

**Prescott Area
Wildland/Urban Interface Commission
Minutes
March 5, 2015**

Participants: John Beddow, Julia Bernel, Gary Bernel, Bill Brye, Craig Brown, Larry Gray, Eric Giler-T, Ken Murray, Toby Cook, Ben Roche', Dennis Light, Soren Fleming, David Bowden, Loren Bykerk, Art Mandel, Bruce Gustine, Douglas Stefanko, Richard Clemmer, Neil Cooperrider, Ken Karkula, Mary Ann Clark, Sarah Tomsy, Jason Clawson, Kurt Wetzstein, Betty Higgins, Jeff Phillips, Lou Burrell, Ted Ralston, Cindy Miner, Roger Swenson, Jim Buchanan, Linn Lisbona, Lois Hoskinson, Cynthia Gentle, Jeanne Seely, Janet Seely, Ronnie Gamble, Al West, Chris Erickson, Marty Trembly, Marty Zythowski, Bob Celaya, Shirley Howell, Jerry Borgelt, Jeff Schalau, Russ Shumate, Ginny Shugars, Darrell Anderson, Mike B

Recorder: Seleatha Mendibles

1. Call to Order/Introductions

Meeting was called to order and introductions were made.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved.

3. Financial Report

• **Treasurer's Report- Shirley Howell**

January 31, 2015 Starting Checkbook Balance	\$	19,650.67
Credits/Deposits	\$	800.00
Debits/Expenses	\$	9,324.64
Ending Bank Balance	\$	19,676.09
Pending Balance	\$	-
Checkbook Balance	\$	19,676.09
Title III Monies	\$	10,142.60
Actual Operational Monies	\$	9,533.49

4. Agency Activity Reports

Board of Supervisors- The AZ Governor's budget was released on 3/4/15. It is not set in stone, but it's important for PAWUIC members to submit letters or emails of support for AZ State Forestry 1.3 million dollar budget to benefit mitigation projects. The Commission voted to draft a letter from PAWUIC to send to state legislatures.

PFD- The camp mitigation/clearing projects are progressing. Unfortunately PFD is losing its seasonal workforce. Also, Ted Ralston is moving onto new adventures. Today is his last meeting.

CYFD- Not a great deal of projects at this time. Seasonal workforce is currently in coordinated training with PFD, and Chino Fire.

Chino Fire- Firewise signs are installed. Thanks again to PAWUIC and the agencies that assisted in getting them placed. Seasonal crews are in training, most are attending the Wildfire Academy next week.

PNF- Jason brought One Less Spark materials to hand out to communities. There hasn't been any fire activity lately. Work in the tornado blowdown area in the Walker area begins today. A mastication project is also beginning today. There will be pile burning near the Highland Center also. Seasonals will begin on 4/6. Logging trucks in the Spence Basin area continue to be active,

hoping to wrap up the project by 4/1. 200 of 400 acres will be completed. Contractors will then move to the Lynx Lake area over the coming year. This is also Kurt's last meeting. He and Jodi have secured work in Montana and will be moving on 4/1.

ASFD- All 28 Firewise communities have been renewed.

ASFD Forest Health- The pinon needle scale report is out. Bob is working with Groom Creek FD to review and remove trees damaged during the tornado event to reduce bark beetle activity.

5. Task Force Reports

- **Jeff Schalau U of A/Yavapai County Cooperative Extension-** Chief Palm and Jeff will be putting on a firewise program in Yarnell on 4/3 from 10-1 at the fire station. Jeff is reviewing the many quality applications for a Forest Health Agent who will serve Gila, Navajo and Yavapai counties. The position should be filled by May or June of this year.
- **Tony Sciacca – Wildfire Academy-** Not present, Wildfire Academy starts on Saturday. Guests are invited to the Gala Night on Tuesday 3/10.

6. Old Business

- **WFHF 14-206** Still at AZ State Forestry for review.
 - Still pending
 - Second Submission- In process, awaiting approval and clearance of first submission. Title III monies are available to new firewise communities or communities who are in the process of obtaining firewise status.
- **Assessor certification registration with PAWUIC-** Please provides your certificate or the year you were certified to Lois.
- **EXPO- April 18, 2015 10:00-4:00-** There is a meeting following the regular meeting today. Volunteers are needed. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please sign up with Lois. Volunteers are needed for set up beginning at 8:00 a.m. Donations are also needed to put toward closing off the street. The cost is \$700 to do this. Sign boards for each community are needed as well. Please bring them to the April PAWUIC meeting or the morning of the EXPO. Flyers and applications for a booth were provided to the group.

7. New Business

- **New WFHF 2015 grant (Shirley)**
 - **More information available after general meeting-** Expect an email blast with additional information. Shirley will go over expectations, offer assistance and direction today as needed. Submissions are due to Shirley by 3/26.
- **Firewise Communities- updates, activities**
 - Hidden Valley-** Annual assessments will start on 4/1. There are 700 lots to do.
 - Ponderosa Park-** Working on a joint project with PNF to clean the creek bed near the community.
 - Wildwood Estates-** Has had firewise status for one year. There are a lot of new homeowners in the community. Firewise day was 2/7. ½ acre was mitigated and 60% of the community is firewise compliant.
 - Yavapai Hills-** Spring chipper day is scheduled for next week. Dumpsters and curb side pick-up is available.
 - Highland Pines-** Submitted an application for a State Farm grant today. The grant is for mitigation of large acres.
 - Iron Springs-** A project to clear common areas and entrance hill to the community is almost complete. This work was started in November.

