

The Highway 168 Fire Safe Council

Jan 14, 2021

Board Meeting called to order at 6:03 by President Howard Hendrix.

In Attendance:

Howard Hendrix

Ryan Stewart

Sharlynn Childers

Warren and Trudy Colbert

Gus Gustafson

Pat Gallegos

Sharlynn-Post Creek Fire Recovery Grant Update:

- \$10,000 in funds received from So Cal Edison, \$10,000 in funds received from Central Sierra Resiliency Fund.
- 1 application received: Ryan Stewart to follow up with applicant to determine needs.
- What role will FEMA play? Jim McDougald shared that FEMA contractors have begun debris removal, but it is still undetermined what trees will be removed (most likely those threatening structures and right of ways).

Warren-Diorama update: Was not covered by insurance. It will need to be removed from the Plumber's garage. Howard will contact Ari to make sure Plumbers have signed a right of entry (ROE) for County to clean up.

- Jim McDougald shared that the county does not have all ROE's signed to do clean up. Asked for HWY 168 FSC to post a link on the website. Howard will reach out to the Pine Ridge HOA as well.

Sharlynn- Google Suite update: not for profit suite is set up: email addresses for board members that requested and drive with important doc access is complete. Docs will continue to be uploaded.

Public Meeting called to order at 6:30.

Present: Board Members listed above

Jim McDougald

Marc Bontregor

Sue Carter

Blair Duncan

Kelly Kucharski

Brad Craven

Shawn Crook

Gilbert Estrada

Nick Bissmeyer

Howard Hendrix , President, Opening Remarks - Discussion: what can we do to better assist homeowners with dead/burnt tree removal?

Sharlynn Childers, Treasurer's Report- General Checking balance: \$24,690, Grant Account: \$595,328. All pledged funds from PG&E for Meadow Lakes have been received and all

contractors have been paid out. All pledged Post Creek Fire Recovery Funds have been received. Payment of \$244,797 was issued to USFS for Jose Basin Project.

Ryan Stewart, Vice President's report and So Cal Edison Forestry update-

- Shaver West: Continued spending for additional tree removal on private property has been approved by Cal Fire. In the process of re-evaluating existing ROEs. Waiting on Private land owners to identify any salvage logging. Unit 1 has about \$9,000 in funds left unused, after remaining piles were burned in Creek Fire and unit 2 had about \$150,000 for treatment of USFS land. There are approx \$315,000 remaining for revised treatment.
- Jose Basin: USFS wants to use funding for various restoration and reforestation of burned areas on the project. There is about 4.5 million left to spend.
- Resiliency Fund will have seedlings available to landowners.

Sue Carter, Big Sandy-

- Their Cal Fire Grant project will be launching soon.
- Co-hosting Forest Stewardship Workshop later this month (info on HWY 168 FSC website)
- Looking to expand their crews for local workforce development, cultural monitoring, etc.

Jim McDougald, Cal Fire-

- Cal Fire is focused on passing down funds to non-profits and small landowners.
- They are looking for collaboration and guidance on projects and will work to secure funds to compete.
- State is focused on Forest Health, CAP & Trade will be fully funded again.

Marc Bontrager, Cal Fire-

- Identifying parcels for clean-up on all fuel breaks.
- Fixing damages from fire suppression efforts on Creek Fire.
- Burning on South end of Edison property.

Pat Gallegos, Meadow Lakes Grant-

- Completed 2nd project in Dec 2020: 236 trees over 45 acres.
- PG&E may send more funds: looking at Snow Road/ Radio Ln.
- Would like to pursue fuel reduction for lower elevations: Burrough Valley, Twin Ponds?

Kelly Kucharski and Blair Duncan, Sierra Resource Conservation District-

- Concentrating on clean-up post Creek Fire: performing property assessment reports, participating in education demonstrations for solid stabilization.
- Next work day: Sat. Jan 16 at Pine Ridge Elementary, focusing on erosion control.
- Looking for partnership with Hwy 168 FSC to apply for CA FSC grant for tools.

