



Linn County
Community Wildfire Protection Plan
2022 Update Meeting
NOTES



Monday, August 31, 2023

1:00 – 3:00pm

Online via Zoom

Zoom recording: <https://dlcd.box.com/s/da2owekmpahi43npj99nzgu6kvp5gf9>
Presentation slides (combined): <https://dlcd.box.com/s/uzl0mzar3nte4r8lk9mivs5egz7xul09>

Attendees

Kate Bentz, Assistant Planner, Linn County
Alyssa Boles, Planning Director, Linn County
Cara Walter, Linn County GIS
Kayla Bordelon, OSU Extension Fire Program, Willamette Valley
Stephanie Stafford, Risk Reduction Specialist, OSFM
Marie Heuberger, Wildfire Adapted Communities Specialist, North Santiam Watershed Council
Shane Wooton, Fire Chief, Albany Fire Department, and Linn County Fire Defense Board Chief
Trent Tegen, Wildland Fire Supervisor, Santiam Unit, North Cascade District, ODF
Shannon Richardson, Executive Director, South Santiam Watershed Council
Erik Anderson, Emergency Manager, Linn County Health Services
Kelcey Young, City Manager, City of Sweet Home
Jay Alley, Fire Chief, Stayton Fire District
Patrick Wingard, DLCD, Southern Willamette Valley Regional Representative
Katherine Daniel, DLCD, Natural Hazards Planner
Susan Millhauser, DLCD, Natural Hazards Planner-Wildfire, Project Manager

Welcome/Introductions

- Attendees introduced themselves.
- June 23, 2023 meeting notes were discussed and approved.

Public Engagement Update

Kayla and Kate provided an overview of the engagement process so far, see the above linked slides for details.

- Meetings
 - August 2, City managers shared common concerns around communication and evacuation, also shared some local issues, such as routes in and out of the city, water supply, and communication.
 - August 24, representatives from community organizations, such as public health, FireWise, watershed council, fuels management organizations, service providers. Some of the priorities on the land management side included... Connections were made that day will help to move projects forward.

- August 24 Fire Defense Board to receive additional local input and expertise and priority needs as well as areas in the community of concern.
- Process - currently summarizing the priorities and feedback received, we're seeing a lot of alignment with what is already included in the action items. Some examples noted below:
 - City managers – for example road improvements, vegetation management, coordination of regional alert systems between Linn and Marion County.
 - Community groups – interest in assessing the needs of vulnerable populations and helping them to be prepared in the event of a fire and to set up shelter and services needed.
- Fire Defense Board was asked to submit information about areas at risk using suggested attributes, districts were also provided a worksheet to provide additional areas of concern. Have been receiving some of the forms back, will need to reach out to others. Next steps will include following up with bordering districts that aren't in the Linn FDB, as well as ODF fire protection districts. Will put geographic locations into the risk assessment and mapping. General concerns were also shared, such as need for ongoing funding to increase capacity and apparatus.
- Community meeting in the late fall to provide education and information about wildfire preparation and adaptation and get feedback on the draft plan.

Reflections from the steering committee:

- The meeting felt very productive, it was important to have various organizations at the table – non-profits and government agencies.

Risk Assessment and Mapping Update

Kate provided an update on the mapping and risk assessment and the committee reviewed and provided feedback on the draft maps (see the presentation linked above).

- Historical fire occurrence is using real-time data from a map service so will be updated.
- Fire district coverage, showing changes since 2007, structural fire protection as well as ODF wildland fire protection. Fire district coverage doesn't necessarily show response capability.
- WUI areas, there may be too many limitations with using OSU/ODF data in a public plan if it's published this fall as there's no clear idea of when the hazard map will be adopted. May use a federal WUI sources, USGS 2022, that uses the same definition of the WUI. Shared comparison between the two, they're close. We could come back in a CWPP update with new data. There is significant difference on the west side of the county.
 - It should be possible to decouple the WUI data with the hazard map. Can schedule a follow up meeting with ODF and OSU. Trent suggested reaching out to Eric Larsen, ODF GIS, in Salem, he'll share contact information. Kayla will follow up with Andy McEvoy at OSU.
 - Chief Wootton noted that the Oregon-specific data from OSU better reflects the on the ground reality.
- 2023 QWRA wildfire hazard data set will be available to the public in October, have been using the preliminary data. Once the public data is available, can refine the maps as needed
- Overall wildfire risk (possibility x consequence) - There is benefit and cost, low, medium and high, could be negative and positive. There is no possibility for positive risk if there's impact to people, property, or structures. Grey areas are where there is no burnable land - water, lava fields, and irrigated agriculture (no data). The 2023 update looks at agriculture differently, not all ag is wet.

- Map with unaltered symbology is confusing, so propose grouping the categories so information pops out – white to show neutral or no benefit. Would include accompanying text to describe how this is categorized as well as detail from OSU describing each category.
- We need to provide a good description as to what is meant by high loss or risk, e.g., timber versus loss of life or homes.
- This is the integrated output.
- Could do a separate map that focuses on risk to people and property. Have the data from OSU but don't have the symbology/information needed to label the map. Include the WUI layer.
- Appreciate that the overall map shows ecological benefit, could include a separate map to highlight that. Need VERY clear descriptions of what "benefits" means.
- Question about format - is there a possibility to have a web-based version that people can interact with? This isn't being planned right now but could include an action item to develop a web-based tool. It was noted that OSU will be publishing this data as well, could pull into the County's system. Don't want to duplicate what's happening at the state level.
- Overall wildfire risk – shows potential impact regardless of probability, areas that would be most impacted if they burned. May want to include as well.
- Overall burn probability - how likely an area is to burn within a year. Lines up with historical data.
- Including city boundaries and rural communities based on zoning.
- Past and planned fuels management and areas of priority concern - will add in areas of concern raised by the fire districts to help prioritize projects. Will look at buffering. Need similar data from ODF and BLM. Could show areas of concern and overlapping concern.

CWPP Action Item Development

- The committee reviewed updated action items, based on feedback at the June meeting focused on education actions, as well as a few others.
- Goal is to confirm/identify leads and partners or identify who might reach out to potential leads.
- See notes in this spreadsheet on Box:
<https://dlcd.box.com/s/bk0su6wxsuwenujjyzs8g4wfvxnj0tr4>
- Susan will follow up with folks where there are still some TBD leads. Kate is following up with some people as well (see spreadsheet for notes).
- Leads to continue to refine action items in advance of next meeting, including action item worksheets, with a focus on timeline, cost, funding source, and location.
 - Susan will share action item worksheets with the committee.

Action Plan and Assessment Strategy

- The committee didn't discuss in detail. Susan, Kate, and others will look at action item prioritization options and come back to the steering committee with a proposal in September for their consideration.

Next Steps

- In advance of the next meeting, leads continue to refine action items, update action item worksheets.

- Integration of community priorities into action items
- Action plan and assessment strategy
- Community meeting on draft plan
- Plan review

Next meeting: TBD, late September/early October 2023. Susan will send out a poll to schedule it.

Support this project by linking the following webpage to your jurisdiction's webpage:
<https://www.co.linn.or.us/planningbuilding/page/community-wildfire-protection-plan>