



1901 Parker Drive, Merritt BC V1K 1J3

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FORUM PLANNING MEETING

March 04, 2020

Present: Kate Anderson, John Anderson, Gerry Sanford, Jill Sanford, Judy Guichon, Bruno Mailloux, Terrence Grams, Kirsten Auer, Marius Auer, Andrew Snelsinger, Bruce Beech, Wayne Schindler, Partick Farmer, Dorothy Jordan, Tom Willms, Charles Joyal

1. Call to Order

- Meeting called to order at 1:02 pm by Chair John Anderson.

2. Round Table

- Everyone introduce themselves around the table

3. Rural Interface – Andrew Snelsinger

- Andrew gave an interesting presentation about the FLNRO Rural Interface Program, which administers funding for Crown Land wildfire risk reduction with particular emphasis on interface areas. This is defined as 2 km around the community.
- There are several funds available for applying for funding including the Community Resiliency Investment Fund and the Forest Enhancement Society of BC.
- There are a variety of factors which are taken into consideration when funds are requested. These include fuel load, population density, infrastructure, wildlife, habitat, visuals.
- The Merritt area is considered to be high on the Provincial Risk Assessment Scale.
- Applications are already submitted for the Merritt area. There is already some work being done in the Fox Farm and the Coutlee areas and there is an application being prepared for Swakum Mountain above the Bench area in Merritt.
- Costs are relatively cheap for prescribed burns but rise considerably when equipment is needed.
- The tenure system and other factors sometimes make efficient cleanup difficult. Companies are required to meet certain criteria for cleanup, but there is often still a need for “after the fact” cleanup by someone else.
- There are still opportunities to apply for some of these funds provided they meet the provincial criteria and risk class.
- These funds are for decreasing fuel load, not for economics.
- The BC Cattlemen are doing some demonstration projects using cattle to decrease fuel load near populated areas.
- There was some discussion about the railroad being held responsible for more prevention activities such as prescribed burns and watering.

- Andrew mentioned that one of the prevention methods being used is the Tom Lacey landscaping idea.

4. Website Content

- The website can easily be used for any information dissemination.
- There was discussion about ensuring that the NWCRT ensure that the website doesn't become a spokesperson for any other group or Government organization.
- It was decided by consensus that we would have a page for the Nicola Pilot Project where public documents can be posted.
- There was a reminder that all documents on the site need to be reviewed annually for currency and relevance.

5. Ted Talk

- The group watched a short "Ted Talk" U-tube presentation by Brad Lancaster called Planting the Rain to Grow Abundance.

6. Forum Brainstorming

- 8 to 80 – a walking friendly city for all ages perhaps building on the plan by Nic Beers.
- Smart Growth , City densification
- Maybe the walking path could be part of the fire barrier
- Andrew's presentation was interesting, fires are current, and this affects the whole watershed,.
- This could be a theme - Fires, Floods and Drought, Then and Now.
- Perhaps Andrew could do a presentation on fire prevention.
- Incorporate a Ted Talk about water use, paths and green spaces
- Include the natural functioning of hydrology
- We want to leave people inspired – planting Hope, planting seeds of abundance for our watershed.
- **Tentative plan :**
 - Tom will contact the professor (Paul) who he suggested as a guest speaker regarding his willingness to come and his availability.
 - Tentative date of forum will be May 20 at 6pm-9pm maybe at NVIT
 - Next planning meeting March 19 at 1pm at NVIT * *please look for confirmation on location as this is not secured at time of posting to website.*

7. Closing Circle

- We hope this will bring the community together.
- Maybe there could be some "teasers" in the Merritt Herald to create interest.
- Maybe a questionnaire asking people to rank items as priorities.
- Let's remember that the Round Table role is to bring education to the community – NOT to do the projects.

8. Next planning meeting: **March 19 1pm** likely at NVIT, please check back in on location or text/call Kate at 250 378 9674