

HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL



Appointed by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
Supported by
Public Works, Natural Resources Planning
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
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Meeting Summary (Action Minutes) Humboldt County Fire Safe Council Meeting August 20, 2020

A [Humboldt County Fire Safe Council \(HCFSC\)](#) meeting was held on August 20, 2020 via Zoom. The HCFSC was appointed by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors (BOS) to guide maintenance and implementation of the [Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan \(CWPP\)](#).

Fire Safe Council Members/Appointed Agency Liaisons Attending:

Bill Eastwood, Southern Humboldt Fire Safe Council
Chris Ramey, CAL FIRE
Ian Sigman, Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council and Honeydew Volunteer Fire Company
John Miller, Humboldt County Planning & Building
Kai Ostrow, Briceland Fire Department and Southern Humboldt Technical Rescue
Lenya Quinn-Davidson, UCCE Fire Advisor
Lon Winburn, Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association, Fortuna Fire Protection District
Lyn Javier, Van Duzen Watershed Fire Safe Council
Ryan Derby, Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services
Tom O'Gorman, Willow Creek Fire Safe Council

Fire Safe Council Members/Appointed Agency Liaisons Absent:

David Markin, Six Rivers National Forest
Ed Laidlaw, Arcata Fire Protection District
Manny Mello, George Petersen/Northwest Insurance
Mike Lake, Fruitland Ridge Fire Department, Southern Humboldt Fire Chiefs' Association
Rod Mendes, Hoopa Office of Emergency Services, Hoopa Fire Department
Tom Mattson, Humboldt County Public Works (non-voting)
Will Harling, Orleans/Somes Bar FSC, Fire Safe Council of Siskiyou County, Mid Klamath Watershed Council

Fire Safe Council Alternates Attending:

Amos Pole, Yurok Tribe (Hoopa Alternate)
Cybelle Immitt, Humboldt County Public Works (non-voting Director Designee)
Nancy Bailey, Mid Klamath Watershed Council (Supervisorial District 5 Alternate)

Public and Agency Representatives Attending:

Allan Wiegman, California State Parks
Dan Wooden, Bureau of Land Management
Jake Taulbee, Humboldt County RCD
Julia Cavalli, Humboldt County Public Works / HCFSC Staff
Nikola Loncar, AI K Me LLC
Rosalie Carnam, LandVest Inc.
Tim Bailey, The Watershed Center

HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARIES

1. Call to Order – Welcome, Zoom Orientation, Roll Call/Introductions, and Agenda Review

HCFSC Chairperson, Ian Sigman called the meeting to order at 10:02.

Meeting attendees went through introductions and a roll call of FSC members.

A change was made to the agenda to ensure Jake Taulbee, Project Coordinator for the Humboldt Resource Conservation District would be able to provide an update on the development of a Garberville fuel break at 10:30.

Given the virtual meeting format, it was decided that action items would be voted on by consensus. Where consensus was not attainable, a roll call vote would be held.

2. Approval of the meeting Agenda and Minutes from the previous HCFSC meeting

Kai Ostrow motioned to approve the February HCFSC meeting minutes (May meeting was cancelled). John Miller seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Public Comments/Announcements/Correspondence

Cybelles encouraged all those involved in forest health and wildfire resiliency to stay tuned to the recommendations of the Governor's [Forest Management Task Force](#). There is also a new "Peer Connect" forum on Podio, a social network-like platform, for practitioners in CA for sharing resources and networking with others doing similar work. Reach out to Cybelles for more information on the FMTF or how to join Podio.

Tom O'Gorman thanked Barbara Darst for her leadership in working with CAL FIRE and the CCC to reduce fuels in Willow Creek over the years. All three highway entrances to Willow Creek are much less hazardous than they were a few years ago.

4. Consent Items

There were no consent agenda items.

