

Mariposa County Fire Advisory Committee

Minutes, January 17, 2024

1. Roll Call – Secretary

Alison Deak, John Patton, Hannah Harrison, Steve Ward, Tara Fouch-Moore, Barbara Cone, Glenn Cahill, Melinda Barrett, Brian Mattos, Mike Keyser, Lacey Sharp, Wes Smith, Racquel Sandoval, Michael Pickard, Danette Toso

2. Approval of Minutes: January 4, 2024 special meeting

Motioned by Melinda Barrett, Glenn Cahill seconded, Approved with requested changes

3. Public comments - for non agenda items, speakers may be limited to 3 minutes.

No public comments

4. Regular Agenda: Discussion and Possible Action/Recommendations:

a. Annual nomination for Committee Officer Positions: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary for 2024 year. – Ward

Nomination by Steve Ward for John Patton as Chair, seconded by Barbara, Approved Unanimously

Nomination by Barbara Cone for Melinda Barrett as Vice Chair, Seconded by Wes Smith, Approved Unanimously

Nomination by Steve Ward for Alison Deak as Secretary, Seconded by Wes Smith, Approved Unanimously

b. Discussion and approval of the meeting schedule for 2024 – Steve Ward

Requesting to change schedule to accommodate CAL FIRE representation during meeting.

*John Patton to send out Doodle poll to get best day of month and time for future meetings. **Further discussion tabled until February meeting.***

c. Continue discussion with possible direction - Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) – Patton

John and other MCFAC members are working with SNC to receive capacity building funding for MCFAC and MCFAC members for two projects: (1) a project pipeline for CEQA, permitting, and right-of-entry for fuels reduction with Cal Trans along the Hwy-49 corridor with Mariposa RCD and (2) capacity building for MCFAC with funding for a split administrative position for RCD and FSC, planning, executive coaching, and strategic visioning for all MCFAC members, and GIS specialist support for MCFAC. Original suggestion was for RCD to receive funding for the pipeline project and county to receive funding for capacity project; SNC is supportive but does not want to split funding of recipients and suggested that the RCD be the recipient of funding for both projects.

Next steps: John and Melinda will meet to discuss grant agreement and fiscal agent. John will meet with SNC to discuss further and build out an agreement in lieu of an official grant application.

---- Discussion ensued about the County being the fiscal agent for the SNC funding and subcontracting Melinda. Benefits to this would be that Melinda could request payment in full and not be burdened by the 10% retention burden. However, Melinda was concerned about delays in invoicing if she was subcontracted. Barbara suggested that if the county were the fiscal agent, it could be written into the terms of the contract that immediate payment will be received up to a certain dollar amount regardless of the amount of funding that the county has received. Tara also commented that the point of the RFFCP is to build capacity, not to create more burden and if the grant will create more burden, this should be resolved through the grant. Michael also explained that as of January 1st advanced schedules for SNC grants are going to change to avoid gaps in funding until the end of projects.

- d. Letter of support recommendation for Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation – Tara**
SSMN is seeking support from MCFAC and the County in the proposal for funding from the California Natural Resources Agency tribal nature based solutions program to purchase and steward a ~900 acres parcel of land adjacent to Yosemite West sandwiched between Yosemite NP and Sierra NF, currently owned by Pacific Forest Trust. This grant program that has a priority for funding acquisition landback opportunities for landless tribes such as SSMN. SSMN has completed the pre-application and have been invited to submit full application. It will be crucial for them to show community support in their application to be successful. Because the grant is funding nature-based solutions in addition to acquisition, it will be in the planning phase for developing a culturally sensitive forest management plan and for post-fire recovery, stewardship, fire resilience, forest health, and workforce training for SSMN crew. This parcel of land was also a key strategic location for protecting the community of Yosemite West during the Ferguson Fire.

Motion by Alison Deak, Seconded by Barbara Cone, Approved Unanimously

5. Updates, Activity Reports and Future Agenda Items

*John Patton, County Fire – Working on MCFAC contact list and have updated the list with members. Once finalized, will send out to MCFAC – **please ensure that the information in the updated contact list is correct.** MCFAC agendas must be published 72 hours in advance – **please make sure any items that you wish to see on the agenda are known to John the week before MCFAC meetings.** New project prioritization submissions need scored requiring three MCFAC members (Lacey Sharp, Barbara Cone, and Melinda Barrett volunteered to score). Please submit any projects that you are considering for prioritization. Currently working with County Fire for additional grant funding through OTS for extrication equipment.*

*Hannah Harrison, Planning – Americorps crew is in town working with different organizations and will begin working with FSC and UCCE to expand defensible space work on local properties on steep slopes that have been a part of the Fire Safe Council's brush and chip program. Crew is being coordinated through the county by Will Fassett. **Please reach out to Will if you would like to talk to the crew and provide education to them.***

Melinda Barrett, Mariposa RCD – Submitted two grants for home hardening program, received one through CAL FIRE for \$49k. Still waiting to hear back on USFS CWDG grant. Contractor received \$2 million for Mariposa Biomass Plant from CAL FIRE Wood Products Grant. Recently submitted Forest Health Grant. Attending biomass conference at end of month.

