

# Coalition of Firewise Communities - MEETING NOTES

Tuesday Nov 5, 2019 – 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Our Mission: The coalition promotes fire safety through advocacy, education, and community involvement with other stakeholders interested in working toward stronger fire safety practices.

**Welcome, introduce officers, announcements**                      **Bob Long**                      **5**  
minutes

- Who's here for the first time? Sign in to get on mailing list.
- Reminders –
  - Sign up for Code Red (see [mynevadacounty.com](http://mynevadacounty.com) – Wildfire Prep button, then bottom of that page under Helpful Links))
  - Complete requests for those shovel-ready projects, send to Fire Safe Council.
  - Promote the Fire Safe Council to your residents: \$49 membership, reflective address signs (\$35 single side, \$40, double, \$5 for stake)
- Beware of Veg Clearing services who are fear mongers. FSC has vendor list that is safest place to learn about vendors. Get referrals before you have work done.
- Ideas on keeping your phones powered up during a blackout. Save your phone Battery:
  - Turn off wifi, Only use this when you know you have WiFi.
  - Turn off Bluetooth.
  - Turn down the brightness of your screen and turn off automatic adaptive brightness.
  - In your "Settings" menu, turn on the "low battery usage" button.
- **Remember: NFPA reports are due by November 15.** Document that you did at least \$1,600 worth of work. Show as much as you can. The Fire Safe Council uses these numbers to demonstrate "in kind" matching to get grants. Helps with NC to show we're working on the county level.
  - In-Training can turn in work forms to FSC and Jamie can use info for FSC.
  - Communities are updated every 3 years. Fire Risk Assessment updated every 5 years.
- Emergency alerts & **Be Ember Prepared video** -- see our website.
- Generator safety reminders:
  - Buy inverter generators which provide clean power to attach TV, Computers and "smart" appliances. Regular generators can fry the electronics because the current can fluctuate. Older portables probably

don't have inverters. Whole house generators have inverters. Another option to get clean current: a UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply). This is a battery that you put inline between a portable generator and your electronic device. Some large surge protectors have specific plugs that provide battery protection in addition to surge protection.

- Battery backup ideas: Solar battery charges (camping stores). Use your laptop to charge your phone. Use your car to charge your phone.
  - Before You Buy a generator: Make sure that there is someone in town that will repair it/maintain it!
  - Check oil every time you start up – this runs out quickly and will damage the motor if it runs dry.
  - NEVER fuel when hot (can cause fires). Gasoline can spontaneously combust if it falls onto a hot engine. Always let the generator cool before adding fuel.
  - Point exhaust **away** from house/openings to prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning. If possible, generator should be 20 feet from house.
  - Use heavy duty (12G) extension cords to carry current correctly.
  - Get professional electrical help hardwiring your generator. Backfeeding into house can cause fires. Backfeeding from house to power lines can electrocute line workers who are repairing lines or getting your power back up and running.
  - Buy surge protectors for electronics and Smart appliances.
- Battery Back-Up Ideas:
    - Solar battery charges (camping stores). Recharge batteries during the day. Charge up phones, etc. at night. Or use for lights, etc., at night.
    - Use your laptop to charge your phone.
    - Use your car to charge your phone.
    - UPS = Uninterrupted Power Supply. This UPS battery provides clean power (no power surges).
  - **Get your residents to fill this out: What to do if you lost your phone usage?** Go to:

**“211 Connecting Point.org/ncpsps-phone/”** And fill out PSPS Phone Loss data sheet. The County will work with Service Providers . Call your phone company and let them know if you were out of service. Push them to get generators and correct this problem.

## Monthly updates – Power outage

### Cal Fire

Jim Mathias

- Dorsey Fire & PSPS.
- Fires this month and near future: “Currently, there’s no realistic end in site to the dry weather and winds.” The High Pressure system means there is a dry airmass over us. When a dry Low Pressure systems create high

winds. UNTIL WE GET SIGNIFICANT RAIN in our forecast, Cal-Fire is not downsizing yet.

