

Coalition of Firewise Communities – Meeting Minutes

February 4, 2020

Welcome, introduce officers, announcements

Bob Long

- **Reminders –**
 - Sign up for Code Red (see mynevadacounty.com – Wildfire Prep button, then bottom of that page under Helpful Links))
 - Promote the Fire Safe Council to your residents: \$49 membership, reflective address signs (\$35 single side, \$40, double, \$5 for stake)
 - Be aware PG&E may clear a 10 foot radius **around power poles on private property**
 - Bob sent a letter from Coalition to NC Assoc of Realtors to encourage realtors to buy the reflective address sign as a gift for new homeowners.
 - A New Fire Safe Regulation County Code Update goes into effect Feb 13th 2020, applying to new and existing properties. Gates will be required to have operable locks. When final document is received from Trisha Tillotson , County Pub Works, Coalition will post on website. Fuels Modification Area that's required to be cleared is 10/10/15 from **shoulder** of road (not edge of pavement, not center stripe).

MONTHLY UPDATES

Cal Fire Report

Jim Mathias

- Weather: Warm weather is bringing new grass growing. Because of windy days, we have had some escaped control burns. Make sure you have a good scratch line around your burn.
- ENSO: El Nino Southern Oscillation. Fire potential for this year is a little higher than average. Below avg precipitation (70% of where we should be). Fuel soil moisture is above avg. Trends expected to continue thru next 4 months. No significant fire potential right now, but need more rain/moisture. We're below the snow line and above the moisture/fog line. So, we are dryer than upper and lower elevations (we're about 2,500 ft elevation).
- Reduce fuel loads in your communities.

Nevada County OES

Jenn Tamo

- PR Push this Spring: OES will come to you: Lt Jacobs & Paul Cummings want to attend your Firewise Community meetings. They will be in touch.
 - Programs – Residential Green Waste Disposal again this Spring
 - FEMA/Cal –Fire Grants
 - How to Best Prepare for Wildfire. Code Red, High/Low Sirens, Evacuation & Clearing Routes (Public & Private Roads), etc.
- OES has a full-time DS Inspector year-round. Working on updating the DS Ordinance.

- Evacuation planning – working with SMEs and Fire Depts

Fire Safe Council Update

Donn Thane

- WUI Drill Event in Cascade Shores, Banner Mtn, Wolf Mtn Area coming up.
- **All FWCommunities are urged to communicate with their residents to say this is a VERY GOOD TIME to REQUEST A FREE Defensible Space Advisory from FSC.** Use the Fire Safe Council website form to make the request.
- Ponderosa Project update
- DSA Training: the Council is considering a monthly Advisor Training that would be open to Seasoned advisors, to “tag along” during an inspection and pick up more info on veg. mgt to increase their level of knowledge.
- Fire Season Guide insert to *The Union* – work has started, Marty Main + committee.
- Track Chipper has been delivered and used successfully. It’s great for Community Green Belt Projects (takes 12” logs) and other areas where it’s difficult to bring brush to the side of the road. The Track Chipper goes INTO the fuel area. Google to see sample photo.
- Certifying Fire Wise Communities: halfway thru the list of 15. Rest in coming months.

Caltrans – presentation on inquiries to Caltrans and what to expect

Susan

Rogers

- Nevada County is in Caltrans District 3, one of 11 counties. There is one tree crew for the entire district.
- Historically, Caltrans’ activities about trees has been simply to ensure that dead or hazardous trees don’t obstruct traffic. The idea that roadside trees need to be cleared so they can’t become a flaming tunnel during evacuation is a relatively new phenomenon.
- Outside groups that want quick action are stymied by regulations.
- Fire scientist Joanne Fites Kaufman recommends that clearing the roadsides to avoid lethal heat to people should be at least 20 feet back, preferably 30 feet – not 10 ft.
- Some Caltrans work will probably be done in a 10-foot zone around Banner Lava Cap overcrossing in the next few months.

Board of Supervisors workshop – update

Caleb Dardick

Survey Results from Coalition – Working on County Priorities. Wildfire is the Board’s “A” list:

- Goals:
 - 1) Create Safer Evac Routes (public & private roads) to protect lives. Veg Mgt (need to move from 11 year cycle to 3-5 year cycle). “Brushing” includes small trees.
 - 2) Improve early warning systems and emergency communications to reach everyone. Harden infrastructure. Public education.

- 3) Establish defensible space around our homes and neighborhoods by reducing hazardous veg and encouraging voluntary compliance with def space standards.
 - 4) The Access & Functional Needs program will assist residents with disabilities, who are seniors, those with limited English proficiency and others. Need updated Wildfire Evac Preparedness Action Plan.
 - 5) Provide a coordinated approach to wildfire response preparedness through planning community outreach and fundraising.
 - 6) Enhance critical infrastructure needed to respond to wildfires such as evacuation route improvements, water storage, fire hydrants, communications systems, and green waste facilities.
- NC currently spending about \$1.8M/year. Need \$5.5 – 10.1 M /year to meet above goals.
 - Board votes on this next Tuesday 2/11/20 10am Rood Center. Would be good for Coalition members to show up to show support for Wildfire Initiatives.
 - How to fund? Could be Sales Tax. Half cent would get the above initiatives done and include maintenance.

Prescribed burns

Jamie Ervin, Sierra Forest

Advocacy

- In the past, prescribed burns were focused on Federal lands.
- Currently on private lands: Getting prescribed burn association (Yuba-Bear Burn Co-op) to teach ppl how do implement burns via volunteer support (grant writing, permitting, etc). Goal is for prescribed burns that can be cost effective for property owners.
- Feb 5th – North Star House 6:30pm, next meeting.

Nevada City strategic plan and Sierra Fund – request for letter of support

Grant request - Citizens committee is asking our support. Sam

Gitche/Alex Keeble-Toll

- A Citizen's Committee wants NCity to add a Fire Safety Goal plan to Nevada City's Strategic Plan: a Veg Mgt Plan for City (300 acres open space outside of city & land within city limits).
- Dr. Carrie Monahan looking for grant funding. Sierra Fund is writing a foundation grant. City of Nevada City would get the funding. Includes needs associated with fuels reduction and maintenance of city property such as fire hydrants. Replace wooden signs with reflective signs. Support Green Waste removal. Involves control lines to slow fire. Need for sustainable funding sources for maintenance.
- Coalition members voted unanimously to approve a letter from the chair in support.

Next meeting: Mar 3rd, 2020 -- 5:30 – 7:30 PM

336 Crown Point Circle

PG&E POLE FIRE PREVENTION LAW SECTION 42

Lake Wildwood was recently contacted regarding the maintenance and clearing around the power poles located within the Lake Wildwood Community. These poles are spread out around the entire Lake Wildwood Community. PG&E came into LWA and identified all the poles that will be serviced by PG&E. Service of these poles is the clearing of not less than 10 feet in any direction from the pole base. Specifically, a twenty-foot circle around the pole base and up eight (8) feet from the ground. PG&E will be contacting the 150 or so properties that are involved. The work should start within the next 30 days. For questions you may have, please call Greg Tudrton at **(530) 722-7146. URGENT!** If you have rare or special landscaping within a 10-foot radius of a power pole on your property you MUST contact this number and make arrangements for its pruning and/or removal. LWA will NOT be responsible for PG&E clearing on Association property.

The rule/law being used for this work is from the PRC 4292, 14 CCR 1254, Fire Break Clearance Requirements Around Poles and Towers. This law has been in place for several years but has not been enforced by Cal Fire/PG&E until now.