

Meeting Agenda for January 11, 2024

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

Or join us via Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84366607385>

To receive documents provided to those in attendance at the board meeting, please email kayla.rohrbaugh@crcd.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.

- 4:00 **Call to order 4:08**
Approval of the Agenda: All approved.
Introductions
Public Comment **Please limit comments to 2 minutes**
- 4:05 **Consent Agenda**
Approval of the Minutes: All Approved

Financial Report: All Approved
- 4:10 **CRCD Reports**
Firewise Report – Kelly Green – See Attached Report
Executive Director Report – Jon Cottington – See Attached Report
- 4:25 **Old Business**
- NRCS TA Meeting/RCPP Update: Jon informed the board that NRCS would not be able to offer CRCD an advance of funds. CRCD will not be able to pay a new employee without this advance. CRCD would like to accept the RCPP funding.
- 4:40 **New Business**
- UMPQUA Bank: Due to limited unrestricted funds and delay in reimbursements from organizations, CRCD would like to open a business line of credit. This line of credit would give us some cushion when needed. CRCD heard of UMPQUA bank through California Special District Associations. This bank specializes in Special Districts and may be able to help us open a line of credit. Jon and Kayla have a meeting with an UMPQUA bank on 1/17/24 to discuss credit options. The board agreed to pursue this option and Central Valley Community Bank.
- 4:55 **Partner Reports**
- NRCS – Mira Dick – NRCS has a few application opportunities open until February 16th, 2024. There may be more opportunities to apply later in the

year. The Crisis to Opportunities application deadline is April 5th, 2024.

- Madera Dept of Water Resources – Jeannie Habben – Not in attendance
- Madera County – Bobby Macauley – Not in attendance
- North Fork Rancheria – Lance Fink – Not in attendance
- CALFIRE – Mike Keyser – Not in attendance
- Eastern Madera County Fire Safe Council – Ashley Nebeker – EMFSC received funding for their chipping program. The Evacuation Route Grant is complete. They were able to clear 17 miles of right-of-way. EMFSC is now working with Burt Stalter as a forester, and he will be working on the COCOAIM project.
- Yosemite Sequoia RC & D – Erin Capuchino – Not in attendance

5:10 **Workshops/Events/Presentations**

- Measure T Funding
- Brown Act Webinar – January 24th, 2024 10:00am – 12:00pm

5:15 **Adjourn: Next Meeting February 8, 2024, 4:00pm @ Raley's
Conference Room & Via Zoom**

Adjourned 5:19

Sub-contractor Progress Report: Title III Firewise Coordination Program

Sub-contractor/partner: Coarsegold
Resource Conservation District

Reporting Period: November 2023

Report Preparer & Title: Kelly Green II
- Firewise Coordinator

Email address: kelly.green@crccd.org

Phone Number: 559.389.8781

Date: 12-12-2023

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.
- Maintained technical assistance and communication with all established Firewise® communities.
 - Nearly every established community needed assistance completing the renewal process due to changes implemented by Cal Fire.
- Previously scheduled work was completed in the following communities.
 - **Kletty's Pride** – Hazard tree removal, thinning and clearing vegetation near homes and outbuildings, chipping, and removal of green waste.
 - **Miami Highlands** – Green waste bins delivered for removal of vegetation that homeowners have removed from the defensible space around their homes. A chipping day for the remainder of the vegetation that has been removed from the roadsides.
 - **Stillmeadow Ranch** – Along critical egress routes roadside vegetation has been removed; larger trees were trimmed to reduce ladder fuels.
 - **Timber View** – Along critical egress routes roadside vegetation has been removed; larger trees were trimmed to reduce ladder fuels and brush piles removed.
 - **Meadwosprings** – Along critical egress routes roadside vegetation has been removed; larger trees were trimmed to reduce ladder fuels.
 - **Road 225** – Along critical egress routes roadside vegetation has been removed; larger trees were trimmed to reduce ladder fuels.
- Community Application Status
 - Indian Springs Road – Community Risk Assessment and 3-Year Action Plan ready to be submitted, resident leaders have created a community within the Firewise portal application to be submitted early December.
 - Crooks Mountain – No progress.
 - Ridgeline – Application was approved.
- Continue outreach to Resident Leaders in certified communities to
 - Remind all communities of the annual renewal process and offer technical assistance.
- Firewise community meetings, events, and presentations
 - Jon was invited to present the Firewise program for Sunrise Rotary.
- Social Media outreach on defensible space and home hardening to engage new communities.

Sub-contractor Progress Report: Title III Firewise Coordination Program

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' complete projects for the 2023 year.
- Timely assistance to prospective communities has allowed for consistent progress in certifying new communities.
- 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.
- 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 scheduled 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.



