

CWPP Planning Session
Okanogan Conservation District Office
03/27/2024 | 9:00am – 11:00am

Agenda:

9:00 – 9:10 Public & Partner Comment

There was one public comment regarding the mapping activity at community meetings. “When using the dots during the mapping activity, can people adequately express their concerns?” “If someone has a concern about the entire forest, how would they express that with a dot?” Okanogan CD explained how the mapping activity works, and that there is an overview for everyone beforehand to explain what is a value at risk, how they can place their dots, while placing dots they can also leave a note behind to explain their dot further, and the activity concludes with community members having the opportunity to share why they placed their dot where they did and determined the priority. The public comment concluded by stating, if an overview is provided that would sound good, and it would be helpful to know whether participants are being asked to place dots based on macro or micro level values at risk.

9:10 – 9:30 Central Community Meeting Recap Discussion

The group discussed the recap of the second Central OK County community meeting. The attendance improved with more public participants and there were 66 people in attendance, making for 100 total for community meetings thus far. A full recap from the 3/19 Central OK community meeting can be found on the website at www.okanogancd.org/cwpp.

We addressed challenges with virtual side and that we are continually working to resolve those. One being, Microsoft teams is not the best platform for public meetings, as we’ve found that you can’t share files with anyone outside of the organization, and other barriers to public participation on the virtual end. At this time, virtual attendance at the community meetings allows virtual participants to listen in and observe the meeting, also provide comments or questions via chat or on their microphone, however, the participation during the activity is limited.

At the conclusion of the community meeting, we asked if there were any questions that we didn't ask tonight that we should have. This fostered more conversation, and one especially stuck out which stated, "what would be an individual's barriers to change?" or being able to incorporate fire resiliency practices. Additional questions and comments were left in the contact box (mentioned in the 3/19 Central OK Community Meeting Summary).

9:30 – 10:15 Action Items & Other

Project Action Table, review and discuss, refine projects in categories #1-#3

The group discussed the combined project action table which includes nearly 100 projects that partners submitted. The focus for project discussion today was projects in categories 1-3.

The full list of projects in the action table are still in draft form. The full list is currently available to all partners in the shared Google Drive, and will be made available at a later time to the public once final projects are determined by the CWPP core planning committee. Those actions will then be available for further comment and discussion by all partners and members of the public.

Included below are a few of the draft projects that we discussed in this 3/27 planning session, mentioned in no particular order but identifying the following components: proposed projects/ lead agency/relative priority/and timeline.

Category 1: Fire Prevention and Mitigation Efforts –

- Develop and implement a wildfire mitigation plan/OKPUD/High priority/Ongoing timeline.
- Risk Portfolio Mapping/WADNR/High Priority/ Medium (2-5 years) timeline
- Resources for towns for Best Management Practices-BMPS and guiding dense developments/WADNR & Towns/High priority/Medium (2-5 years) timeline.
 - o Discussion brought up a question about the Okanogan Conservation District's boundaries and annexation challenges. This is that many incorporated cities and towns in the County are not annexed into the

service boundary and therefore experience challenges accessing Okanogan CD resources.

- Currently, the boundary includes the Colville Reservation, unincorporated Okanogan County, and the incorporated cities and towns that have annexed into the district; Okanogan, Conconully, Winthrop, Nespelem, Elmer City, Coulee Dam, and most recently, the city of Omak.
 - Those who live within the city limits of the following cities or towns are NOT in the boundary because they have not yet annexed in, Twisp, Riverside, Tonasket, Oroville, Brewster, and Pateros.
 - If a city or town is NOT annexed into the district this makes for the following situations 1) they are not eligible to receive or access Okanogan CD programs and resources, 2) they are unfortunately at the lower end of the priority list when resources or funding is available (as areas in the boundary will be prioritized first as determined by district policy or the grant funding source), and 3) areas may be only able to receive resources when a cross-boundary project is in place, and/or the grant funding source determines a specific area of the County is included, even if that area is not in the Okanogan CD boundary (ie, the WUI boundary, the ORAP boundary, or County projects such as this CWPP, watershed planning, VSP, the Okanogan County water bank, etc).
 - Cities or towns can annex in or out of the district at any time, to learn more about this process please contact Emmy Engle at emmy@okanogancd.org or 509-429-5272.
- Initiate incentive-based program for community defensible space treatments/Okanogan CD/Mid priority/Medium (2-5 years) timeline.
 - OCLTRG mentioned they have programs and resources to contribute to this project as well and mentioned the equitable mitigation program.
 - Create a dedicated home hardening cost-share program/(No established lead)/High priority/Medium (2-5 years) timeline.
 - Added emphasis on providing financial incentives and technical assistance to property owners to retrofit existing structures to increase fire resiliency. Especially for assisting vulnerable populations, partnering with OCLTRG to accomplish this.

