



## Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 9, 2023 | 9:30am

- **Welcome/Agenda:** Allison welcomed attendees in-person and on Zoom.
- **Attendees:** Chris McCandless, John Stone, Beverly Cameron-Fildes, DJ Baker, Gary Fildes, Justin Hartman, Madison Thomson, JoAnna Lessard, Rick Satomi, Ben Raynal, Bill High, Jason Schroeder, Jason Vermillion, Kate Gazzo, Creighton Avila, Amy Kelley, Kat Pearlman, Lex Nelson, Chris Holmes, Pam Cook, Joe King, Oscar Marin, Chris Dallas, EV Mendoza, Sara Sodaro-Baggett, Diego Camacho Molina, Dewaina Edens, Curtis Canfield, Sandie Marotti-Huckins, Allison Thomson
- **Public Comments:**
  - **Special Presentation: JoAnna Lessard & Madison Thomson** presented on the New Bullard's Bar Forest Health Project recently funded by CAL FIRE and an innovative use of the California Vegetation Treatment Program CEQA document to support broad project development across Yuba County.
    - Yuba Water's Watershed Resilience Program, which was established in 2018, to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, protect local communities, and safeguard water supply.
    - Yuba Foothills Healthy Forest Grant
      - Implementation started in 2020
      - To date have treated 3,488 acres
      - Yuba Water partners have accumulated nearly \$600,000 in cost share for project management and CEQA
      - Plan to complete in 2024
    - New Bullards Bar Healthy Forest Grant
      - Funded in 2023 provides \$7 million in funding from CAL FIRE
      - Includes approximately 4000 acres of fuels reduction treatments
      - Includes innovative CEQA coverage for all 175,000 forested acres in Yuba County
    - CalVTP CEQA Planning
      - Will cover all treatments in the NBB FH grant
      - Will also analyze fuel reduction treatments and mitigations of all forested acres in upper Yuba County
- **Partner Reports:**
  - **Plumas National Forest** - Jason Vermillion
    - The Plumas National Forest, like many other forests in California, has been deemed a wildfire crisis landscape which entails funding to work on projects that need to be done.
    - Plumas also received some of the Forest Health Grant in 2019
  - **USFS-Tahoe National Forest** – Chris McCandless, YRRD District Fuels Specialist
    - Fire Update

- Initial attacks have been slow.
  - Royal Gorge fire was 2 acres. Repel team was in and did a great job.
  - Some crews are currently in Canada.
  - Under fire restrictions August 1 – November 1. Info on [Tahoe National Forest Website](#)
- Ongoing Projects
    - Hazzard Tree Removal continuing in campgrounds/taking a lot of resources.
    - Trapper Streamflow Enhancement in Camptonville clearing - 800 acres completed and will continue in the fall.
    - Now have money and manpower for landscape projects and able to be more proactive in our planning.
- **Bureau of Land Management** – Jason Schroeder
    - Jason is happy to be here in person.
    - Talking with Madison Thomson about the small parcel of land north of Brownsville.
    - State Fuel pEA(Programmatic Environmental Assessment) was signed by the State Director.
- **Natural Resources Conservation Service** – Diego Camacho Molina
    - Nothing new to report
- **CAL FIRE** – Justin Hartman
    - Currently at Level 4 staffing
    - Just reviewed with Fire Safe Council the fuelbreak work to be done on Huckins Ranch and Siller Brothers properties.
    - Directed engines to start conducting Defensible Space Inspections.
- **Yuba County Office of Emergency Services** – John Stone
    - AG Pass training is complete.
    - Vegetation clearing on Moonshine Rd will be wrapped up August 10.
- **Yuba Water Agency** – JoAnna Lessard
    - North Yuba Forest Partnership: funding efforts are shifting from Implementation to Infrastructure.
    - Continuing supporting the CCP Biomass Project
    - Yuba Water has an Open Grant period beginning Sept. 1. Contact [JoAnna Lessard](#) for assistance with the application process.
- **Oregon Peak** – Gary Fildes
    - New volunteer applications are on hold.
    - The lookout will only be staffed by CalFire request during red flag warnings and severe heat.
    - Justin Hartman commented on the staffing requests being based on the risk vs gain.
- **Yuba County Resource Conservation District**– DJ Baker
    - Just starting to look for projects and grants.

