

Minutes for Yakima County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

2nd Core Team Meeting

February 20th 2009, 10:00am

North Yakima Conservation District

1. Review of first meeting and Project Schedule

Vicky Williams from SWCA facilitated the meeting. Vicky gave an overview of the progress of the plan to date:

Tasks Completed:

Task 1: Engage Interested Parties and Form Core Team

Task 2: Establish a Community Base Map

Task 3: Develop an Initial CWPP Outline

Tasks in Progress:

Task 4: Develop a Community Risk Assessment

Task 5: Establish Community Hazard Reduction Priorities and Recommendations to Reduce Structural Ignitability

2. Plan Outline

Vicky reviewed the outline for the plan. The outline is attached in this email. Please provide any comments to Vicky by email.

3. Public Meetings– Review of Meetings

Fire Chiefs Meeting

SWCA attended the Monthly Fire Chiefs meeting at Union Gap on 2/19/09. Attendance at this meeting was organized in order to discuss the CWPP and the involvement of Fire Districts. The following are notes from that meeting:

- The Fire Chiefs were largely unaware of the project so Vicky explained the history and planning process of the CWPP
- The Chiefs provided information on dispatch and fire management in the County, including discussion of MAA with DNR and FS
- Chiefs provided information on fire fighting resources and staffing including discussion of volunteers and seasonal fire fighters
- Vicky introduced the Risk Assessment. Some attendees expressed concern with low risk in fire district and grass fuel areas. Vicky discussed being able to raise the risk rating of grassland areas by raising the weighting of that layer in the GIS model. Low risk in District areas could

also be explained by a lack of fire occurrence data for District jurisdictions- although that layer in the GIS is minimal compared to assessment of fuels. Discussion ensued about obtaining that data- maybe in tabulated format if spatial layers were unavailable. Vicky to contact Fire Chiefs to obtain data and overcome discrepancy.

- Comments on risk assessment also included needing to address high population areas that are currently rated as low risk.
- Attendees described the need for more fire education and discussed possible conduits for education including Fire Awareness Week in May 2009.
- Fire Chiefs provided information regarding high risk areas in the County
- Fire Chiefs provided information regarding fire fighting resource needs that could be requested as part of the CWPP.
- Vicky to follow up with Fire Chiefs regarding specific needs by District.

Public Meeting

A public meeting was held at the West Valley Fire Department on 2/19/09. The public meeting was poorly attended- mostly agency staff and members of the Highway 410 and Highway 12 CWPP.

- The attendees were introduced to the risk assessment map and a discussion ensued regarding fire history and gathering of data from un-represented areas- namely the Fire Districts.
- The meeting provided information on Community Values at Risk and areas of high risk that could help dictate priority treatment.
- The attendees provided constructive comments on how to reach more community members, how to develop community outreach and education and outlined obstacles to participation.
- Suggestions for greater participation included using fire district home assessments, triage and pilot projects to encourage participation.
- The attendees provided details regarding the Highway 410 and Highway 12 CWPP which will be referenced in the County plan.

4. Community Base Maps

Core Team members were shown the Base Maps that were developed for the Risk Assessment- including fuels, fire density, and fire parameters- fire spread, fireline intensity, rate of spread and crown fire potential.

5. Community Risk Assessment

Vicky outlined the purpose of the Risk Assessment and gave an overview of how the modeling was carried out.

Purpose is to:

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

Methodology:

GIS Weighted Overlays

- a. LANDFIRE or GAP data*

FlamMap

- a. Fire behavior mapping and analysis program that computes potential fire behavior characteristics (spread rate, flame length, fireline intensity, etc.)*
- b. Medium scale: 30m resolution.*
- c. Makes landscape comparisons*
- d. Identifies hazardous fuel and topographic combinations*
- e. Guides prioritization and assessment*

Vicky discussed some of the issues that had been raised at the Fire Chiefs Meeting regarding risk and fire occurrence data. The Core Team agreed that contacting the fire chiefs individually to collect data would be a good approach.

Points raised during review of the risk assessment were:

- Discussion would be best organized by Fire District.
- The Highway 410 and Highway 12 plans would be referenced throughout and specific recommendations for that area would be minimal since the existing plan is already in place.
- The Core Team reviewed the risk assessment and provided edits regarding towns and un-incorporated communities.
- High risk areas were identified at:
 - o Ahtanum
 - o Rimrock Retreat
 - o Tampico
 - o Wenas
 - o Highway 410 and Highway 12
 - o North east of Highway 410
 - o WUI areas on the southwest edge of communities
 - o White Swan and Yakima Nation
 - o Areas outside of Fire District jurisdiction

- Specific points were raised about areas regarding fire fighting resources, fuels and fire occurrence.
- The Core Team discussed water supply.
- The Core Team discussed dispatch and fire management between agencies and fire districts.
- Core Team members suggested that fuels reduction (other than in areas covered by the 410 and 12 plan) is not the major concern in the County. Need to focus more on public education and outreach and raising support for fire districts in terms of volunteer fire fighting resources.
- Discussion ensued regarding volunteer fire fighters and recruitment.
- Suggestions were also raised for the need for better communications, specifically cell towers in the Little Bald area.
- Development of a satellite station in the White Pass area is needed to serve the upland communities.
- The Core Team discussed reaching the public and promoting programs like Firewise, suggestions were for development of a task force of local people who could carry out face-to-face promotion.
- The Core Team helped to compile a list of community values at risk.
- Core Team members discussed limitations for prescribed burning due to poor air quality.

Upcoming Meetings:

- **The draft will be posted for public and core team review April 30th**
- **The review period will be 30 days**
- **The draft will be posted on the SWCA website www.swcacwpps.com , NYCD website and other available outlets**
- **The next Core Team meeting will be in May 2009. The meeting will be scheduled to coincide with the Fire Chiefs meeting on Thursday May 21st.**
- **The next Public Meeting will be scheduled the same week**
- **The Final Draft will be completed by June 30th.**