



Fire Safe San Mateo County

October 14th, 2020
General Meeting Minutes

Online conference call. No in-person meeting

Commence 9:32 AM

I. Attendance:

Online Zoom conference call in lieu of in-person meeting due to COVID-19 meeting restriction due to sheltering-in-place order.

52 members attended the meeting.

II. Introduction

Council President Denise Enea welcomed all members who called into the meeting. There is a conflict, the board of supervisors is holding a wildfire study session, which is open to the public. Many members are attending. After Wes's presentation we may reconvene at the board of supervisor's meeting.

III. Wes Bolsen of Perimeter Solutions – Fire retardant technology Latera Tech's *FORTIFY Brand* – Wes.Bolsen@perimeter-solutions.com <https://www.iafc.org/events/wui>

- *MBA from Stanford*
- Currently lives in Denver, Colorado

1) Background on the use of PHOS CHECK FORTIFY Long-Term Retardant Preventatively

- It's not *the* solution, it's *a* solution – just another tool in the toolbox
- Wildfire prevention is fairly new
 - Largest number of aircrafts have been used in wildfire suppression this year in history
 - We need to work on proactive prevention
 - 84% of wildfires are ignited in Tier 2 and Tier 3 “high risk” areas
 - Roadsides, infrastructure, etc.
 - Prevention is far cheaper than treatment; however, CalFire spends the bulk of their resources fighting fires, rather than preventing them

2) Traditional solutions:

- Herbicide to kill grass along roadsides

- Health concerns
 - Ground clearing to remove vegetation from near poles and along roadsides
 - Erosion
 - Solution: keep vegetation in place while making it non-flammable
 - Compliments utility regulations
 - Useful for communities that do not want herbicide applied
- 3) Understanding how each fire chemical works
- Foam/gel is a suppressant – you put it on a fire that is minutes or hours away. They only last as long as moisture is present in the material
 - Long term retardant – can last days, weeks, and months
 - Indirect attack
 - Fire retardant works chemically, alters the way cellulose decomposes, rendering it non-flammable
 - The vegetation “chars” to prevent it from burning
 - The chemical release of H₂O while charring reduces combustion
- 4) Who we are:
- Perimeter Solutions
 - Been around for 60 years
 - PHOS-CHECK FORTIFY was just added in May
 - Only long term retardant on the USDA Forest Service Qualified products list
 - Only long term retardant that can help prevent ignitions up to 2” of season-ending rain
 - Effective, safe, and environmentally friendly product
 - Multiple peer reviewed publications supporting the technology
 - Safe to be applied “up to” an active waterway if applied via ground equipment
 - FORTIFY passes mammalian toxicity test
 - USFS application levels already established
 - Standard application would be 2 gallons per 100 square feet
 - Standard spray equipment can be used however
- 5) Utilization
- Ignition prevention – can reduce PSPS disturbances
 - Substitution for herbicides and ground clearing around poles
 - Enhanced vegetation management program
 - Allows utility infrastructure to “fail-safe”
 - Roadway ingress/egress paths near power lines
 - Treatments for protection of trees and infrastructure during prescribed fire operations – to help establish control lines
 - Preventatively protect critical infrastructure
 - Phosphate dries with whitish/translucent color

6) Summary

- Lower cost than vegetation removal, season long protection for more sites than is possible through traditional vegetation management or in the face of an approaching fire
- Substitute for herbicides being quickly banned, or ground clearing that is detrimental to vegetation
- Potential to keep infrastructure operational

7) Discussion/Questions: *[Text below is from virtual chat during presentation and verbal questions post-presentation. Includes discussion among council members and also presenter responding to members]*

- Nikki Hanson: Can you share some of the research papers
Wes: I will send out links to the group after presentation

- Lorrie Duval: Do you have a list of success stories?
Wes: I will send a link of success stories. The efficacy of a long-term retardant is very well known. I will work on preventative stories and links.

- Melinda Martin: What is the active ingredient?
Wes: Phosphate; MAP, APP, and DAP – essentially fertilizer.

- Denise: Do you have any contracts with existing entities?
Wes: Just getting started and excited about prospect of working with San Mateo county.

- Denise: This is the kind of information that our board of supervisors need to see. It's our job to push them to use all the tools in their toolbox. Interesting how each city and county work in a silo. For some reason everyone has to learn it themselves.

- Wes: I'm not afraid to use San Mateo county as a showcase to other counties. We can highlight and showcase success stories to encourage other counties to utilize the product.

- Susan Lessin: What health pre-cautions do the workers spraying this product have to take to protect them from harm?
- Wes: Standard long sleeve shirts. There are no health concerns, we just encourage applicators to not walk through the product while wet, because it will remove the product from the vegetation.

- Denise: We have a choice; should we continue our meeting or attend the board of supervisor's meeting? I was going to review the chipper program and watch an informative video. Many of our key members are at the board of supervisors meeting. I will provide a link for us all to attend the board of supervisors meeting (link provided).

IV. Adjourn

- Meeting convened at 10:02 to attend San Mateo County Board of Supervisors meeting
- Meetings the second Wednesday of every month
- **November 11, 2020**