



Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 10, 2024 9:30am

Alcouffe Community Center (9185 Marysville Road, Oregon House, CA 95962)

- **In attendance:** Jon Messick, Gary Ellis, Levi Ellis David Morgan, Gary Fildes, Tracy Munson, Shawna Pratt, Oscar Marin, Ross Muzychenko, Antonio Cruz, Nathan Menth, Charles Sharpe, Allison Thomson, Sara Bagget, Gretchen Cupp, Jason Miller, Dewaina Edens, Elias Mendoza, Rani Isaac, Sean Griffiths, Creighton Avila
- **Special Presentation: “2024 Updates from Supervisor Jon Messick”**
 - Supervisor Messick announced that he is now the Chairman of the Yuba Water Agency
 - His 2023 main project, which is on-going in 2024, is working with several agencies to add 6 more fire hydrants in the Yuba Foothills. North Yuba Water District has requested a Waterline Engineering Study from Yuba Water Agency (which will be paid for by YWA) to see if the waterline can be extended. The next step will be to look for funding. Some of the project will be funded by YWA. Also looking into working with BVID to charge lines year around.
 - Supervisor Messick is also the Commander of the Yuba-Sutter Sheriffs Aero Squadron which is working with Sheriff and Code Enforcement to be proactive in shutting down illegal grows in the foothills before fire season. He encouraged all “to say something if you see something.”
- **Partner Reports:**
 - **USFS-Plumas National Forest** – Jason Miller
 - The Plumas has a new Ranger who will be on-boarding mid-January.
 - There are many acres to burn in Yuba and Plumas County, they will begin prescribed burns next week.
 - **CAL FIRE** – Antonio Cruz/Nathan Menth
 - Reminded us we are in Open Burn season, meaning no permits are needed.
 - 2023 was a low incidence year for fires!
 - They are operating in Amador Mode – many units shut down.
 - Announced that they have added 5 new inspectors to their Defensible Space Program and will be adding 2 more in March.
 - In 2023 they performed 11,000 inspections in Nevada, Yuba and Placer Counties.
 - The Prevention Bureau handed out 265 fire related citations in 2023. These citations come after 3 prior warnings or visits. Homeowners are referred to resources for help before being cited. Cal Fire also worked on a major arson investigation where 9 felony charges were delivered.
 - GIS mapping as well as Real Estate inspections help to decide which areas require attention and would benefit from fire suppression efforts from the Defensible Space Program.
 - They also issued 19,000 burn permits in 2023 unit wide which was the most in the state.
 - Know your Burn Season. The shoulder season is the most confusing, the periods on either side of a high utilization period fall and spring.

- **Board of Supervisors** – Jon Messick
 - Asked for support of the North Yuba Water District as there is an out of county effort to dissolve the district and have them combine with the Feather River Water District.
 - The district has access to 23,700 acre feet of water rights but only use a fraction. They are working to be able to use more.
 - **Yuba County Office of Emergency Services** – Oscar Marin
 - Working with the Fire Safe Council on the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
 - Ag Pass has been passed on to Sara Baggett.
 - Rural School Title 3 Fire Safe Fund is now under OES and the contract is being restructured.
 - They are completing MOU's and Grant applications for temporary evacuation sites as more are needed.
 - 2 new platforms are being used for evacuations and routes in real time.
 - Continuing to look for funds for the Fire Safe Council.
 - **The CHY Company** – notes from Madison Thomson
 - Weather permitting, mastication on the Brownsville and Oregon Ridge fuelbreaks and biomass chipping on the Yuba Foothills Healthy Forest Project are continuing.
- **YWP&FSC Reports:**
 - Outreach-Education Committee –
 - Reminder to pick up a calendar, check the website for locations.
 - Gary mentioned that Mitigation Reviews have slowed down. This is a good time of the year to schedule one so you are ready when grant money for special programs become available.
 - Firewise/Programs Report – Sandie Marotti-Huckins
 - **Firewise:** We are looking forward to gaining more momentum in 2024 in creating Firewise communities in the Yuba Foothills. Please contact Sandie with questions about the program and how to get involved. Stay tuned for information about Firewise events coming up this spring.
 - **Address signs:** We created over 58 address signs for residents of the Yuba Foothills in 2023. A great goal for 2024 would be to get everyone in your neighborhood to order and display a sign. Visit our website to order.
 - **Chipper Program:** In December we closed out a grant from PG&E which supported our “Residential Chipper Program”. Through this grant the YWSFPC was able to assist 15 residents of the Yuba County foothills in reducing fuels and creating defensible space around their homes by providing free chipping services for wood waste.
 - We also implemented a “Special Needs” project to help our most vulnerable residents create defensible space around their homes. Special Needs project participants, who included elderly, disabled or low-income individuals, were identified through our Wildfire Mitigation Review Program via site visits performed by our volunteers. With this project we were able to help 4 residents, who were otherwise unable to physically or financially perform much needed Defensible Space work around their homes, by removing brush and trees to defensible space standards, pruning up tree limbs, and chipping the residuals of the work.

- We will be sending out a quick survey next week for you to share your thoughts about Yuba Watershed Protection and Fire Safe Council meetings. Please take a few moments to help us better serve our community.
- **Board Report – Sean Griffis**
 - Looking for new Board Members, contact Allison if interested.
- **Executive Director Report – Allison Thomson**
 - YWPFSC hosted a film screening in November: “California’s Watershed: Healing” Thank you to our panelists from UC Extension, Yuba Water Agency, Sierra Pacific Industries, and Camptonville Community Partnership. Watch the film online here: [Link](#)
 - YWPFSC will be moving to a new office soon. Stay tuned for location and details.
 - Operations are starting up again on the Brownsville, Oregon Ridge, and Brownsville-Oregon House Fuelbreaks.
 - An implementation contractor was selected for the roadside fuel reduction work in the Dobbins/Oregon House area. Implementation will begin soon, depending on weather.
 - We issued an RFP for a contractor for the CWPP Update project. Contractor will be selected in February.
 - Anyone interested in joining the Technical Advisory Committee can reach out to sandie@yubafiresafe.org
 - YWPFSC was awarded a one year grant from Yuba Water Agency to support our defensible space cost share, special needs, chipping, and tool trailer programs. We have a little work to do to revamp those programs, but keep an eye out for their relaunches in the coming months.
 - More grant applications to support our residential programs and internal Fire Safe Council capacity are currently pending. More news coming soon.

The next council meeting will be March 13, 9:30am at the Alcouffe Center and on Zoom.