



Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 12, 2022 | 9:30 am – 11:30 am

Recording available: https://youtu.be/niUPYCBH_AA

Welcome/Agenda: Allison Thomson welcomed Zoom and in-person attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves. She shared that the November meeting will still be on the second Wednesday, but in the evening (November 9th at 5:30pm). We'll be having a Year End Review and Potluck (we'll provide a main dish). Check your email for a [link to RSVP](#) and/or sign up to bring a potluck item, and the flier you can print and hang up to help us advertise.

Public Comments:

- Rani Issac shared that the [CA Dept of Insurance has regulations](#) that will soon be in effect, probably later this week.
- Louise Miller invited folks to an event at YES Charter School called Forest Health in Yuba County Foothills – October 13th at 5:30- 7 pm
- Frances Ankers thanked fire personnel for their response on the Winding Fire. She wants to find out what will happen to responders when there is no means of egress. Her home is in a place with only one way in and one way out. She would prefer to stay in place over leaving during a fire in order to avoid getting trapped and perishing in her car. However, staying in place is dangerous too and she is asking for help opening another means of egress.

Allison shared that we don't have a guest presenter at this meeting. If anyone would like to present in the future, let us know.

Partner Reports:

- **USFS-Tahoe NF** – Rita Clipperton shared that, near Moonshine Road and Bullards Bar, contingency lines that were started for the Rices Fire have been extended to make more holding lines. Handpiles were also built along Moonshine Road. In the Pendola Fire Scar north of Bullards Bar work had been paused during the hot summer conditions but resumed after some rain in September. The Trapper Unit, including areas south of Camptonville along Highway 49, has had a contract awarded and work will begin soon, starting at high elevations and working down. Other preparations are being made to get ready for burn season.
- **Cal Fire** – Rob Bartsch shared that it has been a relatively mild fire season at the state and unit level, helped by the small amount of rain last month. The incidents have been spaced out, helping ensure that there were resources available for each response.
Staffing has been increased in the area, including 4 dozer operators. Inmate crew numbers are really reduced (1-2 crews as opposed to ~5 in past years). There has been some help from other crews, including from the CCC and National Guard. It's unclear what the weather will bring, and the staffing budget is funded through October 15th but it has been approved to extend to December 24th if needed, which will depend on when fire season is determined to be over.

The biggest fire the unit had this summer was the Mosquito Fire, and staff are still doing work there, burning out areas within the fire perimeter and other tasks. The Rices Fire and Jones Fire were also relatively nearby. The 2 biggest fires in Yuba County this year were the

Winding Fire and Apple Fire (which had a lot of potential to spread, but luckily was spotted and responded to quickly).

Rob touched on Francis Anker's concerns, and said that the area where the Winding Fire occurred is a priority to Cal Fire. They put the area in their ignition plan, which backs up the priority level if other organizations seek money and approval to do projects in the area. There are a lot of hurdles to making big fire breaks, but it is always possible to make contingency lines during fires.

There have been a lot of small suspicious fires in the nearby counties and an arrest was made recently.

- **CA Dept of Fish & Wildlife** – Brianna Pinto shared that projects are occurring in Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area and an area along Marysville Rd will be wrapped up soon. They have been dedicating time in Yuba County, including opening grazing permits for prescribed herbivory on many parts of the wildlife area.
- **Yuba County Office of Emergency Services** – Oscar Marin shared that October 20th is the Prepare Fair geared towards valley residents 4:30-6:30pm at the Food Maxx parking lot across from Linda Fire Station 1. Some properties in the Winding Fire were scorched while the homes survived. He shared that Regent Way is a Community Service Area (CSA, which is similar to an HOA) so he can't send in Public Works to tend to road issues; there needs to be direction and approval from the community. Residents at Richards Ranch are willing to open up that side of Regent Way, but funds are needed and it is not part of the CSA.
 - Cathy LeBlanc asked what Yuba County may be able to do after a CSA decides on direction. Oscar responded that the county may or may not be able to help financially. It can depend on who owns the roads. Cathy suggested that the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) update next year may be a chance to include roads in those areas.
 - Pam Cook added that there are maps showing CSAs on the Yuba County website.
- **Yuba Water Agency** – JoAnna Lessard shared that she sent out information about a new funding source to the IRWM list. A lot of funding is becoming available and more will be sent out. Let her know if you want to be on the email list (email jlessard@yubawater.org). She said the Yuba Foothills Healthy Forest Project is moving along nicely and Madison Thomson is doing a great job carrying the project out.
- **Oregon Peak Lookout Tower VIP Program** – Gary Fildes shared that Bill High is the coordinator and it has been a good season, but more volunteers are needed for next year. If not enough people are involved, they may have to go down to one afternoon shift instead of two shifts each day. Pam Cook asked people for ideas to get young healthy adults interested in volunteering for next year because Oregon Peak Lookout is a valuable asset.

