

Clayton Morgan Territory Fire Safe 2015 Summary Working Session #2 – August 26, 2015

I. **Introduction.** Ms. Miller welcomed the group and attendees introduced themselves.

- Dominic Aliano, Office of Supervisor Mitchoff Contra Costa Board of Supervisors
- Carina Bilodeau, Save Mount Diablo
- Raphael Breines, East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)
- Division Chief Robert Chew, CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit
- Councilmember Jim Diaz, City of Clayton
- Peg Gardner, Concord CARES
- Paul Ingle, Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (CCRCD)
- Fire Chief Dan McCormick, EBRPD
- Cheryl Miller, Executive Coordinator Diablo Fire Safe Council (DFSC)
- Cheryl Morgan, Director East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD)
- Alicia Nuchols, Office of Supervisor Mary Piepho Contra Costa Board of Supervisors
- Larry Nunes, Vice-President DFSC Board of Directors
- George Phillips, Lands Conservation Manager, Save Mount Diablo
- Kathy Woofter, Contra Costa Fire Protection District

2. Stakeholder Meeting I Recap

Cheryl Miller, Executive Coordinator, Diablo Fire Safe Council (DFSC) provided a recap of the first meeting held July 29, 2015 (see written summary at www.diablofiresafe.org/pdf/2015-CMT_mtg_1_summary.pdf for details) including:

- What is a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), requirements of a CWPP and required signatures
- What is a Fire Safe Action Plan and project boundaries (approximate boundaries shown on Fire Hazard Severity Zones in SRA and on Supervisorial district and fire districts map)
- Planning process, schedule, outcomes and grant budget breakdown
- Existing wildfire assessments, projects and resources

3. Preliminary Project Ideas

Short term fuel reduction and fire road maintenance cost share program: Ms. Miller distributed copies of the cost share funding program description and application. The application will be e-mailed out to everyone for distribution and available on the website (see item 4). The program will fund activities on private lands, as well as public lands. The program has \$50,000 for fuel load reduction and \$50,000 for road maintenance. See Summary of Meeting #1 for two examples of DFSC projects that were completed in 2014 and could be examples for the current program.

Ideas for long-term projects or programs: Ms. Miller reviewed the 10 different strategies listed in the 2014 CWPP Update to provide ideas for future projects. See http://www.diablofiresafe.org/pdf/2014-Draft_Contra_Costa_County_CWPP_Update.pdf Section 2.4 for further description.

1. Collaborative partners
2. Risks of ignitions
3. Fire weather
4. Community at risk hazards
5. Defensible space
6. Structure survivability
7. New and infill development
8. Fuel management on public and large scale private lands
9. Protect facilities and infrastructure
10. Local preparedness and firefighter capability.

A round table discussion included the following:

