

CWPP Planning Session
02/14/2024 | 9:00am – 11:00am
Okanogan Conservation District Office

Agenda Items:

9:00 – 9:10 Public & Partner Comment

none.

9:10 – 9:20 2013 CWPP – What have we accomplished?

Reviewed a map of proposed projects (Pg. 114 in the 2013 CWPP document). Discussed treatments that have been done, USFS mentioned Mazama area, Winthrop area, southern Tonasket areas. Mechanical treatments were done in Tonasket area, surrounding areas were burned in 2014 and 2015. The Buckhorn block hasn't been done yet. There are more plans scheduled for the upcoming year(s) and treatments near Mt. Hull are currently happening.

Discussed issues with communication and outreach for the North end and SE corner of the County, and in hard-to-reach areas.

9:20 – 9:35 WUI Revisited

Dylan has been talking with the USFS Ranger Districts on how to incorporate POD boundaries into WUI map. If there is a gap, could use POD zones to fill that in. Adding in ingress/egress routes roadways, and expanding out to campgrounds, communications towers, etc. Mentioned we want to connect with the Tribes on their WUI boundary and concerns mentioned in the last meeting.

Long-term Recovery mentioned adding map overlays to identify areas based on social vulnerability. That these map layers can be found on FEMA. Conservation NW added they would be interested in a core WUI and additional overlays as well for planning and prioritization of projects related to human life, wildlife, and property, to look at *life and property* and work outwards. It was also emphasized that continuity is important, to see where you can connect efforts, and that between state, federal, and local/private organizations we each have varying abilities and resources to consider for project goals. Also emphasized was that these boundary lines and the defined area for the WUI in this CWPP document does not change the State WUI definition. This is for planning

purposes only, to help in identifying the need for projects, coverage or gaps in local capacity and resources, and that this would NOT hold any legal obligation by a particular agency/organization to ensure the project is initiated by a particular time or reaches completion. While we aim to complete the goals set out in this CWPP plan and will refer to this often, it is a non-binding planning document.

9:35 – 10:50 Action Items & Other

Hazard Risk Analysis Components

Looking at the landscape and understanding fire behavior and risk data. Discussed how we would plan to model risk, would this be at a 97th percentile (the 3%) to be realistic about what a fire would do on the worst days, would we model a range to include what risk data looks like at the 50th percentile, 85-90%, for more moderate behavior. Also mentioned that we would want to consider re-modeling this year after year, or after a burn, and to consider the opposite end of risk.

It was suggested to be cautious of highlighting the County only at a 97th percentile where everything shows extreme risk, and considering how this could potentially affect insurance and that homeowners may be concerned that they would lose coverage. Perhaps, basing our risk on historic data such as based on the number of disasters our County has faced historically, it's clear we are at risk. It was mentioned that there is a bill in the legislature right now about wildfire risk and insurance companies.

It was pointed out that when it comes to treatments, not all areas of a landscape need to be treated, and just main parts of a priority area, to prioritize wildlife habitat needs and landowner/community values. Also, understanding that fire is not just a bad thing but is also a good/important thing for the landscape, however, knowing how high winds factor in.

A representative for the Fire Districts asked what do you need from us, and how should we/will we be involved during this CWPP process if fuel treatments aren't something what we do. The response was, we still ask fire districts to represent this group and be included in this process because, while we are talking about fuel treatments now, there is more to come in this process including additional projects that will be listed in the

CWPP, outside of fuel treatments, as well as listing the priorities and values for districts, and more when it comes to local capacity/resources, and community engagement.

A question was posed, “what should be the criteria for assessing risk in municipalities?” If a fire reaches the ‘urban’ areas of our County what does risk factor look like? To consider available resources/capacity, and home-to-home transmission risk. Municipality representative added, “I agree, I’m involved [*in this process*] because I want to see this plan [CWPP] address what the municipalities can do since we are where the most people are concentrated. We’re thinking about access - two points minimum for every neighborhood. Shelter in place protocols and resources. Landscaping guidelines, setbacks, density considerations, building guidelines.”

It was noted that when it comes to evacuation, this is where we see a big issue with loss of life. [Evacuation routes are something that will be discussed further in this process and brought up again for project planning and prioritization].

