

**Summit County Wildfire Council  
Meeting Minutes  
January 19, 2017  
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.  
Buffalo Mountain Room  
County Commons  
Frisco, CO**

**Attendees:** Jim Curnutte, Bryan Webinger, Dan Moroz, Gary Curmode, Rick Ihnken, Jen Barchers, JoAnne Nadalin, Susan Lee, Howard Hallman, Adam Bianchi, Beth Huron, Dan Schroder, Doug Cupp, Chapin LaChance, Ken Wiegand, Paul Kuhn, Jim Keating.

- I. Approval of Agenda:** Jim Curnutte acted as chair in Dan Gibbs' absence. Jim opened the meeting at 1:36 p.m. and introductions were made around the room. Adam Bianchi requested time to discuss the Lower Snake WUI project, and it was suggested that he bring it up during the roundtable discussion. The agenda was approved without changes.
- II. Approval of November 17, 2016 Minutes:** Dan Moroz moved to approve the November 17, 2016 minutes. JoAnne Nadalin seconded the motion; all were in favor and the minutes were approved.
- III. Presentation of 2017 Chipping Program Options:** Doug Cupp gave a PowerPoint presentation utilizing the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) to summarize the challenges and successes of the chipping program to date, then presented potential options for the 2017 chipping program. Highlights from Doug's presentation include:
  - **Strengths:** The program was consistent over a 3 year period, provided a valuable service to homeowners, had good participation, won several awards and provided constant public education.
  - **Weaknesses:** The program did not receive grant funding from the state in 2017, participants did not always adhere to program rules, and the program was costly to run and presented logistical challenges.
  - **Opportunities:** Going forward, continue to educate the public on the program's core purpose of creating defensible space, focus on program strategy, use previous data to develop the most effective and efficient program, and involve additional agencies and stakeholders to share the workload. One benefit of losing state funding is that the county is no longer required to report to a separate entity.
  - **Threats:** Lack of funding from the state, logistical challenges such as obtaining a vehicle for the program, and utilization of wood chips all present potential challenges to the program.
  - **Thinking it Through:** Reduce hazardous fuels near homes, make the program more cost effective, incorporate homeowner education, make it easy to participate and keep the program as consistent as possible.
  - **Other Programs:** Several counties in Colorado manage slash removal programs with

slight variations, such as requiring homeowners to pre-register for pickup, charging for chipping service, offering 50% funding for HOA's that host curbside pickup, and providing slash drop-off locations.

- Possible Options for 2017 Program:
  - Provide one round of curbside chipping vs. two rounds;
  - Provide three or more drop-off locations rather than curbside chipping;
  - Require individuals or HOA's to schedule pickup;
  - Track data through registration, eliminating the need for seasonal employees;
  - Stay the course – provide two rounds of curbside chipping.
- Available Funds: In 2016, the total program cost was \$192,000, with \$50,000 of that paid by Department of Natural Resources grant funding and \$43,000 received in revenue, resulting in a net cost of \$93,000. It may be within the scope of available funds to run the program as in previous years, even without the grant.

Discussion followed on how to proceed with the chipping program in 2017:

- The council needs to determine how much money to dedicate to the chipper program in order to know how much will be available for the county wildfire grant program. The chipping program is prioritized.
- In 2014, the county spent \$198,000 on the contractor; in 2015, the cost was \$140,000; in 2016, the cost was \$128,000. The cost went down because the program was refined to make it more efficient. The 2017 cost would probably be comparable to last year's costs if the program is run in the same manner.
- One council member suggested capping the bids as a potential option.
- Another potential option is to request contributions from HOA's, insurance companies and participants.
- Based on the metrics, it seems the program is successful. If we change the program we may lose some efficiency.
- The number of applications for the wildfire grant program has tapered off over the last several years, but the projects completed under the grant program are closely monitored by staff and are highly effective. It is more difficult to assess the efficacy of work completed through the chipping program.
- Education is one of the major benefits of the program.
- If the chipping program was revised to have one round of curbside chipping occurring in late summer, there may be potential issues with slash left in right-of-ways or easements. In addition, drainage and road paving operations may be affected.
- If the program costs exceed the budget allocated to wildfire mitigation, the county can potentially fund the overage from the 2010 fund, which was created to fund various programs.

Doug Cupp announced that he has submitted his resignation from the Wildfire Mitigation Specialist position. Discussion followed on the potential impacts to the chipping and grant programs.

- Funding for the chipping and grant programs will be determined by what direction upper management decides to take with the Wildfire Mitigation Specialist position.