New Business-

- Introduction of present contractors. They will be added to our list of LTOs on website.

Motion and second to adjourn meeting at 7:22 pm.

March 11, 2021

Called to order at 6pm

Board Members Present: Howard and Laurel Hendrix, Ryan Stewart, Sharlynn Childers, Warren and Trudy Colbert

Opening remarks by Howard Hendrix

Treasurer's report: Sharlynn Childers

- Reorganized the revenue accounts and filled in vendor information on Quickbooks
- Lis has filled 1099s and is working on tax return.
- Will email a request for board attendance at various shareholders and community meetings.
- Post Creek Fire Recovery Grant Update: 37 applicants: 34 homeowners, 16 lost their homes, of the 10 full time residents that applied, 6 lost their homes. Those that had insurance did not have coverage to remove trees. Many did not have insurance.
- Motion: Change grant parameters to treat 0-100ft around homesites, addressing the state responsibility area. Warren seconds, approved unanimously.

Vice Presidents report: Ryan Stewart

- There are still some funds available on the Shaver West Grant. Reassessing work to be touched up post fire and will revise ROEs and resend accordingly.
- Made a request to CalFire to redirect some funds on the Jose Basin Grant for post fire recovery: should be approved.
- Forest Service Musick EA is reproping the NEPA for fire recovery.
- CalFire has Forest Health and Fire Prevention Grant applications out.

Break until 6:30, then Community Meeting called to order.

Introductions of attendees.

CalFIRE update: Jim McDougald

- Gave further information on grants available. Adan from Fresno County will be coordinating with the Tree Task Force.
- The perimeter of the Creek Fire (Acorn rd, Beal Fire Rd, Cressmans Rd, Meadow Lakes) will be completed.
- Question from Warren: Has there been any determination on the cause of the Creek Fire? Jim: it is a Forest Service incident, but he has not hear any cause released.

PG&E Grant updated: Pat Gallegos:

- PG&E has released another grant opportunity. Potential for fuels reduction around Whispering Springs area.

SRCD update: Blair Duncan and Steve Haze

- Completing storm readiness on 80 acres of contiguous properties in Shaver Springs.
- They have diverted 2000 logs to the San Joaquin River Conservancy for habitat.

Fresno Co Sheriff: Lt. Curtice

- Reports of some theft in the area. They are trying to apprehend by setting out "bait" with cameras, but no takers yet.

Big Sandy Rancheria: Rick Flemming

- Continuing the up-start on workforce development: Crews working on the San Joaquin River Trail.

Meeting Adjourned at 8pm

May , 2021

Called to order at 6pm

Board Members Present: Howard and Laurel Hendrix, Ryan Stewart, Sharlynn Childers, Warren and Trudy Colbert, Gus Gustafson

Opening remarks by Howard Hendrix

President's Report: Howard Hendrix

- EDEN listening session summary: shared regional concerns about insurance inefficiencies and prevention of the next big fire.
- YSRCD meeting: discussion of CA Fisher lawsuit and possible ramifications. Howard will forward government contacts to reach out to regarding this. Also, the MOU with YSRCD is ready for signatures.
- Future meetings will begin at 6pm, rather than have the board meeting at 6pm and the community meetings at 6:30. Any confidential discussions can be handled via email between board members.
- April 30th Earth day event: Passed out educational information to homeowners (thanks to Laurel for creating the flyer).

Treasurer's report: Sharlynn Childers

- Sharing of Statement of Financial Position.
- Post Creek Fire Recovery Grant Update: The Board voted out of regular session to change the grant parameters to meet updated community needs. Most hazard trees threatening homes will be removed by Fresno Co. or CalRecycle, so we will use grant funds to expand on clean up of already downed material not removed by other efforts. We will coordinate with the contractor hired by Fresno Co to stretch funds further.

