

CWPP Planning Session
Okanogan Conservation District Office
04/10/2024 | 9:00am – 11:00am

9:00 – 9:10 Public & Partner Comment

None.

9:10 – 9:30 Recap of Community Meetings

The final meeting in Pateros went well and we had good attendance and engagement. The participatory mapping part of the meeting ran longer than expected but it was good, and the community members were incorporating action item ideas with their values at risk. We ended up not having a break because we just moved into the final part of the meeting where we expanded the ideas for action items to the full 9 categories (the full community meeting summary can be found on the website).

We summarized that overall, each one of the community meetings had good attendance turnouts, at least in the Okanogan CD's experience hosting community meetings over the last few years. We asked the group what could have been better? OKLTRG shared that maybe cold calling and overall, even more outreach to inform people the meetings are happening. USFS shared their experience with previous field tours, summarizing that we need to do this more and make more time and have additional opportunities going forward for community engagement.

[At the South County community meeting, there was a comment that brought the Dept. of Ecology (DOE) into the conversation] A partner in the group asked if DOE was included in this group and how we can incorporate riparian zone projects into the CWPP. An example was given sharing that in 2014 with the Chiliwist fire, there were over four agencies that were involved in the efforts to help with post-fire recovery in riparian areas. It was also stated that DOE knows this CWPP process is going on and they have been included in the conversation. Also, more education efforts would be good for what can and can't be done in riparian zones, then who to contact for further assistance.

We continued with, the meetings overall went well, they well attended, the structure was broad and was able to be well adapted to each meeting and the community's specific needs, the virtual end didn't go as well as we planned for, also, maybe more time would have been nice, even just an extra 30 minutes. On top of having community centric meetings, perhaps also having industry centric meetings, to hear more about their specific challenges, needs, and plans. Another partner said, maybe not just industry specific but another meeting for businesses overall. Agriculture users may already have plans, but maybe general business owners don't know or don't have that yet so they should be included as well. For instance, transportation and evacuation plans, it would be good to know unique challenges and plans.

Overall, community meetings were not required under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, but we prioritized these for this CWPP update to ensure a collaborative and inclusive process. Between the surveys and the community meetings we've engaged roughly 1,000 people. Also, going forward for the next CWPP update, we should be sure to mention that these meetings could be beneficial.

9:30 – 10:15 Project Action Table (review and discuss project action categories)

The group discussed the combined project action table which includes nearly 100 projects that partners have submitted. The focus of the discussion was to review projects in categories 4-9.

Please note that 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 only a few of the draft projects that were discussed in this 4/10 planning session. They are mentioned in no order but may identify the following components: proposed projects/ lead agency/relative priority/and timeline.

Action Category #4: Enhancements of Local Resources and Capacity

- Water curtain systems for towns which can reduce risk of ember contact with structures/towns & fire districts/mid priority/medium timeline (2-5 years)

- Monitoring equipment to improve monitoring of wildfires in the state and improve response time also modeling to identify probable hazards/no established lead, priority, or timeline, TBD.
 - o Fire probability monitoring was further discussed, and a point was made that this already exists with agencies like USFS and WADNR, do we need to increase this
- Equipment rentals available to landowners; pruners, chainsaws, chippers, etc./no established lead, priority, or timeline, TBD
- Support PBA's, TREX events, and cooperative burning opportunities/no established lead/mid priority.
- Increase access to Equitable Mitigation Program to increase capacity to vulnerable populations and Firewise USA® practices to private landowners /OKLTRG/high priority/ongoing timeline

Action Category #5: Fuel/Forest Health Treatment Implementation

- OKPUD Vegetation Management includes removal of vegetation within ride-of-way corridors/OKPUD/mid priority/ongoing timeline
- Restoration of departed landscape surrounding Conconully, Toats Coulee area on the NW portion of the Tonasket Ranger District, Tunk Mtn. area, Dugout Mtn., including thinning, piling of slash, pile burning, and more./USFS-Tonasket/High Priority/medium to long-term timeline.
 - o It was further discussed that it is challenging to decide the priority of these treatments and which ones should take place first, also, that the timeline of these actions is challenging to identify as well.
 - o Additional specific treatment projects were mentioned by USFS, WDFW, WADNR, and BLM.
- Develop Prescribed Burn Associations (PBAs in OK County)/Okanogan CD
- Cost-share opportunities for grazing management/Okanogan CD
- All Hand All Lands approach actively participating in federal land use, planning processes, and fuels reduction./USFS and WADNR
- Promote and increase participation with groups such as the Okanogan River Airshed Partnership (ORAP) and MVCC's Clean Air Methow (CAM) to address air quality impacts/no established lead, priority, or timeline, TBD.