Projects and Prioritization Standards

We reviewed the 2013 projects and it was mentioned that the format is confusing and hard to follow, that this time around we should have better organization for action items possibly by objectives. Concerns were brought up, that while the CWPP is non-binding, there may still be a risk to agencies for having plans in writing in this public document. This was heard and confirmed as a very valid point.

It was again stated that this document would be similar to if your organization had an internal long-range plan, and that while projects should be specific and identifiable, they should also be general to include a need to adapt over the next 5-10 years. There would also be plans included for a commitment to revision, to keep partners and the public updated on the status of projects. It was also suggested to have a project plan for communication, education, and outreach around the CWPP document, that it is non-binding and to guide projects, to ensure the public isn’t misled about the reality of what agencies/organizations can do under this document.

Community Meetings:

There were dates and locations proposed for community engagement meetings to start taking place this spring. The meetings will begin after March 12th and occur on Tuesday evenings from 5pm – 7pm in five areas of the County. Central OK County to take place at the Okanogan fairgrounds, North OK County to take place at the Tonasket High School, South OK County to take place at the Pateros Fire Hall, a Methow Valley

to take place at the Twisp Community Center, and we are waiting to hear from a Tribal representative to inform us of where they would like the East County meeting on the Colville Reservation to be held.

These meeting locations need to be confirmed after checking venue availability, and dates to be specified for each area meeting. It was also pointed out that spring break for schools is happening the first week of April, and the 4/2/24 meeting may need to be changed. Planning efforts for the community meetings will continue over the next two weeks by the community engagement committee to confirm the meeting details as soon as possible to ensure outreach efforts are started by February 20th.

The planning committee discussed the structure for the meetings, encouraging this to be a public forum that is well-structured and stays focused on the larger County area (as opposed to diving too deep into one specific community issue or other topics). We want to set clear meeting objectives that let communities know what's in this for them, allow them to understand and know how to access their local resources, and where to submit further information or ask questions throughout this process.

The goal is for the meetings to focus on a participatory mapping activity for residents and partners to mark their values, discuss wildfire risk data specific to communities living in that area of the County, address concerns in-depth that were brought up in the resident surveys, and provide an opportunity for attendees to ask questions. If community members have specific topics to discuss or concerns/questions relative to their community and not relevant for the majority of the group, we ask that they write them down with contact information or set up a 1 on 1 meeting to discuss at a later time. The community engagement sub-committee will work through planning efforts regarding the meeting structure and work to create an additional follow up survey to the resident questionnaire for the larger CWPP planning committee to work through at the next planning session on 2/28/24.

10:50 – 10:55 Committees and Roles

The CWPP planning committee approved of informal sub-committees to work through planning details in between planning sessions. This would help the group meet deadlines and make for efficient decision-making during planning sessions.

10:55 – 11:00 Planning Session Review – Thoughts?

The structure of the meeting worked well for in-person and virtual attendees.

11:00 – 11:05 Next Steps

Reminder that all CWPP documentation and resources are available on the Google Drive link.

Everyone was asked to update an overview of their service area, list what resources are available and where they are located, mention their needs, and come up with a list of priorities for their organization/agency to discuss at our next planning session. Final summaries should be submitted to the Google Drive or sent to Eli Loftis by the next planning session on 2/28/2024.

Planning committee members were asked to start thinking of proposed projects to put in the CWPP; projects should be included for capacity, fuel treatments, communication/education/outreach, evacuation, post-fire preplanning, and more.

11:05 Adjournment

2024 CWPP – Planning Session

Okanogan CD Office

Okanogan, WA

Emmy Engle (OCO) February 14th, 2024

Name

Representing

Dylan Street

OCO

Travis Baker

Colville NF Tonasket R.D.

Will Knowlton

WA DNR

Cass Robbins

Okanogan County Building Dept.

Daniel Mantano

WA DNR

BRAD Armstrong

Okanogan Fire

Chris Furr

Okanogan-Wenatchee NF, Methuen Valley RD

Tim DePh

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"

Brian Cardell

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Shawn Plante

Colville NF

MATT MARSH

Colville NF

Justin Dibble

Okanogan PUD

JEREMY PATRICK

Omak Fire

Matt Danielson

Conservation NW

M Goodall

EM

Lori Caswell

EM

Jessica Farmer

OCUTRG

Blayne Harvey

WA DNR

online

Myron Boles

WA DNR

Rocklynn Culp

Winthrop

Brandon Troyer

WDFW

Whitney Machado

BLM

Eli Lottier

OCO