



FIRE SAFE SAN MATEO COUNTY

May 13, 2020

General Meeting Minutes

Online conference call. No in-person meeting.

Commence 9:35 am

I. Attendance:

Online Zoom conference call in lieu of in-person meeting due to COVID-19 meeting restriction due to sheltering-in-place order.

55 members attended the meeting.

II. Introductions:

Fire Safe Council coordinator Sheena Sidhu welcomed all members who called into the meeting. Participation instructions were shared:

- Mute audio unless speaking
- Video participation not required, you may turn off your camera
- To ask questions, please unmute and speak after the presentations, or use the chat function to ask questions during the presentations

III. Presentation Michael Klain, Golden State Goats. The Goat Grazing Option

- Decades of fire suppression and lack of fuels reduction, high fire loading, dense under stories and continuous ladder fuels, choke out native plants
- Fuels reduction obstacles: time consuming, invasive and disrupts habitats, destructive, burning, noise polluting, spreads seed, chemical spraying is toxic
- Understand industry terminology and defensible space requirements, well taken care of herd – vaccinated, supplemented, and loved
- Herd isn't capable of every task, our chain saw experience and hard work
 - o Herd works day and night to reduce fuel load
 - o They work in steep hard to reach terrain
 - o Reduce both surface and ladder fuels
 - o Noninvasive, natural and economical manner
 - o Over 6 ft of vertical clearing capability
 - o Nearly nonpolluting, nontoxic and carbon neutral
- How it works:
 - o Meet with you at job site and go over vision of finished product
 - o Job sites are broken down into sections

- Temporary elective fences
- Livestock dogs and water are off loaded
- Goats/ sheep are offloaded
- You have 24/7 safe, reliable, cost effective and eager worker force
- Once the area is at the desired level and fence goats are moved to next area
- A crew will clear what the herd can't
- Benefits:
 - Promotes the county in apposite light for using an environmentally low impact way of reducing fuel loading
 - Draws community attention to fuels reduction work being done locally
 - Decreased fire risks
 - Insurance rating
 - LE 100 passing
 - Safer communities

Questions

- What steps are taken to protect goats from mountain lion predation?
 - livestock dogs are the answer
- After they eat the leaves, what is the treatment for the remaining twigs and small branches?
 - wrap with plastic or electric fence
- How do you deal with toxic weed removal like Hemlock?
 - Not a problem unless they are pregnant
- How do you protect bark on desired trees like buckeye, others?
 - They're not big on eating bark- they'll eat branches and leaves
- Cost?
 - Depends on terrain, fuel load- medium cost of 500 acre- \$3/day per goat
- Do goats have a different digestive tract than other hooved creatures so that they neutralize seeds?
 - Goats have 4 stomachs and can eat more vegetation than most types of hooved animals due to their ruminant digestive system.
- Can you confirm that the goats cannot eat any type of Eucalyptus?
 - They shouldn't eat it but they do sometimes, they would ring the trees.
- What is the max number of goats you can bring to a very large site?
 - Depends on the job- intermix sheep and goats depending on needs.
- How far out are you currently booked?
 - Until the 1st of June- larger commercial project availability

IV. Presentation Patty Ciesla and Amber Gardner, Executive Director, What's Coming Next from the CA Fire Safe Council

- Advocacy Program
 - o CFSC Policy Committee
 - Kate Dargan Marquis, Dave Shew, Bob Roper, J. Lopez, Laura Blaul, Pat Kidder
 - Actively scanning legislation submitted by state senators and assembly
 - Communication with recommendations to key staffers working on wildfire
 - Connections with insurance, utility, other industries
 - Committee members draft supporting letter for bills moving forward
 - Annual Wildfire Walk through the capitol
 - Leadership for best practices and priorities for local Fire Safe collaborators
 - Awards program
- Capacity Building Program
 - o Funded by farmers, State Farm, Southern California Edison, CA Dept of Conservation, Governor's Cal Volunteers, CAL Fire
 - o Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program
 - Partners with watershed center, sierra Nevada conservancy, CA RCD< others
 - Provides program management staff at CFSC
3 regional coordinators- supporting new and existing Fire Safe Councils
 - Communications specialist- virtual resource center
 - Technical specialists- providing expertise to local FSCs in implementing programs and admin
 - o County Coordinators Program – coming soon
 - Funding for every county with WUI
 - o Statewide Conference for FSCs
 - o Cal Volunteers Listos campaign
 - Disaster readiness program for disadvantaged communities
 - Reimbursement program requiring creative strategies
- Grants clearinghouse program
 - o Funding from USFS, BLM< FWS, SCE, CAL FIRE (new)
 - o CFSC has distributed over \$100 Million in more than 900 subgrants since inception in 2004
 - o Provides structure for local FSCs to receive federal tax dollars and comply with 2CFR200 compliance burdens
 - o Provides assurance to funders
 - o Can act as fiscal sponsor (with admin fee) for collaborative projects without a 501 ©(3) recipient
 - o 2020 SFA grants cycle opening now \$1.5M, over 160 registered

