

**Summit County Wildfire Council
Meeting Minutes
July 21, 2016
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.**

Attendees: Steve Lipsher, Matt Benedict, Deborah Shaner, Dan Moroz, Susan Lee, JoAnne Nadalin, Chapin LaChance, Shelby Limberis, Howard Hallman, Jen Barchers, Jim Cox, Maggie Hillman, Ned West, Doug Cupp, Adam Bianchi, Dan Gibbs, Dan Schroder, Beth Huron, Ross Wilmore, Doug Paul

- I. Approval of Agenda:** The Chair opened the meeting at 1:34 p.m. and introductions were made around the room. Dan Schroder asked to add a discussion on the 2017 outreach work plan and the agenda was approved with that modification.
- II. Approval of June 16, 2016 Minutes:** Jim Cox moved to approve the June 16, 2016 minutes. Matt Benedict seconded the motion; all were in favor and the minutes were approved.
- III. 2016 Chipping Program Update:** Four weeks into the program, participation is comparable to that of last year's at the same point. Discussion followed:
 - In spite of education efforts, there are still a lot of contaminated piles and people putting slash out late.
 - In an effort to have piles out by Monday, the signs were changed to read "Have your slash out Monday". Now staff is getting calls from people wondering why the chipper didn't come on Monday.
 - There have been a lot of piles containing willow, which the program does not allow.
 - The numbers show strong participation with a relatively low percentage of contaminated piles; however, it takes a lot of staff time to deal with the phone calls and contaminated piles.
 - Colorado Tree Specialists (Ryan Vas Nunes) is the new contractor for the chipping program. So far, Ryan's crew has been very responsive and on-time.
 - We need to make sure we're using the data to make good decisions for 2017 rather than basing decisions on the phone calls/problems.

Discussion followed on the efficacy of the chipping program and the value of public outreach:

- How can we let homeowners know that their home is "red"? Door knocking is time consuming and challenging. Public outreach increases awareness and may result in fire districts being invited to evaluate homes.
- Many chipping program participants are maintaining their defensible space, resulting in smaller piles.
- It would be helpful to have leaders in neighborhoods to help residents understand how to take advantage of county programs (such as the chipping program).
- Homeowners may shy away from having a hazard rating because they're afraid it will jeopardize their ability to get homeowners' insurance. They may also be worried that the information is not confidential.

- It's still early in the 2016 chipping program. We should wait until this year's program is over, then look at the numbers and base decisions for next year on outcomes. A lot will depend on funding available.
- Pitkin County has started a similar program based on Summit's chipping program, but it's too early to tell how it is doing.

IV. Adoption of Revised CWPP: Doug Cupp presented details on the CWPP revisions at earlier Wildfire Council meetings (see March 2016 and June 2016 minutes). The county is now asking the Wildfire Council to approve and adopt the revised 2016 CWPP. If the Council agrees now to adopt the revised CWPP, staff reserve the right to edit and revise as needed. Dan Gibbs motioned to approve the revised 2016 CWPP. Matt Benedict seconded the motion; all approved and the revised CWPP was adopted.

V. Education Updates: Dan Schroder recently presented Summit County's biomass utilization approaches at the Colorado State Forest Service Biomass Utilization Conference in Colorado Springs. This week, as a follow-up to that meeting, he hosted a field trip for staff from Boulder County to showcase Summit County's wood utilization efforts. Dan has presented several times this summer to Keystone Science School teacher groups and will present to Breckenridge Rotary next week. He has also been working with the Summit County Realtor Association on outreach efforts. Extension purchased a Summit Sunrise Segment on SCTV10 for the summer and several Wildfire Council partners have contributed to a segment. Dan asked if anyone in the room would like take advantage of the last segment next week to spread their organization's message; Steve Lipsher from Lake Dillon Fire Rescue volunteered. In November, Doug Cupp will present at a wildfire planning workshop in Boulder. Other entities are capturing Summit County's wildfire information and using it in their programs, and Summit County staff is increasingly being invited to speak in other counties. A short discussion followed on opportunities for wildfire mitigation work in areas that would serve as advertising for the county program. Dan, Doug and the seasonal chipping staff have done mitigation work at the intersection of Miner's Creek and the recreation path in Frisco, as well as on county open space in Mesa Cortina. Dan suggested putting a sign near the Frisco project to advertise the chipping program; the group agreed it was a good idea.

VI. Legislative Updates: Dan Gibbs attended a meeting of the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control (CDFPC) this morning. The state requested items to consider for the upcoming legislative agenda. Some ideas presented for bills included: Wildfire cleanup, definition of wildland urban interface, clarify that CDFPC has authority with wildland fires, definition of fuels, Emergency Fire Fund, bills regarding the county sheriff (sheriff serves as fire warden) and permits for fireworks.

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

- U.S. Forest Service - Adam Bianchi is the new deputy district ranger for the Dillon Ranger District. Adam is new to Summit County and previously worked on the Ottawa National Forest in Michigan. Adam has a strong forestry background and is a certified silvaculturist.
- The Lower Blue River Basin is still struggling to establish cell service.
- Forest Health Task Force – The monitoring project is going strong with new volunteers; USFS is providing information on new plots. The group hopes to add information on

historical burns and provide the data to the Forest Service and other entities.

- Fire Bans - This past weekend, there was some confusion on fire restrictions and messaging. Doug Paul explained that entities along the I-70 corridor participate in conference calls to discuss conditions, but each entity makes their own decision. In Summit County, if the Forest Service issues a fire ban, the county and local fire districts issue one as well. The various entities will seek consensus, but ultimately, the decision to issue a county-wide fire ban comes from the sheriff.
- U.S. Forest Service: The recent Red Table Fire near Sylvan Lake State Park serves as a reminder that wildland fires can occur in non-typical conditions. Much of the burned area consisted of green mixed conifer with some dead and down, but if a fire starts smoldering in dead timber, it can dry green material and spread. The fire most likely started as a low intensity fire caused by lightning strike, but hot, windy conditions allowed it to grow and eventually it required 20 air tanker loads to put it out and took hand crews 4 days to mop it up.
- Red, White & Blue: Matt Benedict was called to a wildfire in Gunnison in mid-June that encompassed lots of dead and down in conditions similar to Summit County.
- Dan Gibbs: Colorado has MMA (Multi-mission aircraft) that we can loan out to other entities. The MMA can detect tiny plumes of smoke from a flyover. On August 4, the Forest Service and Denver Water will lead a tour for the Legislative Measures Review Committee in Summit County. Dan Gibbs will let the Wildfire Council know how they can be involved.

VIII. 2017 Work Plan: Dan Schroder initiated a discussion of whether the chipping program should continue in 2017. Discussion points included:

- We are starting to see progress. Wait and see what the numbers are from this summer.
- The program is paid for by property tax, so it captures second homeowners as well as year-round locals.
- By running the program in consecutive years, we may capture more participants.
- Running two rounds each summer allows second homeowners a better opportunity to participate, since they are usually here only part of the summer.
- When you compare the cost of the program to the cost of putting out a fire, it is very cost effective.
- The program currently has momentum – keep it going.
- Right now we are on track to potentially exceed last year's numbers.

The group reached the conclusion that the county should continue to run the chipping program in 2017.

IX. Next Meeting Date: September 15, 1:30 – 3:30

X. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Beth Huron, Summit County Community Development