Jemez Mountains Firewise Association
Annual Meeting 1/31/2023

Present: Harry Jones, Tom Swetnam, Tom Bennion, Paul Lisko, Ann Cooke, Pat Jones, Luke McLarty, Basil Swanson, John Kingsley, Martha Graham.

The meeting agenda appears at the end of the minutes.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM. The meeting was held via Zoom and recorded.

Forest Service Update (Luke McLarty): So far, the snow pack is above seasonal average and is now at 103% of "normal", although that average has declined due to recent drought years. There is a weakening La Niña trend and no increased fire danger is predicted through April. Because of last year's fires, there are only very limited plans for prescribed burns and those will be smaller (Coyote Ranger District, Deer Creek Estates near Cuba). Some piles near FR 10 were made available for fuel wood gathering but cannot otherwise be burned at this time. Luke later added that they were intending to work more on some fuel piles between SLP and NM 4 near FR 10 this year.

District Ranger Brian Riley has retired and has been replaced by Detailed District Ranger Dawn Cordova (505 228 4832) from Albuquerque. She will serve until a permanent replacement can be found. Her background is in HR, not a lot of field experience.

The fire operations are fully staffed except for one engine position (15/16 of positions are filled).

Tom Swetnam asked about plans for the San Diego WUI thinning near his area; 100 acres have been done but several hundred others remain to be thinned. Luke stated that there was work planned near Seven Springs and near La Cueva around the Horseshoe. He has an upcoming meeting and wants to determine plans for inside the Jemez Corridor. Tom Bennion stated that it was his understanding that further work near Seven Springs has been deferred until 2024 (according to Dave Isaacson). Luke will send information to Harry later in the week with an update on planned work.

New Mexico Rural Water Association: Harry welcomed Martha Graham from NMRWA as the newest member of JMFA. She is responsible for the Source Water Protection Program (SWPP) and helps New Mexicans to identify things that could affect their drinking water sources such as wildfire and post-wildfire issues. She outlined a series of projects she is involved in:

- Development of a consortium of communities to coordinate concerns regarding water sources, including thinning treatments, firefighting, and post wildfire concerns and communicate them to affected providers such as First Responders and those planning thinning projects.
- Drafting of the JAWS SWP Plan in December (Jemez Alliance of Water Systems which includes Jemez Springs, Sierra Los Pinos, San Ysidro, Zia, Thompson Ridge?, Ponderosa, Cañon). She hopes to include La Cueva, Seven Springs, Fenton Lake, and other areas.
- Planning a meeting late in February to hopefully include the detailed ranger and give her a tour of some of the water systems in the district.
- Potentially participating in the spring Fire Preparedness Workshop with a rainfall simulator from NRCS that shows the effects of soil quality on absorption and runoff of rainfall.

- Planning a panel for New Mexico Rural Water's conference in April that includes representatives from the Forest Stewards Guild and Ecotone Landscape Planning (Gabe Kohler and Jan-Willem Jansens).

She asked for feedback for her SWP Plan. Her contact information is martha@nmrwa.org, 505-977-5733.

Harry asked whether it would be appropriate for JMFA to apply to be a member of NMRWA; Martha thought it would be a good idea. Harry pointed out that the best way to share information among the members is by using jmfa-all@googlegroups.com; any member can post to the list.

Paul mentioned concerns that there have been some individuals who are monopolizing the CWPP development process; Martha indicated that some of this may be an outgrowth of personal relationships. There are groups who are concerned about the lack of a voice in the process. Martha says that a purpose of JAWS is to give communities a voice in planning.

CWPP: Harry and Tom sent a letter to Sandoval County regarding the CWPP development. So far, they have heard nothing. Martha has reached out to ask about the Community Wildfire Defense Grant which is what Sandoval County would use to develop the CWPP. As far as she knows, those grants have not been awarded. Tom Swetnam mentioned that the grant opportunities have come online and represent a significant source of funding. To apply, the organization's CWPP must be less than 10 years; Sandoval County's version is older and so doesn't qualify. There is frustration that because the county hasn't updated its CWPP, the Jemez Mountains area isn't able to apply for its own funding. Harry asked Martha to please let us know if she finds anything out.

Slash: Chief Taylor has expressed interest acquiring two pieces of equipment: 1) a chipper for the Fire Department so that it would be available all the time, and 2) a curtain burner that would allow burning slash on site. JMFA could possibly propose to acquire these for the department. The estimated cost is around $100K and would require training, storage, maintenance, and possibly insurance. We are not ready for this yet, but Harry suggested that the intervening year would be spent in dealing with these issues before proposing for the equipment.

