

# LASSEN FIRE SAFE COUNCIL, INC.

## GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

January 17, 2024, 5:30 PM

The Lassen Fire Safe Council, Inc. (LFSC) convened in regular session at 5:30 pm on January 17, 2024, at the Susan River Fire Hall, Johnstonville. LFSC members present were Board Chair Ruth Morentz; Managing Director Cade Mohler; Projects Coordinator Kyle Herron; Board Members Lawrence Crabtree, Kam Vento, Bob Andrews and Secretary/Treasurer, Chevi Amrein.

- I. **Opening and Welcome** – Chair Ruth Morentz called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm  
Sign in – A sign in sheet was passed around for voluntary sign in

II. **Managing Director Report given by Cade Mohler**

**Active Projects**

- A. Managing Director Cade Mohler gave an overview of the LFSC accomplishments of 2023. Specifically, even with a limited amount of LFSC staffing we were able to accomplish many projects. Over 7 million dollars of grant monies were utilized to complete over 4,000 acres of biomass utilization; 3,496 acres of herbicide application; 616 acres of hand thinning; 426 acres of prescribed burn; 921 dying/dead hazard tree removal; 109 structures protected through hazard tree removal; 364 acres completed of neighborhood biomass or chipping and 1,190 acres of burn scar planted. Cade gave thanks to all the partners and landowners for their collaborative efforts and hopes to increase biomass and mastication in 2024.
- B. Overview of LFSC project implementation (see attachment with the minutes) of all project updates. Cade gave updates on the Shasta County grants which encompass biomass thinning around homes in the town of Woodbridge, near Shingletown, south of Hwy 44. LFSC just started biomass operations in Whitmore, which is another Shasta County grant. Cade stated the “Bootsle” project up Janesville grade is still going on. If the community does drive up that direction to be safe as the roads remain icy and there are several chipping trucks in the area. We will continue to work, weather permitting. Most other grants are closed down due to weather.

- III. **Closed Out Grants** – See spreadsheet for a detailed overview.

- IV. **New Planned/Awarded Projects** – Cade updated on three climate investment grant applications that have been submitted totaling 12.5 million dollars. The first is the North Susanville WUI Fuels Treatment Project in collaboration with the City of Susanville, Lassen County, Beaty & Associates, Sierra Pacific Industries, and a non-profit Petesburg Fire Protection. This is a 3-million-dollar grant that encompasses the areas of Susan Ranch to Lake Forrest. The second grant is for hazard tree removal in the LNF/ Eagle Lake Ranger District to remove dead and dying trees. This encompasses approximately 29 miles of hazard trees adjacent to the roads between Westwood and Susanville. Kyle has been working on a 6.5-million-dollar grant which encompasses the South Lassen Wildfire Recovery Project grant of non-industrial timber loss as a result of the “Sheep” and “Dixie” fire (2264 acres). Kyle worked diligently for the last month and a half getting landowners signed up for this grant. The awards of these grants should be known and published around April or May 2024.

V. **Agency Updates**

**BLM** – Alton Pickup updated the progress on Phase I of the Juniper tree removal project. They are currently identifying areas for hand piling mature juniper for burning in later years. He stated this is the first time indicated in California as they are mimicking a successful process used in Oregon. It’s a process to remove the juniper that is friendly to the Ecosystem and the Sage Grouse habitat.

**CalFire** – Adam Mattos informed the attendees about recent staffing changes including the retirement of Scott Packwood after 35 years of service. Erik Ewing is the new Unit Chief; Adam has been promoted to Deputy Chief and Isaac Thornton is the new Assistant Chief. Adam expressed gratitude to the LFSC and their ability to get projects done. He stated the current projects include burning at Clear Creek near Hamilton Branch. He also said the Westwood/A13 looks very good. Adam stated the efforts of the Antelope Conservation Camp crews, SIR, and the relationship with Alturas are going great. Adam concluded there are major budget deficits in California, and it is likely the fire protection grants will be affected. Adam states letters of approval are often requested from his agency, but they are not always able to comply with the request because there are often conflicts within the agency.

