

Summit County Wildfire Council

Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2016

1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Attendees: Maggie Hillman, Matt Schiltz, Chapin LaChance, Ken Wiegand, Jim Keating, Howard Hallman, Susan Lee, Shellie Duplan, Ned West, Doug Cupp, Dan Gibbs, Beth Huron, Steve Lipsher, Dan Schroder, Jim Curnutte, Char Bloom, Dan Moroz

- I. Approval of Agenda:** The Chair opened the meeting at 1:30 and introductions were made around the room. The agenda was approved with no changes.
- II. Approval of January 21, 2016 Minutes:** Dan Gibbs added that with regard to funds left over from 2015, the county has not yet paid its portion of the wildfire funds from the 2015 fire north of Silverthorne; however, this shouldn't impact the 2016 grant funds. Char Bloom moved to approve the January 21, 2016 minutes. Maggie Hillman seconded the motion; all were in favor and the minutes were approved.
- III. Discussion - CWPP Update:** County staff have been working on revisions to the CWPP based on recommendations from the Headwaters consulting team. The most significant items considered for revision include:
 - Wildfire mitigation specialist and county GIS are working to update the community risk map.
 - New maps showing vegetation types and fire regime have been created, indicating that the county is in a low frequency/high risk status, and is currently in a window of potential stand replacement.
 - The first three CWPP objectives have been combined and a new second objective has been added: Support the Fire Adapted Community.
 - Although the consultants recommended updating the Action list, staff agree that the currently listed actions are appropriate and have made no modifications.
 - The consultants recommended creating an ember transport map, but this would probably not significantly alter the current maps, other than to potentially increase the county's WUI boundary. Staff will investigate further the feasibility of creating an ember transport map.
 - Staff agreed that the current delineation of focus areas is appropriate and won't alter the boundaries unless significant changes occur.
 - The suggestion was made to make the maps easier to view online. Staff will work on creating maps that can be viewed in greater resolution.
- IV. 2016 Chipping Program Update:** The Department of Natural Resources has awarded Summit County a \$50,000 matching grant for the 2016 Chipping Program. County staff met this week to discuss the details for the 2016 program:
 - Keep the basic program format the same as last year - divide the county into two

sections of seven service areas each, with one or two contractors working the two sections concurrently.

- Start chipping on June 27 and end on September 30 (14 weeks), with two passes through each service area.
- Hire two seasonal employees.
- Staff will develop an RFP (Request for Proposal) that clearly outlines the county's expectations for prospective contractors - e.g. the contractor will provide the service for a minimum of 40 hours regardless of backtracking or missed piles.
- Advertising will clearly instruct participants to put wood out by Monday morning.
- Advertising will clearly state limitations for time spent on individual landowners. Large landowners will be invited to call for an appointment and the Wildfire Mitigation Specialist will review the situation on a case by case basis.
- Due to contractor difficulties, chips from the 2015 program have remained at the Dillon and Silverthorne storage sites. The towns have allowed the county to leave chips onsite until arrangements are made to remove them.
- Chip storage sites will again be provided by Dillon, Silverthorne and Breckenridge.
- Prospective chip utilization options for 2016 include:
 - Swan River restoration project
 - Summit County Landfill (to use as a compost base)
 - Climax Mine for reclamation purposes
- Staff will continue to explore other chip utilization options.

V. 2016 Wildfire Grant Program: Applicants must submit a pre-application outlining project intent to the Extension office by April 29. The pre-application form is on the county website at www.summitcountyco.gov/wildfiregrants. To date, seven prospective applicants have contacted county staff. As in years past, the county would like to see collaboration between neighbors and adjacent land owners.

VI. Education Updates: Dan Schroder plans to visit professional organizations and would welcome invitations from town councils to speak at their meetings. Dan asked the group whether to keep the broader message of "wildfire mitigation" in most of the advertising, or highlight individual programs such as chipping. The suggestion was made to use the '50,000 foot' message for durable goods such as shopping bags, etc, and emphasize more specific programs for short-term events.

Summit County Government recently won an award for Wildfire Mitigation Innovation from the IAFC (International Association of Fire Chiefs), National Association of State Foresters, National Fire Protection Association and USDA Forest Service. Dan travelled to Reno this past week to receive the award at the National WUI Conference.

VII. Legislative Updates: Dan Gibbs summarized two recent legislative acts.

- At the federal level, the Wildfire Prevention Act of 2015 was introduced by Representatives Polis (Colorado) and Ruiz (California). The act would update FEMA guidelines dictating the release of natural disaster funds and would make wildfires eligible to receive FEMA funds, thereby offsetting fire borrowing.
- A recent bill before the State capital would help continue the Natural Resources grant

fund and make broadcast burns eligible for funds. This and other bills related to funding questions will be voted on later in March or early April, when there is a clearer picture of state funding.

VIII. Other Matters: The Government Accountability Office (GAO), a congressional research arm that helps congress determine funding, recently contacted Summit County to learn more about the collaboration between the county, local fire districts, USFS and other partners. Several county staff and Wildfire Council members met with three GAO natural resources analysts on March 1st. The analysts were primarily interested in learning how the county is accomplishing work with available funding, lessons learned and how they can help us in the future.

The county's planning code revisions are on hold. The BOCC has requested that county staff pursue further outreach with the building community, realtors, etc., in order to get more input before the BOCC votes.

IX. Roundtable Discussion - Activities of Wildfire Council Members and Partners:

- Forest Health Task Force is a volunteer citizen group. The Task Force's goals are to involve community members in the natural landscape, provide forest managers with credible data and establish good management methods going forward. An annual report of data collected is in draft form and will soon be available.
- Buffalo Mountain Metro District has protective covenants requiring property owners to remove standing dead and fallen trees, as well as a full-time covenant enforcement officer. Last fall the district distributed notices to residents to remove marked trees, with a deadline of June 30 of this year. In February the district sent out newsletters reminding residents of the tree removal requirements and informing them that the county chipping program will occur again in 2016. In 2015 the district conducted a water model study and found that the system meets maximum day plus fire flow demands. However, the current system requires a water operator to manually open valves to move water from an upper reservoir to lower reservoir. The district has hired a contractor to convert the manual system to a remote system and may approach the county for assistance through the grant process. Shellie Duplan will talk to the BMMD board about the potential for providing a chip storage site in Wildercrest that would also be available as a source of free wood chips for residents.
- Colorado State Forest Service is working with the county and the Town of Dillon and on a hazard tree removal project on joint county/town property. The hazard tree removal project along Hwy 9 (from Farmer's Korner to Hoosier Pass) will start this summer, targeting dead or potential wind-throw trees.
- Town of Breckenridge is working with the county on a chip storage site for this summer. The space used last year will probably be unavailable due to planned construction.

X. Next Meeting Date: June 16, 1:30 – 3:30

XI. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Beth Huron, Summit County Community Development