

**Summit County Wildfire Council
Meeting Minutes
June 20, 2019
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Buffalo Mountain Room
County Commons
Frisco, CO**

Attendees: Paul Kuhn, Ryan McNertney, Ashley Garrison, Tyler Campbell, Howard Hallman, Brian Bovaird, Jared Manske, Alison Richards, Maggie Hillman, Michael Wurzel, Ashley Hom, Greg Roy, Steve Lipsher, John Drake, Howard Hallman, Lathan Johnson, Raechel Owens, Ken Wiegand, Eric Howell, Joel Dixon, Jim Curnutte, Kate Zander, Elisabeth Lawrence, Dan Schroder, Beth Huron

- I. Approval of Agenda:** The Chair opened the meeting at 1:35 p.m. and all attendees briefly introduced themselves. Michael Wurzel with Summit County Open Space introduced an additional, brief agenda item: The county will need to burn slash piles resulting from an upcoming fuels reduction project on Mesa Cortina Open Space, but is encountering permitting issues related to the number of piles that will need to be burned. Open Space is working with Summit Fire & EMS regarding permitting and will work with the state if necessary.
- II. Approval of March 21, 2019 Minutes:** Elisabeth pointed out an error in the March minutes regarding the number of acres in Summit County affected by Spruce Beetle. Staff will review and correct the minutes. Steve Lipsher moved to approve the March 21, 2019 minutes. Ken Wiegand seconded the motion; all were in favor and the council approved the minutes with the stipulation that staff will make appropriate corrections.
- III. Review of 2019 Wildfire Grant Applications:** Dan Schroder summarized the seventeen grant applications received and explained the scoring criteria used by the review committee. The highest score that a hazardous fuels reduction application can receive is 20; the highest a CWPP grant application can receive is 38. The council discussed each application and gave their recommendations as follows.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction Grant Applications

- Woods at Breckenridge HOA – This Firewise community requested \$5,750 to remove 35 trees immediately surrounding the development. The score was 16; the council recommended approval.
- Woods at Breckenridge Open Space – The applicant requested \$32,500 to remove 700 aspen, 100 standing pine and deadfall from a steep 5.5-acre hillside, mostly by crane. This area is adjacent to the Woods at Breckenridge townhouses. The score was 15; the council recommended approval.
- Gold King Placer – The applicant is an individual homeowner who requested \$19,800 for three parcels, one of which (Unit A) was included in a 2018 HFR grant. Projects adjacent to the proposed project were previously completed. Unit A (2.3 acres) - The applicant proposed

the removal of 50 live trees along the driveway and an additional 50 live trees around the house to create defensible space. Unit B (3.3 acres) – The applicant proposed removing 125-150 standing dead plus 130-150 small live trees. Unit C (2.2 acres) - The applicant proposed removal of 70-100 standing dead. The owner has begun some work on the property. The council suggested that the owner revise the application to reflect work already completed and clarify the work plan going forward. Maggie Hillman moved to recommend that the applicant revise the application and resubmit next year. Paul Kuhn seconded and the council approved the motion.

- Ruby Ranch 2019 – The applicant requested \$9,000 to remove downed and dead lodgepole pine from Tract W to create a fuel break on the northwest corner of Ruby Ranch. Tract W abuts Eagles Nest Wilderness Area and lies upwind of all of the homes in Ruby Ranch and the Town of Silverthorne. Most of Ruby Ranch has received fuels mitigation over the past 15 years, but there are many dead trees on this parcel. The score was 19; the council recommended approval.
- Shadow Creek Ranch – This subdivision is in the far north end of the county and is not in a focus area. The Colorado State Forest Service created a forest management plan for the ranch several years ago, which the homeowners have been implementing in stages. The applicant requests \$60,000 to treat 100 acres of land owned by Shadow Creek Ranch and deeded to Summit County Open Space as a conservation easement. The applicant plans to have the work done this year, but requested the option to extend if weather is prohibitive to completion. Discussion followed:
 - This is a large grant request for a project that is not in a focus area.
 - The cost per acre is low, the project covers a large area, the homeowners pay property taxes in Summit County, and the project helps to build on past and future work. In addition, trees will be going to the Gypsum power plant.
 - We do not want to divert money from projects in more populated areas that could benefit more homes.
 - We could ask the applicant to provide a larger match.
 - It is not appropriate to put homeowners' means into the equation.

The project score was 16. The council recommended that staff continue the discussion later in a meeting with the Board of County Commissioners.

- Summit Guest Ranch – The applicant requested \$2,500 to remove standing dead lodgepole pine and aspen as well as overgrowth of young aspen from 1.5 acres. The score was 18; the council recommended approval.
- Airport Rd. / Downen – The applicant requested \$29,250 to remove standing dead, deadfall and ground fuel from 5.89 acres. The project is on challenging terrain and will require standing dead and deadfall to be felled, sky-lined and/or rigged to an area where it will be processed and hauled away. Ladder fuels on remaining live trees will be limbed. The Forest Service has placed a high priority on treating adjacent property. The score was 16; the council recommended approval.

- Pebble Creek Ranch 2019 – The applicant requested \$10,345 to treat 10.5 acres of common property. Treatment will include removal of standing dead and blowdown, thinning of aspen saplings to allow movement of wildlife, and improving forest health. The score was 19; the council recommended approval.
- Grandview at Breckenridge Condos – The applicant requested \$20,755 to treat 3 acres immediately surrounding the property. This project will include 4 phases of work that will create defensible space around the buildings of the complex.
 - Phase 1: Removal of 51 trees that are a potential fire hazard.
 - Phase 2: Thin the potential fuel on the property by limbing, pruning, and clearing flammable vegetation in Zone I.
 - Phase 3: Building hardening - rock the drip edge around the buildings to address defensible space in the “Immediate Zone” around the buildings.
 - Phase 4: Weed control throughout all of the common areas, including the areas where the trees and other potential fuels have been removed.