- Fuels mitigation along primary and secondary access routes in the County to ensure these routes can be maintained in the case of an emergency/OK County Public Works and WDOT/high priority/short-term (1-3 years)
- Develop collaborative grant program that focuses on the control of invasive annual grasses and the reduction of surface fuels/Okanogan CD/high priority/short-term (1-3 years)

Action Category #6: Post-fire Recovery

- Establishment of a permanent state level fire recovery cost-share/grant program that is proactive rather than reactive, as the current fire recovery model does not meet needs appropriately and increased legislative support/WADNR/high priority/short-term (1-3 years)
 - o This was further discussed to emphasize that assistance is needed to address the land, assist with landowner/firewise tools, and the disposal element of hazardous materials (such as asbestos) in homes, all of which must be done before rebuilding or post-fire recovery efforts can occur. Concluding that this input and information needs to come from our County to the legislative officials to see change at the state level.
- Enhance, conserve, and rehabilitate critical riparian ecosystem functions which may yield greater resistance to wildfires/WDFW/mid priority/ongoing
- Collaborate with aquatic organizations before post-fire recovery to enhance post-fire recovery and restoration in terrestrial habitat/
- Increased seed stock to have materials available for replanting projects
- Coordination of post-fire recovery efforts between agencies, private contractors or foresters, and other organizations such as OKLTRG, OK County Weed Board, and more with practices such as tree felling, road rehab, noxious weeds, and post-fire flooding.
 - o Further discussion emphasized the importance of needing a post-fire coordination plan and short document of how each organization can respond and better coordinate efforts and resources for post-fire recovery.
- Post-fire debris flows monitoring/USGS and WADNR/mid priority/medium term timeline.

Action Category #7: Evacuation and Emergency Response

- Development of community evacuation plans/OCEM/high priority/medium term (2-5 years) timeline
- Coordinate with livestock owners to develop evacuation and/or shelter in place plans for animals/OCEM/high priority/short-term (1-2 years)

Action Category #8: Cultural and Economic Viability

- Purchase of tub grinders to be used by local agricultural producers to reduce the need for burning/Okanogan CD/high priority/short-term (1-2 years)

Action Category #9: Public Health

- Coordinated burn restriction system to allow residents to quickly find related information for easier means of accessing information on burn bans/WADNR & DOE
- Provide air quality monitors for businesses and public community spaces
- N95 mask distribution

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 projects 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.

10:25 – 10:30 Break

10:30 – 10:45 2024 CWPP Document

The group reviewed a draft template for the 2024 CWPP and reviewed what sections would be in the document. It was shared that partners would be asked to help complete certain sections of the document based on the subcommittee's they are a part of; community engagement, fire risk data and mapping, or project action prioritization.

10:45 – 11:00 Other Item for Discussion & Next Steps

The next steps in this process will be to continue working to fill out sections of the CWPP document by using the information we have gathered. As sections are written and put together, they will be reviewed in stages or the document in full will be reviewed at future CWPP planning sessions. This document would also be made available for other partners and for the public to comment on before final submission to the Okanogan County Commissioner's.

11:00 Adjournment

2024 CWPP – Planning Session

Okanogan Conservation District Office

Okanogan, WA

April 10th, 2024

| Name | Representing |
|----------------|---------------|
| Will Krawltan | DNR |
| Haran Coe | DNR |
| Dylan Streetor | OCD |
| Eli Loftis | OCD |
| Emmy Engle | OCD |
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| Travis Baker | USFS |
| Justin Dibble | OK POD |
| Cody Acard | FD #6 |
| Brad Armstrong | Okanogan Fire |
| Tim Delph | USFS |
| Jessica Farmer | OCLTRG |
| Jeremy Patrick | Omak Fire |
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