



FireSafe Montana

Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2009

IN ATTENDANCE

Mike Dannenberg

Dick Rath

Bob Fry

Crystal Hagerman

Don Lorenzen

Bob Mutch

Paul Spengler

Bruce Suenram

- Crystal started things off, with housekeeping items and an overview of the agenda.
- Bob M. asked about the previous conference call. Did not understand the concept of passing money through us through to the national council. Is this a done deal? Wondered why this council, out of all those in the West, is “getting picked on?” Crystal explained the history. FSMT was pushing forward but it still was not a “done deal” prior to BOD discussion. The funding was tied specifically to FireSafe USA. Mike explained additional history, dating way back, regarding this funding, as well as the funding to develop FSMT. When Mike found extra funding (in addition to what Crystal applied for), he thought of ways to provide such funding for the start-up of a national council. He approached Crystal and FSMT about the pass-through of funds. If the BOD had said no, those funds would have been removed from FSMT and put towards the national council through another entity. Bob just felt like there was a lot of time, with wheels spinning. Bob was thankful for the explanation.
- Crystal went over the ground rules for the meeting and objectives for this weekend’s meeting. BOD needs to throw ideas around for the strategic planning session. The whole BOD, since not all are in attendance, will be allowed to vote on the plan.
- Don reviewed the minutes from the Butte meeting. Crystal passed out copies. Group went through Fall 2008 priorities.
 - ✓ Have established 8 local councils to date. More meetings in a few areas to come.
 - ✓ Have begun planning for the annual conference and have completed the recruitment video.
 - ✓ Video is being printed; distribution plan needs to be developed. Crystal went through the prices for duplication of the video. Distribution to BOD, local councils, fire departments, tribal jurisdictions, etc. Crystal will look at the requests for copies. Mike suggested we talk to DNRC (Blankenship), who may have the equipment to mass duplicate the videos. BLM may have access to a similar machine.
 - ✓ Educational materials have been produced. Could evaluate and move forward with regional meetings. More work to come with the development of policies.
- Long-range plan topics from the Butte meeting.
 - ✓ Regarding the website, no action has taken place as of yet. Crystal has contacts for such work and will be working on this. Existing template was set up prior to Crystal and does not give her access to change certain settings. **Crystal will concentrate on website work this winter.**

- ✓ With the financial system concerns, the glitches have been worked out. ASAP is working. **New form to document in-cash and in-kind match should be used by the BOD.** Crystal used \$20 an hour for volunteer time. Mike asked about the option of using an hourly wage for someone who is actually earning a wage; this can be tracked for those individuals and documented. Paul suggested BOD members email their hourly wage to Crystal. Mike suggested **Crystal put together a secure portfolio for each BOD member,** with their personal information (would be handy during an audit). Federal employees or those that are funded with certain grant funds are not eligible for the latter option.
- ✓ Regarding the WUI zone, Bob Fry suggested we talk with Bruce. DNRC has some specifics regarding this topic.
- ✓ FSMT conference was successfully held. Some topics could carry over to this next conference. Will have briefing tomorrow at end of the agenda.
- ✓ Regarding the educational materials, Crystal did some checking on credit for classes for insurance/real estate industries and got confused. If BOD finds this a priority, Don can offer more specifics regarding how this works. Paul asked if this is achievable. Don thinks we could use the monthly get-togethers for these industries, as an avenue to distribute our materials and messages. Hopefully, continuing education credits could be worked in. Don thinks we could possibly go through Monica Lindeen's office to do so. Maybe not essential to give them credit. Don can talk more about this during the long-range planning session. Crystal said some insurance and real estate folks are requesting Living with Fire publications.
- ✓ Regarding the executive committee working on the policies, Carol provided some feedback. Has not been strengthened. Will review her feedback during the long-range session.
- ✓ Regarding the educational materials, the committee will be meeting to determine needs and other products. Crystal put in an order for notepads; could be modified, as she has not received the proof yet. Very expensive! Also showed post-it and pen possibilities. Paul asked about the cost-benefit of this type of advertising, and Mike asked what it gets us. Those in attendance were not so much in favor of the expensive notepads and "cheesy" pens. Don suggested we look in mouse pads, in order to get our brand out there. Paul still questioned the effectiveness. Don suggested we talk about these items in the long-range plan session. Need to get the committees active again! Simplify and prioritize. Bob Mutch suggested the refrigerator magnets (to write and post emergency numbers).
- What it means to be a FSC. Brainstorm, redefine and refresh. Crystal and Bob talked about public citizens, working in concert with the FireSafe BOD and fire rescue, federal agencies and other entities involved. Citizen-based, grassroots group of people, who have a voice in making things happen on the ground. Crystal has been giving the FSMT handbook out to those interested. FSC is the tool to get the FireWise principles on the ground. Bob mentioned the new on-line training for fuels assessment. Bob likes the development of FireWise Communities concept; FSC BOD can touch a lot of the FireWise concepts and principles. Paul talked about the communities in the Trico area and how they complement each other. Don thinks that FSC is the boots on the ground, and FireWise principles are the instructions. Don will be talking at an underwriter's workshop; hoping to have positive impacts with utilization of FireWise materials, providing insurance incentives for homeowners. Crystal went through the overview document (taken from NV); **Crystal will resend this document via email.** Dick explained how things are set up in his county and how they relate to a council. Mike talked about the history of the FireWise workshops and how they came about. Mike highlighted the notion of a non-government entity; we want folks coming into the government offices and asking/telling us what they need from us. Should be part of the strategy is to identify where the various inputs come from (non-government entities). We want the homeowners identifying needs to protect communities. Homeowners should be telling homeowners what needs to be done. Calling these groups "councils." Some are pursuing non-profit status and some would be working with FSMT to get funding. Mike asked how we unify