The project score was 16. The council recommended that the applicant revise the application to reflect a cost share for fuels removal only and not include the rock work or weed control.

- Town of Blue River – The applicant requested \$27,747.50 to treat a total of 13 acres across 17 individual properties. The contractor will remove trees and ladder fuels, and will thin to create proper crown spacing throughout Zone I. The contractor (Beetlekill Tree Guys) is also advising homeowners about home hardening. The score was 16; the council recommended approval.
- Breckenridge HFR – The applicant requested \$55,330 to treat a total of 22 acres across 15 individual properties. This project builds on projects completed last year, with the goal of creating defensible space throughout Breckenridge. The score was 14; the council recommended approval.

CWPP Grant Implementation Applications

- Town of Blue River 2019 CWPP – The applicant requested \$50,000 (50/50 match) to install three cisterns. Each system has 2 x 2,600 gallon tanks. The town owns the locations and has provided easements for the cisterns. The town has already installed cisterns throughout the town and plans to install more. Red, White & Blue Fire District will fill and maintain the cisterns. The score was 30; the council recommended approval.
- Ruby Ranch 2019 CWPP/Cistern – The applicant requested \$153,000 (90/10 match) to install one 20,000 gallon cement cistern buried on Tract T with a standard hydrant. John Drake added that the cost could potentially go down. The community is currently paying for a necessary waterline project, which necessitates their request for county funding for the cistern. Summit Fire & EMS has reviewed and endorsed the project due to the protection afforded to adjacent communities. However, water would not necessarily be available to communities below Ruby Ranch. Dan will compile a spreadsheet of past cistern projects and send it to Elisabeth for historical context. The score was 26; the council recommended

approval.

- Forest Health Task Force CWPP – The applicant requested \$14,581 (68/32 match) to produce a video series titled, “Are We Ever Really Prepared for Wildfire?” focusing on personal and neighborhood responsibility. The project will increase public awareness of the inherent hazards associated with living in a forest and will address the CWPP goal of education in the specific target areas: defensible space, fuels reduction, reducing structural ignitability, and preparedness and family planning for evacuation. The score was 22; the council recommended approval.
- Buffalo Mountain Metro District D-Space – The applicant requested \$30,000 (83/17 match) to create an education/grant program to encourage BMMD residents to create defensible space. The district would act as a pass-through for county funds, creating a grant program for their residents using county funds. BMMD will only ask for reimbursement for actual grants given to residents, and the program will only apply to smaller multi-family properties. BMMD will pay up to \$1,000 per household. Discussion followed:
 - BMMD will provide detailed criteria for the grant requirements to Dan.
 - The contractor needs to adhere to the criteria for fuels reduction.
 - The county should set the standard for what is required.
 - The premise is new, but the county could potentially get more bang for the buck.
 - This project could address Zone 1, with assistance from the fire district in Zone 2.
 - This program could complement a joint project that the county and Colorado State Forest Service will be doing down the center of Wilderrest and Mesa Cortina.
 - The topography suggests that wind would send fires down through the Mesa Cortina neighborhood.
 - There is a lot of fuel in the Wilderrest and Mesa Cortina trails/neighborhoods.
 - There is significant potential for home-to-home ignition in the neighborhoods.

The score was 18; the council recommended approval.

- Town of Breckenridge - Indiana Creek Bottomless Culvert (pre-Disaster Mitigation & Aquatic Organism Passage) – The applicant requested \$40,000 (30/70 match) to implement pre-disaster mitigation road stabilization, which will include creating a bottomless culvert. The project will add to the long-term stability of this forested, wildfire prone watershed. Partnerships with the White River National Forest, Town of Breckenridge, the National Forest Foundation and the Friends of Dillon Ranger District have created a collective effort for the long-term sustainability of Indiana Creek. Indiana Creek feeds Goose Pasture Tarn, the main water supply for the Town of Breckenridge. The National Forest Foundation will provide \$80,000 toward the project. Discussion followed:
 - The U.S. Forest Service would like to see the Town of Breckenridge chip in since the project serves their water source.
 - The project could provide post-fire benefits by reducing sedimentation to a major water source.
 - The project would improve access to fight a fire in the watershed, as well as improve

access to conduct post-fire work.

- The project would provide road access to NEPA approved projects.
- The town has discussed funding the project, but wanted to see how IA funds could apply.

The score was 30; the council recommended further discussion between staff and the BOCC.

- Bill's Ranch Signs – The applicant requested \$7,474.50 (90/10 match) to install 100 reflective, non-combustible home signs and 18 street signs with posts and installation. Red, White & Blue and Summit Fire & EMS have both previously received grants for reflective house signs. Ruby Ranch also received a grant for signs. The score was 34; the council recommended approval.

A brief discussion followed regarding funding the projects as recommended. The current grant requests far exceed the available funds, which are allocated from the 2010 IA funds. The 2018 IA funds (Strong Future Funds) will provide \$1 million annually for wildfire mitigation efforts, but much of that money has already been allocated to other projects. Elisabeth will share the outcomes with this group once the board has had their discussions.

IV. Education Updates: The Summit Association of Realtors (SAR) recently mailed their annual educational wildfire brochure to every Summit County property owner. The Forest Health Task Force will consider doing parallel messaging with SAR in the future.

V. Legislative Updates: None currently.

VI. Other matters: Jared Manske asked if a grading permit is required on all wildfire grant projects. The county will make it clear from this point forward that grant awardees must get any necessary permits prior to disturbing the ground.

VII. Adjournment: The chair adjourned the meeting at 3:33 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Beth Huron, Summit County Community Development