



Minutes Council Meeting

Wednesday, August 10, 2022 | 9:30 am – 11:30 am

Recording available: https://youtu.be/RnWk4wC_V-0

Welcome/Agenda: Allison Thomson welcomed attendees and expressed appreciation for partners who may not be here due to August being a busy fire related month. Introductions occurred, and Allison shared that there will not be a meeting in September, but we will resume with a morning meeting in October.

Public Comments:

- Henry Knapp shared that he was nearby during the Winding Fire, and noted that there were evacuation difficulties due to people leaving while fire personnel arrived. He asked that all be ready to go quickly; the responders have been quick to arrive but everyone also needs to be ready to look after their own evacuation needs.
- Frank DeNatale, Yuba County Fire Prevention Officer, shared that he was the fourth to arrive on the Winding Fire and helped by establishing a staging area. The Apple Fire also had issues with engines going up a dead-end road which caused the route to get clogged. Establishing staging areas as soon as possible is part of the strategy to deal with the narrow roads. He drives a white ford escape, so if you see one driving around the hills it is probably him.

Special Presentation: Wildfire, Smoke Exposure, Human Health, and Environmental Justice Need to be Integrated into Forest Restoration and Management [link to journal article](#)

Edward Smith, Senior Regional Scientist & Fire Manager, The Nature Conservancy

- Ed spoke about the increasing issue of smoke due to the worsening wildfire reality.
- He elaborated that effects of smoke on human health are being studied more in recent times.
- Risk of smoke impact is a sum of one's exposure sensitivity and adaptive capacity.
- TNC has been working with Stanford researchers to understand the difference between prescribed fire smoke and wildfire smoke. The concentration of various smoke constituents have been shown to be higher in wildfire smoke than in prescribed fire smoke. They measured health response to smoke using blood samples. TH1 cell production (for immune function) was suppressed by smoke, especially wildfire smoke (the effect of prescribed fire smoke was closer to the control of no smoke).
- At times prescribed fire is seen to be hindered by air pollution control rules. Some prescribed fire practitioners point out that prescribed fire treatments are needed, and therefore people need to adapt.
- The Science for Nature and People Partnership was formed in 2020, which was used to build a consensus based approach to identify and communicate the information about the relationship between wildfire smoke and human health.
- For additional info from a major health advocacy group, check out the recent American Lung Association report *Can Prescribed Fire Mitigate Health Harm?* <https://www.lung.org/policy-advocacy/healthy-air-campaign/prescribed-fire-report> and learn more on The Nature Conservancy website at www.nature/CAMegafire
- Link to a presentation that Savannah and Ed gave last month to the Southwest Fire Consortium on the same topic for a full hour, with good A/V: <https://www.frames.gov/catalog/66242>

Henry Knapp asked how much TNC is collaborating with indigenous people who have knowledge of controlled burning. Ed shared that they are in contact with the Karuk, Hoopa, Washoe, and Nisenan. Training Exchanges (TRES) have been occurring since 2011 and these are being expanded. Contact him if you have interest in participating (esmith@tnc.org).

Jannike Allen asked Ed to elaborate on ways to increase adaptive capacity to smoke. Ed shared that having a really good community plan around wildfire/ smoke response can help greatly; sheltering in place is useful to stay indoors out of smoky conditions; improving the availability of air filters in peoples' homes including making DIY box fan filters; and wearing using N95 masks.

Allison asked about the need for increased communication that was mentioned, and wondered if Ed had advice for YWPFSC/ Yuba County. Ed said that there have been smoke coordination meetings in some places, so meeting to plan ahead of time is important. Meetings with Air Quality Management Districts are a great way to increase coordination, especially across districts. Every prescribed burn plan has a smoke management plan.

Joanna Lessard added that the Ed may want to engage with the local RCC (Regional Climate Collaborative), which is considering air quality to be a regional priority.

Gretchen asked if another entity was involved, and Ed said reaching out to county health departments is a good idea.

Partner Reports:

- **USFS-Plumas NF** – Erik Apland shared through the Zoom chat:
“Unfortunately I am going to have to jump off for another conflicting meeting. The Feather River RD of PNF has been really focusing on two things: rapid fire response, and fuel reduction near communities. We have been active in assisting CALFIRE on these latest foothills fires as much as possible, and are maintaining a higher level of staffing than I have ever seen in the Forest Service, including staffing our engines and dozers overnight. On the fuels side, we are getting near completion on the latest mechanical work around Challenge and Forbestown. My last task here has been a huge prescribed fire plan for those areas, which will allow for maintenance of Forest lands on thousands of acres west of Bullards Bar. I just want to say thank you for the work you all do and the engagement. I am going to remain highly active in RX fire in my new job, and my dream is to see some of you out in the community as we put some good fire on the ground to protect our homes and neighbors. Thank you!! Erik”
- **Yuba County Office of Emergency Services** – John Stone
John Stone shared that the National Night Out event was last week, spreading more Zonehaven awareness.
- **Yuba County Fire Prevention** – Frank DeNatale
Frank shared that he has been meeting with various community members, and a group on Moonshine Road is preparing to form a Firewise Community. He’s been helping the City of Linda do fire inspections, before they report the number of state mandate inspections to the state. There have been 14 fires in Yuba County this year. Two fires in the Willow Glen area were caused by catalytic converters. A third one in the Willow Glen area may have been caused by a

dragged chain. Three fires were started by lawn mowers in Loma Rica, and another by grinding and welding. The Winding Fire destroyed six structures. The Apple Fire was the most recent fire.

