

CWPP Planning Session
Okanogan Conservation District Office
02/28/2024 | 9:00am – 11:00am

Agenda:

9:00 – 9:10 Public & Partner Comment

Partners introduced themselves, those who attended in-person and online. No partner or public comment.

9:10 – 9:15 WUI Final Decision

Dylan Streeter (Okanogan Conservation District) shared the WUI map and inner and outer WUI zones (maps will be uploaded with other CWPP resources which can be found on the Okanogan CD website's CWPP page). The committee discussed if this map covers the service areas for all partners, and the group identified and discussed outliers on the map. The inner WUI zone will be slightly adjusted to address the gaps between outliers.

The committee agreed that this map will suffice, and the decision was made that the WUI will contain an inner (1mile buffer) and outer zone (3mile buffer) surrounding all known address points in Okanogan County and will be altered to PODs and wilderness boundaries.

This will be the working definition of the WUI for CWPP planning purposes.

9:15 – 10:15 Action Items & Other

Agency/Organization Summary Overviews -

The shared Google Drive was brought up on the screen and the group discussed where partners can submit their completed overviews (submit to the Google Drive, "partner folder" and into the delegated overview folder). Partners asked for clarification on what to include in their overviews, especially if their jurisdictional area is out of the County. It was advised to focus primarily on your services and resources in Okanogan County, and add anything else that is relevant. This could be included as additional services and

explained in a brief and more general overview. Anything that partners are willing and able to share, is helpful. Also, the CWPP document itself is a working draft and these overviews will be blended throughout chapters, where they fit best, and the final version would be approved by the partner committee at a later time.

Project Action Table: Action item categories & project ideas -

The group reviewed the layout of the project action table. This working document includes 9 action items which serve as categories to help organize CWPP proposed project action ideas. CWPP partners from the core committee and general group were asked to save a template of this Project Action Table and start putting in project ideas under the appropriate categories. Partners do not need to have a project(s) for every category but they can if they choose, and were asked to prioritize putting in projects that they intend to lead and implement. They were also asked to start thinking about additional project ideas even if they do not have an identified lead yet, to start a list and bring back to the group too discuss in future planning sessions. Two partners submitted their ideas thus far; however, this will continue to be a working action item and partners should continue submitting these upon completion to the shared google drive folder.

The 9 working action item categories are listed below, in no particular order:

- 1) Fire Prevention and Mitigation Efforts: Activities that encourage individual & community action, home risk assessments, home-hardening, etc.
- 2) Enhancements of Infrastructure: Facility upgrades, telecommunications, roadways, power grid, water resources, etc.
- 3) Community Outreach and Education: Community engagement events and public education efforts
- 4) Enhancements of Local Resources and Capacity: Equipment, staffing, and other resources
- 5) Fuel/Forest Health Treatment Implementation: Small- and large-scale treatments, defensible space, thinning, prescribed burning, wildlife habitat improvements, etc.
- 6) Post-fire Recovery: Pre-planning and post-fire recovery actions, future preparations
- 7) Evacuation and Emergency Response: Pre-planning and active incident management, coordination of people and resources

- 8) Cultural and Economic Viability: Actions to protect objects and areas of cultural significance and economic value
- 9) Public Health: Actions to preserve and protect physical and mental health, including air quality issues

Determine objectives, relative priority, & CWPP mission -

Also, within the project action table and following the 9 action tabs is a relative priority tab and an objectives tab. The relative priority tab hosts feedback from partners and the public on how to determine project actions and whether they will be a low, medium, or high priority. This will be essential to setting direction for the CWPP project actions that will be planned over the next 5-10 years. There are a number of factors and ways to set priorities so there will be further discussion and no set definition to determine relative priority at this time, however, the following was suggested for consideration and a working definition:

Low Priority Action Item – “Projects that would be beneficial and effective to implement if time permits, capacity and resources are available, and can be identified as non-urgent.”

Medium Priority Action Item – “Projects that are important to implement but can handle moving down the priority list if needed; flexible deadlines, in a non-urgent state, but still important to be implemented in the timeline.”

High Priority Action Item – “Projects that are identified as the most important and urgent to implement, aligning with the core values and mission of the CWPP and stakeholders.”