Luke McLarty mentioned that the Forest Service does have the manpower and equipment to handle some Community Chipper Days. He felt that chipping just changes the dimensions of the fuel and doesn't really solve the problem. He says that a curtain burner is very useful.

Luke asked whether people in Seven Springs are taking advantage of the funding opportunities for NRCS grants. Tom Bennion said that those are not really viable because the required biologists are not funded or available. People are going through the Cuba Soil and Water Conservation District for their grants. Some EQIP grants have been approved in Area 3, but there are problems in the Rio Cebolla area near Seven Springs.

Tom S. said that before proposing for funding for a curtain burner, we need to have an updated CWPP. Harry added that Sandoval County Fire & Rescue was responsible for developing the CWPP in their Emergency Management Department. Theresa Greeno has not yet provided any information regarding the status of the proposal.

Harry points out that when grants opportunities become available, it's good to be ready to go, so it might be a good idea to start thinking about proposals before the CWPP is in place. Martha pointed out

that it helps to have these ideas developed for inclusion in a CWPP. She also pointed out that there is an alternate to a CWPP to provide a backup plan for funding opportunities.

Tom Bennion has had success with some small grants for bark beetle mitigation; these were obtained through a program administered by Lawrence Crane. There are also some thinning grants available through this program.

Watershed Preparedness and Recovery: (see above)

Sierra Los Pinos Water Tanks: Paul has prepared a chronology about the project that appears at the end of the minutes. To summarize, a grant of $20,000 was received to move the tanks to SLP and the contract was awarded to Crane Services. Unfortunately, by the time the preliminary preparation was done, it was too late to do the moving before spring. Also, the infrastructure for the tanks will be prepared (ground prep, foundation) and hopefully by late spring SLP will have a water supply for fire suppression.

National Forest Boundary around Thompson Ridge: Basil Swanson pointed out that there are downed trees abutting private property and owners are concerned about cleaning up the problem. Luke says that the Forest Service has left a buffer because in some cases boundaries are in dispute. Luke has discussed this with colleagues including the volunteer coordinator. The areas in question can be thinned but there needs to be a formal agreement between the parties involved that includes certification for chain saw use. However, Luke said that some of this can be handled on an individual basis; he will have some younger people he can use to clear out areas. He also pointed out that prescribed burns are organized from the standpoint of tying roads together to provide defensible space. Luke can be reached at 505-660-5384.

Cuba Fuels Reduction Grants: Basil reports that one problem is the lack of contractors needed to carry out all the work. The project is still accepting applications and they are particularly interested in getting contiguous projects. Harry asked Basil to write something up to send out to people about the funding opportunities since it may not be well known that money is available.

Fire Preparedness Workshop: Eric Larsen and Chief Taylor are working on this at present, but we have no information on plans. Martha would like contact information for Eric and Lee. We may have a small amount of money for support. Harry suggested a manned poster-type presentation with opportunity for people to sign up for JMFA membership. Harry is willing to put together a draft poster; Tom suggested as an alternative asking Lee or Eric if we could do a short presentation. Paul asked whether the national Firewise Association had materials we could hand out. There may be some bags left from a previous workshop. Luke can provide some pamphlets and will talk with Lee. Another possibility is the Smokey the Bear balloon.

JMFA Future Directions: Originally, we were organized to administer thinning grants, but that is no longer the direction grant administration is taking.

JMFA Name Change: We had a lot of difficulty in getting the IRS to respond to our request. After Harry contacted Congresswoman Stansbury's office and sent her the supporting information, the change was finalized. Tom can file the 990 form and Harry will try the DUNS change and SAM registration.

Spending Plan:

- We have the money for the SLP tanks.

- The Los Alamos Community Foundation provided a $2000 grant for relief work from the Cerro Pelado fire. Paul says that the most likely location for work is at Aspen Grove and Calypso. He plans to handle this directly. Paul plans to attend the next SLP board meeting to publicize the role of the Community foundation.
- The log splitter engines have been replaced. We will talk with Jason Redmond regarding potential help for maintenance at a future time.
- The organization voted to provide a small amount of support for the upcoming workshop: food, etc.
- Harry suggested a planning meeting for proposals later potentially in Jemez Springs: Harry, Paul, Tom Swetnam, Martha. Harry will plan a meeting to plan the proposal meeting.
- We might want to have signage that replaces the "GEJWUIC" designation for Firewise signs.

Business Meeting

Harry asked for potential new members. Tom Swetnam will bring up a name later.

