Randy Sundberg (Many Lakes HOA), Allen Chrisman, Ben Devall (Chief, Big Mountain FD), Chris Dowling (Swan DR), Bill Mulholland (Tally Lake DR).*

Upcoming Events:

- [Community Wildfire Defense Grant](#) (CWDG) listening session - Jan 26
- Insurance with Scott - Ali and/or Mike - Wed, Feb 1 at 3:30p - 3 minutes
- **February 16th – Charboss demonstration 10-2, presentation at 11. See attachments.**
- FVCC (see attached) - All are 6-8pm in the AT building – *Follow up with Rick T to see if these can be recorded.*
 - Feb 23 - Pile burning workshop (Rick T and Ernie Nace)
 - March 2 – Forestry 101: Intro to Forestry for Landowners (Holly M)
 - March 9 - History of Wildfire in NW Montana (Rick T)
 - March 16 - Prepare for Fire Season (Ernie, Mike W, Lincoln, others)
- Swan Valley Fuels educational events in Feb and March – Ali will provide dates.
- *Flathead Cross Boundary Coordination Meeting – Mike West, date to be determined, possibly in April. Would like to build off of the meeting that was held last year and expand the participants.*
- Glacier Hills - April 8, 10-12 - Ernie is the lead on this
- Many Lakes - April 22 - Ernie is the lead on this – *Similar to last years event.*
- *April 15th Wildland Firefighter Banquet*
- West Glacier, TBD - Late May or early June at Montana House - Ali will help coordinate
- May - Community Wildfire Preparedness Day - We should plan something! – *National Community Wildfire Preparedness Day is observed annually on the first Saturday in May and this year, it takes place on May 6.*
- May 13 - Family Forestry Expo day - Ali and Holly will be there
- *Big Mountain Fire might have a wildfire preparedness day in the summer*
- *North Fork Mitigation Committee will be planning their firewise/interlocal day, which will probably be in June. They may also be planning another event for July.*

Flathead National Forest project updates - Mike West and Toby Thompson – 2nd year of Joint Chiefs funding are in agreements. Projects near Farm to Market and Bootjack Road along with Pilot Knob scheduled to start this year. Jack Knife project is moving along. Good Creek has work being done right now and will continue. Continuing to chip away at Stovepipe projects. Plans to do work at Round Meadow. Spotted Bear sale was approved. Lake Five project is ongoing. Two sales are planned south of Blacktail. There are four active sales on the Swan Ranger District. There are plans to expand prescribed burning on both the Swan Lake District and surrounding private lands, which would tie together past prescribed burns. Swan Lake District is also working on a needs assessment for a large project that would include land in the WUI.

Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) funding and forester position - Sean Johnson and Karli Becher – Working on getting all 2023 application ranked by mid-February. Joint Chiefs, very high interest across the project area, some hot spots have shown up with HOA's getting on board to spread the news about the opportunity to their members. Wedge Canyon, large jump in interest from last year, good to see momentum seems to be building up there. Big thanks to Allen and the rest of the North Fork Fire Mitigation Committee for trying to push the EQIP program to those eligible landowners. Little Bitterroot Lake - Continued strong interest around Little Bitterroot Lake. Ashley Lake, large drop off in interest this year however we have already contracted 1,129 acres in 3 years while our initial goal was to contract 1,000 acres over 5 years, so we have hit it really hard and as a result of early interest, the number of acres left to treat is greatly reduced. We were not able to hire a forester from the posting that went out.

NW MT Haz Fuels - Deb Starling – All grants and agreements were completed by the end of 2022. Deb had a handout with a summary of completed projects from 2012 to 2022 which treated 4039.5 acres in Flathead County in those 10 years. The program has wrapped up. Deb plans to hand off landowner contacts that are interested in funding programs.

DNRC Kalispell Unit – Holly McKenzie – Shawn Morgan and Ali worked on a video that covers the Elmo fire, the video has not been released yet but should be ready to view by the next meeting.

Flathead County - Lincoln Chute – The Flathead City-County Health Department has been working with the DNRC and Flathead County Fire Chiefs on updating the burn permit process. They are working to get an online permit system that would be used year-round for burn permits. The Flathead City-County Health Department is working to update their air quality standards. Lincoln has been involved in reviewing the regulations for new subdivisions the fire chiefs have also been giving input on updating the regulations.

Big Mountain Fire - Ben Devall, Chief – Elk highlands is looking to thin their common lands. A meeting will be taking place on January 30th on a 2nd egress of Big Mountain, Ben will be sending out a follow up email to invite a few people to attend this meeting.

Goosehead Insurance - Scott Countryman – Looking forward to the event on Feb 1st. Scott would like to know about any instances of people being dropped from their insurance because of fire

risk. Other states have a state insurance for people with no other insurance available, but the insurance in other states only cover the structure and can be expensive.

North Fork Mitigation Committee - Allen Chrisman – *Working on getting the date set for the Firewise/Interlocal Day in June. Working on getting another event in the North Fork for July. They may want to DNRCs Elmo fire video at one of these events.*

Thanks and we'll see you next month!

Kb and au 2/2/23