

Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado

Meeting Notes

May 26, 2009

Present: **Pam Wilson** (Firewise Neighborhood Ambassador Program Director), **Les Kole** (Deer Valley Estates), **Bob Koenig** (Mesa Vista Estates), **Patricia Haupt** (Durango Ridge Ranch), **Jigger Staby and Bill Vaughn** (Shenandoah HOA), **Jack Cannon** (Enchanted Forest), **Cherry Miloe** (Forest Lakes), **Joy Mathis** (Tripp Ck), **Gary Rottman** (Shenandoah Highlands), **Archie Hanson and Russ Swezey** (Indian Camp Ranch), **Jon Callendar** (Kernan Creek Ranch), **Greg Kemp** (Cedar Mesa Estates), **Paula Mathias** (Cougar Mesa), **Philip Walters** (Elk Stream Ranch), **Byard Peake** (Falls Creek Ranch), **Jules Masterjohn**, (Durango West 1), **Craig Goodell** (San Juan Public Lands), **Ben Cordova** (LPEA), **Kevin Heiner** (Southwest Conservation Corps), **Dave Abercrombie and Chief Dan Noonan** (DFRA), and **Mike Kane** (M&M Enterprises), **Sam Burns** (Office of Community Services at Fort Lewis College), **Beorn DuPont and John Dickinson** (Earth Improvements), **Christina Schmidt and Drew Peterson** (Archuleta County Sheriff's Office)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Pam Wilson and everyone introduced themselves.

COUNCIL UPDATES

Pam mentioned that she has received tentative approval to start **Firewise Chapters** in both Montezuma and Archuleta Counties. With the limited hours for which she is funded it has been difficult to do adequate outreach to these counties. Pam's title will change from Neighborhood Ambassador Coordinator to Director and she will oversee the Program. However, each County will have their own Coordinator whose primary responsibilities will be recruiting and training new ambassadors and running the Chapter. It is anticipated that the Chapters will hold their own meetings at some point in the future; however, Council meetings in Durango will remain open to whoever wishes to attend. The Coordinators will have a seat on the Fire Council Steering Committee to help guide the overall program. Pam hopes to advertise and hire someone for Montezuma County by late July. In Archuleta County, the position will be held by Christina Schmidt, Deputy Director for Emergency Management.

Fire Council mini grant fund: Still \$3200 available. This money needs to be obligated or spent by Sept. There are NO matching funds required – just a simple 2-page application. Contact Pam for an application. Applications due by June 15th to Pam.

AGENDA CHANGES

The first agenda item (La Plata County Code Revision) was tabled until later as Chief Dan Noonan had not yet arrived. Judy Serby from the CSFS was not able to come down due to injuring her back over the weekend.

PRESENTATIONS:

Compressed Air Foam Systems (CAFS) from Earth Improvements. Beorn DuPont represents both Fire Solutions and Fire Break. Beorn outlined that CAFS are to be used at the start of a fire for suppression purposes. CAFS are a rapid response measure and can be housed in a pick-up or a similar type vehicle. CAFS is the type of equipment a POA could have on hand for initial attack. The foam makes bubbles just prior to going into the hose. These bubbles once sprayed onto the fire, burst

into a mist, and the foam adheres to the structure. Beorn further stated that this CAFS is being used by L.A. County as their first attack on a fire. After the meeting, Beorn demonstrated the application process.

Q: How long is the shelf life?

A: A long time as CAFS is basically detergent. Also, once applied the mist will stay moist for several hours. The foam is biodegradable.

To learn more about CAFS and other products that Beorn sells, call him at 970-426-9563 or go to www.earthimprovementsinc.com.

Note: The Council does not endorse or promote this product – CAFS is simply one more tool in the toolbox that HOAs could consider for use.

Introduction to the CWPP Framework: Craig Goodell, Pam Wilson, Dr. Sam Burns and Kent Grant developed a framework for the CWPP process during the winter. Pam handed out the document to all those in attendance. A great deal of the data in the framework was adopted from materials secured from the University of Oregon. Craig proceeded with a power point presentation on how to use the framework. He also took questions as he moved throughout the document, and stated that this is still a work in progress.

One ambassador said his subdivision would not approve a CWPP because they are concerned about liability issues. Technically, only the local government, local fire department, and CSFS need to “approve” the CWPP. It was suggested that the signature page could include a lead-in statement that the subdivision has reviewed and voted to accept the plan as written.

Dr. Burns then covered six major points concerning collaboration. He also handed out a one page document that detailed his presentation. Dr. Burns indicated that this collaboration is vital to the overall success of the CWPP, because it may take many years to bring about the changes being addressed.

In addition to the Framework, Pam is developing several handouts that may help HOAs during the CWPP process.

- Appendices and Maps
- Consultants and Facilitators
- Fire department contacts
- Federal, state, and local contacts
- Mapping Contacts

All three counties and DFRA have agreed to provide GIS mapping services for CWPPs for free and a list of contacts for mapping needs will be provided as part of the package. Pam will try to have the package posted on the Web site by mid June, but if you have immediate needs for any of the products, give her a call.

Examples of completed CWPPs – at the County, Fire District, and Subdivision level can be found on the Colorado State Forest Web site at www.csfs.colostate.edu. Click on the CWPP link under Quick Links.

Currently, the only approved subdivision level CWPP in SW Colorado is Elk Stream Ranch in Montezuma County. Several other subdivisions should have completed and approved CWPPs by fall.

Homeowner CWPP experiences: Presenter Jules Masterjohn of Durango West 1 had to leave the meeting prior to her presentation on the hiring of a contractor for the CWPP process. Les Kole (Deer Valley Estates) briefly discussed the hiring of a mapping contractor for his CWPP process.

La Plata County Code Revisions: Chief Dan Noonan pleaded for forgiveness for not being on time and stated that he was already late to take his wife to dinner. Dan outlined the existing situation with the La Plata County Fire Codes, which are very outdated. The County is operating under the 1985 code, while the City utilizes the 2003 International Code. Dan stated since 1998 we have been trying to get the code updated and presented, but we have failed in that regard. County Commissioners do not want to address the issues of Driveway Standards and Wildfire Mitigation. The process to get the revision accomplished must go through a Committee called Adoption and Revision, but Dan now hears that further training is needed prior to working on that Committee. At some point in the future may call upon members of the Council to speak before the County Commissioners.

Dinner Break -15 minutes.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): Valerie Lovett of the NRCS spoke about this federal agency that is funded by the farm bills. Valerie outlined how the NRCS can make a field visit to your land, and put your ideas into a plan which they take back to the office and make a working document. The size of properties is not a problem. Her office can also make recommendations on the spraying of weeds. Their services are FREE. Valerie had a number of handouts that further detailed the NRCS services. To reach the NRCS: in La Plata County call 259-3289, in Montezuma County call 565-9045.

WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE GRANTS

Kent Grant outlined that the next round of Wildland-Urban Interface grants will be due on August 7th to his office. He needs time to review and prioritize the applications before sending them up to the State Office. Pam has sent the grant application to all ambassadors.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m. and folks had the option of going outside to view a demonstration of the CAFS equipment.

Next meeting will be held on July 28 at 4:30 p.m. at LPEA.

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