Election of Officers: Harry has asked if Paul will assume the office in a year. Pat plans to resign at the end of the year. The officers will remain as they currently are: Harry Jones, President; Ann Cooke, Vice President; Tom Swetnam, Treasurer; Pat Jones, Secretary.

Minutes of August Meeting: Approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

A Detailed Chronology in the Acquisition of Intel Water Tanks for SLP
Presented by Board Member Paul Lisko at the JMFA Annual Meeting on
Tuesday, Jan. 31, 2023, with Minor Revisions made on Friday, Feb. 3, 2023.

June 14, 2022: Sandoval County Fire Chief Eric Masterson asked and I accepted the role to serve as an on-the-ground point man for this project. Chief Masterson recently advised that Sandoval County Public Works was incapable of taking on this project. His time was admittedly limited to dedicate toward this project. I had been very vocal in wanting to have this undertaking brought to fruition since this was the fourth time since 2014 that Intel offered tanks for fire suppression in SLP but ultimately withdrew the offer each time for failure of the county to act in a timely manner.

July 16, 2022: Proposal received from Masthead International for transportation and delivery at cost of $20,565.

September 9, 2022: Meeting of the All Together New Mexico Committee occurred and approved a grant of $20,000, based on proposal of Masthead International, to Jemez Mountains Firewise Association. This grant is to be applied to transportation and delivery of the Intel tanks to SCFR Station 52 in SLP.

September 13, 2022: Two other crane services companies were currently drafting bids. The next day, Crane Services, Inc. submitted quote for transportation and delivery for $14,220. On Sept. 19th, Mountain States Crane gave a bid of $43,459; which included loading and unloading only; transportation was not covered.

September 23, 2022: JMFA received and deposited check for $20,000 granted from All Together NM Fund for project

September 26, 2022: Gary Salas, Crane Services Account Manager, was notified his company's quote was accepted. Customer name and address on quote had to be revised from Sandoval County Fire & Rescue to Jemez Mountains Firewise Association. Mr. Salas was further advised that payment would be made COD and that the credit application he requested JMFA to complete was unnecessary.

October 7, 2022: Notice to SLPPOA: Getting tanks upright and filled with water is ultimate goal for this project. Construction will ideally commence in Spring 2023, with the intent of completion before next fire season is fully upon us. Of the $20,000 granted for this project, about three-quarters of that amount will be expended on loading, transport and delivery of the tanks. The remaining twenty-five percent will be applied toward building the infrastructure essential to onsite placement of the tanks. Any costs incurred beyond those specified above will be covered by Sandoval County.

October 10, 2022: Met with Mr. Salas and LCVFD Lt. John Fredlund at SCFR Station 52 in SLP for survey of the route through SLP and the site set aside for unloading of the tanks. Also emailed Mr. Salas about revising contract to drop language requiring JMFA to provide insurance. He replied on October 12th, their Contracts Dept advised to "red line" that portion out of the contract, which was done and then signed.

October 11, 2022: Chief Eric Masterson in an email attached three Professional Services Agreements that Sandoval County currently has in place with engineering firms, requesting I make contact with at least one to schedule a site visit with the intention of scoping out design and placement of infrastructure.

October 14, 2022: I spoke with a Souder-Miller rep who asked if engineering plans from the installation of similar tanks at SCFR Station 51 in La Cueva could be found. Chief Masterson advised he would check. He further stated his continued support for my remaining project manager, given complaints from others.

October 20, 2022: Jeffrey Saavedra, Crane Services Dispatcher, advised via email that Gary Salas was “no longer with the company.” He further stated that a route survey required by NMDOT was completed but there were too many obstacles to transport the tanks along NM 528. Therefore, an alternate route survey, using Northern Blvd. to Unser, was recommended, with completion expected by October 27th. I replied with concern for the route survey and transport to get done before snows.

October 28, 2022: Mr. Saavedra reported that the new route survey had been completed and submitted to NMDOT for review. He stated that a police escort for the tanks may be necessary along NM 4.

November 1, 2022: Mr. Saavedra was advised by NMDOT to contact the City of Rio Rancho to determine if any permits might also be required to transport the tanks through its jurisdiction.

November 2, 2022: Chief Masterson emailed he was unable to locate any engineering plans for tanks at Station 51.

November 9, 2022: While trying to secure the permit with the City of Rio Rancho, the route survey with NMDOT expired. Mr. Saavedra stated that another one will now have to be done but with no additional cost to the Jemez Mountains Firewise Association.

