Minutes
Council Meeting
Wednesday, February 9, 2022, from 9:30 am – 11:00 am
Recording Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmPLFjx1cpM

Welcome/ Agenda: Allison Thomson welcomed attendees

Public Comments:
John Stone announced that the annual Prepare Fair is tentatively planned to be May 19, 2022 at the Alcouffe Center in Oregon House, likely from 5:30-7:30.

Special Presentation: USDA National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Programs Available for Healthy Forests and Fuels Reduction Dan Taverner, District Conservationist based in Butte County presented about NRCS programs, looking to do outreach to Forbestown (region straddles Butte and Yuba) as well as residents of either county. NRCS delivers EQIP cost share programs for agricultural producers, including forestry, with no minimum parcel size. The process requires an application, and Farm and Tract number from the Farm Service Agency (FSA), meeting with a planner or forester to consult about what programs are applicable, and development of a plan to improve natural resources onsite. NRCS can help share the cost of treating forest and range land to reduce fire threat, including mastication (~$500-$1500 per acres), thinning and pile burning. Contracts are usually 1-3 years and once the work is done, money is given to you, either for doing the work yourself or for paying a contractor. Small landowners could work with a Fire Safe Council on one project together if they sign over limited power of attorney. You can work with Dan regardless of which county you are in; his office is at 150 Chuck Yeager Way, Oroville CA 95953; office phone: (530) 693-3171; cell phone: (530) 616-5662. The NRCS office directly serving Yuba County is located on Butte House Rd, Yuba City; phone number: (530) 671-0850; and they are open by appointment. See meeting recording for the entire presentation and slides attached to these minutes.

Partner Reports:
USFS-Plumas NF – Jason Vermillion
- Mission change: remote projects on hold to focus more on communities
- CCI grant: Mooretown Rancheria is working away behind Challenge, lots of mastication and biomass “piling”

USFS-USFS-Tahoe NF – Gabe Foster
- Increasing staffing for longer hours and to mirror actual burn periods; adding staff to each engine; each hotspot crew can carry up to 25 on the Tahoe this year
- The candidate pool continues to be an issue
- GS3 level seasonal workers will now be paid over $15/hr
- Tim Hart Act will help with retention and staffing issues if passed
- Conditions have not been good for burning lately
- Crews are at work on various projects
- Dealing with heavy blow down from the winter storms, especially in campgrounds

Cal Fire – Jim Mathias
- In a period of less staffed engines
- Hopefully the governor’s budget adds a year round engine in Loma Rica
- There’s a National Guard hand crew working currently
- Evacuation routes are being prioritized for selecting projects to fund this year; applications due today (Fire Safe Council is submitting one)
- Lots of dead fuel down due to the wettest December on record, which was followed by the driest January (no precipitation recorded in Sacramento)

CA Dept of Fish & Wildlife – John Watkins
- ¼ done with fuel break along Marysville Rd
- struggling with staffing due to covid and hiring seasonal staff
CA Dept of Insurance – Rani Isaac
● May want to present after new regulations are official, in order to ask for feedback

Yuba County Office of Emergency Services – John Stone/Oscar Marin
● Prepare Fair almost certainly will be May 19th
● Camptonville Prepare Meeting occurred, using snow storm issues as a reminder of things to address for fire season as well
● Oscar Marin- new OES manager who lives in Brown Valley; is working with Michael Armor on a project on Oregon Peak to help improve communications during Public Service Power Shutoffs (PSPS) etc

Beale AFB – Tony Velasquez
● 9 firefighters are on the wildfire side
● Prepping for prescribed fire this year
● Crews will be gone in March burning elsewhere

Oregon Peak Lookout Tower VIP Program – Gary Fildes
● Appreciation lunch on February 26th for volunteers from the past year

Yuba County RCD – Gary Fildes
● In the middle of an audit
● Working on a Forest Health Guidebook about the various veg types in the area; Debbie shared they have the money for it and will be making a few changes before printing; inspired by Butte County FSC and RCD publications
● Next meeting is Friday morning at 10
● Looking for 2 more board members

Sierra Pacific Industries – Ryan McKillop
● Continuing mastication project in the Brownsville area; completed 16 acres in that area
● Another machine is working as well
● SPI is also working to plant 3 million trees

The CHY Company – Allison shared message from Madison Thomson
● 6 masticators are working on CHY parcels

YWP&FSC Reports:
Wildfire Mitigation Reviews - Gary Fildes
● 45 conducted so far
● Helping Lake Francis Estates as they work to become the first Firewise Community in Yuba County; the 28 lots need to have mitigation reviews

Outreach-Education Committee – Beverly Cameron
● Calendars are out; there are about 100 left; contact Beverly if you know of somewhere that needs some
● Tow-chain covers are in demand; over 1,000 sets have been distributed; keep sending fire hose our way to make the covers
● Some neighboring county residents (in Gridley) are interested in starting their own tow-chain cover program; Beverly will be meeting with them
● John brought up the idea to reach out to PG&E so that chippers and other towed equipment make sure to use tow-chain covers
● Hopefully tow-chain covers can be talked about on the radio soon
● Great gift ideas for people with trailers are tow-chain covers and fire extinguishers to keep in their car

Board Report – Sean Griffis
● There’s a Cal Fire wood products bioenergy workforce development grant opportunity, funded quarterly, which can go to private enterprise or NGOs

Executive Director Report – Allison Thomson
● Focus has been on Cal Fire fire prevention grant application proposal covering roadside clearing a with a 100ft buffer in the Dobbins Oregon House area
● Submitted an application to Yuba Water Agency and have been awarded a cost share to use on the project if Cal Fire funds it
● There will not be dead tree removal in this project; that will be something to incorporate in a future project
● Yuba Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Team helped with the grant preparation
● A Project Coordinator, Jannike Allen, has been hired and is starting on Friday. She previously worked for the Sierra Institute in Taylorsville, and will be managing our new Home Hardening and
Defensible Space Cost Share programs launching in the next few weeks
● Firewise Communities are being worked on as well
● The Stevens Fund fuels reduction project work is occurring

No Board Meeting this Month

The next meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2022 @ 9:30 - 11:00 am

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