

**Summit County Wildfire Council  
Meeting Minutes  
March 29, 2018  
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.  
Mount Royal Room  
County Commons  
Frisco, CO**

**Attendees:** Jim Keating, Chapin LaChance, Peter Grosshuesch, Shellie Duplan, Maggie Hillman, Steve Lipsher, Jim Cox, Justin Conrad, Deepan Dutta, Sarah Thorsteinson, Brian Bovaird, Paul Kuhn, Eric White, Matt Benedict, Jeff Berino, Dan Gibbs, Ryan McCulley, Adam Bianchi, Bill Jackson, Catherine Schloegel, Ryan McNertney, Jim Curnutte, Dan Schroder, Troy Wineland, Greg Roy, JoAnne Nadalin, Ken Wiegand, Beth Huron

- I. Approval of Agenda:** The Chair opened the meeting at 1:33 p.m. and introductions were made around the room. The Chair welcomed Brian Bovaird as the new Summit County Emergency Manager. Special mention was made of the wildfire exercise that will take place on June 21. The council approved the agenda without changes.
- II. Approval of September 21, 2017 Minutes:** JoAnne Nadalin moved to approve the September 21, 2017 minutes. Ken Wiegand seconded the motion; all were in favor and the minutes were approved.
- III. Blue River Water Commissioner Presentation:** Troy Wineland is the Water Commissioner for District 36, which includes the Blue River Basin. Troy invited the council to discuss their perceptions of current water conditions. All agreed that the snowpack seems very thin, humidity is low and temperatures seem warmer than normal for the time of year. Troy presented data indicating that la Niña is driving current weather conditions. From November to January, precipitation was well below average, while temperatures were well above average. February brought more precipitation and cooler temperatures. To date, this has been the third driest winter on record based on statewide snowpack, with the current snowpack at 88% of average. Soil moisture throughout western Colorado is also below average. Discussion followed on how snowpack levels may affect fire danger for 2018. Summit County is in better shape than other river basins in the state. Water calls on the Colorado River should not affect firefighting capabilities. Northwest Colorado Council of Governments monitors water quality for sediment load. The Town of Breckenridge has determined where they will place sediment traps in the event of a wildfire.
- IV. 2018 Predictions and How They Could Affect Summit County:** With this year's lower snowpack, combustible timber fuels may start showing earlier. The fire districts are preparing for the season by training firefighters and initiating public outreach earlier than usual. Current fire predictions may mean higher fire danger in June, when dry air comes off the desert (pre-monsoon), and the county could see fire restrictions earlier than usual. Soil maps are of great interest to firefighters because moist soils could help slow the spread of fire. Red, White and Blue Fire Protection District has obtained a drone for collecting better intelligence, as well as

the use of two Type 2 helicopters and other aircraft. The district will also use the drone to show homeowners wildfire risk and encourage them to create defensible space. The State of Colorado Fire Prevention and Control now owns six drones and will be researching best practices and creating policy around their use.

**V. 2018 Hazardous Fuel Reduction and CWPP Grants:** Staff will present 2018 wildfire grant applications to the council for approval at the June meeting. Pre-applications are due at the end of April; applications are due at the end of May. Dan Schroder has talked to four potential applicants over the winter. Staff asked council members to help get the word out about grant availability. The fire districts and Summit Association of Realtors can help identify areas/homeowner groups to target for grants. There may be a few applications from HOA's in Wildernest. Buffalo Mountain Metro District is concerned about the open space area between Wildernest and Mesa Cortina. Jim Curnutte will discuss potential work in this area with Brian Lorch, Summit County Open Space and Trails Director. The Town of Blue River will put in requests for grants for signage and other projects.

**VI. Summit County Chipping Program Review:** The Chipping Program had the largest number of participants last year, with 9,000 homes putting wood out. Of those 9,000, about 1,000 were repeat customers. Staff held a pre-bid meeting on March 23, and expect that the same three contractors will bid as in previous years: Alpine Tree Services, Colorado Tree Specialists and Cut Above Forestry. The 2018 program will follow last year's template, starting on the last Monday of June and ending on the last Monday of September. Staff are working on securing storage sites for chips.