Mike Keyser, CAL FIRE – Majority of work on Guadalupe Fuel Break has been completed

Mike Pickard, Sierra Nevada Conservancy – As of January 1, SNC shifted their subregional boundaries. Mariposa County is now a part of the southwest subregion with Madera, Fresno, and Tulare Counties.

Wes Smith, Mariposa OES – Nothing new to report since special meeting. Still waiting for Mariposa Creekhillslope grant approval from FEMA and for hazard mitigation plan funding.

Brian Mattos, CAL FIRE – A business and workforce development grant that CAL FIRE has given to Ascent Forestry to purchase two new tractors for work in Mariposa County and they should be responsive to bids from MCFAC members.

Glenn Cahill, Sierra Tel – Status quo at Sierra Tel. Fiber to the home project is slated to be completed by the end of February.

Lacey Sharp, Happy Goat – Currently working a brushing contract on 30-acre parcel on Creekview. Resources (chainsaw crews) were pulled by Happy Goat and they are now working with SSMN to complete the parcel. Next project is in Madera County.

Barbara Cone, Mariposa Fire Safe Council – Received three contracts from CAL FIRE – for Lushmeadows Ladder Fuels Phase 1, Bumguardner Fuel Break, and storm damage clean up. Window is tight for Lushmeadows ladder fuels right-of-entry to complete CEQA in the spring (required). Final inspection completed on Wagoner Ridge Fuel Break with SNC and FSC is now working on final reporting. FSC received check for Bullion Fuel Break and operations are resuming. Looking forward to working with Americorps crew to expand defensible space downhill for qualified homeowners. Recently submitted two CAL FIRE grants for Lushmeadows Ladder Fuels Phase Two and for Fremont Fuels Reduction project near hospital.

Tara Fouch-Moore, Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation – Still no response from BIA about Sierra Priest Project so it is still on hold. Keeping crew busy doing work in Tuolumne County and will be partnering with Happy Goat. Crew will also be focusing on acquiring training and qualifications (Basic 32, S212). Crew currently working with Tuolumne County and Sierra Foothills Conservancy to do restoration work in Rim Fire and on SFC properties. Approved for grant augmentation on Mariposa Creek Property for forest management planning and administration. Also applying for tribal capacity grant around climate change.

Steve Ward, County Fire – County Fire will begin moving forward with OTS grant for extrication equipment. Justin Wight has been promoted to assistant chief; new battalion chief will be starting February 5th. New fire engine (a tactical water tender or “pumper tanker”) should be in service in May/June. Reserve program going strong and candidate pool is improving. Still have an objective of getting a recommendation to board to use general fund monies for full-time

staffing and permanent employees for immediate capability to respond with specialized equipment. CCI grant for tractors has been closed out and money has been reimbursed to county. Chris is working on closing out second grant used to purchase masticator heads that will be continually utilized to maintain fuel breaks. Auto aid agreement with Tuolumne County for fire response in North County is back in place. No auto aid agreement with Yosemite NP is in place but working on getting agreement back in place and have submitted draft agreement to them to do so. **John will be giving an annual report for MCFAC for board in February. Please share anything with John you want to share with the board next month.** It would be good to have MCFAC members at the board meeting to give support.

Alison Deak, UC Cooperative Extension – No updates since special meeting. UCCE will be hiring a 0.5 FTE coordinator for the Southern Sierra Prescribed Fire Council. Other 0.5 FTE will be shared with Fire Advisor on Central Coast to work with their PBA. Position vacancy announcement has not been posted yet but will update MCFAC when it is – please share with any potential candidates!

Danette Toso, Mariposa Board of Supervisors – no updates

Future Agenda Items

1. Continued discussion and approval of MCFAC meeting schedule for 2024
2. Discussion about revising bylaws to allow MCFAC to vote on time-sensitive and unanimous agenda items via email

6. Adjourn

Motion by Tara Fouch-Moore, Seconded by Alison Deak, Approved Unanimously