



FireSafe Flathead Meeting Notes, March 24, 2022, via Zoom

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 28. Venue to be determined.

Meeting Attendance: Ali Ulwelling (Forestry Assistance, DNRC), Starling (NW MT Hazardous Fuels program), Karli Becher (NRCS), Ben Devall (Chief, Big Mountain Fire Department), Allen Chrisman (North Fork Mitigation Committee), Lincoln Chute (Flathead Fire Service Area Manager), Don Stephenson (Whitefish Hills proper development board), Marcel Getz (Fire Adapted Community Coordinator, Lincoln County & Libby Unit DNRC), Rick Connell (Fire & Aviation Staff Officer, Flathead NF), Mike Sullivan (Glacier Hills), Vicki Hoyt (Valley resident). Matt Bishop (F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber), Lori Woods (Forest Stewardship Foundation), Richard Hildner (retired FBAN, Whitefish resident), Mark Newbold (Glacier Hills Firewise),

Our Mission: We are individuals, neighborhoods, organizations, and agency wildfire professionals working to create Fire Adapted Communities and resilient landscapes by providing leadership, technical assistance, and resources.

ARTICLES:

Living with Wildfire video – [HERE](#)

Popular Science - Don't blame national forests for America's massive wildfires [HERE](#)

Flathead National Forest and NRCS Field Office Receive Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Project [HERE](#)

USDA Forest Service – Confronting the Wildfire Crisis [HERE](#)

KGEZ morning show – Mike West & Sean Johnson talk about the Joint Chiefs' project [HERE](#)

"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:

- Contact Randy Sundberg and Ernie re: date for Many Lakes presentation – April 16, 23, 30?**
- Ali needs to follow up with Allen re: the HIZ filming site that we discussed last summer.**
- Ali needs to follow up with Rick T re: fire history page on website**
- Status of Burn Permit system – Dylan Kopitzke**
- Short term rental information from Julia to share with the group (Richard, Ben, Monica, North Fork)**
- How can we better communicate w/landowners what funding opportunities exist at this time/place?**
- Ali has started updating the calendar of events on the firesafe flathead site, will be posting the library of KGEZ articles, is dusting off the contact list, and exploring where to put funding maps.**

0900 – Welcome & Introductions

Ali Ulwelling, DNRC – We hosted the **Living with Wildfire** video and follow up presentation at FVCC AT139 on Tuesday with about 35 people in attendance. It was well received and the kickoff for the Land Stewardship Seminar series for 2022. In future planning, I will schedule MORE time for Rick and Lincoln to talk about their experiences as landowners are very interested in what they have to share.

Bootjack Road – The Good Neighbor Authority will have a 25-acre timber sale out for bid on Bootjack Road in the fall. This may be a good/high profile opportunity to talk about the GNA program, and the work occurring the WUI off Bootjack & Farm to Market Roads.

Bark Beetle grant proposals are due April 8th - This grant is for non-federal private lands (county, state) that are susceptible to bark beetles and would benefit from forest management.

Forestry Expo is coming up May 7—Are we interested in hosting a table/booth that day? Very popular event with a lot of people coming through! (Ali will be in Libby assisting with Risk Assessment training.)

Home and Garden Show – Tai Foley was there with info & his equipment this year and said there was a lot of interested in Home Ignition Zones, Firewise landscaping, thinning and fuels reduction. Recommended that we consider participating again in 2023. (In years past, Bill Swope and Ali would host a table and present.)

Rick Connell, FNF – Joint Chiefs’ funding is getting underway on TLRD. There is potential to request additional funding, but we are figuring some of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding as we go.

Prescribed fire – Spring is the time for smaller burns and pile burning. There are some planned throughout the forest, but the larger burns are generally planned for the fall. (Like Whitefish last fall.)

Cross Boundary Coordination meeting – Was held on March 3. Mike West did a great job of developing the invitation list, getting the speakers there, and facilitating the conversation. This is in an effort to better coordinate activities on the landscape, to be better aware of who is doing what where, and to work together in pre-planning.

PODs – [Potential Operational Delineations](#) are being developed by each District AFMO by hosting meetings and working closely with the partners in their area. Generally speaking, the process will identify potential control locations (natural or manmade features) and places where they can be connected with shaded-fuel breaks to improve opportunities for suppression in the event of a wildfire.

Karli Becher, NRCS -

Targeted Implementation Plans (TIPs)

- **Ashley Lake:** We have been funding projects here since 2020, accepting applications until 2024
- **Little Bitterroot Lake:** This year (2022) is the first year of funding, accepting applications until 2026
- **Wedge Canyon** (Trail Creek Rd area north to the Canadian border): this year (2022) is the first year of funding, we will be accepting applications until 2026

Joint Chiefs: funding started this year (2022) and we will be accepting applications until 2024; there could be opportunity for us to extend the project.

