



FireSafe Flathead Meeting Notes

Thursday, October 24th, 0900-1100 at DNRC Conference Room

Attendance: *Ali Ulwelling* (DNRC), *Rick Connell* (Flathead National Forest, FMO), *Allen Branine* (FMO/Service Forester for 34 more days, Swan Unit DNRC), *Rick Trembath* (all-around fire guy), *Lincoln Chute* (Fire Service Area Manager, Flathead County), *Sean Johnson* (District Conservationist, NRCS), *Deb Starling* (NW MT Hazardous Fuels Program), *Ernie Nace* (Prevention Specialist, Kalispell Unit DNRC), *Chris Dowling* (Swan District Ranger, FNF), *Anna Lang* (Zylient Disaster Diagnostics), *Karli Becher* (NRCS), *Turner Askew* (Suncrest HOA), *Ben Duvall* (Chief of Big Mountain FD).

**** Next meeting scheduled for January 23, 2020 – Happy Holidays! ****

**If there is anything that you would like to share
(a new video, articles, meetings, events...), please send to Ali and she will distribute.**

We started by providing some updates on what has been happening and what's coming up:

Rick Trembath gave a presentation on fire history in the North Fork and the Halfmoon Fire of 1929 at the annual Tree Farm meeting. He followed this with a talk covering the traditional use of fire by native Americans at the Montana House in Apgar. Thank you, Rick, for all that you do! We also attended a presentation by author [Jack Nesbit](#) who spoke on his new book *The Dreamer and the Doctor*. Jack is a writer, a naturalist, and a storyteller and has a lot to say about fire on the landscape in the 1800s. We may have a chance to hear him give a talk about fire when he returns!

[Pile-burning workshop](#) - November 21, 2019 in Bigfork. Dr. Peter Kolb of MSU Extension and Rick Trembath are leading this. Ali is helping out and planning to take & coordinate photos/videos for future use to guide residents through the burn seasons. Call 406-243-2773 to register.

This led to a LONG discussion about pile burning, burn seasons, air quality, and how difficult it is for new residents to find information about burning regulations. This is an opportunity for us to engage with Flathead-City County AQ and find language to share. Can we produce a magnet for folks? ***Ernie and Ali will work on this.***

As a reminder we also have www.firesafekalispell.com as the place to go for burn permit information and the [Flathead City-County Air Quality](#) through the Health Department for the daily ventilation forecast. Ali created this in the past to help people navigate this confusing topic:

[Montana Forest Collaboration Network Workshop](#), November 7-8, Missoula – This workshop is all about Shared Stewardship, community engagement, the Good Neighbor Authority, NRCS, and collaborative work.

Two-part series at FVCC: Wednesday, February 19 - Tree Selection with Rick Moore, Service Forester for the DNRC and Wednesday, February 26th - Pile-burning with Rick Trembath.

Fire Adapted Montana has a Request for Proposals grant opportunity out and we will apply to get funding for community engagement projects that we are talking about. ***Ali, Ernie, and Anna will work on this but you are invited to join the conversation and share ideas!***

Real estate training – Rich Blaney will provide a more complete report but stated via email that “there are changes being made to the way continuing education for Realtors is regulated by the Board of Realty Regulation. These changes will make it easier for a curriculum like we have discussed to be approved and presented for CE credit.” ***(Rich Blaney and Turner Askew should connect and work on this.)***

Aaron Hughes couldn't make it but also commented via email that there is an opportunity to **engage with vacation rentals**. He is going to find a list. There are frequent complaints in the summer about campfires and there should be a way for us to communicate with visitors about what the fire danger level is and if there are any restrictions in place.

Ali and Anna attended the [Building for Wildfire Workshop in Big Sky](#) last month. Hosted by Headwaters Economics, they shared a writeup of the event (in the link above). Ali has contacted the Flathead Building Association about hosting something similar when the time is right, and we can coordinate with another building or architectural conference in the future.

Ali – There is also a **small-acreage land stewardship seminar** hosted each spring by MSU extension's Pat McGlynn that brings together many resources for rural landowners. We are working to compile and publish a resource list to share. Pat is also interested in connecting with **real estate agents** to share information about the small-acreage workshop and the local resources available to landowners. If you know of folks who would benefit from a workshop like this, please have them call **Pat McGlynn at 758-5553!**



Land Stewardship Seminar

Providing landowners with tips and tools for managing natural resources on their land

Meets for six consecutive Thursdays starting in February 2020

Topics include:

Soil health, pasture management, wells & septic systems, riparian areas, forestry, wildfire preparedness, living with wildlife, and noxious weed management

Call 758-5553 or e: pmcglynn@montana.edu

Lincoln Chute, Fire Service Area manager, Flathead County – **Community Wildfire Protection Plan** – Meeting again in a couple of weeks. Had been missing the forest health aspect and are working with Rick Moore on that. They have a goal of wrapping it up this fall and getting it signed by spring.

Rick Connell, FMO, Flathead National Forest – Brought an **out-year planning map of the projects** that they have planned for the next few years. (Thank you, Rick!) Dependent on stage in planning process, those that also involve fire (piles, broadcast burning...) may allow for eligibility for communities within 2-3 miles adjacency of said project for Haz Fuels grants in the future. Talked about the need to be more coordinated in our efforts on the ground, how planned projects and community priorities can leverage support for grants and projects.

Chris Dowling, District Ranger, FNF – Update on status of projects in the Swan. Starting on the Bug Creek area and looking at the condition-based mid-Swan treatment that is 174,000 total acres with 130,00 acres of treatment. Interested in engaging recreation and businesses in the conversation, to communicate how forest health and wildfire affects. Also interested in Joint Chief's opportunities in Lake County.

Deb Starling, Lead Forester, NW MT Haz Fuels Program – While the map is helpful the projects need to be at a certain point in the planning process, a stipulation that has kept them from following through on a couple of projects in the north fork: Red Meadow and Moose Creek. They are working on another that will complement south Foy's, Stoltze land, and Jim Watson's place. Also working with Suncrest and Ptarmigan Village HOAs on Big Mountain. They have 2 Western States Grants in the works: one for West Flathead neighborhoods (Stove Pipe, Mountain Meadows, Rhodes Draw) and one for East Flathead neighborhoods where they are getting a lot of requests from Bad Rock to Ferndale (Eagle Bend, Swan Hill, S. Many Lakes). They are waiting on money for one and submitting the application on another. These are the grants that have an 18-month turnaround time, vs. the Hazardous Fuels Grants that may be applied for quarterly and are limited to 50k.

Sean Johnson, NRCS District Conservationist – Working with landowners in areas where interest has been shown: Ashley Lake (22 landowners with 1000+ acres), south of Foy's Lake, and the Red Meadow/Moose Creek areas in the north fork. Karly is new and will be assisting with Targeted Implementation Plans. They also work with agriculture, irrigation... not all of their work will be in forestry.

There is a difference in the programs, in what the prescription area and where they focus their efforts. While proximity to federal projects may boost an NRCS application, it is not a requirement as it is in the Hazardous Fuels grants.

What is the best way to communicate and coordinate efforts between agencies, industry, and private forestry?

It was decided that we would forgo meetings in November and December due to holiday schedules, but if you have anything that you would like to share or work on, please let Ali know! She will be here.

Thanks!

October 24, 2019 au