

Meeting Agenda for: Thursday, August 10, 2023, from 4:30pm to 5:45pm

Raley's Conference Room: 40041 CA-49 #49, Oakhurst, CA 93644

Or join us via Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86999943919?from=addon>

To receive documents provided to those in attendance at the board meeting, please email kayla.rohrbaugh@crccd.org with your request no later than 3pm the day before the meeting. Items provided to directors prior to the meeting will be emailed with the agenda to all recipients requesting to be on the distribution list.

4:30 Call to Order

Approval of the Agenda - All approved

Introductions

Public Comment **Please limit comments to 2 minutes**

4:35 Consent Agenda – *Sierra Bookkeeping needs to compile annual report and financial statements to provide Treasurer's report. Sierra Bookkeeping plans to have the finalized report for the September meeting*

Approval of the Minutes of July 13th, 2023 – *Jay requested that a change be made to July 2023 Minutes.*

Financial report July 2023 - Sierra Bookkeeping did not receive necessary reports from previous bookkeeper to complete the annual financial report. Sierra Bookkeeping plans to have the finalized report for the September meeting.

4:40 Reports – Please limit to 5 minutes per organization

NRCS – Mira Dick – not in attendance

Madera Dept of Water Resources – Jeannie Habben – not in attendance

Madera County – Bobby Macauley – not in attendance

North Fork Rancheria – Daniel Aguayo – not in attendance

CALFIRE – Mike Keyser – not in attendance

Eastern Madera County Fire Safe Council – Ashley Nebeker – Ashley said they have been awarded a grant for a chipping program in Madera County. They will be able to service 33 low-income homes with chipping services for fallen trees/brush 100 ft from the home. Awarded a grant from the California Fire Foundation to purchase a matrix sign for road work. They put these on the roads they have been building evacuation routes on. They will begin working on road 420 evacuation route in the next couple weeks. Jon said that he and Ashley will be working together at the Fall Festival October 6th-8th. They are planning on having a Fire Prevention Table at the event.

Yosemite Sequoia RC & D – Erin Capuchino – They will be looking into partnering with CRCD for more FW projects. They have officially published their winter storm damage mitigation project and they have 4 applicants. Their plan is to assess each property, Erin then reviews the assessment and if appropriate

they start work on the property. Their contractor is ready and waiting for work. They have income requirements, but it is also first come first served so they are starting projects that do not meet income requirements. Applications for the program are only available via QR code, but they are working on a system that will help people who do not have smart phones fill out the application. YSRC&D are interested in supporting other RCDs and programs. YSRC&D is also working on the Community Economic Resilience Fund with CRCDC. Erin asked us to share Economic Development surveys.

Firewise – Kelly Green – See attached report

Executive Director report – Jon Cottingham – See attached Report

Public Comment from Andre Kohler: Andre introduced himself and expressed interest in taking care of the burn piles on his property and suggested that Madera County implement a chipping program like Mariposa RCD. Jon informed him that Ashley with CFSC has a chipping program available. Andre shared his interest in creating more park trails in the area. Julie shared that there has been a big push in North Fork for park trails. Jon told him that he and Erin could discuss some of Andre's concerns at a later time.

5:15

Old Business

- Annual Financial Report – his has been postponed until next month. Our bookkeeper did not provide the necessary documents to create an accurate report.
 - David made the motion and Lyndal seconded the motion to switch to Sierra Bookkeeping as of September 1st.
- Succession Planning – nothing to report

5:30

New Business

- Board Policies – Julie is working on a Board Handbook and Board policies. The board approved the Policy of Procurement of Construction that Julie created.
- Hiring Committee – Jon would like the board members and partners to form a hiring committee.
- YSRCDC and CARCD Membership Dues - Erin with YSRCDC&C said that one payment of \$250 would be accepted. CARCD wants 2% of our unrestricted funds in exchange for their membership. The board approved this membership.

5:45

Workshops / Events / Presentations

- Admin Grant Writing Workshop August 24-25th 2023

Adjourned at 5:52

Adjourn: Next Meeting September 14, 2023, 4:00pm @ Raley's Conference Room & Via Zoom

Sub-contractor Progress Report: Title III Firewise Coordination Program

Sub-contractor/partner: Coarsegold
Resource Conservation District

Reporting Period: July 2023

Report Preparer & Title: Kelly Green II
- Firewise Coordinator

Email address: kelly.green@crccd.org

Phone Number: 559.389.8781

Date: 08-10-2023

Progress reports are an explanation of what occurred during a one-month period. If no fiscal activity occurred, that is acceptable, but explain what did occur during the reporting period (challenges encountered, plans made or changed, etc.). Please include details about upcoming projects, workshops, or purchases that you will be making to accomplish the tasks/deliverables outlined in your scope of work.