- With the chipping program infrastructure in place, perhaps a full-time position is not required to assist Dan Schroder in running the program.
- Without the need to report to the state, less data tracking will be required in 2017; however, some tracking is beneficial to continue to improve program efficiency. If the county requires the contractor to do the tracking, the need for seasonal employees is reduced.
- If the fire districts assist with public education and grant monitoring, the county may not need to fill a full time position.
- The council agreed that the county should continue to run the chipping program with two rounds. It remains to be seen how tracking will be managed depending on how the wildfire mitigation specialist position is filled.
- It is important to reach out to second homeowners to let them know what's been happening for the past three years and encourage them to participate in the chipping program. Council members discussed the benefits of including messaging on tax bills. It may be more beneficial to send direct mailers in order to target the exact dates of the chipping program, whereas tax bills are sent out in January.
- It may be beneficial to send out maps showing properties treated by the chipping program to give homeowners some perspective of the area that has been protected.

Dan Moroz motioned to continue the chipping program in the same format through the 2017 season. Ken Wiegand seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion was approved.

- IV. 2017 Wildfire Grant Program:** County staff will work on getting the best possible bid for the chipping program, and remaining available funds will be available for the Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFR) and Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) grants. Dan Schroder asked council members to talk to their town councils and help stir the pot to find potential applicants. If the county decides to reduce the wildfire mitigation specialist position to half-time or eliminate it altogether, the slack could be made up by fire districts helping homeowners create viable proposals for grants. Fire districts could work with HOA's and homeowners in high-priority areas. Dan will ask the fire district wildfire mitigation experts to join the "Get it Done" subcommittee.
- V. "Get it Done" Priority List – Review and Revision:** The original "Get it Done" list included 89 items. Doug Cupp strategically revised the list to eliminate completed and unobtainable projects and categorized the list according to responsible parties. Doug asked that those on the original subcommittee step up and work with Dan Schroder to initiate projects. Dan Moroz volunteered to be on the subcommittee and to work with Climax Mine. Adam Bianchi from the U.S. Forest Service also volunteered to be on the subcommittee. Dan Schroder will email the "Get it Done" list to council members to help town councils determine which of their staff should join the subcommittee. Dan will also ask representatives from the fire districts and towns to join the subcommittee and will set up a meeting within the next few weeks.

**VI. Round Table Discussion – Partner Input on Completed CWPP Projects:**

- Chief Kuhn, Red, White and Blue Fire District: Ross Wilmore will give an overview of the upcoming wildfire season on May 18 at 1:30 p.m. at Colorado Mountain College.
- Chief Keating, Red, White and Blue Fire District: RW&B staffed a table at the Parade of Homes and contacted over 300 people at the event. The chief recommends that other fire districts consider participating in future Parade of Homes events as an outreach tool.
- Dan Moroz, Ptarmigan Homeowners: Ptarmigan HOA installed three 2,200 gallon emergency water cisterns last summer with the assistance of the CWPP grant program. The community has also completed several fuels mitigation projects in the last few years using HFR grant funds. Dan thanked the Wildfire Council for the grants received over the past few years.
- Town of Dillon: Jen Barchers will talk to town staff about joining the subcommittee.
- Town of Breckenridge: The town has decided not to continue with the slash drop-off site due to large numbers of contractors dropping off slash. The town will, however, provide a drop site for county program. Town Council last week signed an MOU with the Forest Service through 2022 to form a partnership to address mitigation issues in Indiana Gulch.
- Town of Silverthorne: The site used as a chip storage site by the county last year is under construction this year. The town will work with the county to find another site in the Silverthorne area.
- Forest Health Task Force: The Task Force continues the forest monitoring program, which is evolving and improving with help from Adam Bianchi.
- The U.S. Forest Service is currently trying to hire a fuels specialist out of the Dillon Ranger District. Adam asked the council for contacts for that position. The Forest Service is currently in the scoping phase of the Lower Snake WUI project, which comprises 857 acres in the vicinity of Keystone, Freye Gulch, Keystone Gulch, Tenderfoot Mountain and along Swan Mountain Road. The proposed units follow many of the CWPP boundaries. The project deals mainly with lodgepole pine, with approximately 80% of the area affected with mistletoe canker. Proposed vegetation management activities include clear cuts, salvage, pre-commercial thinning and pile burning. The Forest Service hopes to reduce fuel loading as well as mistletoe canker in the area, and plans to start implementation as soon as this spring. Adam asked council to contact him with questions or comments by February 13.

**VII. Education Updates:** The council has already approved \$20,000 for funding of education and outreach. Dan proposes making no modifications to the outreach approach used in the last couple of years.

**VIII. Legislative Updates:** None.

**IX. Next Meeting Date: March 16, 2017, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m., Buffalo Mountain Room**

**X. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:19 p.m.**

Minutes submitted by Beth Huron, Summit County Community Development