Rob Bartsch added that all the lookouts are having a hard time keeping enough volunteers, and said that even one shift a day during the afternoon heat is a huge help. Contact Gary, Pam or Bill High (hibill56@yahoo.com) and you can visit the Lookout during someone's shift this year to get a taste of what it's like.

Beverly shared that training and paperwork tends to be done around March; let one of the contacts know if you want your email on the list, or talk to someone at a Cal Fire station.

- **Yuba County RCD** – Gary Fildes shared that a Cal Recycle Grant project has occurred to clean up abandoned cars in orchards near Yuba City; they are applying to get another grant for next year. They also plan to submit a grant application to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to get funding to hire an executive director, who will then help seek more grants. They are looking for two or more additional board members as well (contact gildes2001@yahoo.com). The RCD is hoping to improve forest health in the foothills and help ranchers/ farmers improve operations in the valley.

- **Camptonville Community Partnership** – Cathy LeBlanc (email: cathy@theccp.org) shared that CCP will also be looking for an executive director because she is hoping to retire next spring, and the new employee will handle the community health projects. She will continue with the forest biomass business center project, which will include a 3.5 MW power generator that will turn forest byproducts into electricity, and employ people with good paying jobs. The CA Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force and Sierra Nevada Conservancy each came to tour the project, and the North Yuba Forest Partnership meeting reiterated that the biomass energy facility is the missing piece. More money is needed, and though 2 recent grant applications were not funded they are applying for another grant. Look at [Camptonville biomass](#) to find out more. As part of the collocated business portion, they are looking into bringing in a small sawmill as well.
 - Keith Chambers added that the biomass facility is a great project and helps address the issue of what to do with logs that are removed during projects. A local sawmill would be a great addition to the community. He asked if the governor’s plan to decarbonize energy production will be a problem for the project. Cathy responded that they are working to make sure that the language of the bill does not deter the project, but the small size and steam engine should help keep it within limits.
 - Curtis asked about increased services that could come with the project. Cathy said there may be potential for a restaurant, food growing greenhouses, a brewery, etc on site.

- **Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI)** –Ryan McKillop shared that fuel reduction work paused in July to avoid ignitions that could come from the masticators. They also took a lot of precautions in June to avoid starting fires. They hope to treat many more acres this winter. Tree trimming crews are doing a lot in the area and they’re trying to make sure the logs are made use of. Along Willow Glen Rd there’s a lot of dead and dying trees, but as a private company SPI can’t remove those trees which would require some road closure. It’s an issue that needs to be dealt with.
 - Allison suggested reaching out to Public Works to address at least the trees that are in the right of way.
 - Debbie shared that NRCS has some grants to provide money for post fire cleanup, which may be able to help along Willow Glen Rd. Andrew Lee, forester for NRCS, will be sharing at the YRCD meeting on Friday.
 - Ryan asked if there will be follow up spray on the mastication that occurred in the Spring, and Allison said there will be.

