

Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado Bi-Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2008
Location: San Juan Public Lands Center

Minutes of the Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 4:30.

Present were:

Bob Koenig (Mesa Vista Estates), Jigger Staby (Shenandoah HOA), Jack Cannon (Enchanted Forest), J.T. Coyne (Vista De Oro), Linda Walters (Elk Stream Ranch), Joy Mathis (Tripp Ck), Kevin Heiner (Southwest Conservation Corps), Patricia Haupt (Durango Ridge Ranch), Maureen Keilty (Lower Part of Rafter J), Bob Manning (Rafter J), Gary Rottman (Shenandoah Highlands), Anne Schrier (Forest Lakes), Ken Kurtz (Rock Ridge), Craig Goodell (San Juan Public Lands), Ben Cordova (LPEA), Dave Abercrombie (DFRA), Cate Harding (Upper Pine Fire Dept), Mike Kane (Fire Ready), Kent Grant (Col. State Forest Service), Pam Wilson (Firewise Neighborhood Ambassador Program Coordinator)

Cate Harding from Upper Pine Fire gave a short presentation on a new DVD, *Ponderosa Pete Returns*, which could be used in educational programs. The DVD comes with a companion book. Cate has ordered a copy of both from the Ecological Restoration Institute at Northern Arizona University (producers). She will see about getting another copy. Joy will look into getting it run on DCAT and Pam will share with SJMA education coordinator who does most of the classroom fire education.

National Firewise Conference -- Pam Wilson gave a summary of the conference that she attended in Tampa, FL in early November. She first went to a 2-day pre-conference workshop on "Communicating the Firewise Message." Pam then made a presentation at the conference on our neighborhood ambassador program called "Mobilizing Neighborhoods One at a Time" which was attended by about 30 people. It was well received – people thought we had a well organized program and were impressed by our brochures and recruitment efforts.

At the conference she attended breakout sessions on Firewise Forever, Keeping Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) Alive, a Partnership with Master Gardeners, Communicating the Firewise Message, Humor in the Wildland-Urban Interface, What to Do if you Lose your Sparkplug, and Firewise for All Seasons. A common thread in many presentations was preventing burnout in your volunteers and keeping people interested. The key was to host events that people could attend -- whether it is a learning opportunity, a clean-up day, a chipping party or a slash burning party – and always have food!

The program that impressed Pam the most was the **Firewise for All Seasons** from the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska. With a grant of \$85,000 and in-kind match of the same, they conducted a 6-month information blitz where they assessed properties and distributed a bunch of material focusing on what people could do year-round to be Firewise. Key messages for each season appeared on door hangers, calendars, brochures, information sheets, videos, etc. and their

education team blanketed the Peninsula with this information – door-to-door and at community events. Pam has a DVD with all materials on it. They would need to be altered some as our environment is different from Alaska, but we've got a good starting point if we wish to promote a similar program here. Might be a good opportunity to pursue some grant money.

Other items of interest included the development of a Girl Scout Firewise badge, a partnership with Master Gardeners, and a community near the Boundary Waters in Minnesota that got grant money to install sprinklers outside of people's homes.

There was also much talk at the General Assembly gatherings about the Home Ignition Zone, and that in addition to promoting defensible space we should also be talking to people about things they can do to make their house more fire resistant. Recent research shows that most homes that burn do so because of flying embers, not the house being overrun by fire. Pam suggested that we might look at a new brochure in our series that would focus on materials to use as you remodel or build a new home.

Web site – it was pointed out that the County is revamping their Web site and we might consider asking them for a page on Firewise or a link to the SouthwestColoradoFires Web site that we currently use. Pam will see about getting a county link to our current site. We need to keep our site because we are a regional Fire Council (SW Colorado) and it is a good one-stop shopping site that houses information from many of our partners. Pam has gotten some updates to Webmaster at FLC and he will be updating the site by early December.

Insurance – a question was asked about whether the national Firewise group was working with insurance companies to provide incentive for people to mitigate their property. No one knew. But after some discussion it was recommended that insurance be an annual in-service topic. JT will follow up on this in 2009.

Committee Breakouts – Bob explained that the committees are the backbone of our FireWise Council however we need to improve communications so we know what is getting accomplished. And we need to keep coming up with innovative ways to share the message and get work done. It was brought up that we seem to be missing a connection with our partners and it was asked how they fit into our committees. Our partners are here to provide technical assistance and advice as requested. Dave Abecrombie said we are doing what the fire agencies want us to – we are providing the grass-roots effort to promote defensible space.

Bob asked if we needed any additional committees and the only thing mentioned was a "communications" group, but it was decided that this should be a sub-group of the Education Committee. Responsibility for "sustainability" will be absorbed by the Steering Committee.

Committees were asked to do three things:

- 1) Brainstorm activities for 2009 and prioritize their top 2-3 items.
- 2) Pick a spokesperson that could report out at both the Steering Committee and General Council meetings (spokesperson name is highlighted under each committee).
- 3) Share with us how often and when they might get together during the year.

For folks not at tonight's meeting -- Pam will check with ambassadors who were previously on the Education committee and Jack will check with folks previously on the Mitigation committee to see if they still wish to participate.

Ambassador Committee

Pam Wilson, Jigger Staby, Bob Koenig, Jack Cannon

Goals for 2009: Assist with Fire Prevention and Education Month in May
Ambassador recruitment and training, specifically nourishment and program feedback.

The group will meet on an as-needed basis – probably 3-4 times a year.

Education Committee

Ben Cordova, Joy Mathis, JT Coyne, Ken Kurtz, Pam Wilson

Goals for 2009: Update current brochures and distribute to new locations
See about getting more brochure racks made (high school shop class?)
Assist with Fire Month
Develop "Home Ignition Zone" brochure

The Education Committee will meet for an hour prior to the Jan. 27 meeting. Committee members are asked to review the current brochures prior to this meeting and be ready to discuss needed edits.

Mitigation Committee

Jack Cannon, Anne Schrier,

Goals for 2009: Develop handout or brochure on techniques of mitigation
Revamp notebook binder

Upcoming Dates:

Dec. 15 – Steering Committee meeting, 1:00 – location TBA

Jan. 27 – General Council meeting, 4:30 at LPEA – there will be an in-service at this meeting

Notes submitted by Pam Wilson