

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MENDOCINO COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL, INC.**

Wednesday, October 24, 2007, at 5:30 p.m.

Ukiah Valley Fire District, 1500 S. State Street, Ukiah, California

President Colin Wilson called to order the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council (MCFSC) at 5:37 p.m. Directors present were Colin Wilson, Suzanne Guido, Ronda Gott, Hal Wagenet, Robert Bruce, and Steve Leonard. Also present were Executive Director Julie Rogers (“Staff”), Pat Collins and Nancy Hoon of the Pine Mountain Fire Safe Council, Jeff Tunnell of BLM, and Terry Nickerson of the U.S. Forest Service. Director Mike Jani was absent.

The Minutes of the August 22, 2007, meeting were unanimously approved as written.

Executive Director Julie Rogers began the meeting with the following report:

- **Federal Non-Profit Status.** On September 14, the IRS issued MCFSC a “letter of determination” that it is now an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, effective October 13, 2006, the date of the application. (California nonprofit status had already been gained, effective September 25, 2006.)
- **Mendocino National Forest Resource Advisory Council (RAC) funding.** In September the RAC voted unanimously to allocate \$12,000 of Secure Rural Schools Title II funds to help fund next year’s edition of “Living with Wildfire in Mendocino County.” In return the edition will highlight the Forest and the work of the RAC.
- **The Allen-Heath Memorial Foundation** had just that day granted MCFSC \$20,000 for its work in 2008. This foundation, headed by Chuck and Liz Phillips Heath of Hopland, has been a mainstay of MCFSC’s financial wellbeing for four years. Thank you!
- **FEMA Funding.** The County of Mendocino is currently preparing a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, which means that MCFSC will soon be eligible for FEMA “pre-disaster mitigation” funding. Staff is preparing a Notice of Interest indicating MCFSC’s intention to apply for funds when the grant period opens.
- **Audit/Review of MCFSC Books.** Staff is preparing for a “review and report” of MCFSC’s financial records by Larry Restel of the Coastal Mountain Group, Inc. Staff is also preparing MCFSC’s IRS 2006 Form 990, due November 15.
- **Northwestern California BLM Resource Advisory Council (RAC).** MCFSC’s Julie Rogers has been appointed to this BLM RAC by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Dick Kempthorne. Ms. Rogers had been solicited to apply for this position to bring a wildfire perspective to the RAC, whose 12 members advise BLM management on issues pertaining to its lands.

Under Committee Reports, President Wilson reported on a September 7 meeting of the ad-hoc Health Benefits Payments Committee. By a 2-1 vote, the Committee recommended that Staff be paid health benefits back to the date of her employment.

President Wilson reported that MCFSC is facing a nearly \$20,000 shortfall for its 2008 operating budget. He requested that the Fund Development Committee be reconstituted, and that MCFSC directors and members seek new avenues of funding to sustain the Council's work. He noted that without significant additional funding the Executive Director will be reduced to a part-time. Robert Bruce suggested that MCFSC needs a greater presence at area events. An ad-hoc Budget Committee consisting of President Wilson, Directors Steve Leonard and Ronda Gott, and Staff will work to create a reduced, balanced budget before the next board meeting.

President Wilson suggested that the position of Safety Officer be replaced by a Loss Control Committee, which he will head.

In the absence of CFO Mike Jani, Staff distributed copies of the Treasurer's Report. As of October 17, total funds in all accounts were \$29,356.70. Subtracting trust funds of \$2,676.65 being held for Pine Mountain and Robinson Creek FSCs yielded an MCFSC fund balance of \$26,680.05. Restricted funds for grant projects were \$10,982.23 (Pine Mountain only) plus \$1,750.00 being held for chipping and address signage. Total unrestricted funds on hand were \$13,947.82. Details are included in a Financial Summary and Notes, Balance Sheet, Statement of Income and Expenses, and Fiscal Outlook.

Suzanne Guido, Membership Committee Chair, reported five new memberships since the last meeting. Dues are \$20 per calendar year.

**BLM Grant Projects.** Pat Collins of the Pine Mountain Fire Safe Council reported that BLM-funded chipping is continuing in their area. The highly successful program has begun a chain reaction: the availability of free chipping has spurred homeowners along the north fork of Ridgewood Road to clear brush and branches from long stretches of the road, in addition to defensible space clearing. Road signs have been ordered and will be installed in December. Plans are underway for a mailing to 325 residents to kick off a second round of chipping in January.

MCFSC has also been awarded \$166,852 of BLM funding for vegetation clearing in Brooktrails, and funds should arrive in early 2008. This is MCFSC's second project in Brooktrails.

A "Fire Safe Homes, Mendocino!" defensible space clearing project for four elderly/disabled households has been completed, thanks to a \$3,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Mendocino County. The work, mostly tree trimming, was performed by Thompson Tree Service; and all recipients were pleased and grateful.

Director Robert Bruce reported that the newly-formed Oak Knoll Fire Safe Council, in the hills southwest of Ukiah, is working on address signage, emergency evacuation mapping, and roadside clearing.

Under New Business, the board considered a draft letter to the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office in opposition to an application by the California Fire Safe Council, Inc., to obtain a service mark (trademark) for the term "Fire Safe Council." If their application is granted, the California Fire Safe Council, a nonprofit corporation, will be the only entity who can legally use the term and logo. A number of county, regional, and local Fire Safe Councils are concerned that such control might require them to change their organizations' names and thus be detrimental to their work.

They are also concerned that the California Fire Safe Council might require a fee for permission to use the term, as their staff had mentioned in 2006. The Board unanimously voted to send the letter, with modifications, to the U.S. Patent Office immediately by fax, as the opposition deadline was the following week.

Staff suggested that it would be helpful to local Fire Safe Councils in Mendocino County to have a written description of the services the MCFSC provides to local groups. President Wilson asked Staff to complete a draft letter and send it to Board members for review and input.

Staff noted that the next deadline for applying to the Grants Clearinghouse for BLM funding is in February 2008. These are possible projects for submission:

1. Gorse Removal in Caspar. This project was not funded last year. Since then, awareness of the wildfire hazard posed by gorse has greatly increased, and the County Board of Supervisors has approved a resolution acknowledging the problem. Further, a very active Caspar Fire Safe Council has been formed. Staff has committed to re-submitting this project for funding.

2. Bell Springs Road Fuel Break. This would be the second phase of a 3-part project. The Southern Humboldt Fire Safe Council was awarded funding for the first part, in Humboldt County. Staff stated that strong community awareness and buy-in must be created in the project area before she can apply for funding. This application will be postponed until a future year.

3. Countywide Chipping Program. The Grants Clearinghouse has approved a number of grants for this purpose, and the need in Mendocino County is great. Staff intends to submit a proposal for approximately \$100,000 of BLM funding. The board expressed approval.

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, December 12, at 5:30 p.m. [The date was subsequently changed to Monday, December 17.]

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Dated: December 10, 2007

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Suzanne Guido, Secretary