



FireSafe Flathead Meeting Notes, June 21, 2023

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, July 19th, 2023, 9-11am at DNRC Office and Zoom

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/82785538192?pwd=UXZXejVLZXJhMFRNdFFYVTVIMlAxdz09>

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.

Attendees... Ali Ulwelling (MT DNRC), Mike West (USFS), Katie Mast (Marion Fire), Lincoln Chute (Flathead County), Ben Devall (Big Mtn Fire), Josh Whit (WFMT Resort), Sam Cummings (USFS), Toby Thompson (USFS), Parker Olson (NRCS), Karlie Becher (NRCS, Alie (NRCS), Richard Hildner, Richelle Winkler, Ella Brodowski, Marlee Ostheimer (NFF), Henry Deluca (MT DNRC), Rick Trembath (FVCC), Mike Frost (Elkhorn), Scott Countryman (Goosehead Ins), Tom Fry (NFF), Ernie Nace (MT DNRC) Brian Sommers (Flathead Ridge Ranch).

FNF update... Project tracking tool database for the regional office for capacity and budgeting purposes.

- Project update... Tally, Swan, Hungry Horse projects. Contact Mike West or Toby Thompson for more specific information.

National Forest Foundation (NFF)... Request for proposals out with NFF for work on the Flathead National Forest for fuel reduction work. Keystone agreement pending to provide funding for work on FNF. MT DNRC funding pending to do cross boundary work on private land. Planning to hire staff person to support FNF with Keystone funding.

Natural Resources Conservation Service... Looking to hire another person to add capacity. Also, another position being advertised. Past few weeks a few more Joint Chiefs' applications funded. Planning to attend North Fork Day at Moose Creek. Friday video shoot with FNF for Joint Chiefs. Lots of folks are calling each week to determine if they can apply for program... Joint Chiefs', TIPs and other areas... keeping a list.

North Fork... Tomorrow community hall meeting @930 Sondreson Community Hall then drive to moose creek, carpooling important. Small groups with evaluation forms to assess property and cabins. Intent is for homeowners to do an evaluation of their property. Lunch and discussions at Sondreson Hall. Going to discuss what folks can do to be fire safe inside their home. **Bring home retrofit guide & fire adapted mt publication.** Interlocal meeting... includes agency & firewise meeting at Sondersons **hall July 12th with Elmo fire and wedge canyon fire.**

Michigan Tech University... Richelle Winkler background in social sciences... current project with USFS research social vulnerability to wildfire... wildfire preparation... recovery etc. Using public data sources to develop indices to map out social vulnerability to wildfire. What are the characteristics make people vulnerable to wildfire. Population change mapping for Flathead County event **July 13th at FVCC AT 139**

0830-1030... 30-minute presentation then small groups Q&A with map to indicate where there may be vulnerability locally... share info, generate discussions, build networks... open to the public. **Bring materials... home retrofit, fire adapted mt etc. Help with outreach or media.**

Scott Countryman... Bringing realtor to NF event June 22nd to do a video and will be edited prior to sharing video with Hildner approval. Met with Sean Johnson and homeowner regarding fuel reduction on private lands in the Joint Chiefs project area. State Farm, Geiko, All State is no longer insuring wildfire in California. MT is seeing a lot of migrants who need wildlife insurance... insurance is still available however is getting harder to get. Scott has seen homes declined in the area however still able to shop around to get insurance. Building inspector meeting... needs a new location & schedule a date.

Flathead County... Burned Herron Park piles... looking at what they can do with Joint Chiefs' along north boundary of Heron Park... considering applying for Many Lakes RAC grant for park lands. Teaching wildfire training to 70 Flathead Electric employees. Also taught search & rescue and sheriffs wildland fire training. Chiefs' association made recommendations to county for subdivision fuel reduction so fuel treatments are completed prior to final plat... commissioners initially support this idea. Burn permit update... folks getting a new permit every time instead of activating their permit... **put something on the home page so folks remember their permit number.**

Montana West Economic Development... considering community wildfire defense grant... application period opens this July for 90 days... also working with Flathead Electric on this grant request. Working to administer Joint Chiefs funding and Foothills Road western states WUI grant.

MT DNRC... did secure next year home and garden show... met with flathead home builders for wildfire awareness. Jim Wardensky with Flathead County did a KGEZ radio show on air quality and wildfire smoke... next KGEZ June 30th. KGEZ radio spot 3rd week of July TBD. Fire Crew being trained to do home assessments... prevention messaging for end of burn season and 4th of July.

Big Mountain FireWise event/HOA meeting July 20. Did annual brush pick up day July 3rd... put slash on the street with pick up service. Went over incident action plan in the event of a wildfire with WFMT resort employees. WFMT Resort guest safety & resort asset protection... if impacted by wildfire how would they open the ski resort the following winter. Elk Highlands revamped their rules regarding fuels mitigation rules to increase fuel reduction work and maintained. Doing structure risk assessment and triage. Single ingress/egress to the mountain... board members met with DOT regarding clearing road right of way on the lower section of the road. Elk Highlands is treating their common area for fuel reduction... good piece of cross boundary work because it ties into Holbrook and other fuel reduction work. **Ali is wondering if there is any interest in inviting media, in telling the story and setting the example of the coordinated work and dedication of the Big Mountain Fire Department to preparing the community.?**

Mike Frost Elkhorn HOA... Beaver Lake Fuel Reduction project. *(Mike, there are some efforts with the Fire Adapted Montana Learning Network to work on landscape architecture and those important concepts. We may have to pick this up in the fall. -Ali)*

Holly McKenzie... Ptarmigan Village doing additional fuel reduction work. It would be really helpful to get together with the NRCS and MWED/Carrie Johnson to see where the calls of interest overlap with identified priority areas. Holly is getting this together to share landowners contacts, identify those clusters of interest that could inform future grant proposals and create opportunities to assist landowners where the interest is the greatest.

Montana's Best TV episode looking for funding to do a fire prevention messaging episode. (No funding to assist with this at this time, will have to consider again at a future date but really appreciate the intent!)

Swan Valley Connections meeting June 27th to get a FireSafe Council group together.

Sam Cummings... consider reaching out to MTDC for fire behavior modeling to give the public a visual of the change of fire behavior pre & post treatment.

Tree Farm event/tour this Friday 1pm at Heron Park horse stables/Jim Watson property.

Thank you and we'll see you next month!

-aau