- Grant program informational meeting next week-see website
- Grant application is due June 18th
- CFSC Growth Admin
 - CFSC in undergoing internal changes to support the new programs and expansion of the grants clearinghouse
 - Recruiting leaders to the BOD
 - Considering a membership/ association model (TBD) for local FSCs to have an official affiliation with the statewide FSC
 - Adding new staff, HR capabilities
 - Potential to become employer of record for local affiliates
 - Financial housekeeping

Thank you for your interest in our Grant Program: <https://cafiresafecouncil.org/grants-and-funding/open-grant-programs/2020-sfa-grant-program/>

Questions

- Are grants to FS Councils only, or to communities?-
- What is the chance that you will be replacing the current reporting software with something else more user friendly?
 - This is currently being reviewed.
- San Mateo County Fire Safe (Denise Enea) has completed the survey: www.surveymonkey.com/r/CFSCFeedback2020
- Has the CA Fire Safe Council had any discussions with the State Insurance Commissioner on having insurance companies recognize Firewise Certified communities? (Denise)
 - Rate setting
 - A lot to be said about firewise-
 - What is it? Firewise- program of the NFPA- its voluntary for community to apply, establishing a firewise council in community, small investment in fire safety, risk assessment by a professional, keeping the committee going
 - Getting the risk assessment is the trick, IMO. getting the skilled assessors is difficult. (if you have a community working on the first steps of their program, this is a stumbling block.)- working through the steps of the risk assessment
- Does CFSC have any educational materials that teach people more techniques on how to target invasive weedy species and which native species to leave intact? I have noticed that communities can become really scared of fire and end up over clearing and causing erosion risk, invasive flammable species increase, or other issues?
 - Yes, clearing and erosion, cutting trees down and no shade- its hard to teach nuance due to California's huge ecological diversity. Invasive plant council- when land use planners approve housing they're approving defensible space in the WUI. Its shocking to remove established vegetation-

- yes there is erosion after large defensible space/ shaded fuel break but it will come back after first winter. Brush removal is complicated
- Would the CA Fire Safe Council ever consider funding the printing of "Living with Fire" for Fire Safe Councils to distribute to help assist with preventing over clearing?
 - o not a one size fits all for all parts of California- needs to be more specific to regions (create framework that needs to be specific to each area with weather and house details).
 - What about funding the individual FSC to print their own individual LWF?-
 - o Utilize them and their printing system and resources- trying to get funding through clearinghouse –
 - A lot of times contractors are asked to bid on fuel mitigation projects, but aren't given specifications on what to bid on. Does the Fire safe council have specifications for fuel mitigation clearing? This seems to be a major problem. Landowners do not know how to tell the contractors what exactly needs to be done.-
 - o Specs are important- don't tell contractor show to do it but what end result you want. If we created a document for local landowners to use, are we helping or infringing on the local level.
 - o I think your maintenance point is key. Doing follow up weeding and mowing to target any weeds that have popped up in cleared spaces in the first couple years after clearing is especially helpful. Herbicide in fuel reduction in right place right time
 - Does the State have a system to insure every part of the State is represented by a local Fire Safe Council?
 - o Not every part of the state has a fire safe council
 - Does CA Firesafe Council have strong opinions (i.e. for/against/guidance) on exterior sprinkler systems for homes?
 - o No we don't have an opinion officially from the CFSC- there are some good ideas/ systems for a sprinkler system. Big challenged is where will the water come from and storage for water and for fire fighters to use when they arrive- how does it integrate with firefighting?

V. Announcements

- Sheena- Helping through SMRCD (CRPG Co-leader)- create a localized prioritization list (FHFR list). Distributing a survey to collect data on any projects that are in progress to help with funding- May 29th or email Sheena for more information

Denise- If anyone has a grant project and wants to apply to the Fire Safe clearinghouse please let me know and I am happy to assist

Next Fire Safe Council meeting will be held on June 10th

Adjourn at 10:58 AM.