Summary of activities that occurred during the reporting period (e.g., communities established, communities outreached, workshop coordination, products created/developed):

- Continued to distribute educational materials to existing and prospective communities.
- Review and update Firewise® communities boundary maps and create shape files in Arc GIS Pro.
 - 20 of 21 complete.
- Maintained technical assistance and communication with all established Firewise® communities.
- Community Application Status
 - Indian Lakes was approved. Our 21st community in Eastern Madera County.
 - Indian Springs Road is still gathering residents and conducting individual risk assessments.
 - Crooks Mountain has created a community in the Firewise portal.
- Continue outreach to Resident Leaders in certified communities to
 - Completed tree trimming in the community of Oakhurst Area located off Road 426.
 - Completed tree trimming in the community of Mudge Ranch.
- Firewise community meetings, events, and presentations
 - Jon Cottingham presented to prospective community Ridgeline near Bass Lake.
- Social Media outreach on defensible space and home hardening to engage new communities.

Relation of activities to overall goals, deliverables, and timeline. Please quantify progress where possible (e.g., XX community members engaged on MM/DD/YYYY for kick off meeting, XX new communities established, XX action plans developed):

- Continuing Resident leader discussion to help committees plan projects for the 2023 year.
- Timely assistance to prospective communities has allowed for consistent progress in certifying new communities. one new community reapplied this month.
- Outreach to all Resident Leaders re: Scheduling contracted workdays, community meetings, Recertification deadline, Tool Cache reminder; continued assistance to individual communities as needed, including portal uploads for recertification efforts and new applications.

Sub-contractor Progress Report: Title III Firewise Coordination Program

- Social Media outreach has increased the visibility in the community, leading to additional inquiries on the program.
- Review and updating maps in Arc GIS Pro allow us to quickly identify and quantify communities and surrounding forest service lands.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period and possible challenges in the future (e.g., meeting cancelled, unresponsive homeowner's, personnel change):

- CRCD continues to face the challenge of waiting for the in-progress communities to essentially make progress. Coarsegold RCD must wait for the committees to complete the application process in their own time.
- Lack of response for scheduling community meetings from approved Firewise® communities. Community members are not reaching out to schedule meetings.

How challenges impact overall accomplishments and plans to remedy the situation (e.g., personnel change required additional time to onboard for program but they began outreaching communities this month; unexpected weather required cancelling a risk assessment but it has been rescheduled for next month, etc):

- CRCD continued outreach to individual resident leaders through email, site visits, and community meetings has kept energy high in recertification, as well as progress on community action plans. Some communities remain silent so continued correspondence will be necessary.
- CRCD continued outreach to prospective and in-progress communities.
- We have created a new project application that can be shared with the whole community to create a list of shovel ready projects in the community.

Next steps (please provide a brief summary or list of activities planned for the next month):

- Expand use of new Firewise surveys to streamline the process in larger communities.
- Continue scheduling the existing Firewise® Communities for contracted work.
- Schedule Community meetings for every certified community to plan for future funds/projects.
- Continue to attend meetings and webinars for additional grant funding opportunities.
- Review Action Plans for each community to see where implementation funding can be used to the best advantage.
- Continue to be flexible and available to any community in need of assistance towards becoming Firewise®.
- Continue community outreach to find new prospective Firewise® communities.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
August 10, 2023

CALFIRE GRANT: We have shared the Defensible Space Program at the FireWise presentations throughout the month and also released the info on Social media. Since then, We have sent out another 6 applications. We will continue to reach out to folks. I met with the Director of the Fresno LCC last week to discuss working with their group. They have grant funding to work on defensible space work in the county. They joined me on 2 site visits in North Fork and are reaching out to the state to get permission to collaborate on the projects. Fresno LCC would provide labor for a crew of 10 to both of these sites, free of charge. CRCD will need to provide oversight, restrooms, and a chipper, but this will get much more work done for a lower cost. These hours can also be considered match for the grant.