- Develop a data base from Home Ignition Zone-HIZ assessments to compile information for entities and public access/(No established lead)/Low priority/Long-term (5-10+ years)
 - o This project was added during discussion, importance of such database was brought up by both USFS agencies (Tonasket-Colville and Methow).
- Legislative tours and education/(No established lead)/Mid priority/(No established timeline)
 - o Emphasis on education and promoting projects and support for projects at the state and federal level. The Okanogan Conservation District organizes and attends tours like this and attends legislative days, as do other organizations.
- WA Prescribed fire council funding and Prescribed Burn Association-PBA support/(No established lead)/Mid priority/Long-term (5-10+ years)
 - o The group discussed complexities with PBAs, funding, capacity, private lands, liability. USFS mentioned their priority having to be USFS land, and private land challenges limited by policy that would include the need for a cultural resources review and agreements (which is timely and can be expensive), getting that information and “how-to” information to private landowners, also, differences in burn restriction regulations and timing of burn windows between private and state lands.
 - o Concluded that it would be beneficial to increase PBAs across OK County, and would require additional conversations and coordination between Okanogan CD, WADNR, USFS, OK County, Fire Districts, and more.
- Chipping resources/Okanogan CD/Mid priority/Ongoing timeline
 - o This project touches on air quality/public health, as well as, fuels reduction, and chipping opportunities are expanding across partners, Okanogan CD, WADNR, Clean Air Methow, Cities and Towns, support for these programs should continue.

Category 2: Enhancements of Infrastructure –

- Identify possible ingress and egress routes and public evacuation areas around the County/OK County Emergency Management/High priority/Short term (1-2 years)

- Discussion around pinpointing specific evacuation areas, there were conflicting viewpoints as some people want this while some don't. Also, complexity of being able to specifically lay that out in this document (which would require a technical analysis that we can't perform at this time). It was concluded that we can identify this need in the CWPP as a project action, that would be to develop an additional document that identifies access routes and evacuation locations, however, pinpointing the locations directly in the CWPP is not something we would do. This project action was proposed below.
- A document that identifies where and how people can evacuate and how to evacuate in place/Lead varies by city, town, or neighborhood/High priority/Short term (1-2 years)
 - Added during discussion period by OCLTRG, mentioning that this has been a top concern at community meetings. Importance is to identify what areas are available for each community, although, keeping this open for change, as when a wildfire occurs, where people go or how they evacuate is variable.
- Posting "Emergency Evacuation Route" signage around the County along primary and secondary access routes/OK County Emergency Management/High priority/Short term (1-2 years)
 - Discussion that specifically marking something as "this is a wildfire emergency evacuation route" is not something we want to do; complexities (leading people down the wrong route, we don't do this for any other emergency, and more), however, we do need consistent signage throughout the County to identify where roads lead and if you can get from point A to point B. If this project makes it to the final list, this would be adjusted to reflect that more specifically.

We discussed additional infrastructure improvement projects specific to the town of Winthrop, which we will table to discuss further when they are with us.