8. Guest Speaker- Sarah Tomsy, Bradshaw District Ranger

- **The Importance of the Prescott Basin Cross Boundary Project (PNF)**

The Prescott Basin Cross Boundary Project (PBCBP) is located in the central highlands of Arizona and is comprised of 141,156 acres. The project area is ecologically, socially, and economically significant. Ecologically, the project area includes critical habitat for Mexican spotted owls as well as high priority watersheds. Socially, the area represents one of the largest wildland urban interfaces (WUI) in the Southwest. Economically, recreation is a major source of revenue for the Prescott region and a viable tourism industry is intricately linked to the condition of the forest. The PBCBP is made up of a wide variety of vegetation types including chaparral, pinyon-juniper, oak-juniper mix, ponderosa pine-oak, ponderosa pine, Gambel oak, and mixed conifer. The landscape of the project area consists of federal, state, tribal, and private ownerships with the Forest Service managing much of the upper watersheds and a mosaic of ownerships in the lower watersheds.

Project Goals and Desired Outcomes

The 2013 fire season served as an important reminder that the Prescott Basin area is in need of treatments that increase the resiliency of the landscape, reduce extreme fire risk, and improve forest health and diversity that sustains habitats necessary for a variety of wildlife species including the Mexican spotted owl (MSO). A total of 5,270 acres of MSO habitat are slated for treatment with the majority of the acres identified as protected activity centers (i.e. nesting stands for MSO). Because of the wildland urban interface facet, only one third of those acres were designated as critical habitat (MSO Critical Habitat Final Rule 69 FR 53217).

There is a need to decrease stand density and improve forest structure and composition. In 2002-2003, the Prescott region experienced an Ips bark beetle outbreak that resulted in the loss of thousands of acres of ponderosa pine. There are also several important watersheds located within the project area. The Hassayampa River, Granite Creek, and Lynx Creek all originate from within the project area. Each of these watersheds is identified as impaired or listed as a high priority for treatment. High intensity wildfire in these watersheds will increase sedimentation, reduce water quality, and poses a threat for post-fire flooding events. Hazardous fuel reduction projects are designed to modify fire behavior by lowering the potential for crown fire. These activities are essential to reducing future fire and management costs, advancing public safety, protecting communities, improving habitat for sensitive and threatened wildlife species, and restoring high priority watersheds.

Partnerships

The Prescott Area Wildland Urban Interface Commission (PAWUIC) is a collaborative group that was formed in 1990. The purpose of this multi-agency and non-governmental organization is to implement an all lands, all hands collaborative approach to address the fuel hazard and fire risk in the area as well as promote forest health in the greater Prescott region. Members from the Prescott National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, Arizona State Forestry Division, Prescott Yavapai Tribe, Yavapai County Emergency Management, Central Yavapai Fire District, Prescott Fire Department, eleven other smaller fire departments, homeowner associations, and private citizens meet monthly to report and coordinate activities. To date, there are 28 Firewise communities in the Prescott area with an additional ten communities actively pursuing the Firewise certification. Non-Federal land

treatments are closely coordinated between AZ State Forestry and the PNF to compliment on-going and foreseeable hazardous fuels activities.

Over the last decade, approximately 5,535 acres of State and private lands have been treated with various fuels mitigation programs. The PNF, working with our two local Natural Resource Conservation Service Districts, Chino Winds and Triangle, have made it a local priority for vegetation management for watershed health improvement. The Prescott National Forest, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the NRCS have a long history of collaboration; as partners in the Central Arizona Grasslands Conservation Strategy (CAGCS), we strive to develop and implement an integrated management strategy for the conservation and restoration of grassland ecosystems and associated pronghorn populations in central Arizona. Collaboration has also led to numerous successes via the Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition (VWRC), which aims to comprise a diverse, self-sustaining, and resilient riparian ecosystem in which invasive plant species are controlled through cooperative stakeholder participation. Finally, the NRCS serves on the Steering Committee for the Strategic Action Plan (SAP), designed to work with partners to identify and prioritize landscapes, and develop the resources, partnerships, and tools needed to support the planning and implementation of landscape conservation and restoration. In addition, collaboration regularly occurs with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, who are key partners in all of the aforementioned efforts.

9. Special Recognition

As noted earlier in the meeting, Ted Ralston with PFD and Kurt Wetzstein with PNF are moving on to other adventures. Both have been instrumental in the growth of PAWUIC and through their careers have worked tirelessly to keep the Prescott area safe. Certificates were presented. Ted and Kurt will be greatly missed in the community and in PAWUIC.

10. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 8:05 a.m.

Afterwards:

EXPO 2015 Volunteer Meeting

WFHF Grant Applicants Meeting

Note: Our next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 2nd at 7:00 a.m.