**SNC** – Not present

**NE CA Fire Prevention** – Not present

**USFS** – Plumas: Mike Ray updated on the Beckwourth prescribed burning since fall is 3,700 acres. Current projects include Phase I operations of timber recovery. Mt. Huff burning near Buck's Lake; timber sale near Graeagle; post fire recovery Plumas County timber salvage (3,000 acres); Phase II implementation encompasses 900 miles along Feather River; 70 acres around Cromberg, Portola, Graeagle. Phase II is very close to being rewarded. There are two major post-fire projects in the works including the "Tributaries Project" and the "Mt. Huff". They are also working on a Stewardship Project for at-risk communities which will be awarded to local companies.

**USFS Lassen:** Dan Varney gave updates on their collaboration with Terra Fuego on the Cheney Creek Project which is now completed. They are shifting their focus back to the "Whale Back"/88 acres and piles along A1. Dan updated the attendees about staffing changes including Leland who moved on to the air attack in Chester, CA, and his replacement at the agency Brett Matthews.

**Susan River FPD** – Not present

**OES Lassen County** – Not present

**SPI** – Mr. James Haynes-Petty reported they have ongoing plans in collaboration with Beaty and Collins Pine for fuel break operations up Hwy 44. This Summer they will start fuel break operations in Hamilton/Clear Creek area. They are also working with Cal Trans and the fuel break up Hwy 44 looks great. Stated Cal Trans had discussions with him for stump grinding and mastication grants for LFSC. They are also planning a small project by way of a fuel break near Bogard. James concluded they are also currently logging in the Harvey Valley area. Cade clarified the names of the contacts at Cal Trans for purposes of grant discussions. Kyle commented on the HWY 44 fuel break, "It looks fantastic!".

**Honey Lake Power** – Not present

**Beaty** – Not present

**Lassen County** – Not present

**Honey Lake Valley RCD** – William Johnson updated on staffing vacancies including a staffing coordinator position. William explained there is a resources video that he will be providing called "Fire Re-Imagined". He feels this is a good resource for all and is free for the asking. William updated on the "Water Delivery Project" currently in process to enhance the delivery of water improvements along the Susan River. They are drilling 2.5 feet across Hwy 36/Main Street. Another project is the Lassen County Weed Management wherein they are surveying maps to identify goat heads and other invasive weeds. Williams expressed gratitude for the opportunity to do the CEQA survey.

**SIR** – Brandie Cooper, Natural Resources Manager, was present and introduced Audie Noneo, SIR Fire Chief. Brandie stated they currently have a total staffing package of 14 for the first time. She is working on projects including the upper Rancheria WUI. SIR is currently working with Cal Fire for a 2024 burn plan. They just received 93 acres transferred to them from BLM at Eagle Lake. They will continue to work on fuels reduction for all their land.

**American Red Cross** – Not present.

**Golden State Natural Resources** – Not present

**Firewise Communities** – Ruth Morentz stated all Lassen County has been certified through December 2024. There are two new additions including Bieber/Big Valley and Doyle. We are looking forward to adding Herlong.

- VI. **Other** - Ruth Morentz indicated all the latest happenings including the LFSC project updates can be found on the LFSC website and the LFSC Facebook page
- VII. **Public Comment/Questions** – Dr. Dozier expressed concerns about the recent herbicide applications along the Goumas Road. He stated there were no signs about the process and requested information about the legality of the process. Kyle explained there are laws that govern herbicide application and signs should notify the public. He referred him to the Ag Commissioner for clarification.
- VIII. **Next meeting** – February 21, 2024, in Susanville
- IX. **Adjournment of Meeting** – The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm

*Chevi Amrein*

I, Chevi Amrein, Secretary/Treasurer of the Board of Directors, Lassen Fire Safe Council, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a full true, and correct copy of the minutes.