November 10, 2022: Met this morning on-site at Station 52 with Souder-Miller rep, Jody Garcia. He took photos andstated he’ll seek input from their structural engineers to draft a proposal. An important point he made was to include an access road into the tanks for future maintenance as may be necessary. Coming up from around the east side seemed like a precarious ascent, considering a large chunk of hillside had been excavated, resulting in a sheer drop, making for an unstable passage. So, we discussed bringing this road in from the west, which would be about 30 yards or so from FR 10 into the proposed site for the tanks. This would require placement of a large culvert to cross over the drainage. Mr. Garcia also stated he’d stop by Station 51 to look at that existing infrastructure.

November 13, 2022: I reached out to Rep. Christine Chandler to ask her or one of her colleagues from NM Legislature intervene on our behalf to expedite issuance of the required permit from the City of Rio Rancho, which Mr. Saavedra had trouble obtaining. He asked to stay that request as he could get it soon.

November 16, 2022: Mr. Saavedra emailed “Hopefully my guy can do the new route survey ASAP, he had a [surgical] procedure and is still recovering.” Survey was later projected for completion by November 30th.

December 6, 2022: Mr. Saavedra emailed, “All, one of the trailers and heavy haul drivers I had for the job is no longer with us. The main thing is the double drop stretch trailer needed for this job. I do have one for sure. My Boss and I are working hard to find another one. My route survey guy will do the survey whenever I pull the trigger. ... Meanwhile I have at least three phone calls in to companies that we think might have this particular trailer.”
December 13, 2022: Mr. Saavedra emailed “All, I am still trying to secure the 2nd trailer, I am concerned that I have Experienced drivers for this move, I’ll keep you updated so we can get this job complete. My route survey guy is willing to do the survey ASAP, but I need to make sure I can do the job within the two weeks once it gets approved.”

December 21, 2022: Mr. Garcia submitted a proposal from Souder-Miller that included a topo survey, a geotechnical investigation and a drainage analysis for design of a foundation for the tanks at a cost of $70,034. Chief Masterson told Mr. Garcia that he’ll be Sandoval County’s point of contact for this project. Mr. Saavedra emailed “My gut feeling [for transport and delivery of the tanks] is right after the holidays, I did find another double drop stretch trailer I can rent, to make sure we get both tanks in

the one day, but [still] trying to secure the 2nd Experienced heavy haul driver."

December 28, 2022: First significant snowfall of the winter season blankets Jemez Mountains in SLP with seven inches.

January 4, 2023: Crane Services' Dispatcher Jeffrey Saavedra sent an email which stated, "I am hoping to do the updated route survey the first part of next week, along with the 2 drivers I have found and have them run the route too. Then within the time frame do both tanks at same time. I will update at least every other day to keep you updated and hopefully get this job done." Per his request, I contacted Lt. John Castaneda with SCSO who was willing to assign "a couple of units" to accompany the transport from Intel to Sta.52 once NMDOT gives final approval for the route.

January 10, 2023: Met at SCFR Station 52 with Chief Masterson, Sandoval County Roads Supervisor Dave Martinez and LCVFD Chief Lee Taylor to discuss final site for placing tanks and creating access for Geotech.

January 11, 2023: I received the following email in part from Jeffrey Saavedra, Dispatcher with Crane Services, the company under contract for transport and delivery of the tanks: "I just got off phone with heavy haul driver and then Frank from our Route survey company, both have been out to site and have informedme that there is a patch of snow underneath part of the route that cannot be gotten thru because of the snow, either frozen or wet it will be unpassable with these tanks on the trailers we have. I know this is not the news you wanted to hear and you did mention that we needed to do it before we got snow. I did try my best to get it done before then but with the recent changes to company and lack of experienced heavy haul truckers I could not accomplish this in a timely manner."

Week of January 15, 2023: Twenty inches of snow accumulation occurs in Sierra Los Pinos. Project is now on hold until spring.

Jemez Mountains Firewise Association
Annual Meeting (Zoom)
7:00 PM Tuesday January 31, 2022
Agenda

General

- *Wildfire Conditions/Forest Service Update*
- *Watershed Issues*
- *Preparing for Future Funding Opportunities*
    - *CWPP*
    - *Slash*
    - *Watershed Preparedness and Recovery*
- *SLP Water Tanks*
- *Thinning National Forest Boundary with Thompson Ridge*
- *Cuba Fuels Reduction Grants*
- *Fire Preparedness Workshop*
- *JMFA Future Directions*
- *Name Change*
- *Spending Plan*
    - *SLP Tanks*
    - *LA Community FA Grant*
    - *Small Equipment*
    - *Workshop*
    - *Proposal Planning*
    - *Signage*

Business

- *Election of Members*
- *Election of Officers*