

Forest Health and Wildfire Mitigation Committee March 2022 Meeting

March 24th, 2022 6:00 p.m. at Joe and Carmen Richard's home

Present: Jerry Barnes, Donna Barnes, Jerry Peters, Michelle Blake, Craig Forth, Carmen Richards, Joe Richards, Bill Latham, Ken Dixon and Nanci Dixon

Chair

Motion by Joe to make Jerry P the chair, seconded by Michelle and Jerry B. All approved.

Mitigation

Ken provided an update on the Oak Park mitigation. Using his equipment, he widened the road ~30ft from the center of the road. Mainly oak brush was mulched, but in a few instances (for safety reasons) larger pine trees were taken down. The trees were chipped by John Cantin and his son Johnny. Tom graded the road when the project was completed. The whole project took around 22 hours, and cost \$2,000. Ken donated 2 hours of his equipment time to the project. There is still approximately one mile remaining on Little Bear to Oak Park to complete.

Fuel Break Description

For future projects we will need a written project description. The description will clarify the details of the project including 1) distance -how far from center of the road and total length of road 2) timing-if mitigating during the ips and pine beetle season, then only oak brush (and possibly pinon) will be removed 3) fire hazard-if mitigating during fire season, what precautions will be taken? 4) fuel-what will be done with chips and logs? 5) clean up-how will the area be cleaned up after the project is complete? 6) maintenance-how will the mitigated area (esp. gambel oak) be maintained? Bill Latham offered to take the lead on this.

Other thoughts: Currently, using contractors for the projects helps avoid the liability/insurance issue and work can be completed very quickly. However, we have a team of enthusiastic volunteers ready to assist. Jerry Peters will talk to the board at the April meeting to see if the insurance issue can be resolved. Are Metro Ditch Rats covered under insurance, and if so, can we get something similar? What if volunteers are only doing clean up and not operating equipment? Even if a landowner gives permission, no POA funding will be used for mitigation on private property. Is the 15ft utility easement part of the 30ft easement or does it extend the easement to 45ft? All future mitigation projects will be put out to bid. Bill Latham discussed pre-fire planning to be sent to the fire agencies.

Cul de Sacs & Water Hydrants

Cul de sacs need to be sufficiently wide to accommodate the turning radius of a fire engine. Although some cul de sacs have been enlarged, there are still some that need work. Do we know which ones need widening? Is our list of hydrants current? Some new ones may have been installed. All functional hydrants should be shown on a map.

CWPP

Michelle reported that the CSFS is working on the CWPP, while they are waiting for the new full-time employee to come on board and take over the project. The CSFS plans to do the ranch assessments/site visits in the summer and have the CWPP completed by the fall. The current CWPP has been provided to them to use as a template. The cost of the CWPP has been reduced to \$6,000.

Budget:

We started with \$25K. After putting \$2k aside for the Oak Park mitigation project and \$6k for the

CWPP, we have around \$17k left over. We need to prioritize our next projects. Michelle will submit the list of recommended projects to the ConCom for posting on the FHWMC website.

Outreach & Education

Smoke Spotting Class:

The FPFDP is very interested in offering a spoke spotting class to SFTR and would also like to include Trinidad Lake Estates. Michelle is waiting for FPFDP to provide potential dates and then she will then coordinate with the MOC for availability.

Website: Michelle will continue to work with the ConCom to update the FHWM page on the SFTR website. FHWM page includes our mission statement, points of contact, meeting tempo, and useful links. Eventually it will include upcoming projects and educational articles.

Additional Promotion:

Jerry B suggested promoting the FHWMC (and its projects) on ND to engage more residents. Michelle provided an FHWMC article for the SFTR newsletter to raise awareness of FireWise and the FHWMC committee. Michael Hughes also provided a historical article on the Track Fire. When possible, the FHWM should continue to provide articles for the ranch newsletter.

Chipper

The chipper is currently at John Cantin's home. Who will maintain the chipper? Should we allow the contractor to use the chipper? Perhaps the contractor can maintain it after each use.

Water Trailer Idea:

This project idea was originally for the Las Animas Community Grant, which ultimately the FHWM was not eligible for. However, this could still be an option for future grants or POA funding. Most fires can be stopped if they are caught quickly (e.g. single lightning struck tree or small grass fire). Depending on the location of the fire, the FPFDP response time could be 30 minutes, allowing the fire to spread and become more difficult or impossible to contain. The idea is to have several trailers, with water tanks and pumps, stationed around the ranch for rapid response to very small fires. These trailers could be towed with an ATV or a truck. What size makes the most sense? Should they be stored on the side of the road or at people's homes? Deter theft with combination locks? Ken suggested looking a [Richie Brothers.gov](http://RichieBrothers.gov) for used equipment. Bill suggested 100 gallons with fire pump and ~200 ft of 1" hose. Craig suggested a variety of sizes. Donna, Carmen and Michelle will look into this.

POA Board Meeting

Jerry P will give the FHWMC update at the April board meeting. Michelle will prepare the update.

Next FHWMC meeting:

At the MOC on April 21, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.