Vice President's report: Ryan Stewart

- Inspected the entire Shaver West Fuel Break and explained how different treatment types did or did not effectively change the fire behavior. From a Forester's perspective, mastication only was not effective. We will continue mastication of burned area to re-establish the fuel break and replant trees.
- Warren: "Will any trees in the fire footprint survive?" Ryan "Yes! Many are rebudding right now and by the end of summer we will know what will make it and what will die."
- Jose Basin Project: Connects the CalFire 45 day projects on private property. 200,000 trees were planted in the burn area.
- CalFire Forest Health grant application will be submitted next week. The Ridge Recovery Project will be in a 4,000 acre area of the Creek Fire footprint. Grant funds will treat the 100'-300' radius of a homesite where private property owners sign up. Treatment will include felling and removal of dead/dying trees, mastication of slash and replanting of seedlings in conjunction with the Central Sierra Historical Society Resiliency Fund. We expect to have funds to treat about 800 properties.

So Cal Edison update: Ryan Stewart

- Mobray crews will be out in force.
- So Cal Edison will be salvage harvesting and prescribed burning on their forest lands.

Introductions of attendees.

Big Sandy Rancheria: Rick Flemming

- Hiring year round crews for their workforce development program.

- Received a PG&E grant to clear under power lines.
- Received a CalFire grant for clearing.
- The continuing education program is growing. Had their first graduate!
- Obtained a contract with YSRCD for clearing in Cedar Valley.

CalFIRE update: Roger Raines

- Working on suppression repair from Creek Fire.
- Rehabbing existing fire breaks over winter.
- We are experiencing extreme drought and dry vegetation. Homeowners need to be very diligent about defensible space.
- Burn elevation moving up to 4000 ft this weekend.

PG&E Grant updated: Pat Gallegos:

- Obtained a PG&E grant for Whispering Springs: \$55,000 available for mastication of up to 50 ft on each side of the road. Will be complete by December 2021.

Brett Rush with Fresno County Supervisor Nathan Magsig's office:

- Kirk Ringold obtained a \$250,000 USDA Wood innovations grant for employee training at his upstarting sawmill in Auberry.

SRCD update: Blair Duncan

- Log Deck removal almost complete.
- Applying for Cal Fire CCI funds for Hwy 180 corridor and additional Creek Fire clean-up

Dylan Johnson, Shaver Lake Visitors Bureau-Rebuild Our Sierra:

- Mobray donated logs to mill for Creek Fire Rebuilds.

New business:

- Gary and Sue Martin have resigned from the board. We thank them for their many years of service! An election will be held at the next meeting.
- Warren: Motion to donate address signs to Creek Fire residents. 2nd by Sharlynn with amendment to set a financial cap. Sharlynn will determine what we can afford and advise the board.
- Next meeting: July 8 at 6pm

Meeting Adjourned at 8pm

July 8, 2021

Called to order at 6:10pm

Board Members Present: Howard and Laurel Hendrix, Ryan Stewart, Sharlynn Childers, Gus Gustafson

Opening remarks by Howard Hendrix, introductions

Treasurer's report: Sharlynn Childers

- Sharing of Statement of Financial Position.

Vice President's report: Ryan Stewart

- Shaver West Fuel Break still has funds available for some retreatment. This will be concentrated on Private Lands west of the West Village of Shaver Lake.
- A note to Homeowners: do not be afraid to use herbicides.
- Looking at potential treatments on the North side of Auberry Rd on the Ridge and hand clearing around Pine Ridge School.

So Cal Edison update: Ryan Stewart

- Currently 5 loggers salvage logging.
- Planted 15,000 trees last year.

Grant updates: Pat Gallegos:

- PG&E grant for Whispering Springs: Waiting on safer weather to have Ryan Day start mastication. Will be complete by December 2021.
- Meadow Lakes: work will continue to tie together our Meadow Lakes fuel break and the CAL Fire Radio Lane fuel break.