state-wide efforts so that FSMT can be the one voice for all councils. Don mentioned that it would be nice to have such a unifying effort for recognition of affiliation with FSMT, as it relates to how insurance underwriters make policies. Looking for “branding” of the name. Dick suggested an additional tag line, identifying the affiliation with FSMT, to the group’s accepted name. Mike talked about giving councils a “red placard” or something to identify their affiliation. Bob Mutch highlighted the importance of consistency of terminology in the future; could add to our group’s credibility and increase our identity. Dick agreed, but mentioned that changing existing names may prove difficult. Trico changed their name to “FireSafe Working Group” recently. Paul added that the bottom line of how you are reducing the fire hazard in communities is the important part. Don suggested we add “FSMT certified group” to existing councils, no matter what their current name. We would encourage consistency for future groups. Bob Mutch suggested we address the differences/similarities between FireWise and FireSafe councils in our future writings.

- Benefits to local FSC. Crystal went through her list of potential benefits (educational workshop, 1000 copies of Living with Fire publication, priority for receiving grant funds, DVD, signs, promotional items, financial assistance for local activities). Paul asked about support to develop local councils. Mike expounded, with financial (not grant) support. Crystal has a bit of “seed money” for some expenses for local events. Paul suggested there be guidelines for expenditures. Bob Mutch talked about display-related items for events. BLM districts have pop-up canopies for such use. Others benefits thrown out include the following: FSC member placard/sign for members, technical and financial support for start-up.
- Fire Chiefs conference in Helena. Have paid fees for the vendor area.
- More proactive in outreach. Crystal read Carol’s comments. Bob Mutch suggested the use of Webinar’s, to possibly save some travel money but still accomplish outreach. Could learn through sharing among the councils, via a webinar or other electronic internet-based technology. Crystal talked about Ready Talk, a similar tool. Don suggested sending out something like this to county commissioners through MACO and/or through DES coordinators. Bruce suggested including the county fire wardens. Dick suggested putting together some bulletin statements to get the commissioners thinking about what is happening (or not) in their county. Maybe the commissioners would see fit to forward information on to the citizens. Mike suggested developing a strategy for an outreach to reach citizens. Look at newspapers to get to the citizens. Have articles ready for submission at a specified timeframe. Need a series of articles, possibly leading up to Wildfire Awareness Week in mid-June. Could be used to reach the masses, whereas the Webinar could be more site-specific. Bob Mutch suggested we use a broad spectrum of tools. Bruce suggested including AARP; Don brought up AARC. Crystal talked about the Big Sky meeting and how the citizens there felt they weren’t ready for a FSC due to their dependence upon the local fire department. Bruce also suggested including the Farm Bureau and Montana Farmer’s Union. Bob Fry suggested we talk about how the mitigation aspect relates to the response effort. Need to tailor the message to the audience! Bob Mutch suggested Sally Mauk with NPR in Missoula. **Bottom line is to develop a strategy to implement sometime in early spring.** Mike suggested everybody needs to do a better job of utilizing everybody. Conference would be a great time to bring that out in those folks attending, highlighting their responsibility to help with outreach efforts. Dick suggested some sort of program that would “reward” volunteerism (yearly dues covered, etc.). Paul suggested a canned PSA package for distribution across the state. Crystal is still waiting for an update on her FEMA grant application, which had funds for outreach efforts.
- Local FSC application. Crystal has draft she got from NV. Has made a few changes. Does this need to be reviewed by a legal entity? What is our liability? Crystal hasn’t received any feedback. **Crystal will visit with Carol, regarding her review of the document.** This document is just an application to become an individual council; lists the roles and objectives of affiliated councils. **Crystal will email to BOD; BOD members need to review and provide feedback!** Mike asked how

