

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
of
THE WEST CONTRA COSTA FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

The board of directors of The West Contra Costa Fire Safe Council (WCCFSC) held a videoconference meeting via Zoom on **March 4, 2024 at 7:00PM**.

The following directors were in attendance at the meeting and constituted the entire board:

Soheila Bana	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Marilyn Saarni	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Ra Criscitiello	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Rebecca Orona	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Angel Montoya	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Absent

Present: Erica Peng, Rocky Saunders, Catherine Rauch, Michelle Rinehart, Kate, Susanna Thompson, Susan Nishizaka, Joe Grupalo, Tony Semenza

AGENDA

1. Updates and Announcements

- a. **MARCH 6, 7-8pm, Repeat of Erica’s excellent talk due to high interest! “Be Comfortable With Being FireWise”** • Erica Peng helps leaders understand how our fight-flight-freeze instinct shapes our reactions/actions, and can sabotage best intentions and goals in our lives, relationships, and communities. She helps leaders learn strategies and practices for interrupting our automatic and unconscious reactions so we can get on with what’s most important: accomplishing shared goals and creating possibility together, amidst the most uncertain and destabilizing conditions of our time.
Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81821458348>
Meeting ID: 818 2145 8348
One tap mobile
+16694449171,,81821458348#
- b. Dumpster Days coming up in April
 - i. Richmond VHFHSZ and HFHSZ April 13 and 20
 - ii. Encourage neighbors to get rid of flammable stuff
- c. NOW OPEN: The Contra Costa Wildfire Mitigation Program welcomes applicants to the Low Income Exterior Hazard Control Program. You may access this program and others by visiting the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District website @ <https://www.cccfpd.org/wildfire-mitigation-program/>. This program allows for \$1,500 to address Zone 0 defensible space projects. It requires last year's tax return to verify income on a sliding scale. Please redact your Social Security number as it is not needed to determine eligibility.

- d. Last CWS Alert (brief discussion). Soheila requested that we write emails to all City Council members about the CWS. They do pay attention to resident emails.
2. Should we invite Chief Broschard or someone he appoints from Contra Costa Fire to discuss the county's approach to wildfire prevention, and what modeling it uses?

Catherine said she used to work with the County and they share info all the time. We need to be careful in suggesting that the fire chief needs info from this group-- that risks sounding patronizing. Erica said that Chief Winnacker explained this modeling in a webinar she attended, and found it very helpful to see visually. It helped create an understanding of how fire moves in varying landscapes and topographies. Joe said this is all brand new technology that helps us see the most likely places that fire will enter-- this helps them focus prevention dollars. Michelle offered to facilitate and ask a member of the badge service to attend this meeting, and requests that we clearly articulate what information we want to get out of the meeting. Measure X is separate from ConFire, and they accept public comment at their meetings.

 - a. "Strategically placed landscape area treatments" (SPLATs) are landscape fuel reduction treatments designed to reduce fire severity across an entire landscape with only a fraction of the landscape treated"
 - b. Erica showed a clip of Chief Winnacker's presentation with the mapping simulation. Joe said that ZoneHaven can run simulations, too, but that's different from the pathways software/modeling. Soheila requested that the City Council see the El Sobrante and Richmond simulations. Michelle said that current Measure X money will not be enough to fund this technology- most likely will be grant money. Joe explained that this is brand new technology and is likely to be used widely in order to target resources. Robert Shear is the computer scientist who built this, it is so new that it hasn't yet been monetized.
 - c. Erica's Wednesday talk: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GMR_GV-hOzz0MdE8YWKBXSLB9ufAouNk/view
 - d. Free maps: protect.genasys.com
3. Start a regular gathering to build relationships, community, celebrate achievements - Erica Peng. Coming out of the talk that Erica gave at the El Sobrante library, it's clear that there's a desire to talk and ask more questions about these topics. Flight/fright/freeze conversation was very fruitful. Thinking about a monthly community gathering to build community and connections. Soheila suggested being more dynamic like inviting different neighboring communities like Orinda. Michelle offered the CCCFPD classroom that holds up to 30 people. Marilyn suggested we could include field trips, such as looking at how EBMUD set up their burn piles. Rebecca shared that they tried to do this in Carriage Hills, turnout was low (about 25 people) which was disappointing. But maybe this is something we could grow.
4. Roll out Volunteer Firewise Inspector program. Orinda's program: <https://www.mofd.org/community/outreach-programs/fire-adapted-community->

[ambassador-program](#) . FireSafe Marin also has a similar volunteer program. We have some very well trained people who could help right away. Marilyn explained that if we get this launched, we will need volunteers who can help homeowners with the firewise info they are seeking.

5. Seminar Committee - Marilyn Saarni

- a. Tentatively set for Saturday May 4, 2024, [Wildfire Community Preparedness Day](#)
 - i. Fern Cottage (Kennedy Grove) is unavailable both 5/3 and 5/4. Suggestions for space with AV and capacity to hold >100 people? If at UC Berkeley after classes end, we may be able to get a free room on campus. Soheila suggested we focus first on who to invite and what subjects we focus on.
 - ii. Would June be a better time?
 - iii. Should we plan a lunch? Say 10-12, 12-1, 1-3pm? Perhaps we can co-host with another group.
- b. Committee volunteers - to develop program, Jim Hanson, Conservation Committee Chair, East Bay CNPS; Kathy Kramer, Bringing Back the Natives; Kate Rauch; Marilyn Saarni, WCCFSC V-Chair. *A couple more volunteers with science research contacts and/or organizational skills preferably? We have Monday.com project software to help.*
- c. Goal: Explore topics for the newest wildfire science that pertains to West Contra Costa
 - i. Tasks include recruiting local researchers to present their research
 - ii. Potential topics: leaf burning studies (both live and on-ground: spread, ember-production); efficacy of different Central CA forest and grassland maintenance approaches; riparian zone wildfire resilience (include engineering as well as vegetative best and worst practices); climate change impacts on wildfire risk for local WUI forests (parks and wildlands); neurological implications for disaster preparedness, evacuation; building community cohesion; successful incentives to change behavior; economical and cultural barriers to reducing risk and loss of life. What else?
 - iii. Of repeated interest is identifying flammable plants to be banned by the City and deep rooted plants to be promoted for preventing mudslides, highest-risk urban or wildland forest species. Consider seminar topic on latest research on Eucalyptus globulus: flammability, leaf burn/distribution patterns, mitigation, removal costs, hazards in removing on slopes, herbicides and where they cannot be used, ecosystem values, identifying endangered species and species of special concern reliant on eucalyptus groves. Expand to include other high flammability species in the WUI/urban forest.

6. Find volunteers to survey local evacuation routes and to identify and survey critical feeders (e.g., Rancho Rd.). We have several areas with only one workable evacuation route, and some of those routes may not be stable after an earthquake or have trees overhanging roads that could topple and made the road impassable. Need a volunteer to walk around and fill out an online survey showing the hazards that could create roadblocks. Soheila suggested Pam would be helpful in Rancho Road area.
7. Launch campaign to urge cleanup of flammable debris before wildfire season
 - a. Identify evacuation route hazards.
8. Switching meetings to first Monday of the month