**VII. Round Table Discussion – Activities of Wildfire Council Members and Partners:**

- Summit Fire & EMS will get a new type 3 (wildland urban interface) engine in May, as well as a new Type 6 engine.
- Red, White & Blue will hold a refresher training next month for firefighters, and is looking for participants for a wildfire training exercise in June. The district is also getting a new Type 6 engine.
- The fire districts had a meeting with partners (NW regional coalition of fire chiefs) last week to discuss the 2018 operating plan. The group established a mutual aid agreement that will provide a quicker short-term response.
- Buffalo Mountain Metro District continues to upgrade their water distribution system and will probably apply for another grant this year. The district has had some success with covenant enforcement, requiring homeowners to remove dead trees and debris from their property.
- The Summit PIO group in conjunction with county Emergency Management is embarking on an educational campaign to boost participation in Summit County Alert/Code Red.
- Residents of the Lower Blue would like to be able to get Summit County alerts, so their top priority is to get cell service.
- The BOCC has approved amendments to the county's Land Use & Development Code. The amendments affect new subdivision proposals as well as rezoning applications, and address wildfire reduction goals outlined in the CWPP (e.g. fuels reduction prior to building, wood storage and noncombustible fence construction near homes). County staff also revised the CWPP last year, and are in the process of re-writing the

#### Countywide Comprehensive Plan.

- The Colorado Firewise Communities program has established new guidelines. Communities already in the program are grandfathered in for now, but will eventually have to meet the new guidelines. Colorado State Forest Service will work with the fire districts to help Firewise communities meet the new guidelines.
- USDA Forest Service Project Updates:
  - Brush Creek – completed; 462 acres of clearcutting.
  - Highlands – completed; 450 acres.
  - Spring Creek – 230 acres vegetation removal done, robust pile burning effort finished around Christmas – few hundred piles left in Highlands.
  - Indiana Creek logging project – 220 acres, mechanized, lodgepole pine; will award contract when they get funding. Project will include moving the road out of the creek and putting in a ford/aquatic organism crossing.
  - Golden Horseshoe – 469 acres under long-term stewardship contract, will most likely do in 2019 (mechanized treatments).
  - Big push this year will be Ophir Mountain – 3 different contracts; Ophir North – 60 acres; Ophir Mountain – 441; Ophir South – 277 acres. Contracted with West Range for this year.
  - Lower Snake (Frey Gulch) - Hand treatment pile and burn is under contract; 67 acres.
  - Lower Snake TSI (Near Swan Mountain Road) – Pile and burn; 66 acres to be treated this summer
  - Keystone Gulch – Hand treatment units, patched clearcuts up to 300 acres; will decide where to put clearcuts when they get crews on the ground.
  - Tenderfoot mechanized - Above cemetery and landfill; 88 acres, to be awarded this year.
  - Tenderfoot, near Montezuma Rd - 21 acre unit; hope to award this year.
  - Tenderfoot, near Keystone Gulch - 49 acres mechanized treatment.
  - Spring Creek mechanized – North Deep Creek 457 acres, South Deep Creek - 380 acres, Spring Creek - 233 acres.
  - Spring Creek – North Harrigan 158 acres, Harrigan 184 acres and West Harrigan 220 acres.
  - Shadow Creek Ranch – 46 acre parcel to be cut this season.
  - Planning: White River Forest Health and Fuels Reduction – 12,500 acres; White River Aspen Enhancement Project – to address sudden aspen decline; Swan Vegetation Management and Habitat Restoration Project – Fuels reduction, I&D, improve diversity for Snowshoe hare & lynx; Dillon Range District WUI Fuels/Forest Health Project – District wide approach to look at high risk areas in the CWPP and improve connectivity of past/new treatments. USFS will be talking with fire districts on the WUI fuels project.
- The county Emergency Manager would like to coordinate a community event following the wildfire exercise on June 21<sup>st</sup> that will encourage people to have fun while also increasing wildfire awareness. Brian will invite wildfire partners to help with this.
- At an Emergency Fire Fund meeting earlier this week, meeting participants discussed moving to a 24 hour mutual aid period, which would mean that communities wouldn't have to dip into the EFF fund as quickly in the event of a wildfire.

- VIII. Education Updates:** Dan will use the same outlets for public outreach on the chipping program as in previous years. Jen Barchers suggested that Dan talk to the Town of Dillon about putting an ad on fencing that will be used at events at the new amphitheater. Summit County Library's "Summit Reads" program will include a presentation by Jason Ramos, author of the book "Smokejumper".
- IX. Legislative Updates:** The Governor signed House Bill 1051 into law last week. The bill imposes increased penalties for leaving unattended campfires, changing the offense to a Class 3 misdemeanor with a \$50-750 dollars fine plus potential jail time. The new law will become effective July 1. The county is working with the Sheriff to see if deputies can increase coverage to watch for unattended campfires. Council members suggested several outlets for messaging about the new law, including CDOT signs, Town of Breckenridge mobile sign, REI, gas stations and grocery stores. The recently passed omnibus bill includes a fire borrowing measure allocating \$20 billion for firefighting for 10 years starting in 2020. There will also be an extra \$500 million above what is already in the budget for 2018 and 2019.
- X. Other:** The countywide wildfire exercise will be held on June 21<sup>st</sup>. The PIO group will let the council know more details about the exercise as the time approaches.
- XI. Next Meeting Date:** June 20\*, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. in the Buffalo Mountain Room at the County Commons, Frisco (\*Please note revised date).
- XII. Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Beth Huron, Summit County Community Development