- Ignition prevention. Key causes of ignitions in the area are vehicles (especially on Morgan Territory and Marsh Creek roads), equipment and people (arson or accidents).
 - An ignition prevention campaign targeting contractors and public works agencies may help reduce equipment caused fires.
 - DC Chew, CAL FIRE explained the State's cost recovery program. The State can pursue an individual or company that causes a fire for reimbursements of the cost of firefighting. This provides a large incentive for contractors to comply with the minimum requirements for ignition prevention as found in the public resources code. Key requirements include equipment inspections, spark arrestor, required fire fighting tools, and operational procedure such as weather monitoring for red flag events. However, many contractors do not know the requirements. An education and outreach campaign could be effective and include local equipment rental companies, nurseries, permit counters, repair shops, local blogs etc.
- Red flag weather could be communicated more effectively. Perhaps fly red flag at City Hall and other facilities. DFSC has extra red flags that could be made available for public facilities. Look at use of "nixel" or other communication system to push messages out regarding red flag and what to do during a red flag alert.
- Structure survivability and defensible space may be particularly of concern for some local institutions (e.g. March Creek Detention Facility, Diablo Valley Drug and Alcohol Rehab Center, and Curry Creek mobile home park) that may be at a higher level of risk or with special needs populations. LE-100 Defensible Space inspections are carried out by CAL FIRE personnel, but these inspections are not designed to evaluate structure construction and resistance to ignition.
- Firefighter capability. Much of the Morgan Territory area has very low or no fire-fighter response due to the distance from the nearest fire stations and low East Contra Costa Fire District staffing levels reflecting limited financial resources.
- East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD). Chief McCormick highlighted some of EBRPD future long-term projects. The District is interested in continuing to collaborate with agencies and the community. They maintain remote automated weather stations (RAWS) that provide data for red flag weather warnings, as well as a system of operations protocols related to fire danger (see www.ebparks.org/about/fire/Fire_Danger_and_Weather_Information/Fire_Weather_Information). Their nearest fire station is the Contra Loma station and with a first response coming out of Tilden Regional Park in west part of the county. The District is working with the Federal Fire regarding using the existing station at Concord Hills for EBRPD fire personnel staffing in the future. He explained to the group about the mutual aid agreements among fire departments that expand the response beyond a local fire department's resources to include other agencies. EBRPD manages a number of parks and regional preserves in the area including Round Valley, Black Diamond Mines, Morgan Territory Regional Park and the newest Clayton Ranch Regional Preserve. Fuel management activities are primarily through seasonal grazing. For more on grazing and monitoring of grasslands in the parks see <http://www.ebparks.org/about/stewardship/grazing>.
Raphael Breines provided information on a new land use planning effort for Clayton Ranch Regional Preserve. The 4,200 acre preserve will link from Marsh Creek Road to Black Diamond Mines. The preserve will primarily be for habitat and species protection, but will include trail use (on existing fire and ranch roads), camping and outdoor enjoyment. For more information and schedule see www.ebparks.org/about/planning-clayton-R.)
- Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (RCD). Paul Ingles provided information about the RCD <http://www.ccrd.org> that works with individuals, ranchers, public agencies and others

to facilitate conservation and stewardship of natural resources. Cheryl Morgan added information based on her father's continuing work with the RCD. In past years (when funding was available) RCD has sponsored a fire road program to work with landowners to develop longer term, less erosive fire roads. They also have assisted with developing grazing plans for grassland management, brush reduction, fire hazard reduction and natural resource protection. Another sources for natural resources information is the East Contra Costa Habitat Conservation Plan www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/cd/water/hcp/ that includes the project area.

- Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (CCCFPD). Fire Prevention Technician Kathy Woofter provided information about CCFPDs collaboration, including mutual aid and working with DFSC. CCFPD developed a protocol for flying red flags at their stations that they have shared with DFSC and others. The District's Exterior Hazard Control Division provides inspections and abatement of properties within their high fire priority zone. They have a defensible space program, but no staff at this time to enforce it, so the program primarily is through incentives (such as the DFSC cost share program). They anticipate additional inspectors and public education staff in the coming year. Similarly, the District has not formally adopted the State's 7A building code, but suggests builders or homeowners follow those guidelines during new construction or renovation. Sprinklers are required in new construction. Peg Gardener recommended we explore using the CCFPD "pulse point" public contact system to publicize red flag warnings.
- Save Mount Diablo. George Phillips, Land Conservation Manager provided an overview of Save Mount Diablo which owns 22 properties and approximately 22,000 acres. The organization primarily purchases property and looks for other agencies to manage long term. However, over the past four years they have been holding properties longer and now have a volunteer program for weed abatement around structures. Their core mission is to preserve habitat and natural resources on and around Mount Diablo through land acquisition and preservation strategies. They provide recreation consistent with protection of natural resources. They are interested in the overlap of conservation and wildfire. After the Morgan Fire they provided several small grants for research of post fire effects on the mountain. These projects are in their 3rd year of monitoring habitat recovery. They are also interested in the impacts of wildfire abatement practices especially related to non-native weeds (e.g. artichoke thistle, stinkwork). They do have several grazing operators on their lands both for habitat enhancement and fuel reduction. They are interested in working with local home-owner associations on their private open space (usually resulting from a condition of development) and best techniques for wildfire reduction. It was noted that RCD and DFSC also have this similar interest.
- City of Clayton. Councilmember Jim Diaz is interested in how the City can communicate wildfire hazard and prevention messages to with the community and appropriate roles for citizens.
- Animal Services. Peg Gardener explained that animals service is focused on the education and outreach associated with animal evacuation. They are connected with the local CERT (Community Emergency Response Training) groups, as well as the Red Cross, related to local preparedness.
- Board of Supervisor Mary Piepho's Office. Alicia Nuchols explained that the Supervisor is interested in community outreach and has monthly e-blasts. They are interested in communicating preparedness messages about year-round activities and ignition prevention.
- Board of Supervisor Karen Mitchoff's Office. Dominic Aliano echoed that Supervisor Mitchoff also does regular outreach and is interested in fire safety information.

- CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit: Division Chief Robert Chew talked about a current education focus on reducing risk of ignition. “One less spark, One less wildfire” is a current campaign. Materials were available at the meeting and at www.preventwildfireca.org/OneLessSpark/. CAL FIRE is also focused on new and infill development. In 2008 new building codes in Chapter 7A of the California Building Code went into effect for all SRA areas and Very High Zones in LRA(Local Responsibility Areas). calfire.ca.gov/fire_prevention/fire_prevention_wildland.php. In 2012, Senate Bill 1241 was signed into law and created new wildfire safety requirements related to land use planning and updates of the Housing and Safety Elements of the General Plan. The Board of Forestry and CAL FIRE now will review and sign off on these plans for compliance. In addition the Santa Clara Unit is developing pre-fire plans and evacuation plans. A copy of the evacuation brochure was shared at the meeting. For an example of the operational plan for fire service and response agency see San Luis Obispo County Fire District at <http://www.calfireslo.org/PreAttack.html>.
- Diablo Fire Safe Council (DFSC). Larry Nunes, Vice President and former Battalion Chief CCCFPD provided a historic perspective regarding the reduction in fire fighter capacity and station closures due to budget shortfalls over the past decades. The risk has become only more intense with the recent drought years. DFSC will continue to focus on outreach and education regarding the risk and provide incentives for hazardous fuel reduction.
- East Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (ECCCFPD). Cheryl Morgan, Director ECCCFPD and resident of Morgan Territory, provided information about the District’s collaborative partners, such as the Morgan Territory volunteers. This community organization has equipment and people to serve as a fire brigade, bringing water and assisting in protecting structures. Increasing access for fire response and resident evacuation is one long term project of particular interest. There are several unofficial roads (Finley Road, Black Diamond Road) that could provide emergency access/ egress if Marsh Creek Road or Morgan Territory Road are blocked. Morgan Territory area has a long response time due to its remoteness. ECCCFPD does not have the staffing for defensible space inspections; they utilize CAL FIRE staff to complete LE-100 inspections. Volunteers are developing a website for more proactive communication in addition to community blogs, and would like to add live video of fires and additional educational materials. Burn permits are required in the area and if staff is available are supervised by ECCCFPD. However, the District has to triage services due to their staffing capacity and budgets. Several cities in the District have been discussing separating from the District. If contiguous cities to Morgan Territory leave the District, Morgan Territory may also separate if they become non-contiguous to the rest of the District.

4. Expanding Participation in the Planning Process

Outreach methods for the planning effort include: email updates (a constant contact list has been developed), media releases, information on websites and newsletters with links for planning partners to share with their audiences, presence and presentations (e.g. a booth at the Clayton farmer’s market). Copies of the first email release and media release about the cost share program were distributed. DFSC requests that stakeholders spread the word about the project with their groups, and recommend anyone else who should be added to the contact list.

Website: www.diablofiresafe.org/clayton-morgan-Fires.html

Constant Contact list: [2015 DFSC email list](#)

5. Next Steps

It was determined to push the next meeting until late October / November due to fire activity. At the next working session we will continue to share assessments and community information. We will also begin to develop an Action Plan for future projects (both short term fuel projects and fire road maintenance projects, as well as long term projects) and talk about priorities and an assessment strategy.