I have also been in discussion with Provost and Pritchard, a civil engineering firm out of Fresno that would like to partner with CRCD on one of these projects as well. This group requires employees to participate in one community service event a year. One of our sites is in the Fork fire scar and they qualified for the CALFIRE program, as well as the pollinator habitat program. Provost and Pritchard will provide 10-20 volunteers on 9/15 to assist in brushing the defensible space around the remaining structures. Some of these hours will also provide match to the grant Depending on their availability, I will be releasing a RFP to get a contractor lined out for the remaining part of this project

MADERA FIREWISE© COMMUNITIES: CRCD has continued work on the Firewise program. We had 1 new community (Ridgeline) 1 community workday and 1 Chipping day were completed in July for the Mudge Ranch community. Projects are in the planning and prep phase for multiple communities in the upcoming month.

CA FIRESAFE COUNCIL FIRE PREVENTION COODINATOR:

- Oversaw CRCD's Firewise program, which had 1 community workday, 1 chipping event, and 1 new community (Ridgeline Homes) start the process.
- Presented Fire Prevention and FireWise program at Ridgeline and Indian Lakes Communities
- Attended CFSC County Coordinator Quarterly meetings.
- Launch Yosemite Gateway PBC website with YSRCDC.
- Began entering data for CFSC GIS portal information
- Attended EMCFSC Advisory Meeting
- Researched EMCFSC MOU and CARCD Post Fire Proposal
- Attended meetings with Madera County and YSRCDC for project planning/program management.
- Attended planning meetings with Madera County, Red Cross, CAL FIRE, CFSC, and YGPBC.
- Social Media outreach on defensible space and home hardening to engage new communities.
- We are planning on having a "Wildfire Prevention Corner" at the Oakhurst Fall Festival in partnership with EMCFSC, YSRCDC, and YGPBC.

Unfortunately, Madera County accidentally used the County Coordinator funds to pay EMCFSC for some of their Evacuation Route grant. The funds were in the same account, although they were being tracked separately. However, this accident has now delayed CRCD's reimbursement for May, June, July. They have reached out to CFSC about getting an advance on their funds and we were informed that CFSC's funds are delayed and to not



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expect reimbursement till late October. This will cause a financial strain on CRCD, so I have spoken with the grants manager at the county and he is looking into options to resolve the issue.

NACD: CRCD met with NRCS to discuss future collaborations. We are actively discussing how we can best make our partnership work more efficiently in the future. We will continue to present the NRCS programs to property owners as we meet with potential Firewise Communities. We also have links for the programs on our web page.

WCB Pollinator Block Grant: CRCD will be submitting the first report for this grant on April 20th.

Land Owner Agreements have continued to move forward. Chawanakee Unified approved the agreement at the June meeting. I met with Yosemite High School and approved the amendments to the agreement. It will make it in front of the board at the upcoming meeting, this coming Monday. I have still not heard back from Wasuma. I have also received the LOA's from both private landowners. As soon as agreements are signed and approved by CARCD, we can begin prep work on the sites. I hope to start prep work at the end of August. Provost and Pritchard will provide 10-20 volunteers on 9/15 to assist in one of our pollinator habitats that we will be creating within the Fork Fire scar. These folks will assist us with cleaning the site, any necessary weeding, installing drip line, solarization plastic, etc. This will provide match to the grant and get the prep work done on this site ahead of schedule and under budget.

CERF (Community Economic Resiliency Fund)

We have attended the virtual July and August meetings for the CERF program to discuss the health, economic, and environmental concerns affecting Madera County and the San Joaquin Valley as a whole. Participants will continue to work together to come up with new plans and strategies to diversify and improve local economies. Reimbursement methods are being decided upon and we should receive a portion of the funds to cover time and expenses in the near future.

The CERF was created to promote a sustainable and equitable recovery from the economic distress of COVID-19 by supporting new plans and strategies to diversify local economies and develop sustainable industries that create high-quality, broadly accessible jobs for all Californians. We had our first county meeting on 5/30/23, where we set goals and ground rules for this working group. Participating agencies will receive funds to reimburse for time and travel. There will be implementation funds available to begin to address the issues that the committee highlights. Yosemite Sequoia is leading the environmental panel and we will be working alongside them and other groups to advocate for funds to be directed towards forest health projects in eastern Madera County that will benefit the residents of the area as well as the economy within our county. This is a yearlong project with monthly meetings. I will update the board as I learn more.