Sub-contractor Progress Report: Title III Firewise Coordination Program

- 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
January 11,2024

CALFIRE GRANT: American Tree Medics has completed assessments and defensible space work around the 39 homes in their contract. CRCD will have just under \$4000.00 left in contractual funds once the contractor has invoiced. However, after looking at our budget, we determined that we would have some additional personnel/benefit funds left over at our current rate. We have reached out to Southern Grants to request a \$7500 budget adjustment to put these remaining funds into contractual. This would allow CRCD to assist an additional 3 homes with the remaining funds. The other portion of the grant is for FireWise communities. Project planning is ongoing and requests for proposals will be going out in 2024, so we see no negative impact to the grant closeout date of March 2026.

MADERA FIREWISE® COMMUNITIES: CRCD has continued work on the Firewise program. We welcomed our 2^{3rd} FireWise community last month, Indian Springs. We also had 2 new communities, Thunderhead Drive, and NF Rancheria, start the process in December. We had 2 projects completed in the Klette's Pride, StillMeadow, Miami Highlands, Timberview, and Meadow Springs neighborhoods.

Last month, all communities had to renew their application. However, communities that are older than one year old are having to update their 3 year action plan by inserting into CALFIRE's new template. Over half of our communities had to update their action plans in order to fit into the new template. Some communities have been having issues with this update because the templates were not working on Mac computers. Kelly, Kayla and I had to assist those communities with uploading this information to the new template and eventually the FireWise portal.

CA FIRESAFE COUNCIL FIRE PREVENTION COODINATOR:

- **Oversaw CRCD's Firewise program, which had 2 projects planned, two new communities starting the process, and one new community recognized. All 22 communities were engaged regarding technical issues regarding renewal of applications.**
- **Attended monthly CFSC County Coordinator meetings.**
- **Attended planning meetings with NF Rancheria and RPF. Begin mapping and writing proposal for CALFIRE WP grant for tribal allotment lands.**
- **Attended planning meetings with Madera County, CAL FIRE, CFSC, EMCFSC, YSRCDC, and YGPBC.**
- **Social Media outreach on defensible space and home hardening to engage new communities.**
- **Attended planning meetings with EMCFSC and GrizzlyCorps for possible intern position. CRCD has received word that our RFFCP proposal has moved to the next round of review so CRCD and EMCFSC will need to create an MOU between the groups to define our partnership and have an agreement drawn up for sharing information, intern staff time, and possibly office space.**

NACD/RCPP: CRCD had a meeting with NRCS on November 29 to discuss future collaborations. As I mentioned previously we are waiting to accept the NACD TA agreement, but would like to accept the RCPP funding so we



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can have that funding pool available for residents. We can discuss this further under old business. But 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.

We continued site prep with our Senior Project at Mountain Oaks High School. This site will be prepped this year and we hope to apply for a xerces kit in the spring. CRCD and Madera/Chowchilla are looking to possibly partner on sites at the Oakhurst Senior Center and Hillside Elementary. Discussions are ongoing. I have also been contacted by a Girl Scout troop who is interested in partnering for an approved habitat at the Coarsegold Community Center. The habitats will be going dormant through the winter but we will continue to monitor them as needed. But we want to plan new habitats for 2024 now if we want to potentially receive habitat kits from Xerces again. I am also thinking about looking into the potential Arbor Day Funding that was mentioned last month, and how we could use that to help pay for some native trees for some of our pollinator habitats. I will have to adjust the proposal that Lyndall and I created if we go this route, so we will have to discuss it further. But it would be great to get Arbor Day in as a partner on one of these future projects.

Quick note on the budget side. This discussion will tie into the discussion under new business so we can dive deeper then if we need to. CARCD has always been a few months behind in payment of CRCD invoices, but currently we have not been paid for the pollinator work we've done since September. The pollinator Program Manager for CARCD was just promoted to Executive Director, mixed with the CARCD conference and holiday season, and we understand that there could be a delay. But When these type of reimbursement grants take this long, it definitely hurts a small group like CRCD's ability to fully function and thrive. I will share more as things progress.

CERF (Community Economic Resiliency Fund)

We have not attended any meetings since the last board meeting. However, we have received a draft copy of a survey that will be intended for the public when released in order to get the community's perspective about the needs of the county/region. We will be sharing the final version of this survey with all partners and ask them to share it as well. The information collected in this survey will help in determining where funding will make the largest impact. We will share more with everyone soon.

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.