- They can accept applications at any time, the cutoff is unknown at this time but likely in October. Any applications we accept now would be for consideration for funding in 2023.

Local Working Group – Meeting is open to the public and being hosted March 31 from 1-3pm at FVCC AT139 (downstairs). They have not met in a couple of years and will be asking for resource concerns throughout the Flathead.

Lori Woods- Brought up the point that the grant program and opportunities for funding are confusing for people and it’s difficult to find that information. She has brought this up in the past; what is the solution?

Deb Starling, NW MT Hazardous Fuels – A lot going on and working project by project to get things wrapped up. Burn season has been wet so finding it difficult to get piles burned. They are not currently taking on any new requests for funding but are receiving multiple calls each day, especially in the Lakeside, Many Lakes/Foothill Road, and Bigfork areas.

Lincoln Chute, Flathead County – He is working with the planning department and a fire chief subcommittee to review and update subdivision regulations. They would like to provide more consistent recommendations

regarding water supply and fuels mitigation and will need to review current subdivision regulations, agree on changes, make recommendations to the planning department, and get approval from the planning board.

Allen Chrisman, North Fork Fire Mitigation Committee – Has been building the agendas and plans for the North Fork Fire Hazard Reduction Field Trip on June 15 from 9:30am-3pm and the North Fork Firewise Day on July 13.

Ben Devall, Big Mountain Fire District – “It’s still winter up here!” Their new landowner packets and website has been a success. They are planning to host a Fire Department open house the 3rd week of July and will focus on what it means to be “Firewise”. They are purchasing some No Fireworks signs and have the Fire Danger signs and locations ready to go.

Richard Hildner – Is a resident of Whitefish, has been on the City Council, has a USFS career in wildland fire including being a fire behavior analyst (FBAN) on a Type 1 incident management team. He would like to support and help lead an effort to increase awareness of wildfire risk in the area north of Whitefish. We can start with Living with Fire video, host a presentation/conversation, provide information on the funding available, and things that landowners can do to make a difference. Richard is able to produce progression maps to help illustrate the wildfire risk and impact of a future fire in that growing WUI community. He’s also like to see the short-term rental products that are being developed.

Matt Bishop, Stoltze – Meets with a lot of private landowners and also sees a need to better communicate what programs are available.

Ali Ulwelling – Events coming up:

~~March 22 – Preparing for Fire Season, FVCC AT139, 6-8pm~~

March 29 – *Pile burning workshop*, FVCC AT139, 6-8pm (Rick Trembath & Ernie Nace)

April 14 – *Era of Megafires*, Dome Theatre in Libby 6:30pm (Marcel Getz, FAC Coordinator)

April 16, 23, or 30 (TBD) – *Living with Wildfire* – Many Lakes (Randy, Rick C, Holly M, Ernie/Ali?)

April 22 – *Pile Burning Workshop*, [Swan Valley Connections](#), 9-1 Registration required

May 4 – *Preparing for Wildfire in the Swan*, 6pm Zoom with Swan Valley Connections (Ali, Jack, Mike M.)

May 7 – *Family Forestry Expo* (table?) and risk assessment training in Lincoln County (Marcel, Ali)

May 14 – *Women in the Woods Workshop* at Lone Pine State Park (Holly, Ali, Ashley, arborist, MCC)

May 24 – *Forest Management*, Holly McKenzie, FVCC 6-9pm

June 15 – *North Fork Fire Hazard Reduction Field Trip*, 9:30am – 3pm (Allen Chrisman)

June TBD – *Living with Wildfire* – Montana House, West Glacier (Ali, Harker, HHGV, Lincoln, ?)

July 13 – *North Fork Firewise Day* (Allen Chrisman, Sean Johnson, Huntsberger, Lincoln..)

July 14-15 & 22 – *MSU Forest Stewardship Workshop*, Kalispell (Register [HERE](#))

August 4-5 & 12 – *MSU Forest Stewardship Workshop*, Eureka

Don’t forget, I have a lot of these here in my office so give a call if you’d like a stack:

[Be Ember Aware!](#)

[Wildfire Home Retrofit Guide](#) (home hardening)

[Wildfire Evacuation Checklist](#)

[Ready, Set, Go Montana](#)

[Fire-Resistant Landscaping Considerations for Montana’s WUI](#)

[Protecting and Landscaping Homes in the Wildland Urban Interface](#)

Thanks for being here and we’ll see you next month!

3/24/22 aau