

Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado Bi-Monthly Meeting
Educational In-Service
Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2009

Location: La Plata Electric Board Room in Bodo Park, 45 Stewart Street

Minutes of the Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 4:30

Present were:

Bob Koenig (Mesa Vista Estates), Jigger Staby and Bill Vaughn (Shenandoah HOA), Jack Cannon (Enchanted Forest), J.T. Coyne (Vista De Oro), Les Kole (Deer Valley Estates), Cherry Miloe (Forest Lakes), Joy Mathis (Tripp Ck), Kevin Heiner (Southwest Conservation Corps), Bob Manning (Rafter J), Gary Rottman (Shenandoah Highlands), Ken Kurz (Rock Ridge), Naomi Dobbs (Timberline Oaks), Archie Hanson (Indian Camp Ranch), Jon Callendar (Kernan Creek Ranch), Craig Goodell (San Juan Public Lands), Ben Cordova (LPEA), Dave Abercrombie (DFRA), Mike Kane (Fire Ready), Steve Ellis (Col. State Forest Service - Montrose), Pam Wilson (Firewise Neighborhood Ambassador Program Coordinator)

Introduction of New Firewise Leadership:

JT Coyne was introduced as the new Firewise Chairman. He has served as Vice Chair for the last year. JT is a retired naval officer after serving 32 years in the navy. JT was a volunteer fire fighter with the Fort Lewis Mesa Fire Protection District, and then was elected to the FLMFPD board of directors. JT is currently program coordinator for the local non-profit "Heart Safe La Plata". JT also serves on the San Juan Basin Health Dept. Board of Directors. JT has been part of Firewise since 2003 and is the ambassador for Vista De Oro subdivision south of Hesperus.

Les Kole will replace JT as Vice Chair. Les spent 35 years as Director of Parks and Recreation in California. This has given him considerable experience in the interaction between paid and volunteer workers. Les spent much time working with BLM/Forest Service personnel in the San Bernadino Mountains where wildfires are a common event. He has personally been evacuated four times so has great familiarity with that issue. Les moved to Durango in summer 2006 and has been active with Firewise since. Les is ambassador for Deer Valley Estates and is close to completing a CWPP for his subdivision.

Recap of 2008 highlights and 2009 objectives:

Pam Wilson and Kevin Heiner reviewed last year's highlights and this year's objectives. These are summarized as an attachment to the email to which these minutes are attached.

It was suggested that "Clean Up" days should be changed to "Fuels reduction/Removal" days to provide greater clarity. This was done.

Kevin Heiner reviewed some thoughts from a recent meeting between himself, Chris Nessitt (SCC), Pam, and Mike Kane regarding last year's Clean-Up Days. The Fire Council agreed to take a more active role in the future. They will be responsible for applying for the grant and trying to get more publicity for all partners in the project. Additionally, a letter will be sent to the selected HOAs that outline expectations regarding the fuels reduction efforts. The letter could also be copied to all ambassadors as a form of enhanced communication.

Mike Kane suggested an article could be published in the Herald concerning our accomplishments. This article could also be sent to HOAs. This will be put on the Feb. Steering Committee Agenda.

Jigger Staby suggested updating our website or adopting our own website. Pam suggested that we work with Bill Ball to optimize the current resources. This was added to our 2009 objectives list.

Mini-grant discussion:

JT and Pam reviewed the mini-grant process. Applications for mini grants are being accepted through Feb. 27th. The application was mailed to all ambassadors in late January. JT described the process as it applied to his HOA. JT's handout is attached to the email to which these minutes are attached. Pam pointed out that matching funds from the HOA are not required.

I JT also emphasized and illustrated how important and easy it is to access the San Juan Mtn. Assoc. website to log Ambassador hours, including attending these meetings. The site is www.sjma.org. Click the **Volunteer** tab, then click the **Volunteer Timesheet** tab. Type of activity is "Ambassadors." The rest is very simple. Include travel time, research, and meeting preparation time.

In an effort to share information on what current ambassadors are doing and motivate others, Pam suggested we include 10 mins. on each meeting agenda for an ambassador to share successes in their neighborhood. The Steering Committee will review other ways to motivate HOAs. Anyone wishing to share their accomplishments at the March 24th meeting should contact Pam at 385-8909 or chamisa02@earthlink.net.

Committee Reports:

Ambassador: Pam referred to the above success and objectives handout. She also noted that one new-ambassador orientation meeting for this year has already been held.

Education: Benny Cordova noted that the committee is working on updating the Firewise brochures which are placed in many public locations in La Plata County. This is the first time the brochures (which are several years old) have been updated. The objective is to have the job done by Fire Awareness month which is May.

Mitigation: Jack Cannon noted that the role of the mitigation committee focuses primarily on education and therefore suggested we consider merging the mitigation and education committees. Most felt we should keep the mitigation committee and after some discussion it was agreed to add "redefine the objectives of the mitigation committee" to the 2009 objectives. It was suggested the committee could assume responsibility for the fuels reduction/removal days.

Craig Goodell noted that there may be significant funds made available through the expected Federal Financial Stimulus Package presently working its way through Congress. The current proposal calls for \$550 million to be available for mitigation on private lands and \$300 million for treatments on federal lands.

**Guest Speaker Presentation:
Roz Wu Fire Ecologist with the San Juan National Forest**

Roz discussed how and why fire is critical to the health of our forests. She described the ways in which different forest types (Pinon/Juniper, Ponderosa, Spruce/fir, Gambel oak, Aspen) respond to fire. Shift in tree species as a result of climate and fire. Roz used numerous examples of before and after rapid population growth (late 1800s) to show how population has suppressed fire both intentionally and unintentionally. The ways in which different forest types respond to ground vs. crown fire was illustrated. For further information Roz can be reached at rwu@fs.fed.us

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30. The next general meeting is scheduled for March, 24, 2009 at 4:30 p.m.

Bob Koenig
385-4931