

CWPP Planning Session
Okanogan Conservation District Office
03/13/2024 | 9:00am – 11:00am

Agenda:

9:00 – 9:10 Public & Partner Comment

Public comment

There was one public comment. The committee was reminded of items from the 2013 CWPP, which were listed as “removed due to lack of funding.” The public member emphasized the importance of the projects and that they would like to see these addressed again in the 2024 update. This included Item 6.3a, emergency evacuation routes and signs, Item 6.3d dead end roads and drainages to provide additional escape routes, Item 6.3f fuels mitigation to maintain primary and secondary routes in County, and Item 6.1d to develop policy on requiring new homes and businesses to install underground power lines. Following this with an emphasis on seeing these items brought into the CWPP again since human life is the focus and very important. Additionally, commenting that currently proposed zoning doesn’t require adequate ingress/egress and an example is that French Creek Road could have a sign saying “French Creek” so people know where they are at.

The CWPP committee members acknowledged this comment and thanked them for their public comment. Okanogan County Emergency Management responded to this later, to bring up that there is a challenge to providing signage in these areas that could use them due to these areas being private property or owned by other land managers and that it would be difficult for the County to enforce something like this. OKPUD also commented about underground powerlines later in the meeting (see page 5).

9:10 – 9:30 Community Meeting Recap Discussion

Emmy Engle with the Okanogan Conservation District provided an update from the Northern Okanogan County community meeting: the meeting was well attended by partners and the public with 44 people total, and while we are always hoping for as many people as possible to come, it was a good turnout for our first community

meeting. The presentation overview of the community wildfire protection plan went well, members of the public were happy to have so many wildfire partners in attendance, and there were positive comments about the effectiveness of the mapping activity. With our smaller to medium sized group people were able to go in-depth and share their concerns and ask questions. Meeting attendees also brought up various project ideas (listed in depth in the 3/12 community meeting summary). Other partners chimed in to summarize that the general consensus for project actions and concerns from the community were the need for repeaters (relating to communications and power grid), ingress/egress (for roadways and evacuation routes), HWY 97 and HWY 20 specifically being important routes, and the need for more prescribed burning and chipping. The group agreed that the meeting went well and moved on to address some of the challenges and feedback for next time.

The challenges included Wi-Fi connectivity which became an issue for the online portion of the meeting, although, there were only two attendees online, also, the SIM table sandbox was a great display but there were some technical difficulties that limited it's use, which the Conservation District is hoping to resolve in time for the next community meeting. Another comment was that more communication pushes and additional alerts that these meetings are happening can go out. While we used various outreach methods we can always do more. At the community meeting, attendees also touched on the importance of mixed communication methods as they stated they heard about the meeting from a range of mediums, the radio, the paper, a flyer in town, OK County Alerts, Facebook, and more.

The committee had feedback recommendations for the next meetings. This included, a way to collect input in writing for those who may not wish to share verbally or if there are time constraints. The mapping activity dots could maybe be numbered and correspond that number with any comments on paper. One partner asked if there was a way to record the presentation, another partner mentioned that there are challenges to this and we typically don't record meetings for storage, public record archiving purposes, and some members of the public may not want to be recorded. A solution was posed to maybe just record the informative overview of the CWPP PowerPoint presentation (PowerPoint slides posted on the Okanogan CD's CWPP webpage).

Lastly, another partner brought up when we covered the nine categories for CWPP action items, we had good conversations around project ideas but next time we could bring up specific examples to help get input on those ideas as well. A recommendation was to start this discussion by asking if anyone has any general ideas for projects from any category, then to shift to more specific ideas for each category.

9:30 – 9:57 Action Items & Other

Project Action Table: Review and discuss project ideas

We discussed the project action tables that were submitted by various partners. Thus far we've received project action ideas from WDFW, Clean Air Methow, OKPUD, Twisp and Winthrop, Okanogan CD, USFS Ranger Districts; Methow Valley and Tonasket, and WADNR (also, newly submitted was Conservation Northwest). All partners were asked to keep submitting project ideas if they haven't already, these need to be collected by the end of this month to have a compile a final list of projects by the end of April.

These project ideas from each partner will need to be compiled into one big list for further discussion and for the committee to decide on and rank projects and priorities, and identify gaps in projects or where additional partners may be able to assist. Partners had the opportunity to share any projects they've submitted thus far.

USFS-Tonasket commented that their table mostly includes thinning and other fuels reduction projects. The high priority items were identified as what are currently working on, also emphasizing that all projects really are high priority just on different timelines. Stating that their timelines were determined based on when they might start a project, even though it will be ongoing and is likely to even continue beyond 10 years. The USFS-Methow commented that their projects were similar and that the fuels work was prioritized where all items are high priority just on difference timelines. Also, concurring that a lot of this work won't be completed in the next 10 years and will continue to be ongoing.

A question was posed by the committee, do we have a desire to break any of these projects into geographical areas? The committee responded that rather than sorting every project action into a geographical area, it would be best to call out those specific projects that do take place in a certain area, mentioning if a project will take place in any

specific location. There was discussion to clarify whether we should include projects in this Project Action Table that we are doing currently and already do, or to list projects that we are planning to do? It was advised to use discretion and mostly focus on including any information and projects that you plan to do, or list current projects as continue to fund and work on “___.” Also, keeping in mind that there is opportunity to list any current projects in your agency overview summary, and we will refer to additional plans where those overviews might already be listed that your agency already has developed such as the County’s Hazard Mitigation Plan. We will be able to work as a group to identify any inconsistencies with projects at a later time.

