

Feather River Stewardship Coalition Proposal

There have been five primary hurdles discussed around continuation of the Feather River Stewardship Coalition:

- The apparent lack of agency and public participation
- The source of “match” for grant funding
- The challenges of working with the Forest Service to treat public land
- Whether or not the work meets the Fire Safe Council’s mission
- The lack of oversight for a new coordinator

This proposal addresses all of these concerns by proposing that I, the Fire Safe Council Coordinator, incorporate the work of the coalition into my duties.

While the Fire Safe Council already meets the guidelines of a collaborative entity, I would be willing to facilitate quarterly Coalition meetings through the established outreach channels. If after one year the Coalition meetings are not deemed vital, they could be discontinued and the Fire Safe Council could address any necessary business as part of Council meetings.

The Forest Service grant that funds coordination of the Coalition requires a 20% match. The current requirement was exceeded with in-kind “industry professional” participation time. The Forest Service will have limited funding available in the next financial year. However, the budget for ongoing coordination would be significantly lower because: 1.) the framework for the Coalition has been established; 2.) the Fire Safe Council’s existing means for grant writing and administration will streamline with the Coalition’s grant proposals, and; 3.) travel expenses and supply costs will be greatly reduced.

Working with the Forest Service may be a different pace than the Council is accustomed to, but as Mike De Lasaux pointed out in his letter to the RAC members: “The Plumas County Fire Safe Council believes that it is critical to continue to collaborate with the Forest Service to manage national forest land within Plumas County. While a case can be made to focus the collaborative efforts on the entire county, the Fire Safe Council has elected to focus the collaborative effort on the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). There are nearly 870 thousand acres (61%) of national forest within the WUI, many of which have yet to receive hazardous fuel reduction treatment. The Plumas County Wildfire Protection Plan specifies that hazardous fuel reduction within the WUI on public lands is an important mitigation measure.” These statements clearly support the Fire Safe Council’s mission: “To reduce the loss of natural and human made resources caused by wildfire through Firewise community programs and pre-fire activities.” This goal can be equally obtained by supporting work on public lands as well as private.

There will be no need for separate oversight for a coordinator position if it is incorporated into the existing Fire Safe Council Coordinator role. Additionally, my job offer included more hours than previous coordinator positions. Therefore, it is not only feasible but also desirable to incorporate the Coalition work, as the additional funding will partially support the additional hours.

I would also like to reiterate the points that have been made during Council meetings that the grants currently secured by the Coalition, and potential future grants, are large sums that provide real benefits to Plumas County. And that Categorical Exemptions for Forest Service projects require a Collaborative (which is defined as any “transparent and non-exclusive” group – a definition for which the Fire Safe Council qualifies).

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