

MINUTES

Yakima County Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP)

Minutes

October 23rd 2008

1:30pm-3:00pm

I. Introductions

Leif Bang and Victoria Williams (planning lead) led the meeting for SWCA. Michael Tobin (District Manager) who is overseeing the project for North Yakima Conservation District (NYCD) was also joined by Joe Weeks (Fuels Coordinator for Washington Department of Natural Resources).

Other attendees are listed in the attachment.

The general consensus from the introductions was that this CWPP will act as an umbrella plan with broad scale risk assessment and recommendations from which individual communities will later build from by developing more detailed community level plans. Even though the plan is general it will still provide the capacity for communities, agencies and individuals to apply for fire and fuels funding.

In these minutes, italicized text provides background material.

II. Overview of CWPP Process

Vicky provided an overview of the CWPP process:

Background information:

A CWPP is a collaborative planning document that helps communities to identify and refine priorities for the protection of life, property and critical infrastructure in the WUI. A CWPP does not provide for implementation of treatments it is merely a plan that outlines recommendations and priorities for treatment. Another point is that the plan is not a fire management plan in the sense that it directs fire suppression, it is a fire prevention plan for treatments that could be implemented before a fire passes through.

The CWPP was born from the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 which provided new authorities to implementing the National Fire Plans goal of reducing hazardous fuels on federal lands. HFRA also provided opportunities to bolster community led fuels management planning and that's where the CWPP comes in.

HFRA specifically states that the annual program of work for Federal land should give priority to fuel reduction projects that protect at-risk communities or watersheds or for fuel reduction projects that implement recommendations from a CWPP. The weight given to recommendations made through CWPPs therefore provides a significant incentive to communities to develop these plans. The CWPP is also a pre-requisite for many funding opportunities for implementing fuels reduction and so if a community has completed or even is in the process of completing a CWPP they are put at the top of the list for funding. This Core team will collaboratively plan the CWPP. Federal Agencies act as an advisory role in this planning process, but the plans are community driven facilitated through the core team.

Three entities have to be in agreement with the final document and they are:

- *The applicable local government (the NYCD)
The local fire department (s)
Washington Department of Natural Resources*
- *Requirements*
 - a. *Collaboration*
 - b. *Prioritized Fuels Reduction*
 - c. *Treatment of Structural Ignitability*
- *Goals*
 - a. *Improve prevention and suppression*
 - b. *Reduce Hazardous forest fuels through recommendations that are easily implemented and followed*
 - c. *Restore Forest and watershed health*
 - d. *Promote community involvement*
 - e. *Provide public outreach to educate and inform communities*
 - f. *Provide communities with a plan that will provide a foundation for future grant and funding opportunities.*
- **Review of tasks**

There are 7 Tasks involved in writing a CWPP, Vicky provided an overview of those tasks:

Task 1: Engage Interested Parties and Form Core Team

Call for recommendations for other groups or individuals to be involved:

- Large land owners?
- Heather Rigden – R C & D Coordinator

- County Fire Marshall- Jakki Maclean
- 410/12 CWPP collaborators- NOTE: A community level CWPP has already been completed for communities along Highways 410 and 12 in Yakima County. The CWPP was completed in 2005. This CWPP will be more broad scaled than the 410/12 CWPP but will reference the 410/12 plan and build from recommendations contained in that plan. Collaborators for that plan will be targeted for information and recommendations.

Task 2: Establish a Community Base Map

These maps provide baseline data about the planning area and help us to identify values and communities at risk and provide focus for the risk assessment.

Task 3: Develop an Initial CWPP Outline

This will be like a summary document of what the final CWPP will include and so at an early stage Core Team input is important in directing us to any issues and problems that may need to be addressed in the final document. The Core Team were shown examples of previous CWPPs.

Task 4: Develop a Community Risk Assessment

There are a number of components to this task for example how to determine community at risk, how to define WUI and what to base the risks on. The results can be displayed in a map format and will utilize the base maps developed in task 2.

Task 5: Establish Community Priorities and Recommendations

Community involvement is a key component of the CWPP.

Task 6: Develop an Interim Draft CWPP with an Action Plan

All of the previous tasks are compiling information in order to draw up the draft CWPP plan. As part of the draft plan we will develop an action plan that will have suggested project types, locations, timelines and monitoring. Projects will be based on priorities established using Core team and public input.

