

Forest Health and Wildfire Mitigation meeting

June 25, 2024

On Tuesday, June 25th, at 11:00 AM, our Foresters, Jared Fleming and Ashley Selee and property owners Kelley Bruns, Deb Johnson, Michael Hughes and Linda Myers attended a meeting at the home of Michael & Linda for the purpose of discussing the [2024-2025 Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation \(FRWRM\) Grants](#) provided by the Colorado State Forest Service. This is the same type of grant that was awarded to the SFTR for the 2022-2023 grant cycle.

Discussed were a number of strategies such as submitting one large grant application for all of the recommended fuel breaks, a single application for each fuel break or bundling similar fuel break projects into a single application. Each of these options has its own set of pros and cons.

Prior to the meeting, Michael had provided Jared with potential grant applications for each of the 12 CWPP recommended fuel breaks to consider. Jared suggested that the Tall Oaks and Mountain View projects, being mostly completed, may not be approved. New fuel break projects, rather than refurbished projects, would be more likely to be approved. On the other hand, the Vista West and Fox Trail projects have a lot of favorable attributes such as being an evacuation route and providing access to the water supply. He also suggested that bundling similar fuel break projects in an application would be advantageous while including all of the recommended fuel breaks in a single application may become unwieldy without a committee to manage them. Jared recommended bundling the projects into four or six grant applications and these applications should mention that property owner mitigation work has continued since the closing of the previous 2023-2034 FRWRM grant without any funding.

General CSFS grant issues were discussed such as the Grant cycle application period begins on August 1st and closes on October 10th. Notification of the acceptance of grant applications is supplied by the CSFS at end of January 2025. At that point, the applicant may either accept or reject the award. Grant awards are announced on April 1, 2025. The grant term is believed to be 3-4 years and the reimbursement level is 75% (aka 25% match) once the project is completed. Michael mentioned that it might take until August to develop a fuel break application that is acceptable to the CSFS, the POA as well as the affected property owners. It was agreed that a budget of \$1,000 per acre sounded good recognizing that some projects may be substantially higher or lower. The fact that some property owners have considerably more road frontage than others might be an issue. Possibilities for various property owner reimbursement schemes were also discussed. The concept of "In-kind" in the form of either cash or volunteer labor probably needs additional clarification. If we do bundle fuel break projects into multiple grant applications and they are approved and accepted, the grants would run concurrently.

Deb inquired as to what next steps need to be taken. Michael suggested that grants for local fuel break projects could be instigated, designed and managed by the property owners directly involved and customized for the needs of the applicants. Deb also suggested that the POA Board be informed that we are considering starting the grant application process. SFTR Community buy in is critical and may need informational meetings at the MOC to generate interest and answer questions from our property owners. Jared and Ashley said that they would be happy to support these meetings and attend as much as able. Kelley asked how we were planning on notifying property owners. Snail mail and emails were discussed. While not all property owners use the SFTR website, Facebook group and/or Nextdoor – these communication channels should be considered as well.

No plans for any future meetings were discussed.

Submitted by:

Michael Hughes, Deb Johnson & Kelley Bruns