Big Sandy Rancheria: Rick Flemming

- BSR had 2 crews working right now
- Current projects: A PG&E grant to clear under power lines on Rancheria, Logging for USFS at Edison Lake, Yosemite Valley and Cedar Valley fuels reductions for YSRCD

CalFIRE update: Matt Dunham

- Jim McDougald has transferred to a state level position in Home Hardening.
- Fire season peaked about 2 weeks early. Fresno has a helicopter and tanker on site full time.
- Dustin Hail is the new unit chief.
- Updates on the Deck and Blue Fires.
- Fuel moistures are about 2 months ahead on dryness. Local fire activity is 2-3 times normal for this time of year.

SRCD update: Blair Duncan

- Treating a few properties on Peterson Rd on July 17th and another work day scheduled for the 31st on Glenview.
- Toolkit trailer should be ready soon.

Shaver Lake Visitors Bureau-Rebuild Our Sierra: Kyle Lee

- Partnered with operation Tiny Home to supply a tiny home for a local veteran on Peterson Rd. Being delivered tomorrow!
- Doing log retrieval to mill lumber for those that lost out buildings
- Online auction to raise funds happening now.

Fresno Co. Library- Shannon Morrison

- Creek Fire storytelling: compiling stories of those affected by the Creek Fire

- All Branches are back to normal, pre-covid, hours.

New business:

- Sharlynn Childers: Our Forest Health Grant requires us to hold advances in a high yield savings account and reinvest the interest payments into the project. Shared option on what could be set up. Matt Dunham doesn't think that is required and offered to double check and get back to Sharlynn.
- By-laws review and election of new board members: tabled till next meeting to allow time to review by-laws.
- Next meeting: Sept 9th at 6pm

Meeting Adjourned at 7:25 pm

Highway 168 Fire Safe Council Meeting, September 9, 2021

Sierra Senior Center

Board Members Present: Howard Hendrix, Laurel Hendrix, Warren Colbert, Gus Gustafson, Ryan Stewart and Sharlynn Childers

Called to order at 6:15 pm

President's Report, Howard Hendrix: Submitted an application to the CA State Fire Safe Council for a Resilience Brilliance Award. Award Ceremony will be held in Sacramento in early October.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report, Sharlynn Childers:

- Sharing of financial standing. After completing invoicing of Shaver West Grant and Jose Basin Grant, moved some indirect costs that had not previously been charged to the grants into the general fund. The checking account currently has a balance over \$30,000.
- Applied for 2 CA State Fire Safe Council grants: #1, a PGE grant for \$100,000 to help property owners in Auberry and Tollhouse clear their state responsibility areas. #2 SCE grant for \$25,000 for capacity building including: an event booth, video and print education materials for homeowners, social media development and equipment to hold hybrid in-person/online meetings.

Vice President's Report, Ryan Stewart: Currently ramping up for work on Shaver West and Jose Basin Grants, planning to start this fall.

SCE Update, Ryan Stewart:

- Edison has about 2M board feet of logging left to complete this season.
- They also have about 120,000 seedlings started, Sierra High has about 15,000 and the Resiliency Fund is growing about 20,000 at Intermountain Nursery. Sign up for the Seedling of Hope project at <https://museumofthesierra.org/resiliencyfund/seedlings-of-hope/>

Fresno County, Bret Rush: Fresno County was awarded a CalFire Hazard Fuels Reduction CCI Grant of \$4.07 million. The funds will be used for Road Hazard clearance on the Auberry Ridge and surrounding areas.

CalFire: Jerry Sharp, Forester and Matt Dunham, Battalion Chief:

- Dunham:
 - Introduction of Thorin Day has been named as the new Battalion Chief of Fuels Reduction. He will over see all fuels reduction projects and contractors working on them.
 - Prep work was done south of Shaver Lake and north/east of Blue Canyon.
 - Some private property near the Dinkey Creek Work center may perform a TREF burn.
 - Anticipating a dry fall and early winter.
- Sharp: Work has begun to reestablish the Cressman Road fuel break: 200ft on each side of the road all the way around the loop.