Task 7: Complete the Final CWPP

Comments from the Core Team will be incorporated into the final document and this will be provided to the County. Electronic versions of the final plan will be made available to the Core Team.

The Core Team are to assist in obtaining signatures for the final documents.

- Review of Schedule
 - Task 1: Engage Interested Parties and Form Core Team
 - Task 2: Establish a Community Base Map
 - Task 3: Develop an Initial CWPP Outline
 - Task 4: Develop a Community Risk Assessment
 - Task 5: Establish Community Priorities and Recommendations
 - Task 6: Develop an Interim Draft CWPP with an Action Plan
 - Task 7: Complete the Final CWPP

	Sep 2008	Oct 2008	Nov 2008	Dec 2008	Jan 2009	Feb 2009	Mar 2009	Apr 2009	May 2009	June 2009	July 2009
Task 1	→										
Task 2	→	→	→								
Task 3	→	→	→								
Task 4			→	→	→	→					
Task 5				→	→	→	→				
Task 6						→	→	→			
Task 7									→	→	→

III. Role of the Core Team in CWPP Process

Vicky discussed the importance of the Core Team- they could be compared to a Board of Commissioners who assist in decision making and guiding the plan. The Core Team are encouraged to help spread the word about the CWPPs and to gather input from their colleagues and other interested parties.

IV. CWPP Data Review

Vicky discussed data needs and role of the Core Team in obtaining data:

- Joe states that a lot of the fire data should come from the fire Marshall:
 - Draft Emergency Management Plan
 - Data from the Hwy 410 and 12 CWPP- Joe Weeks to send CD.
 - Fire Hydrant- GIS layers
 - Cell Towers- GIS layers
 - Natural Gas Lines- GIS layers
- Info on fire department personnel and equipment- Individual Fire Departments.
- Training Center Fire Data- Chris Dykstra
- Training Center Fire Management Plan- Chris Dykstra
- Landfire Data- SWCA Inc.
- Fire Occurrence Data- USFS- Jim Bailey and DNR
- Fire Management Plan- Naches District- USFS Jim Bailey
- Federal Fuels and thinning data- USFS Naches.
- Jim Bailey- USFS GIS layers available. SWCA need to contact USFS GIS.
- Plum Creek Timber Co- would have a record of harvest data- Betsy Bloomfield.
- Irrigation data- Mike Tobin
- Utilities data- Benton Rural Electric and Pacific Power
- Summer homes- USFS Naches has GIS data

V. WUI: Definition

Discussion regarding the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) definition. The Core Team can establish their own local definition.

Background:

At least 50% of all funds appropriated for projects under the HFRA must be within the WUI. Default definition of WUI as defined by HFRA Section 101(16) is:

"An area extending 1/2 mile from the boundary of an at-risk community"

The 1/2 mile distance can be tailored to our plan, for example HFRA states that the WUI may extend to 1 1/2 miles where the, at risk community is surrounded by a steep slope. Fuels treatments can occur along evacuation routes regardless of their distance from the community.

- The Core Team agreed that the WUI definition should be as broad as possible in this plan to include all County lands, with

the idea that the WUI will be more well defined in future community level plans.

- WUI will be discussed in more detail at future meeting.

VI. Public Meetings/Outreach:

Vicky suggests we have three public meetings to cover the CWPP planning area:

Venue and Format:

- The meetings will take place in January 2009 and cover the county as much as is possible.
- The meetings would be in three different formats- 1) traditional public meeting- suggestion Naches, 2) a meeting at the Fire Chiefs meeting (Union Gap- third Thursday each month), 3) a meeting that piggybacks an existing event- suggestion Yakima (i.e. Highschool football game, Agricultural Fair etc.)
- Suggestion that SWCA call the Yakima Convention Center and Sun Dome to see what events are planned in late January.

Meeting advertisement:

- Advertisement in Yakima Herald
- Flyers distributed by Core Team members
- Surveys- distributed by Core Team members- SWCA to develop surveys and provide to Core Team.