- Allison asked if there is maintenance that can be done to keep catalytic converters from starting fires. Beverly shared that regular maintenance can help you monitor to know if your catalytic converter is likely to fail soon. Curtis said that sometimes people put a hole through their catalytic converter to help pass emissions testing, which is counter productive to maintenance/ fire prevention.
- **Yuba Water Agency** – JoAnna Lessard
JoAnna confirmed that the YWA Grant and Loan Program's next open period for applications runs Sept 1-Oct 1; email jlessard@yubawater.org for any questions regarding the program or how to submit a project to the Yuba IRWM Plan (which is a grant eligibility requirement).
- **Oregon Peak Lookout Tower VIP Program** – Bill High
Bill shared that it would be great to have more volunteers who live locally, and people can contact him to get signed up with Cal Fire. The view is great, there are snacks, and even 4 hours/ month is helpful. The phone is not reliable, but people call in and ask what's going on, and they will likely get a cell phone to keep at the Lookout soon. Bill recommends getting WatchDuty on your phone to keep informed. Someone volunteered to fix the porch.
 - Beverly added that you will become hooked – it's a great feeling to catch a fire and keep it at 1 acre instead of 20 acres. [Check out the video from a few years ago.](#)
- **Camptonville Community Partnership** – Cathy LeBlanc
 - Cathy thanked Frank Denatale and John Stone for coming to the monthly Camptonville Prepared meetings. They are setting up captains for different ZoneHaven zones, and these zones will hopefully work to become Firewise Communities as well.
 - CCP now owns the site for the biomass facility on Marysville Road near Oregon Hill Road on the way to Bullards Bar. They are looking for businesses that would like to be based on the site, such as greenhouse food production. The co-located businesses could set up on site after collaborating on plans regarding square footage and electricity needs. The site used to be owned by SPI and is under power lines, which will be useful for connecting to the grid. They have applied to 3 grants (Cal Fire, SNC, and YWA) for funding assistance.
- **Sierra Pacific Industries** –Ryan McKillop
Ryan shared that there has been a pause on fuel break work during the summer conditions, and will resume when fuels become less flammable in the fall.

YWP&FSC Reports:

- Outreach-Education Committee – Beverly Cameron-Fildes
 - National Night Out went well, and lots of people signed up for Wildfire Mitigation Reviews and took home tow chain covers.
 - Tow chain covers are available many places, including Tommi's Hay Barn to have customers put on. There is a great volunteer we appreciate in Brownsville who cuts tow chain covers for us.

- The 2023 wall hanging calendar is in the design phase, and we are still asking for more photo submissions which you can [submit online](#) and be considered for a photo contest prize as well. We are working with Printworx in Yuba City.
- The Wildfire Mitigation Reviews are continuing, though some people are not responding to phone calls/ emails for scheduling after they apply. ~120 reviews have been conducted this year.
- Curtis and Jannike are posting great content on the [Facebook group](#)
- Jeff Huckins asked about education efforts at Bullards Bar. Beverly said that there are 3 locations distributing tow chain covers there. We're trying to keep them consistently placed at recreation sites.
- Jannike asked attendees to take Home Hardening Cost Share Program and Defensible Space Cost Share Program fliers to hang up. We'd like people to apply as soon as possible so that we can use the funding sources available this year.
- Executive Director Report – Allison Thomson
 - Cost share reimbursements are being distributed, so far >\$15,000 for Home Hardening and >\$8,000 for Defensible Space.
 - PG&E did not approve our funding request for the Special Needs Defensible Space program, so we will be looking for other funding sources.
 - We received a \$10,000 grant from the California Fire Foundation to fund a few more days of our drive by chipping service.
 - The Roadside PSA was filed and approved, which will cover our CEQA environmental permitting for roadside clearing for at least the next 10 years. The \$1.499 million Cal Fire grant we were awarded recently will be the first phase of implementing roadside clearing under that environmental review.
 - A review committee has been reviewing responses from foresters to the RFQ. Bidding on this first project will occur in the next few weeks.
 - The most recent Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is from 2014 so it is time to update it. Last time we tried to have community meetings to start the update process, PSPS events, COVID, and the Willow Fire disrupted the process. Will be working with Frank to restart that process.

Rani Issac mentioned knowing people who have refused to evacuate when in an evacuation zone and asked what outreach can help convince people to prioritize their lives when they may say they have to stay for their fragile animals etc. John Stone responded that OES tries to continue this messaging, and remind people that when they don't evacuate it puts firefighters at risk.

We will be taking September off from meeting, use the time to address your own fire safe projects/ maintenance!

The next meeting is scheduled for October 12, 2022 at 9:30am.

Regular Board Meeting – postponed due to lack of quorum.