we are protecting our name. Are we copyrighted or trademarked? Name is registered with the secretary of state.

- FSMT Newsletter. Crystal lobbied for quarterly newsletters. Those in attendance agreed. Content would be greater. Keep the size so they can be posted on the internet. Crystal will be calling on BOD members and local councils for articles. Mike said CA sends out emails that have a one or two sentence “teaser” and a hot link to the website. Eliminates sending out a huge email. Mike suggested that BOD members should be writing quarterly reports, highlighting what you have been doing in your part of the world.
- FSMT Website. Crystal read Carol’s comments. Crystal will be working extensively on getting this shaped up, as previously discussed. Bob Fry suggested we need to move on to the new site, which is difficult since we are trying to keep the existing site up and running. Looking at moving away from Meagher County and going with another vendor. Website maintenance is very time-consuming. Could be more money to go with an outside vendor manage the website. Will they develop a new template only or manage the maintenance? Current site has limited capabilities. Biggest issue currently is getting Crystal able to manage. Bruce can provide a web person through DNRC, as possible assistance. Need to be willing to pay for these services. Crystal has a few contacts; bids received so far are between \$2400 and \$5000. Plan for work and transition this winter.
- Other publications. Ideas include poster on fire-dependent ecosystems, how landscapes have been shaped, etc. Dick suggested we are good to go for now. Have a couple good products; use them and move forward. Don brought up the placard again. Mike updated the group on what the BLM is doing, regarding the development of a curriculum for Fire Ecology in the Grasslands. Most existing curricula are geared toward timber lands. Also working with incorporating fire-safe building materials and practices for the Industrial Arts/Building classes. Another opportunity is a handout for the DIY builder; could be distributed with building permits. Bob Fry talked about how they are re-working their CWPP with web-based, educational risk maps. Each informational layer will talk about the risk of building on such areas.
- Providing financial assistance to local FSC. Some discussion previously. Local councils could submit requests for assistance for local events. CA or NV has yearly application for such assistance. Paul would support but asked about the activities (on-going or development). Crystal mentioned one-time events. Paul talked about capping the amount. Mike suggested we take out the word “reimbursable” (makes the grant management cumbersome). Need receipts and documentation on how funds were spent. Don asked about establishing a budget line item for this and developing a limit per council. Need to establish the criteria for expenditures, so they fall in line with the objectives of the money. Need to be discerning what this money would be used for (events v. mitigation projects). Keep funding capabilities in mind; direct to other avenues to garner additional funds if current funds not sufficient for projects. This application would be for local events (small amounts).
- Advocacy and policy education. Crystal read Carol’s comments. Bruce mentioned that this is necessary. At a minimum, the executive board needs to agree. We will be asked our position on legislative bills. Typically, a position must be relatively unanimous or not at all. Don said he would talk to Greg, an insurance lobbyist who is interested in the doings of FSMT. Would allow us to develop a policy on how to react to those situations. Bruce suggested there needs to be more discussion to develop a strategy on how to take positions. Need to look at legislation at how it affects FSMT and not the individual organizations independently. Dick felt a bit of discomfort from the last legislative session, with the lack of briefing on what we supported. Mike suggested looking at guidelines (CFR’s) on lobbying. Mike suggested Crystal talk to the NV director, who could provide some guidance. Bruce suggested we look at the by-laws, too. Need to develop a policy on how to take positions or testify as a proponent (or not). Need to include how we can more informational statements, regarding legislation. BOD will have to identify a group of issues that are important to them, making sure they stay on track.