VII. Risk Assessment-

Vicky discussed the Risk Assessment methodology and purpose

Background:

1. *Community Risk Assessment*

Purpose:

- Identify where fuels treatments will reduce risks to communities and infrastructure*
- Prioritize areas for fuels treatments*
- Identify highest priority uses for financial and human resources*

2. *Factors in Community Risk Assessment*

Local Preparedness and Firefighting Capability

- Response capabilities of fire protection forces*
- Equipment*
- Number of firefighters*
- Evacuation plans*
- Safety zones*

f. *Fire Assistance Agreements*

Community Values at Risk

- a. *Cultural Sites*
- b. *Historic Sites*
- c. *Recreation or Scenic Areas*
- d. *Critical Wildlife habitat*

Critical Infrastructure at Risk

- a. *Homes*
- b. *Businesses*
- c. *Farms*
- d. *Municipal Water Supply*

Risk of Wildfire Occurrence

- a. *Historical data*
- b. *What are common causes of fire?*
- c. *What is frequency?*
- d. *Typical weather patterns?*

Methodology:

A) *GIS weighted overlays*

- a. *Fuels/vegetation LANDFIRE or GAP data*
- b. *Population data*
- c. *Roads*
- d. *Structures*
- e. *Fire fighting resources*

Quite often in these CWPP fire behavior is predicted manually from vegetation data and topography. We can get a more accurate prediction of fire behavior by using Flammap. We can encompass FlamMap into the weighted overlay to get predictions of fire behavior in different fuel types, given actual weather data from RAW stations and using DEM: slope and aspect.

FlamMap

- a. *Fire behavior mapping and analysis program that computes potential fire behavior characteristics (spread rate, flame length, fireline intensity, etc.)*
- b. *Medium scale*
- c. *Makes landscape comparisons*
- d. *Identifies hazardous fuel and topographic combinations*
- e. *Guides prioritization and assessment*

- o Betsy Bloomfield (TNC) suggested looking at the path of least resistance as an output of Flammmap, as well as looking into SPOT- Strategic Placement of Treatments.

VIII. Schedule of Upcoming Core Team Meetings

- Second Core Team Meeting: approximately January 14th 2009- Date to be confirmed.

IX. Action Items: **IMPORTANT: Data to be retrieved by November 14th, 2008 BELOW.**

Please review the following list of items to determine if you are responsible for any tasks. If you were absent from the meeting please review the tasks to see if you can also provide data from your organizations. Any data can be easily uploaded to the FTP site. Instructions attached. Please email Vicky informing her of what data you are posting.

Task	Core Team Member	Date Due By
Make suggestions with contacts for additional Core Team members	All Core Team	11/14
Invite Heather Rigden to Core Team	Mike Tobin	11/14
Review available data from your agencies/organizations and provide copies of plans and GIS data related to fire and treatments to Vicky.	All Core Team	11/14
Contact additional suggested parties for Core Team	SWCA- Vicky Williams	11/14
SWCA to coordinate with USFS Naches GIS staff for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. summer home data b. fuels treatments- prescribed burns and thinning treatments- project boundaries (last 10 years and projected 2 years) c. fire history data (as far back as possible) d. fuels layers e. special use sites 	SWCA- James Feldman and Jim Bailey	11/14

Utilities data- Benton Rural Electric and Pacific Power	SWCA- James Feldman	11/14
Plum Creek Timber Co- Harvest data	Betsy Bloomfield	11/14
Provide fire history data from DNR	Joe Weeks	11/14
Provide Fire Management Plans in digital format for Naches Ranger District and Training Center	Jim Bailey and Chris Dyskstra	11/14
Contact Convention Center and Sun Dome about up-coming events	SWCW- James Feldman	11/14
Obtain following from Fire Marshall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. fire hydrant- GIS layers b. cell towers- GIS layers c. natural gas lines- GIS layers d. fire station location- GIS layer e. contact list for Fire Chiefs for whole County f. forward minutes and invite all fire chiefs to Core Team 	SWCA James Feldman to contact Jakki Maclean (County Fire Marshall)	11/14
Provide Draft Emergency Management Plan for County in digital format	Joe Weeks	11/14
Provide CD of Hwy 410/12 CWPP data	Joe Weeks	11/14
Irrigation data for County	Mike Tobin	11/14
Produce surveys and distribute to Core Team	SWCA- Vicky Williams	11/4