- Applying for a small grant for Forest Health Education and Management.
  - Developing a brochure.
- **Sierra Nevada Conservancy** – Chris Dallas
  - No recent updates.
  - SNC will be conducting Board Meetings across the region. Yuba Co. to be in December.
- **Camptonville Community Partnership** – Cathy LeBlanc
  - Working with our EPIC and SNC grants on the Forest Biomass Business Center
  - Signing developer agreement with Engman and the biomass business will be called Engman/Camptonville Green Energy. They are hoping to break ground in the fall. Requesting funding from Yuba Water Agency.
  - Have 2 interested Co-located businesses: sawmill and pellet mill.
- **UC Extension** – Ricky Satomi
  - No recent updates
  - Goat grazing project – demo sites in Chico and El Dorado County. This project will look at the effectiveness of goat grazing for fuel reduction, including the re-sprouting effect on hardwoods.
  - They are hoping to keep these grazing sites open for 3-5 years.
- **Sierra Pacific Industries** – Joe King/Ben Raynal
  - Working on the Yuba Healthy Forest Grant as well as the Stevens Fund Fuel break projects.
  - Patrols will be shifting to the afternoon with bad weather coming.
- **YWP&FSC Reports:**
  - **Outreach-Education Committee** – Beverly Cameron-Fildes
    - Still making good contacts and connections at the Brownsville and Dobbins Farmers Market.
    - During the National Night Out we received many requests for Mitigation Reviews. Conducted 151 Mitigation Reviews last year and have only completed 51 to date.
    - Beverly gave a testimonial of a resident that said because of the cost share grant she was able to get work done in 2 days that would have taken the better part of a year to finish on her own!
    - VOLUNTEERS WE NEED HELP! Please send an email to: [info@yubafiresafe.org](mailto:info@yubafiresafe.org) if you are interested in becoming a volunteer in our Outreach program.
    - Camptonville picnic will be on September 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - **Firewise/Programs Report** – Sandie Marotti-Huckins
    - Chipping
      - The council has received a new PG&E grant for approx. \$45,000 for chipping to be completed by November 15, 2023. The goal is 60 properties.
      - We are in the process of hiring a 2<sup>nd</sup> chipping company.
    - Defensible Space Cost Share Program
      - Program ended 7/31.

- We will report on final project costs and reimbursements at the September Council meeting.
  - Thank you to all who participated. Keep your eye out for new programs.
- Reflective Address Signs
  - Requests keep coming in.
  - Ordered new materials.
- Firewise USA Program
  - We have 4 more potential sites.
  - Met with a group in Loma Rica in July and they will be moving forward in the process.
  - Sunnyside Lane in OH will be holding a community meeting in September.
  - Other potential sites are in OH and Browns Valley.
- Tool Trailer
  - Sandie and Allison are working on program policies and paperwork, but we will start taking names now for interested neighborhoods. Let us know if you want to utilize our tool trailer for a community work day and we'll add you to the waitlist. Email [Sandie](#) with your interest.
  - Looking for a Volunteer to help run this program, including towing and supervising the trailer during workdays
  - Our plan is to provide the trailer to communities working on their Fire Wise distinction.
  - Another possible use may be to partner with a youth organization for community service to elderly and disabled residents.
- **Executive Director Report** – Allison Thomson
  - No new updates on the fuels projects – there's not much that can be done right now with the hot, dry weather.
  - The roadside community meeting will be rescheduled for September 14 at 6:00pm. The date will be announced on Facebook and through our email list.
  - We've completed the grant paperwork for the funding for the Community Wildfire Protection Plan update, with grant execution within the next month. The CWPP is a broad scale plan for wildfire mitigation in the Yuba Foothills region; it will help us and other stakeholders to prioritize areas for mitigation, looking both at local wildfire risk and community values. We will be holding a series of community meetings as part of the CWPP update process, but if anyone would like to be more involved in the process and in guiding what the CWPP will look like and how it will be used, talk to Allison. There are multiple opportunities to get involved, both on the initial planning team and on the technical advisory committee.

- Grants: We were notified we did not receive a Cal Fire Wildfire Prevention Grant that would have funded continuation of a number of defensible space programs for 5 years: Cost Share and Special Needs, residential chipping, and a more robust program utilizing the community tool trailer. We are looking into additional funding sources for those programs, as they've been really effective in supporting residents reducing fuels on properties around the foothills. Since that grant was not funded, those programs currently stand as follows:
  - Cost Share and Special Needs: on hold until we find additional funding
  - Chipping is open until the end of November
  - Tool trailer will be available as Sandie and I have time
  
- There is a legacy Outlook meeting invite for Fire Safe Council meetings floating around out there, but we don't have an easy way to delete it. We'll be attempting to delete and reissue the meeting invite in the near future, so don't be alarmed if you receive "Canceled Event" or any other notifications. Our upcoming meetings are still scheduled as originally planned.
  
- Thank you all for attending!

**The next council meeting will be September 13, 6:30pm at the Alcouffe Center and on Zoom.**