10:15 – 10:20

Break

Category 3: Community Outreach and Education –

- Outage education and outreach/OK PUD/Mid priority/Short term (1-2 years)
 - o OK PUD mentioned part of their hazard mitigation plan will be to increase outreach and education to help people prepare for outage events and know what to expect during outage events via flyers and more. Okanogan CD will help distribute that information at public events as well.
- Public outreach and fire prevention efforts/USFS-Tonasket/Mid priority/Ongoing timeline
 - o Will continue planning and organizing outreach events and efforts. This is a general project that many other organizations aim to do as well, which includes wildfire resiliency preparedness and recovery efforts through the implementation of wildfire educational programs by Okanogan CD and WADNR, OCLTRG, and many others.
- Wildfire risk assessments of homes in identified neighborhoods/Okanogan CD & WADNR/High priority/Ongoing timeline
- Expanding membership in the Firewise USA ® program/Okanogan CD & WADNR/Mid priority/Ongoing timeline
- Develop capacity to serve the Spanish speaking community of Okanogan County directly/Okanogan CD/High priority/Short term (1-3 years)
 - o Discussion occurred to ask if emergency communication alerts go out in Spanish. They do not at this time. It was mentioned that an important consideration is that a message will not be delayed by waiting for a translator, and because of this there are options for the individual to translate the message in other ways on their end.

There were additional general communication, outreach, and education projects, many of which overlap and will be compiled down at a later time. The remaining project actions in categories #4-#9 will be discussed at the next planning session. Also, the community engagement subcommittee will continue working to summarize all projects mentioned at the public community meetings to ensure they are incorporated into the CWPP action table projects as well. Again, these are still draft projects and we are working to develop a more finalized and concise list of project that will be made available at a later time. Those actions will then be available for further comment and

discussion by all partners and members of the public. Please stay tuned for this document and the public comment period (we are hoping this will be available by the end of April and through May- early June). If you have questions or concerns regarding any of this, please reach out to Eli Loftis.

10:40 – 10:50 Remaining Community Meetings, 3/27, 3/28, and 4/9

A reminder that the next community meeting is later tonight in Nespelem, there is another one in Winthrop tomorrow, and the final one will be right before the next planning session in April on Tuesday, 4/9 in Pateros. We hope the great participation continues and to see all partners there! Agendas and meeting summary notes are available at www.okanogancd.org/cwpp.

10:50 – 10:55 Other Item for Discussion & Next Steps

There was a reminder that all project action ideas and summary overviews from partners should be submitted by this Friday, 3/29. An outlook for April was mentioned, we are continuing to compile projects into one full list in a CWPP project action table, this will then be evaluated to identify gaps, ensure public comment is incorporated, and determine priority, timeline, and lead agencies.

We are working on a user-friendly CWPP template design to plug all final document information into. Once that is ready, we will plug in the information we have so far (we estimate we are 1/4 or 1/3 of the way there with information needed), we will work to format and complete chapters of the document, and we will be leaning on subcommittee members to submit information needed for the document. This might include additional summary overviews from fire districts, barriers to wildfire resiliency and preparedness, existing and needed infrastructure, enforcement policies, geographical information, vulnerable population information, risk data, mapping, and much more. We hope to have a final draft with all the needed information by our planning session in May, so partners and public can start making comments and finalizations sooner than later. There will then be an official public comment period and hearing at the Commissioners Hearing Room, also, one final CWPP community meeting.

10:55 Adjournment

2024 CWPP – Planning Session

Okanogan Conservation District Office

Okanogan, WA

March 27th, 2024

Name	Representing
Jessica Farmer	OLTRG
Emmy Engle	OCD
Dylan Streeter	OCD
Eli Lettis	OCD
Travis Baker	colville NF
Amanda Thiel	Oregon State Univ.

Online:

Brad Armstrong	Okanogan Fire
Jeremy Patrick	Small Fire
Isabelle Spohn	Public
Timothy Delph	FS
Maurice Goodall	Emergency Management
Brian Campbell	FS
Will Knowlton	WADNR
Cassidy Robbins	Public City of OK
Justin Dibble	OK PWD