9:57 – 10:05 Break

10:05 – 10:40 Project Action Table cont...

We discussed ideas for general project ideas as a committee. OCLTRG brought up some ideas to discuss and asked for feedback. One was around policy when it comes to large areas of land being parceled off and sold. Mentioning that this happens to many areas in our county, and that new community members might be misled on what is being sold to them or who owns which roadways, people might think that some roads are County roads when they aren’t, and don’t end up being maintained. Also, that ingress/egress and access points become a safety issue. The question was posed, is it possible to develop policy around what development means in our County? A second comment was made around developing the power grid, emphasizing that a lot of times the only ones who can keep their water on in emergency events are people living off the grid. These types of issues consistently come up in OCLTRG’s line of work and this partner wanted to note this. OK County Commissioner commented that there is work and discussion on the planning department side about these issues as well.

We reviewed the comments from the community meeting for further discussion and brainstorming of additional ideas (details of these ideas listed in the 3/12 community meeting summary). Salvage logging was something brought up, further comment included that this is inconsistent in practice and there are variables; large scale fire and ability to log, regulatory issues, timing, need for feasibility study and further biochar discussion, and more. This could maybe be listed as a lower priority at this time,

perhaps to get started on advocacy that comes from local agencies to push policy on making salvage logging a viable option in our community.

Further comments were stated on the project ideas around well-thought-out evacuation routes, if it is possible to enhance the knowledge of evacuation routes for people to know how to evacuate and where to go. No answer to this, but a response was made that we can try reaching out the County's GIS sector and public works regarding available mapping tools.

OKPUD addressed power grid issues, and that they attempt to leave the power on for as long as possible, acknowledging the water resource concerns. OKPUD also emphasized that with the amount of public comment on "what can I do and what's my evacuation route," we should be sure that we don't get too far into the weeds of trying to tell people exactly they should do but put the focus on providing education and equipping communities with resources specific to the areas that they decide to live in.

OK County followed up to ask if the PUD would have a project action to emphasize the development of underground powerlines? OKPUD responded that they don't push this or dictate this matter due to the associated costs of the project and to the landowner. However, if this is of interest, and if funds come around such as FEMA, we do try to replace overhead powerlines with underground ones.

Review objectives & CWPP mission:

Did not address this specifically at this session.

WUI Map Review

Dylan pulled up the planning WUI map for review and discussion. The map looked good, maybe out of proportion but that was just a visual issue with GIS. OK County asked about the State's WUI regulations and how there may be proposed changes maybe that these changes may take 2 years or so for this update to happen? WADNR mentioned they think that might be in regard to a Wildfire Community Risk map rather than the State WUI map.

10:40 – 10:55

Next Steps

CWPP Timeline and Continued Efforts

Our outlook for March and April, community meetings will continue and we will continue to collect public feedback. We may start leaning on the CWPP sub committees more to help sort community input, and get general project ideas added into the list, further community outreach along this process, and identifying engagement opportunities for the future.

By the end of March we'll continue collecting project action ideas and compiling those we've received, hopefully have those compiled by our April planning session to review and start prioritizing and identifying any gaps. A good goal would be to have all project ideas collected into the action table by the end of April to get this finalized by early May. We will continue working diligently. Throughout May, our focus will shift to finalizing CWPP project actions and completing chapters of the CWPP document. The template for the 2024 CWPP is currently a work in progress, we are aiming to have this document be user friendly and straightforward, making it easy for us to plug in chapters of information also.

Getting a majority of these things ready by the end of April allows us to work through May to review our work thus far and identify inconsistencies and needs for revision. We will also need to review the timeline and set a date for an official public hearing for public comment by end of May or June. There will also need to be a final community meeting to discuss a summary of this document and discuss the next steps. No further comment.

Planning Session Dates (April & May)

The next couple of months will be busy for agencies and organizations with trainings, burn season, and other upcoming projects. Keeping this in mind, it was advised to keep planning session dates on Wednesdays from 9am-11am. The April and May planning dates are as follows: 4/10, 4/24, 5/8, and 5/22. The planning sessions will continue to take place at the Okanogan Conservation District office and be available by the virtual Teams link. Meeting agendas and session summaries will continue to be published monthly to the Okanogan CD website at www.okanogancd.org/cwpp

10:55 – 11:00 **Other Items for Discussion?** None.

10:57 **Adjournment**

2024 CWPP – Planning Session

Okanogan CD Office

Okanogan, WA

February 14th, 2024

Name	Representing
Cindi Tonasket	Consolidated Tribes of Colville Res.
Travis Baker	colville N.F.
Stacy Plank	COF.
Blayne Harvey	DNR
MARICE Goodall	OK. Em
Lori Caswell	ok. Em
Dylan Streater	OCD
Eli Lattis	OCD
Emmy Engle	OCD
<u>online:</u>	
Brad Armstrong	Okanogan Fire
Jessica Farmer	OCLTRG
Tim Delph	USFS
Justin Dibble	OKPUD
will Knowlton	WADNR
Whitney Machado	BLM
Jeremy Patrick	Omak Fire
Isa Isabelle Spohn	Public
Rocklynn Culp	Winthrop Planner
Jon Neal	OK County Commissioner
Cody Acord	Fire District #6
in person Cathy Holmsten	WADNR