Audit – Jaribu Nelson, CPA is working with staff to collect all remaining necessary documents to complete the audit. There are a few receipts from 2016-2017 that we are working on tracking down, but things are moving forward.

Old Business:

NRCS staff/ TA Agreement/RCPP



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As I mentioned last month, I attended a meeting with NRCS representatives about the possibility of having a CRCD employee in the NRCS office using a combination of available NRCS TA funds and a new round of RCPP funding. I mentioned to the board that I had reached out to CARCD about possible advance funding for this position, Sophia Lemmo stated that they are still waiting for an answer back from NRCS on that subject, but she said it sounded promising. She is on vacation until next week but responded to my inquiry right before she left and reversed her opinion. She said advanced funding is not looking possible but would be willing to look into options when she returned from vacation. We have been waiting nearly 4 months for CARCD to reimburse us for the Pollinator grant. If we had to wait this long for funding for a full time position, it would cause CRCD severe financial strain. So at this time, I would like to hold off on accepting any funding until we speak to CARCD.

From Last Month for reference:

“Last month, I attended a meeting alongside Kelly Kucharski (Executive Director of Sierra RCD) with the Fresno and Madera field offices of the NRCS, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist Johnnie Siliznoff, Chris Zimny NRCS State Forester, and CARCD representatives. The meeting was created by Kelly and myself in order to discuss our existing partnership and how that can improve with the new round of RCPP funding as well as the new NRCS TA agreement.

NRCS made it clear that they did not need the RCD's to provide funding for an forester or forestry technician to help improve the workflow on their end. They said that the main roadblock is the paperwork on the backend of these agreements. They agreed that the best way for our RCD's to assist them using this funding is to hire an employee of the RCD that will be housed in the NRCS field offices to assist with NRCS contracts. Between the two funding sources, it will pay for a full time employee that CRCD will only have to provide minimal oversight and will have access to for field related work, when necessary.

We are still needing more input from NRCS as to the little framework that is currently in place for this type of employee. We need to know that NRCS is fully committed to managing the person. Another large concern is the time lapse for reimbursement for payroll for this employee. Currently we are waiting around 3 months for reimbursement from CARCD for our pollinator program. If we have to wait this long for reimbursement for a full time employee, this may cause undue financial burden to the RCD. I have reached out to CARCD about possible advance funding for this position, Sophia Lemmo stated that they are still waiting for an answer back from NRCS on that subject, but she said it sounded promising. We should enter into the new RCPP program to open that funding up for Eastern Madera residents to use without having the new shared staff member, but the NRCS TA agreement requires us to hire someone with Forestry background. I am ready to sign the RCPP agreement, but feel we need to wait to sign the TA agreement until we hear more from CARCD and NRCS. “

New Business



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Umpqua Bank (Credit Card) – CRCD has limited unrestricted funds. Current unrestricted funds are enough to cover a pay cycle, give or take. When reimbursements take months longer than expected, this leaves little wiggle room. Advances like CALFIRE or FireWise have provided some padding on the issue. However, the CALFIRE advance is being expended by March and the FireWise funds sunset in September. One option that virtually all businesses utilize to deal with these fluctuations is a business line of credit. This would simply help us get through the possible down times between payments. CRCD has looked for a business line of credit/ credit card from our bank (United Security) in the past and were told there was nothing available. CRCD has found a bank through our membership in CA Special Districts Association, Umpqua Bank, that may be able to provide this option. They do not have a nearby branch, closest being in Merced, but they work with a variety of special districts throughout the state on this issue of credit. They are actually partnered with CSDA, so this sounds like a promising option. Kayla and I have a meeting scheduled next Wednesday with bank representatives. If Umpqua is able to work with us, we want to make arrangements as soon as possible. I am hoping the board can make a motion to approve opening a credit card through Umpqua Bank.

Workshops/Events/Presentations

There is a Brown Act webinar, hosted by the CSDA on Tuesday January 23rd that the board may wish to attend. There is also a CSDA Ethics compliance course on Thursday, February 8th. You can sign up for both of these at CSDA.net.

Also Tuesday, January 23rd EMCFSC and CRCD will be hosting a virtual special Madera County Fire Prevention Advisory Meeting. A Representative from the Madera County Transportation Commission is presenting on a potential renewal of Measure T and how Fire Prevention fits into their funding. This meeting will be for partner agencies/organizations and not open to the general public. CRCD Board Members are available to attend if interested.

There are no other events or presentations to share this month. With the holidays, work can slow down in the month of December. Staff took some much needed days off around the holidays, and are looking forward to a fulfilling new year. So with that, Thanks everyone for joining us here in 2024. We can adjourn the meeting.

Jon Cottington, Executive Director