

## Goolawah Co-Operative Bushfire Policy and Action Plan

**Fire Squad Meeting**

**14<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**9:05am**

**Present:** Ralph V, Roger, Rob, Dennis, Jelly, Chris, Bruce, Steve, Marty, Erika, Sam, Dan, Craig

**Facilitator/Minutes:** Craig (Director/Fire Warden)

- **Opening Comments:** Roles and responsibilities of the Fire Warden. Craig wanted to make it clear to the members that he has no particular expertise, knowledge or experience in fighting fires or developing bushfire policy and action plans. He has taken on this role primarily as a Director Portfolio and due to the lack of any volunteer in the community to take on this role. As Fire Warden, Craig will organise Fire Squad Meetings, liaise with local RFS and encourage members through education and the process of Community Meetings to develop a Bush Fire Survival Plan and generally increase their knowledge and preparedness in the event of a bushfire.
- The intention of this inaugural meeting for 2020/21 Fire Squad was to review the current documents that exist from the previous Fire Wardens and Fire Squad Meetings, some dating back several years.
- Brainstorm issues arising from the current documents and encourage members to take on roles of responsibility where they feel their knowledge and experience is suitable. Example, organise working bees and hazard reduction burns.
- Streamline some of the policies and responsibilities with existing Goolawah infrastructure such as Machinery Co-ordinator, Working Bees, Men's Shed, Phone Tree/Web Site/Social Media and others.

### **Review of Fire Warden Responsibilities and Fire Action Plan**

- Encourage members to have a "Bush Fire Survival Plan" – Emergency Fire Plan Booklet is available from the RFS.
- The RFS can come to your home/site or to the Community to assist in developing this plan and assess your site for fire preparedness. This has raised some issues in the past and Rob commented that there must be a balance between "living in the middle of a paddock" as the RFS may prefer and "living with nature" as many members prefer. It was also discussed that we have a responsibility to our neighbours and other members that our site is not a fire hazard that may put their place at risk.
- **Action:** Craig will drive around Goolawah and review the current Fire Action Plan (several years old). **Update:** This has been completed with the assistance of Roger, during Men's Shed time. This document is currently being rewritten to include

improvements that have been made and areas that are still of concern. It will be presented and reviewed at next FS meeting then to Community.

- Ensure all fire equipment is in full working order. Ralph V and others have been completing this task, often during Men's Shed time. All strikers and equipment are working well. It was suggested that more members could take part in training and the operation of the strikers. Discussion.
- **Action:** Suggestion that instructional videos could be developed on the operation of strikers. Craig will look into this with the assistance of Ralph, Roger and Wayne E.
- Suggestion that one striker be moved to Red Hill for summer. Discussion on the housing of striker on Red Hill be moved to another forum for now.
- Implementation of Fire Emergency Communications Plan. It was discussed that all members should monitor the "Fires Near Me" App. Work needs to be done in maintaining communication through the Goolawah Phone Tree and the allocation/distribution of fire appliances. This will be controlled by RFS in attendance. In their absence the strikers and tanker need to be in appropriate areas.
- This led to a discussion on Mapping - dams and water sources for RFS. Including dams that can be accessed by RFS helicopters. It seems the helicopters will access whatever water supply they safely can and are rarely in communication with units directly on ground. It was noted that it is common practice to then re-supply those dams with water and that the RFS have a budget for this.
- Suggested that a map with dams suitable for helicopter access be available for RFS when in attendance (similar to SWS signs and GPS mapping). Suggested that Dave L and Griff may be able to assist. No Action or Update available at this stage.
- Camp Kitchen fire inspections need to be carried out, fees paid and certificates lodged. This has been the responsibility of the Secretary in the past. Steve C to follow up with Directors.

**The following suggestions were "brainstormed" for future discussion and development**

- The depositing of "green waste" on Goldmine Hill (in quarry pit) for burning is a good idea but needs to be organised with clear instructions and a plan for when to burn etc.
- Community could use a PTO mulcher to assist with the management of green waste
- Plan fire drills or a "mock runs"
- List of locally suitable Fire Retardant Species for planting on APZ/mounds/Dam wall etc, made available for members on Website/Social Media
- Workshop on designing/building/installing sprinkler systems on member's sites.

- Investigate grant money available to purchase or get donations of old RFS units or start an RFS on Goolawah.
- Work bees/Fire Squad help on members sites and APZ to improve fire safety/ reduce hazards and align with Fire Action Plan. This could be done by small groups, individuals and processed through Community Work hours. Could assist where a member does not have equipment or physical ability to complete maintenance.

**Meeting Closed: 10:30am.** Thanks to all those attending and looking forward to regular (short) meetings and involve as many members as possible. Bushfire preparedness is everybody's responsibility. Craig