5. HCFSC Membership

- Acknowledge Member At-Large, Mike Lake for his service on the HCFSC
 - **Action: Authorize the Chair to sign a certificate of appreciation.**
 - Lon Winburn motioned to approve the action as stated. Kai seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.
- Discuss HCFSC membership and purpose/mission
 - The Chairman welcomed newly appointed HCFSC members:
 - Tom O'Gorman, Local Fire Safe Council (WCFSC) Member At-Large
 - John Miller, Humboldt County Planning & Building
 - HCFSC [Board Resolution Update](#) and Next Steps
 - On July 28, per feedback from FSC, the Board updated the resolution to include Planning & Building and appointed John Miller. (This resolution also replaced Barbara Darst with Tom O'Gorman and Mike Lake's slot was made vacant).
 - During the last meeting, there was discussion about staff developing recommendations to the FSC on how the resolution might be restructured or how certain member slots may be reclassified to better serve current needs and interests. Staff have not been able to revisit this task since the February meeting but recommitted to completing this task before November.
- Appoint Vice-Chairperson
 - **Action: Vote to approve a Vice-Chairperson**
 - **Discussion:** Lon, the only nominee, will likely be retiring early next year and so will be stepping down from the FSC. February will likely be his last meeting. A new nomination process can be initiated at the November meeting.
 - Kai motioned to approve the action as stated. Lyn Javier seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

- Nominate candidates for a new Chairperson
 - Ian will be stepping down prior to February meeting (November will be last meeting). Candidates for chairperson can be nominated at this time or by contacting staff prior to the November meeting.
 - The main duties of the chair primarily consist of running the meeting, keeping time, and reviewing the agenda with Cybelle ahead of the meeting.
 - Lon nominated Bill Eastwood (Bill did not accept the nomination)
 - Kai nominates Will Harling (not present) and Lenya Quinn-Davidson
 - Bill nominates Ali Freedlund (not present)
 - [Lenya accepted the nomination after the meeting]
 - A vote will be cast for nominees who accept nominations at the November meeting.

6. Updates: Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Implementation/Maintenance and Associated Partner Activities

Cybelle introduced each of the 6 goal areas and the corresponding work groups. Communication between meetings with work groups has been challenging. It will be important moving forward to revisit/recommit to what the FSC does/should do, especially as the FSC considers restructuring its resolution. It was intended to serve as a committee providing guidance and oversight on implementation of the CWPP but not necessarily taking on implementation itself.

Cybelle and Julia are focused on the implementing grant funded projects and have limited capacity to coordinate work groups although help may be on the way. As a result of lobbying by the CA Fire Safe Council last year (including Humboldt County participation), funds will be appropriated to all applicable CA counties for a fire safe council coordinator (\$~50,000/year for 2 years). It may be a new position or will supplement existing staff duties. This support will allow more outreach and work coordination for CWPP implementation.

- [CWPP](#) Maintenance Update and Reminders
 - There is an update process for GIS and other CWPP changes. See the [CWPP webpage](#), Implementation tab for more details. The Southern Humboldt Fire Safe Council (So Hum) continues to be the star in exercising this process. Major changes will be presented to the FSC through the consent agenda. Minor, non-controversial changes will come as a notification, such as the So Hum mission statement update included in this meeting's materials.
- Implementation Updates, Challenges and Successes
 - [Fire Protection](#)
 - The Team (Cybelle, John, LAFCO) is working with the Board of Supervisors, County Administrator's Office, and Chiefs' Association to move initiatives forward. Reorganization/expansion of Rio Dell FPD annexed and merged with Redcrest, Shively, and Scotia fire companies. Now they have a unified operational structure and support (revenue and mentoring/training). The County approved a tax exchange agreement with them so that a portion of the property taxes already collected in the area now support fire and rescue services—a historic decision that acknowledges that we are all in this together.
 - Working with LAFCO to address laws that are creating barriers to desired level of service.
 - Working with LAFCO to expand FPD districts to include areas of expansion that don't currently have fire protection.
 - Contracting for County Service Area #4 under evaluation – options range from status quo to a whole variety of alternatives.
 - Point of interest shared by Ian Sigman: This is a huge difference from when the FSC first started in early 2000s. Previous redistricting happened in 1987. Redistricting was said to be too complicated.
 - [Disaster Preparedness](#)
 - Ryan Derby: Back in February, the Office of Emergency Services started the “Do One Thing” outreach campaign to encourage preparedness for a variety of disaster scenarios; it ended abruptly with the pandemic outbreak. OES is now pivoting back to wildfire preparedness and are planning to do a “Ready Set Go” promotion campaign in 2021, which is still on target. Hiring of a new program manager has been crucial to CERT Team recruitments and Red Cross recruitments, who are working on prepping mass care areas. OES is also recruiting for Incident Management

HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

Team Level 3 local responders. OES is considering rolling out a tech-based disaster preparedness training program from the state. Other than the above and monitoring of the evolving wildfire situation across the state, it's all COVID all the time at OES.