- If you ever get fire damage to your house, **beware** of people who show up quickly, possibly with some “badge” on their shirt, saying they’re “certified by CA” and presenting themselves to do some kind of fire damage mitigation and/or reconstruction. These are often scam operators. WAIT and talk with your insurance company to choose a legit firm to help you with your immediate needs and reconstruction.
- What we can do to help out Cal-Fire: Take Personal Responsibility for your property (defensible space, home hardening), clear evacuation routes, learn as much as you can about being wildfire preparedness at the Coalition meetings. If there’s a fire emergency, stay clear of the area. . . don’t try come in and get photos. Cal-Fire will help you get pets, children if they are home and you’re outside the area. They won’t know how LONG to stay away. Just get out of the way.
  - During the Dorsey Fire, there was an Acute Care Facility that needed to “shelter in place” because it takes time to evacuate elderly people. Building was built with Fire resistant materials. Shut off the AC and shut windows. Let fire front burn over, then evacuate when safe.

### **Nevada County OES**

Jeff Pettit

- PSPS Public Safety Power Shutoffs:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Oct Event: When you have a known event, prepare & get ready:
    - Weather the storm
    - Be ready to Evacuate
  - Fuel in car, go bag, photos, send kids to Bay area.
  - PGE: NC OES is advocating for what NCounty needs: get power to critical infrastructure: hospital, gas stations, etc.
  - Nev County in Tier 2 & 3 high fire danger area and we get power cut often and for longer time. The Nevada County BOS met on Nov 5<sup>th</sup> and is drafting a letter to the CPUC requesting that critical infrastructure must have power and push phone vendors to have backup power systems. Also, 2<sup>nd</sup> tier providers participate in providing phones. Cell towers and internet must stay powered. Comcast, Sudden Link, Xfinity, etc., need to PUT GENERATORS IN TO PROVIDE SERVICE.
    - What can residents do? CALL and/or write your service providers and request better service. Help push this issue. We’re all in this together.
  - Gas stations and grocery stores are getting generators so they can sell their goods.
  - FREED: Yeti 3000Watt battery to power ppls medical devices.

- Susan shared edited results from the survey which asks Firewise Communities how they communicate with their residents (email, print, etc.) and what their challenges are. The full report (of only those FWCs that have responded so far) are the website.

**Presentation of plaques to new Firewise Communities** Fire Safe Council

You Bet, Ananda Village, The Cedars, Foxwood-Slate Creek, Golden Oaks Association, Jones Bar.

- All communities can get Signage for their community. Order from NFPA, \$25/sign.
- FSC's NFPA FireWise Communities: 37 Certified. 39 In-Training.
- Matt Wallen: Wildland Fire Drill Exercise in Spring. Banner Mountain (possibly Cascade Shores) and McCourtney (possibly include Sherwood Forest).
- DSA Training Dec 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>. Siemens Lodge. Class 1<sup>st</sup> Day, Houses 2<sup>nd</sup> Day. FireWise Communities in Training – have at least 1-2 ppl go through the training. Call Allison at FSC to sign up.

**Home Hardening – vents** Susan Rogers 10 minutes

- 1/8" vents on homes. Material is called hardware cloth (not screen). Details on Coalition Website under "Education."

**KVMR and emergency updates** Susan Rogers 5 minutes

Can't get good radio reception? LIVE STREAM it. Details on Coalition Website under "Education."

**Clarify defensible space on roads** Bob Long 5 minutes

- Private roads: 10/10/15. 10 feet of vegetation clearance on each side of road and Trees limbed 15 feet up from ground. Allows for "mosaic" (checkerboard effect), loosely defined as 2ft square/high by 2 feet of dirt.

**Ad hoc group to study Boulder CO FWC & Insurance** Bob Long 10 minutes

- Bob described a program in Boulder, Colorado that helps homeowners get insurance and a tax deduction. Bob needs a few volunteers to help out, along with few Insurance Brokers. Please contact him if you can help.
- Bob described the Truckee ordinance requiring a DF Inspection when a home is sold. He asked if any other HOAs are doing this: Forest Knowles looking into it. We think that could help with insurance issues.

**Report on Fire Safe Council Board meeting**  
canceled  
outage

no report, meeting was  
due to power

**Subcommittee and Agency Partner Status Reports**

- **Evacuation** – Chris Reilly, not in attendance because he's a New Grandpa as of this morning. Congratulations!

**Next meeting: Dec 3rd, 2019 -- 5:30 – 7:30 PM      336 Crown Point  
Circle**