- FSMT Membership. Ideas include: membership dues included in fees for conference, website update prior to conference registration, recognition placard, recruitment of additional members results in decreased dues, group rate for members of local councils, high-level inspirational speaker, coupons for use at Home Depot or other stores. For sponsors: logo on website and link to their website, logo in the newsletter, attend conference vendor show without fees, certificates or recognition plaque.
- Administrative fee for financial fiscal agent. Have charged 8% for FireSafe USA so far. Should this fee be across the board or dependent upon individual situations? Should be able to determine an administrative charge. Bob Fry and Mike suggested going with current rate, and Paul suggested 10%. Could run with % for a year and reassess what the actual costs will be. Need to track and develop based on current history. Have to be able to defend these administrative fees. **Need to discuss having Quicken or similar program to track expenditures, as well as a computer and/or hard drive.**



| IN ATTENDANCE |
|------------------|
| Mike Dannenberg |
| Dick Rath |
| Bob Fry |
| Crystal Hagerman |
| Don Lorenzen |
| Bob Mutch |
| Paul Spengler |
| Bruce Suenram |
| Jake Krielich |

- Conf Calls.** – grp discussed dates/times. Jake advised difficult for him w/ his new job schedule. Group agreed should occur 4x / year face-to-face. Tele-conf calls to remain 3rd Mon in other months. **Bob F suggested that we offer to have new councils join in the teleconferences, if possible.** Mike D & all agreed but advised non-board members must be on mute. Further mentioned our board is too large w/ 11 board members, [quorum is simple majority]. Bob M suggested that we keep the webinar capability in mind to assist; the other councils could tie-in their successes w/ Powerpoints. Crystal reinforced in summary that occur 4x / year face-to-face. Tele-conf calls to remain 3rd Mon in other months.
- Roles of board members** – Positions appear clear, but in lieu of “ex-officio” we’ll use the term “Agency rep” members. Mike asked if we plan to put in zones vs local councils. Other states do that, and have the “zone rep” make reports for the councils within their zone. Bob M, Don L mentioned that we’re premature to do that at this point in time.