Jon Cottington, Executive Director

Succession Planning/ Annual Financial Report: Teri Van Huss from Tulare RCD has been assisting CRCD with payroll for some time now. Her prices were very reasonable, and for many years she provided service that



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helped in CRCD's mission. However, discrepancies were found that made CRCD's previous treasurer's report inaccurate. These reporting issues can be traced back into 2022. No additional monies were paid to any employees or contractors. However, hours were tracked incorrectly during these time periods, leading to overages in a few grants, NACD in particular. These hours had to be made up out of general funds in order to satisfy the grants. This leaves our annual report showing a general funds balance of -\$47.00. However, Madera County owed us reimbursements of \$12,450 for the County Coordinator grant. This would cover indirect and payroll for May and June and would have been reflected on the balance if we had received the funds. By the time of this meeting, they now owe us for July as well. Therefore, the actual amount in general funds should be closer to \$18,000. This is still less than the \$28,000 that we thought we had before finding the reporting discrepancies. So I will be looking into other avenues to purchase the vehicle so as to not further deplete general funds.

These errors, coupled with very long lag times in supplying CRCD with the necessary reports to find these issues has led CRCD to look for other payroll vendors. The idea was floated that we may need to change to Sierra Bookkeeping in May. Teri had previously charged \$90 a quarter and we decided to hold off because she was more affordable. In June, Teri raised her rates to \$200 a quarter. Savannah's cost per quarter is \$157.50 for Quickbooks plus Savannah's hours. She estimates 1-3 hours monthly to handle payroll, until she trains Kayla on the process, at which point these hours will shrink further. Although this is slightly more expensive per month, when you factor in the previous issues that cost CRCD general funds as well as the hours spent waiting for reports, this expense is negligible. Having payroll in house with a bookkeeper that is much more aware of daily activities will speed up the office work, thereby lowering the cost difference even further. I am hoping the board would like to make a motion to hire Savannah on as our future bookkeeper starting 9/1/23.

New Business

Board Policies: CRCD has not updated board policies in many years. The current policies are loosely compiled and do not touch on everything that is needed. Julie is working on taking old policies and updating them into a proper handbook that can be distributed to members. One area that has not been addressed in previously adopted policies is procurement of specialized and/or construction services. CRCD wants to release a RFP for our CalFire low income defensible space work. We need to adopt policies that discuss these topics in detail. I have reached out to other RCD's and received a few versions of these board policies that have been vetted and adopted. After reviewing, Mariposa, Santa Monica, and Napa RCD's policies, we would like to adopt the policy before you that is almost identical to the other RCD's. I have sent these policies to the board, but have a copy if anyone would like to see. I am hoping the board can make a motion to adopt these policies, which will be added to the updated handbook in the coming weeks/month.

Hiring Committee: Because we hope to release the RFP for the CALFIRE project as soon as possible, I would like to create a hiring committee to discuss and approve bids for this project. If I can get this released next week, we should be able to review bids and make a decision at a committee meeting prior to the next board meeting. Can the board make a motion to establish a hiring committee and choose 5 members to sit on this committee.

Membership Dues:



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It is the time of year for some of our partner organizations to ask for membership dues. Partnerships with YSRCDC and CARCD bring CRCD additional grant opportunities, training opportunities, technical assistance, and access to a network of people in the same industry that assist each other as often as possible. Currently our partnership with YSRCDC has allowed us to collaborate on the Madera County Firewise program as well as the County Coordinator program. They are asking for \$250-\$500 for membership dues. They also want to sign a new MOU for the current year. This is due as soon as possible. Given the current state of our general funds, I suggest that we offer \$250 for our dues.

Our partnership with CARCD has allowed us to collaborate on the RCPP program as well as the Pollinator Habitat Program. We are also in discussions with them on a post fire rehab proposal, new RCPP contract, and possible shared staff position with NRCS. Their dues are on a sliding scale based on income. Because of our current funds, it looks like CARCD will allow us to pay \$xxxx.

These dues are required to be paid by August 31st. I am hoping the board will make a motion to approve the updated MOU with YSRCDC and the membership dues. I am also hoping that the board will approve paying the membership dues required by CARCD.

Workshops/Events/Presentations

CRCD will be participating in a Fire Prevention Meeting Saturday August 12, in the Ahwahnee Estates FireWise Community. Although this is a community meeting, I have been told it is open to the public. Once I receive a finalized list of attendees and a flyer, I will share it with the board. There are no other upcoming events next month from CRCD at this time.

If there is no more items to discuss, we can adjourn. Thanks to everyone for attending. Our next meeting will be September 14th at 4pm. Hope to see everyone there. Have a great evening.