PG&E Grant, Pat Gallegos: PG&E is cooperating with delay in work due to fire danger of masticating.

Fresno Co. Library, Shannon Morrison: They have to opportunity to host a webinar on homeowner's insurance. Howard suggested topics such as: coverages and riders, gauging depreciation, united policy holders, delays, issues with holdbacks. Shannon will touch back with possible dates/times.

SRCD, Blair Duncan and Kelly Kucharski: September 24-26 there will be a workday on lower Cressman. This will include chipping and other clean up on 6 properties.

Old Business:

- Revision of By-laws: Sharlynn: motion to assign committee to suggest amendments; second by Ryan; motion carried. Sharlynn volunteered to chair the committee, Howard, Ryan, Pat and Warren volunteered to participate. Due: November meeting.
- Warren: reminder that we need to establish a budget for the formally approved program of reflective address signs in Creek Fire footprint.

New Business:

- Sharlynn: Will the Board approve use of surplus funds towards Post Creek Recovery Grant/Peterson Rd Project. Ryan: Review available funds after a reserve of 1 year has been established.
- Howard: A Board election will be held in January.

Next meeting: November 4th at 6 pm, at the High Sierra Ranger District office.

Highway 168 Fire Safe Council Meeting, November 18, 2021

Sierra Senior Center

Board Members Present: Howard Hendrix, Laurel Hendrix, Gus Gustafson, Ryan Stewart and Sharlynn Childers. **Absent:** Warren Cobert (excused).

Called to order at 6:05 pm

President's Report, Howard Hendrix: Reviewed final changes to the by-law. Ryan motioned to approve, Gus 2nd, unanimous approval.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report, Sharlynn Childers:

- Sharing of financial standing.
- Shaver West and Jose Basin Grants have been billed and reported to date.
- SCE Capacity Grant: All grant funds were received upfront. Already purchased: event booth, chairs, table, print materials to distribute and video production. Still outstanding: Conference equipment and laptop. Relocate \$5,000 budgeted for social media to reflective signs? -Yes.
- Peterson Road Project: bids due 11/19
- Reflective signs: 2 applications in through the website.

Vice President's Report, Ryan Stewart:

- Shaver West Grant: Forest Service ground behind community center: going to harvest merchantable timber, pile non-merch and masticate, as well as fix access road. To be completed prior to March 2022 deadline.
- Jose Basin Grant: waiting until any currently merchantable timber becomes non merchantable, and then continue treatment on private parcels. This is to insure that property owners have every opportunity to harvest merchantable timber if they want.
- Future projects: applying for a 2022 Fire Prevention grant for a fuel break S/Dinkey Creek Rd along E/ side of Blue Canyon through SCE, USFS land and the Grandbluff Conservation easement.

SCE Update, Ryan Stewart:

- SCE is burning on the south side of Shaver Lake.

PG&E Grant, Pat Gallegos:

- Ordering reflective address signs from Zap (all agreed to use SCE capacity grant funds, if approved.)
- Work began on Whispering Springs in early November.
- Potentially another PG&E grant available in December to tie in Radio Ln fuel break behind Meadow Lakes.
- Community notice: The Senior Center is a charging spot during public safety power shut offs.

CalFire: Thorin Day, Fuels Battalion Chief:

- Plan for his position is to design and execute widescale projects across the landscape: 1)Fuel breaks 2) mechanical treatment 3) prescribed fire.

- AB 38 requires a defensible space inspection prior to sale of a residential property. You can look up your address online and print your most recent inspection or schedule one.
<https://www.fire.ca.gov/programs/communications/defensible-space-prc-4291/>
- PG&E is offering a generator rebate in hazard severity zones 2 and 3. You can check their website to see if you qualify.
- CalFire is currently burning piles in Blue Canyon and chipping at the end of Wild Iris.

Old Business:

- Revision of By-laws: Sharlynn will email final copy to board when complete.
- Election of 5 board members (including officers) at January meeting.

Next meeting: January 13 at 6 pm, at the Senior Center.