



FireSafe Flathead Meeting Notes

September 24, 2020 9-11am via Zoom

Attendance: Ali Ulwelling (DNRC), Mike West (AFMO Fuels Tally Lake RD, FNF), Swan District Planners (Flathead National Forest, Swan District Ranger, Rick Trembath (all-around fire guy), Sean Johnson and Karli Becher (District Conservationist, NRCS), Deb Starling (NW MT Hazardous Fuels Program), Ben Duvall (Chief of Big Mountain FD), Ernie Nace (Community Preparedness, DNRC Kalispell Unit), Randy Sundberg (Many Lakes HOA), Anna Lang,

"Let's take care not to pile our plates too high, rather let's bring another chair to the table" – Ashley Juran

Next meeting: Thursday, March 26th Location to be determined.

✓ **Send Ali Smoke Column articles and ideas!!**

Upcoming events:

March 3-5: Fire Adapted Montana in Helena – Mike West attending & will report back

April 18th: Many Lakes Community Wildfire Preparedness Day (Lincoln, Ali/Ernie, Rick Connell, Deb?)

June 4th: Whistling Andy in Bigfork (Swan District fire, Ali, Chief Thiry, Rick Trembath)

West Glacier, this spring

May 4-8 & 9th Family Forestry Expo

July 8th: North Fork Firewise Day

0900 - We started by welcoming the new faces in the room and thanking all for being there!

Ali – Rick Trembath is our connection to FVCC and he prompted us last fall to host a 2-part series on Tree Selection and Pile Burning. We were able to advertise in the FVCC brochure and found the need to complement that with a lot of social media and email sharing, which worked! We had 14 landowners with 28 to 70-acres all from west of Kalispell.

This led to a few conversations:

- Open burn season is here! And what other messaging can we help with, especially with the areas of blow down from wind storms this past winter.
- The need for us to network, share on social media, update our [FireSafe Flathead](#) website and hire someone to do assist with this. **Ali has already contacted someone to get that started!** We have funding to pay for this quarterly.
- Do we have a complete and updated list of local media? **Ali will be working on this.** (MTPR, KJAJ, KGEZ, 107.9 with Montana issues, Redditt... were some of the ideas thrown around).
- We will plan to host a fall pile-burning workshop again with Peter Kolb. We will also plan to host this spring pile-burning conversation at FVCC in late-February in advance of spring open burn season.

Ali (in place of Lincoln Chute) – CWPP update: The Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan is in the final stages. Lincoln has a couple of people working on the formatting, it will then go back to the committee for review, then out a 30-day public comment period, then for signatures. We had said that it would be complete for March 1, but that was optimistic! Lincoln will be back to give another update in March.

Mike West, Flathead National Forest – Jake Jeresek, Fuels AFMO for the Swan District, has accepted a position with the Kootenai NF and will be moving back to Libby. Congrats to Jake and to Andre Dulac who will be the new fuels AFMO on the Swan District (he's super savvy with GIS & modeling, so keep that in mind.) Rick

Connell will detail with the RO so Keith will be the acting FMO and Mike West will be the acting AFMO for the Forest.

- The Good Neighbor Authority program is moving forward with projects and sales are coming on Good Creek, Weed Lake, and Taylor-Hellroaring.
- Flathead NF is in the beginning stages of gathering thoughts on a Joint-Chiefs project. Meeting to discuss what that looks like, what the process is, what makes a competitive application, and how the money can be spent.
- Still planning for burning of Taylor-Hellroaring, this fall and into the future.

Deb Starling, NW Montana Hazardous Fuels Program –

- All of their funds have been distributed at Overlook Ridge. One landowner is doing the work, all others are contracting with Larry Roberts (Larry the Logger). Roads have been icy so waiting a bit longer.
- **Suncrest** Haz Fuels grant – Whitefish Tree Service is working on a “test site” where they can demonstrate the work. Carrie will be taking photos/video to share with the homeowners, so they can decide what/if they are interested.
- **Ptarmigan Village** – Carrie is working on this one.
- **Stone Mountain** – Is moving forward, hosting their HOA meeting in early March.
- **Dower Draw** – Starting a proposal. *This is where Ernie Nace grew up, so he would be a great contact for that area.*
- **Ashley Lake** – Working to complement the NRCS funds being spent in the Ashley Lake area.
- **Eagle Bend** – Continuing the conversation, limited opportunity in that area.
- **Western States WUI Grant** for the East side of Flathead County – Funds have been obligated but there is an opportunity for NRCS to take on some of this work. *Looking at coordinating another Western States grant application for this year and will be reaching out for support.*

Sean Johnson, NRCS – Targeted Implementation Plan (TIP) for the Ashley Lake area has been approved and they are completing outreach, working with NW MT Haz Fuels program, and DNRC for home assessments and management plans. They have 5-years of funding and 2000-acres signed up so far! *Sean will connect with Ernie re: this project and the ALPOA meeting in August.*

Randy Sundberg, Many Lakes HOA – Questions about insurance costs and what’s happening. Residents are being told that they may lose their insurance. Importance of subdivisions working together. Some insurance companies are assessing properties and landowners MUST maintain to keep their insurance.

- **April 18th** – *Many Lakes Community Wildfire Preparedness Day* – Opportunity to change up the presentation, highlight the work that has been done, focus on pile-burning.

Ben Devall, Big Mountain Fire Chief – The Mountain will be thinning between chair 2 and 3 and they are excited about this!

Christian Mascho – Is really interested in prescribed fire and prescribed fire councils, in burning piles, getting work done on the ground. He has piles below the “F” near Foy’s Lake that may be a good opportunity for filming, if they get the right window to burn. He has worked with the Blackfoot Challenge and the Nature Conservancy and is interested in helping to pursue more of the same here. We will continue to do research, gather information, connect, and see what it would take to make this happen. Thank you!!

3.9.20 au