- c. **Recruitment of Permanent Exec Director** – Bob F, the timeline needs to be defined. Crystal & Jake stated that the committee is within the Exec Comm. **Still needs work.**
- d. **Other staffing needs** – Crystal working to delegate to others certain tasks to get them completed. Bruce S mentioned the grant writer needs to be “close” / available to Exec Dir. Dick R stated that RC&D has great resources to make suggestions for writers/support, contract it out and save Crystal time. Jake: How much time does Crystal put into grant writing? Crystal – a lot, depending on the grant; the FEMA one was complex, others less so. Don L how many were written? 5 in 9 months, total about 90-100 hrs. Mike D – doesn’t Bozeman have many students or facilities to write them? Yes. Don L – Missoula has many folks that write grants also as a profession. Jake – contracting for a grant writer would be good idea. Dick will check w/ Beartooth RC&D Chris Mehus for name[s] to assist writing grants.
- e. **Diversifying Funds** - Crystal – checked w/ Calif for their funds, she mentioned several corps, sources. Also that Mike D had mentioned looking into MT conservation districts. Dick says Peggy Pelaggio has access to some funding thru her Missoula office. Mike suggested that the board should have a set committee to raise funds, and that as an off- legislative year, we have time to request funds thru the state. Jake mentioned we should approach legislators, like Carol Williams and write a proposal. Mike D, keep such a group looking at all sources, not just state. He says many environmental groups feel fire should be re-introduced and a FireSafe group protecting structures would be a good alliance. Don mentioned insurance co’s would be open to such alliances to promote FireSafe, Agency & environmental group using fire in the forest. Jake wants this to be a priority. Crystal – **the other board members will review the minutes, and we then form a Fund Raising committee.** Bruce raised concern about the success of the functioning board, and we are where we were 2 yrs ago. Discussion followed on our successes, then was clarified by Bruce & Jake that we depend too much on the board and it is still forming and working together. Bob feels the board members are under-utilized. Don said that we spin off tasks then forget about the results & follow-up. Mike mentioned that it should be Crystal/Exec Dir to be the “list keeper” and ask for follow-up status. **Group discussed the MT Non-Profit Assoc, and will attend their mtg in late Sept. Could provide great grant insights.**
- f. **Target Planning 1 Year focus:** [Crystal will provide staff support]
1. Website: Chair: Bob F + **due date: Jan 2010**
 2. Outreach committee – Chair: xxxxx + Bob M + Bob F., Mike D[advisor] **Webinar due date: Jan 2010**
 3. Policy, Legislature & Positions – Chair: xxxxxx + Don L, Bruce S, Carol D. **due date: March 2010**
 4. Feb 2010 Conference Planning: Chair: Crystal, + **due date: Feb 2010**
 5. Future Funding working group. Chair: ask Carol D + Jake, Mike D[advisor] **due date: Oct 2009 and On-going**
 6. Hiring permanent Exec Dir. – Chair: Dick R. + Jake, Carol, Don. **due date: Advertise in Jan 2010. Meet in Missoula 9am Fri 9/25 @ State Farm.**
 7. Accounting system: Crystal & Carol D **due date: Nov 2009**
 8. Contractors forum Oct 17: Jim N + **due date: current**
 9. FSM Board enrichment – training to be better functioning board & policies. Use the Non-Profit Assoc for assistance. **due date: Fall 2010, and annually**
- g. **Target Planning 2 Year focus by Fall 2011:**
1. Goal of 25 FireSafe MT councils; each board member aim of two, and shepherd existing councils. Board to provide \$500 for each start-up.

2. Current membership is 76, goal of 150. Bob M: What do members vote on for \$30? Board of Dir, issues, political stances.
3. Current corporate membership is 4, had been higher in 2008. Goal of 20 corporate memberships in place.
4. Develop a MT fire ecosystem poster.
5. Schedule of Webinars & topics (ex, fire proof vents) **Annually**
6. Permanent Exec Dir, Sustained funding stream, and staff as necessary.
7. FSM Board enrichment – training to be better functioning board & policies. Use the Non-Profit Assoc for assistance.
8. Dick R: Develop a broader state FSM representation. Bob M: a stratified FireSafe zone configuration. Bruce suggested DNRC land office regions/zones as a model.

h. Other items: -

- 1) Bob M asked for email, phone and roster. Crystal to provide to board.
- 2) Crystal - Location for the Feb 25-27, 2010 FSM conference; discussed reasons to confirm Fairmont. Vendor locations and support good. Food serving better. Govt rates do not apply on Fri. Bruce, is this negotiable? Diff is about \$15/room. Crystal to check.; Fairmont has been good working w/ us for this Sept FSM board mtg.
- 3) Conference ideas: Bruce /DNRC wants to be involved, some staff support. Dick R: keynote speaker should be notoriety on “Stay & Defend”, Australia. Bob M would be able to provide such, and may add in TX grasslands aspects. Crystal, the latter has interest for E MT attendees. Bob M – consider Dave Thomas, “High organization 5 principle concepts”. Bob M: how many past conf attendees are VFD? Crystal to check. Bob M – we should target the VFD, as “backbone” for initial fire attack support. **The Conf Committee mtg will next teleconference Mon, 9/28 b/w 1-4pm, to set agenda, etc. Crystal to advise time.**
- 4) Crystal: Thanks to DNRC/Bruce for putting in \$15,000 grant for conference support.
- 5) Crystal: upcoming we need to check advise Lockwood FSM council on whether they need their own IRS 501c3, or under ours? **Crystal will discuss w/ Carol, and we need to set up a one item teleconference.**

Mtg closed at 11:35 Sat, 9/12 2009.