



FireSafe Flathead Meeting Notes

Friday, September 23, 0900-1100 at Flathead NF

Attendance: *Ali Ulwelling* (DNRC), *Keith VanBroeke* (Flathead National Forest, AFMO), *Allen Branine* (FMO/Service Forester, Swan Unit DNRC), *Rick Trembath* (all-around fire guy), *Lincoln Chute* (Fire Service Area Manager, Flathead County), *Rich Blaney* (Real Estate/Contractor/Fire Guy), *Randy Sundberg* (Many Lakes HOA and more), *Sean Johnson* (District Conservationist, NRCS), *Deb Starling* (NW MT Hazardous Fuels), *Shane Wilson and Heather* (fire and GIS students at FVCC).

October Meeting: 9am Thursday, October 24th at the DNRC office (655 Timberwolf Parkway)

Flathead National Forest, Keith VanBroeke – had big plans, but weather has impacted plans for prescribed fire and there will likely be very little completed this fall. Some pile burning.

Allen Branine – The Swan Unit is working on activity fuels down the Swan and has been burning piles this fall as conditions allow.

NW MT Haz Fuels – Deb Starling – They are working with Suncrest and Ptarmigan Village HOAs north of Whitefish. There is a lot of interest in these communities (and many others) in moving forward. 2020 WUI grant application in for the West Flathead Neighborhoods, waiting on another that would cover from Badrock to Ferndale on the E side. Potential projects in the N Fork are on hold for now as, based on proximity and timing, they are not eligible. The NRCS may be able to assist interested folks in that area. They worked with Overlook Ridge on a Haz Fuels Grant in May but did not see any funding until October. Is five months an average turn-around time for funding? (Ali will follow up on this.)

Lincoln Chute – Brought up Happy Valley as another place that could use some work/engagement.

Natural Resources and Conservation Service – Continuing to work on long range plans and Targeted Implementation Plans (TIPs) for their focus areas. They have a December 31 deadline for TIPS for any projects for 2020. Sean has recently hired Carli Bechner (sp?) who has been with the Lake County Conservation District and NRCS in Ronan; she will work with him on these.

Areas of interest—Jim Watson/Foy's/Herron Park. Weyerhaeuser and Flathead County ownership. Has been working with Jed from the Park's department on a timber management plan for Herron Park.

Annual working group meetings happen annually. Considering schedules and annual workloads, Sean is planning for a February meeting for 2020.

The NRCS and DNRC are entering into an agreement where the DNRC will be assisting the NRCS with management plans and implantation. Sean will send templates and criteria for those plans.

Rick Trembath - Our pile-burning workshop hosted with Peter Kolb will take place on Thursday, November 21st from 9-5pm. (See accompanying attachment)

Rick attended the annual Montana Tree Farm meeting on October 5th and gave a great presentation on the Half-moon fire of 1929. (Ali was there and those are her words 😊) He followed that up with an afternoon presentation on the historical use of fire by native Americans in NW Montana at the Montana House in Apgar.

Rick will also host an evening pile-burning seminar the last week of February before spring open burn season. This will be in coordination with an evening focusing on tree-selection and forest health hosted by DNRC Service Forester Rick Moore along with Ali.

[Building for Wildfire Summit](#) – Ali and Anna attended. It was a well-organized and well-attended event in Big Sky. It was a good opportunity to meet people from around the area who are working on similar fire-adapted community projects, to network and learn from others. Ali spoke with Ashley of Fire Adapted Montana about bringing a similar event in the Flathead. Ashley will be looking for opportunities to partner and coordinate with building, planning, or architectural conferences around the state. Ali is in touch with the Flathead Building Association and will continue the conversation with their Executive Director. (Ali has the agenda, handouts, and notes from the Summit.)

How can we engage more with planners, real estate, insurance over the winter..?

Rich Blaney – Offered a couple of suggestions: 1) sending out a **maintenance-reminder** postcard to cost-share recipients 5 years after the work has been completed. 2) Create a 2-4-hour curriculum for real estate agents that would help satisfy their annual Continuing Education requirements. Once built, offer an online CE option, similar to that offered by the [Montana Noxious Weeds campaign](#). Aaron Hughes has a space where trainings can be hosted. Rich will talk with Board of Realty, Aaron Hughes, and Matt Arno to start coordinating.

CWPP – Lincoln Chute – Lincoln is starting up the CWPP revision process again and will get a meeting on the calendar.

Ali Ulwelling – Always wants to Thank You for being part of this discussion and welcome those who are new! If anyone is interested in writing 325 words for the Smoke Column, please me know..

Thanks, and we'll see you in October!

October 10, 2019 au