We have received some feedback to date from partners and community members for examples as to what might be listed as a high priority project. This includes, “projects involving improved delivery or accurate and timely communication in an emergency event,” “projects that impact the greatest number of people (varies for each respective agency and where their service boundary is),” “projects with the greatest impact to life (human but also animal life),” “projects involving critical infrastructure in Okanogan County; communication towers, power lines, water resources, etc.,” “projects that include the pre-planning and improvement for efficiency in navigation and coordination of people, responders, and resources, in an emergency event.”

The final tab in the Project Action Table includes CWPP objectives. The group agreed to move forward the objectives from the previous 2013 CWPP and continue working on updating, adding to, and refining them for the 2024 version. These are working objectives at this time, but will be the driving goals of the CWPP project actions. In other words, every project listed in the CWPP should tie back to one or many of the following objectives (listed in no particular order):

- 1) To reduce the area of WUI land burned and losses experienced because of wildfires.
- 2) Prioritize the protection of people, structures, infrastructure, and unique ecosystems contributing to our way of life and the sustainability of the local and regional economy.
- 3) Educate communities about the unique challenges of wildfire in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).
- 4) Establish mitigation priorities and develop mitigation strategies in Okanogan County.
- 5) Strategically locate and plan fuel reduction projects.
- 6) Provide recommendations for alternative treatment methods, such as modifying forest stand density, herbicide treatments, fuel reduction techniques, and disposal or removal of treated slash.
- 7) Meet or exceed the requirements of the National Fire Plan and FEMA for a County-level Wildfire Protection Plan.
- 8) Effective collaboration between CWPP partners and stakeholders for improved navigation of wildfire resources and project action implementation efforts.

Projects for cities/towns/unincorporated communities -

This was a discussion to shift the thinking of CWPP efforts and project ideas to what we can do - what the specific CWPP partners who represent municipalities can do, within the populated cities, towns, and communities of our county. The Winthrop city planner representative asked, when a fire comes to town, it's not always a viable option to evacuate, so how can we provide a way to better shelter in place? Also, considering that not everyone can evacuate, especially when so many people are visiting town and in an area like Winthrop with increased density. The group was asked to think about projects where people can better shelter in place. Examples from previous wildfire events such as the Rising Eagle and Carlton fires, were brought up. It was mentioned that during

these events, resources were very stretched out, and it was asked, what can we do to keep people safe? The focus went to projects for water availability, for people to fight fires on their own, also, trainings for fire districts, and education for what can be done during these times.

It was also mentioned that each specific town might have, or look to develop, standing agreements for evacuation centers. To have a plan to identify where people can evacuate to, noting that these should be places where power is available, and ensure that people know where these are and where they can go.

While planning this, it was also brought up that it would be important to consider various parties in this planning, for instance, incident command teams also need to be able to set up in a designated area, and many areas have limited spaces for this, if that is reserved for an evacuation, this could hinder the incident team and cause them to get stationed further away or elsewhere.

The City of Okanogan discussed the lack of water availability back from a previous fire event and noted that it difficult to access water from towers, and maybe needing to have a back-up plan. BLM partners mentioned needing to educate the public about what's available, where to go, etc., that this CWPP document could do a good job of that.

It was also pointed out that a lot of this discussion is up Emergency Management's alley and they end up being a major decision maker in these times. Unfortunately, they couldn't be here today due to a training event so we will want to bring this up again with them in the room and ask where are the gaps, and what can CWPP partners help with during these events.

It was advised to consider, what does each community's incorporated city emergency and disaster response plan include? Can we gather those from each city and town, and do these need to be updated?

Community engagement was brought up again, and it was mentioned to help people consider their plan and options for sheltering in place or evacuating. While each

person's situation is different, how do we best communicate their safe place and help them build that plan? A project action item could be encouraging the public to build their plan or incorporate this piece if they already have a plan. Education and outreach efforts should focus on supplying resources to help community members come up with a plan, then move this up to a larger city/town plan, etc., (to ensure action plans keep building). The group was encouraged to remember that a lot of people aren't in the fire world, so explaining resources from that perspective.

Okanogan County Long Term Recovery Group (OCLTRG) mentioned that they have this resource/tool to help build an emergency plan, regardless of what the disaster event is. Another important point was to emphasize how and when community members can share their needs and influence planning decisions for agencies such as the Forest Service, DNR, Conservation District, etc. For instance, when the annual public meetings or community surveys come out to add to and help shape an organization's priorities.