- **The CHY Company** – Madison Thomson said that most mastication and biomass chipping operations are shut down for right now. Some projects recently wrapped up. They are looking to do mastication and chipping this fall and winter once there has been more precipitation. Keith Chambers added that he’s been with CHY for about 43 years, is about to retire, and will have some time on his hands to get involved with this group. He was involved when the Fire Safe Council started and has supported local efforts in the community for a long time. He

challenged SPI to step up and match what CHY has done for this community. Ryan responded that they are working on it. Keith brought up the Loma Rica Ranch Residential Development below the air attack base near Grass Valley, which is used to respond to fires. He hopes the new residents don't try to create barriers to using the air attack base, which serves this community. Randy Fletcher may be able to share more if invited to a future meeting. He'd also love to see the pilots come give a pep talk to this community because they are a tremendous asset. He then spoke about ingress/ egress routes. He brought up the topic of causes of fire, has heard on the scanners that a lot of fires start as structure fires, and it would help for the FSC to find out more about the root of the issue in order to better address ignition prevention. He looks forward to getting more involved when he retires.

- Curtis thanked Keith for his support.

YWP&FSC Reports:

- Outreach-Education Committee – Beverly Cameron-Fildes
 - Thanks to Cal Fire and the Forest Service for supplying used hose, which Tonio Hernandez turns into tow chain covers.
 - Curtis shared that a fire department in Colorado is now handing out tow chain covers as a result of him sending a few to his son.
 - Our 2023 calendar is in production, and we look forward to distributing them once they're done.
 - We've been contacted to do an information/ education piece at YES Charter Academy with parents of some of the younger students.
 - We get emails from other organizations with questions about how we run our programs, some as a result of attending a CFSC conference in the spring. Groups such as RCDs in other counties are keeping an eye on what we're doing and developing some similar programs.
- Executive Director Report – Allison Thomson
 - The Stevens Fund Fuel Breaks have been mostly on hold this summer, but some spray work has been completed and more work will move ahead this winter.
 - To start the roadside fuel reduction project, which was funded by a Cal Fire grant with cost share by YWA, the board is working on hiring a forester who will oversee the surveys, landowner outreach, and implementation.
 - Residential Programs: the Home Hardening (HH) and Defensible Space (DS) Cost Share Programs were launched in March. Each was funded by short term grants which will soon be coming to a close. HH applications close on Nov 15th and DS applications close Nov 30th. We have enough DS funding to do about 16 more parcels. We may be able to utilize HH money on related home hardening expenses upfront and are open to ideas (possibly buying supplies such as wire mesh and/or tools to make some sort of tool lending library).
 - Gary suggested gutter covers (many people have ineffective covers).
 - Beverly suggested buying metal flashing.
 - Keith spoke about his research on tarping firewood, and found information on fire resistant tarps (which the [Marin FSC](#) has a list of tarp vendor recommendations).
 - Rob clarified that fire retardant materials generally burn when a flame is held to it but go out when the flame is removed. Something to keep embers from getting into a wood pile would likely be helpful.

- Keith also spoke about his strategy of putting fiberglass blankets in his attic if he evacuates for a fire.
- Gary suggested bitumen tape be bought for putting over the rafters of a deck. Decks are often in poor condition on the homes he visits on Wildfire Mitigation Reviews.
- The residential chipping program currently has some funding and we may adjust the program in the future, possibly implementing a cost share.
- We are hoping to update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan next year, which will help bring together community knowledge and include new projects. Some grants require projects to be in a CWPP to fund them. An application to the Community Wildfire Defense Grant will hopefully result in funding to pay for the update process, which will include community meetings. The CWPP update will include the data platform (yubacounty.opennrm.org).
 - Curtis asked about a training for using the data platform and Pam is also interested.
- Jannike Allen shared that we've been brought in on an outreach project that will ask for community input on what climate vulnerabilities they experience. This will help PG&E shape a Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) and prioritize ways to best help the communities in their service territory. The survey can be filled out here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc749ru5>
 - Multiple attendees expressed that PG&E has been taking action to support the community in recent times.

**The next meeting will be our first annual Year End Review and potluck
November 9th at 5:30 pm at the Alcouffe Center**