- [Integrated Planning](#)
 - The North Coast Resource Partnership is developing a Regional Priority Plan for priority forest and fire projects and processes through a Regional Forest and Fire Capacity block grant. Staff is supporting that effort by making sure they have the best GIS data and up-to-date CWPP sections to integrate into that plan.
 - John gave a quick update on the need to update the General Plan Safety Element, which will focus on evacuation routes and secondary access. The update to the General Plan Safety Element will ensure that there are appropriate cross-references to the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and CWPP. It will also address climate change vulnerability. The update to the Fire Safe Regulations (the County's regs are currently superseded by new state regs) will likely follow the adoption of the Safety Element. To date, no county alternative fire safe regs have been certified in the state. Sonoma County is farther ahead than most other counties and hopes to have theirs certified in September although they have been met with a lot of concerns from the Board of Forestry (BOF). In the meantime, Humboldt County has approval from CAL FIRE to conduct inspections of compliance with State Fire Regs.
 - Chris: One size fits all fire safe regs is becoming a recognized issue. A BOF working group has been discussing additional changes that may be adopted in 2021. Chris hopes the working group, which he is participating in, can help craft new regulations that make sense for the Humboldt area.
 - Cybelle: Keep in mind how members of the IP work group can be engaged between meetings to assist and provide input.
 - John: Planning & Building originally planned to follow the Safety Element update with the fire safe regs update. Talking to Sonoma, there are some state laws being looked at closely that may prevent/limit development in SRA. AB 38 has come into play, mainly related to real estate transactions occurring in the SRA, requires inspections by CAL FIRE to make defensible space and home hardening recommendations.
 - Chris for Jen: The HUU Plan was recently approved, will be posted to the CAL FIRE [and County] website. ADA compliance issues delayed completion a bit. Staff will stay in touch with Jen on the next update. CAL FIRE Unit is relying on the CWPP for identification of priorities included in their plan.
- [Wildfire Ignition Prevention](#)
 - Chris: Analyzed ignitions from 2019: debris burning and vehicle related fires accounted for the greatest proportion of ignitions.
 - Defensible space inspections – The goal is to inspect 30% of all habitable structures in each CAL FIRE unit, which is very lofty for HUU. They are struggling to keep inspectors hired/employed. The forestry aid classification is entry level and seasonal – those applying typically have firefighting ambitions that lead them out of the position very quickly. Unit currently does not have any inspectors on staff.
- [Restoration of Beneficial Fire](#)
 - [Time did not allow for an update on a sample of applicable North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP), Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program Demonstration Projects and their applicability for modeling action that could benefit Humboldt County. Julia Cavalli provided a written update was provided after the meeting.]
 - Three prescribed burn projects were awarded by the NCRP as part of the RFFC block grant. Two of these are intended to have region-wide influence, including Humboldt County; sponsored by the Watershed Research & Training Center and the Karuk Tribe. All projects will contribute benefits that increase capacity for restorative fire across the region.
 - Karuk – is designing an inter-tribal approach to cooperative burning that will include workforce development/training, inter-tribal mentorship on agreement development with non-tribal entities, and a guidance document on culturally appropriate approaches to engaging with tribes on prescribed fire.

HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

- The Watershed Research & Training Center – Using an All Hands All Lands approach, WRTC is tackling workforce development on a regional scale by conducting trainings, surveying and tracking available equipment and personnel in the region. They are also developing cooperative agreements that will make working across boundaries easier.
- Shasta – Shasta Valley RCD is developing a Prescribed Burn Association (PBA) (the first in Siskiyou County) and conducting demonstration burns to get experience under the belts of new members.
- The lessons learned from each of these projects (and the other 10 ten demonstration projects) will be detailed in the Regional Priority Plan, a primary output of the RFFC Program, so that they may be replicated or enhanced in other areas of the region. Demo projects will be complete by late next year.
- More information on the demonstration project is available here:
<https://northcoastresourcepartnership.org/ncrp-regional-forest-planning/>
- Lenya: Plans for spring burning were derailed by COVID. Winter burning successes were reported at the February meeting. This spring Lenya and her team continued to meet with landowners and plan burns for fall and winter. UCCE hosted a workshop in April, “Prescribed Fire for Foresters”, intended for the local forestry community. Its online format enabled much wider participation, including from those out of state (~300 attended). The [workshop materials](#) are all online and include many great presentations related to prescribed fire and are not all forestry-focused. Statewide outreach and coordination with PBA-style groups across CA is ongoing and included development of a statewide website about PBAs: <https://calpba.org/>. Lenya has also been hosting webinars to train PBA leaders (links included on page 6). The PBA will host an in-person general member meeting in September to plan fall and winter burns.
- Kai: Gearing up to do LE-7s. There is a lot going on behind the scenes and a lot of public support for and interest in getting involved in prescribed burning in Southern Humboldt.
- [Wildfire Preparedness](#)
 - Jake Taulbee: Thanks to Tim Bailey for doing a lot of groundwork on setting up the Garberville fuel break project, also thanks to Chris Ramey. RCD is contracted by CAL FIRE to develop a shaded fuel break around Garberville early next year. Larry Wilson, RPF is collecting landowner agreements despite some roadblocks in finding the appropriate contact information for landowners.
 - Will this project include areas within Garberville such as Maple Lane?
 - Within the city [town], no, just area around it. The RCD is aware of the hazards on Maple Lane and will be sending out letters to those landowners about the project. This project does not include defensible space.
 - Who will provide labor and funding? Funding is through CAL FIRE. Labor is to be determined.
 - Chris: This is a pilot project using the RCD under contract. The general idea is for CAL FIRE to guide the RCD in planning and implementing the project. Labor will be coordinated by the RCD. There will be heavy equipment and potentially some inmate hand crews. If successful, CAL FIRE may be looking to continue this model.
 - Will the focus be on sections along roads?
 - RPF is still working on project boundaries, prescription, and cost estimate. Easier the access, the better.
 - Will be using a masticator off the road edge and then a hand crew to clean up.
- Round Robin
 - Lyn: Bridgeville CERT continues to meet and is preparing a CERT trailer.
 - Ian: Working on fuels reduction around the school in Petrolia, updating Fire Atlas; sent out custom pages to NEST; trying to get the Fire Atlas into tablet format that can be shared with CAL FIRE as well as local fire departments.
 - Time did not allow for any additional updates.

HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

7. Confirm next meeting date and location and adjourn.

Next meeting proposed for November 19, 2020. Location TBD.

Meeting date confirmed. Meeting will most likely be virtual. Meeting adjourned at 11:35 am.

Feedback on the Zoom meeting format is welcome i.e. amount of time, how things can be improved, etc.

Informational Links

Statewide PBA website: <https://calpba.org/>

Prescribed Fire for Foresters workshop recordings (lots of great presentations that pertain to Rx fire more generally—not all forestry-focused): http://cehumboldt.ucanr.edu/Programs/Fire/Workshops/Prescribed_Fire_for_Foresters/

Webinars by Erin and Miller, Co-Directors of Fire Management at the Watershed Center in Hayfork, sponsored by Lenya and the RFFC program. These webinars were intended for PBA leaders across the state, but are full of great information that others may be interested in:

- Firing Patterns: https://ucanr.zoom.us/rec/share/2fQuLon_rnJOS8_LtGOBYqAqBL_mX6a8InMbrvUFnRm3AXAhlaISQaevxt9OHEGg
- Risk Assessment and Fireline Safety: <https://ucanr.zoom.us/rec/share/uehECI3yykZOflHN5GPHBY8gGq7YT6a8hHdMqfYPzUqbHQ0rem2haoA99fTEp26c>
- Making Maps and Burn Unit Delineation: https://ucanr.zoom.us/rec/share/tdNoCa_Qyk9Oej2Oqxv-frcFE6X9aaa80ScaqPQKzkgbmwG9VjcPCbqr0eqp6ch2
- Burn Objectives, Fire Weather, and Fire Science Resources: https://ucanr.zoom.us/rec/share/xtZac4DR_WpOBYXn5EuDBPAhOKnlaaa80yNPrPcjyB2ZFuhgbK3x3GaoIB952I3P

2-pager on PBAs in California and the Great Plains:

<http://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPractices/FireLandscapes/FireLearningNetwork/Documents/FocusOn-PBAs-2020.pdf>