USFS mentioned that they often have people moving into our area, adjacent to a project site, and we specifically need them at those meetings. However, like any other public meeting, and for one reason or another, people won't know about the meeting that it is happening, or simple don't want to attend the meeting. In general, community outreach and participation takes time, sometimes, there are avenues to work on the needed priorities on private lands, but it doesn't always align priority-wise between a landowner and an organization, or doesn't always fit timeline-wise, or in the current budget. For USFS, that's where DNR is usually a good bridge to help get these actions done more quickly.

Unfortunately, where it may be more meaningful treatments, that's where USFS may have most pushback from landowners. Conservation NW mentioned that is where they can also help bridge the education gaps and why treatments would be beneficial to both the ecosystem, community, and wildlife habitat. All in all, there's a lot of multi-faceted components, priorities, land managers, etc. in these projects.

Finally, it was mentioned to ensure we ask District #8, the Cattlemen's president, and Farm Bureau about what their area needs are and to fill out the project action table. As we would like to hear from them for what their needs are in the shrub steppe area for

rangeland. The Colville Tribes mentioned that they have also done treatments, and have specific protocols, but would work on adding their service area and project actions as well.

10:15 – 10:20 Break

10:20 – 10:45 North OK Community Meeting & Others

Meeting structure, agenda, and partner roles: objectives, mapping activity, SIM table, takeaways, resources -

Emmy Engle with the Okanogan Conservation District overviewed a plan for the community meetings. That these meetings will likely differ based on the community but would aim to have the following components...

First, introductions by CWPP partners who are in attendance, an overview of the CWPP process, goals, and meeting objectives, and the focus being a participatory exercise to map community values. Dylan Streeter is working on creating the maps.

*One portion of the map was referenced and displayed for the group, it was mentioned that there will be a few zoomed in, ~3'x3' maps to make up each area for (North, Central, South, West, and East OK County) this might be four separate maps for community members to break into groups and physically map community values at risk.

Halfway throughout the meeting we would put the individual maps together to form one large area map and see a visual for community values at risk. The next part of the community meeting would be a discussion to gather input and feedback about specific project actions over the next 5-10 years for the CWPP document. By the end of the meeting, there would be a time for community-level questions and concerns to be addressed by partners. We will also have the Okanogan Conservation District simulation table (SIM table) set-up to project wildfire scenarios and treatment actions during the breaks and before and after the meetings.

We would aim to have community ambassadors specific to each area, to help facilitate these community meetings and bring everyone together. The group discussed ideas for

facilitators, and the community engagement subcommittee will work on further meeting details in between our two time per month CWPP planning sessions.

10:45 – 11:00 Next Steps

Agency/organization summary overview – Submit these by Friday, 3/8.

Partners were reminded to complete their service overview to include their service area, resources, and needs by downloading the template #1 in the Google drive.

CWPP Project Action Table – Submit these for initial review by Tuesday, 3/12

Partners should continue thinking about CWPP project ideas, and download the template #2 from the Google Drive for the project action table, and re-upload once completed. Partners can put in ideas that they intend to be the project lead for, and also list general project ideas to contribute for the CWPP planning committee to discuss, determine the relative priority, and find who has the capacity to lead these potential projects at a later planning session date.

Outreach & Spread the word for Community Meetings –

Partners were asked mark their calendars and spread the word for the upcoming community meetings. The meeting dates and locations can be found on the Okanogan Conservation District's social channels and website at www.okanogancd.org/cwpp

11:00 Adjournment

2024 CWPP – Planning Session

Okanogan CD Office

Okanogan, WA

February 28th, 2024

Name

Representing

Will Knecht	WA DNR
Tim DePh	USFS
Justin Dibble	Okanogan PUD
KITA KENNY	WINTROP PLANNING COMMISSION
Aaron Coe	WA DNR
Blayne Harvey	WA DNR
Travis Baker	USFS Colville NF
Sham Prank	CNF
Steve Young	WA DNR
Emmy Engle	Okanogan CD
Eli Loftis	Okanogan CD
Matt Davidson	Conservation NW
Craig Nelson	Okanogan CD
<u>online:</u> Brad Armstrong	city Okanogan
Jessica Farmer	OCLTRG
Brian Campbell	USFS
JP Jeremy Patrick	city of omak
Whitney Machado	BLM
Brandon Trayer	DFW
Lonnie Cawston	Colville Tribe