



Linn County
Community Wildfire Protection Plan
2022 Update Meeting
NOTES



Thursday, October 5, 2023
3:00 – 5:00pm
Online via Zoom

Zoom recording: <https://dlcd.box.com/s/da2owekmpahi43npj99nzgu6kvp5gf9>
Presentation slides (combined): <https://dlcd.box.com/s/e0x5vdb18aduhw4qjvdlravktashqmn6>

Attendees

Kate Bentz, Assistant Planner, Linn County
Alyssa Boles, Planning Director, Linn County
Cara Walter, Linn County GIS
Shane Wooton, Fire Chief, Albany Fire Department, and Linn County Fire Defense Board Chief
Christian Whitfield, Sweet Home Fire, CWRR Program Manager
Kayla Bordelon, OSU Extension Fire Program, Willamette Valley
Stephanie Stafford, Risk Reduction Specialist, OSFM
Horace Ward, Senior Emergency Management Specialist, PacifiCorp
Chris Mushrush, Fire Planner, Northwest Oregon Interagency Fire Management, BLM/USFS
Cliff Carpentier, Director of Safety & Loss Prevention, Linn Benton Community College
Katherine Daniel, DLCD, Natural Hazards Planner
Susan Millhauser, DLCD, Natural Hazards Planner-Wildfire, Project Manager

Welcome/Introductions

- Attendees introduced themselves.
- August 31, 2023 meeting notes were discussed and approved.

Public Engagement Update

Kate provided an update on community engagement activities since the last Steering Committee meeting:

- Have been reviewing the feedback received at the two focus group meetings in August (City Managers and community organizations representatives) to identify where feedback might be addressed in the plan, where there's need for updates, etc.
 - [This document on Box](#) tracks feedback and how we're planning to integrate it. It will be cleaned up/summarized to show how feedback was incorporated into the plan, included as an appendix.
 - Many of the comments are already aligned with the plan; some require additional follow up with organizations, including Linn County Emergency Management, County Public Health, County Roads, and ODF North and South Cascades.
 - Working to integrate the feedback received and how it's being addressed into action item worksheets and implementation actions.

- Following the August Fire Defense Board meeting, fire agency feedback is mostly being integrated going into the risk assessment, including follow up on areas where there are concerns to better understand the issues. Also following up via email with North Santiam fire districts that aren't on the Linn County Fire Defense Board to request similar information about areas of concern. Will also update fire district profiles.
- Next steps for public engagement include holding an open house for the community at large, with the goal of familiarizing people with the CWPP and gathering feedback. May also incorporate community education and resources around wildfire prevention, preparedness, and connecting people to programs to draw people in and share important information.
 - Timing depends on having enough information to present, aiming for late November.
 - Would like to include: CWPP goals, action items, and County draft risk assessment and maps to get feedback on the most important elements.
 - Will form a subcommittee work on this. Interested in helping: Kayla-OSU Fire Extension, Stephanie-OSFM, Marie-Watershed Council, Christian- Sweet Home Fire. Could invite experts to speak, tabling, etc. including fire districts.

Risk Assessment and Mapping Update

Kate provided an update on the risk assessment and mapping:

- Using 2023 PNW Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment regional data. Have permission from OSU to use QWRA data in any way the County would like; final data was provided today. Cara, County GIS, and Andy, OSU, have been working on county-wide symbology (versus region-wide) and recategorizing data only relative to Linn County. Not a lot of change for the County. Also using ODF/OSU WUI data. Have been able to clip data to fire district boundaries.
- Committee members provided feedback:
 - Combine Albany Rural with Albany.
 - Adding ODF protected lands, on the same chart will compress the other areas. Risk to all values. Can possibly do just risk to structures.
 - Question about how WUI is defined, OSU resource: <https://osuwildfireriskmap.forestry.oregonstate.edu/wildland-urban-interface>
 - Will need to determine how we define areas as low, medium, and high risk. Do we need to categorize? The CWPP must prioritize fuels reduction projects.
 - This approach doesn't include federal and state lands outside of the structural protection districts.
 - Is there a map of unprotected areas? Yes, there will be a map that shows that and potentially the number of structures as well as risk data for those areas.
- Fire Districts priority areas mapping – currently just has roads, will add community boundaries. Ideally will have a table with areas of concern listed out. This map will help with project identification and prioritization.
- Conclusions will be forthcoming.

Action Plan and Assessment Strategy

Prioritization Process/Methods

Susan provided an overview of potential prioritization process/methods considerations for the Committee's discussion, including some initial feedback received from some action item leads, the process outlined in the 2007 CWPP, and the importance of understanding and integrating internal

priorities for the action item leads (summarized in the meeting presentation), with the goal of committee coming to consensus on the direction. Committee discussion followed:

- Priorities are related to Fire District need - Some districts are in higher risk areas so it would be hard to compare priorities which might be important in a more localized area. For example, Albany FD's recent grant award from OSFM to use goats to reduce vegetation in a problem area. This wasn't necessarily tied to being in a higher risk area.
- Shouldn't be too hard to sort or prioritize by funding availability, it should be straight-forward to identify existing funds and potential funds that may become available.
- How do we quantify potential impact? Don't want to just use funding, there could be projects that are impactful but don't have funding identified.
- Suggestion to add a funding feasibility component.
- Do we need to be prioritizing? All are deemed a priority by the various partners. How do we compare a fuels reduction projects with a resilience hub, for example?
 - Confirm with ODF that action items should be prioritized.
 - Can we prioritize within each goal?
 - Maybe we only have to prioritize fuels reduction projects, such as areas of concern from the risk assessment to score just fuels reduction projects.
 - Geographic areas prioritization?
 - Community Wildfire Defense Grant uses a point level / scoring comes at risk level and having an action in the CWPP.
 - Also, can write a proposal by community, can help to qualify as high risk, low income, etc.
- CWPP top priorities should be included in the NHMP.
 - For NHMPs, project prioritization is primarily opportunistic based on funding. Much less analytically driven than this conversation.
- Risk assessment will help to prioritize areas of the county: low, medium, high . Could define by fire district or other community boundary, 2007 plan didn't have locational actions.
- Could take fire agency priorities and distill them into potential project areas, e.g., this project is medium priority based on the wildfire hazard risk.

Action plan status/timeline for implementation

The following proposal was shared for committee discussion:

STATUS / TIMELINE

O	Ongoing
ST	Short Term (1-3 years)
MT	Medium Term (4-10 years)
LT	Long Term (10+ years)

- Do we want to have a target date?
- Is the time range for starting or target completion date? Could also note "Not Started and Completed" in addition to Ongoing.
- How will this help the Steering Committee with plan review and maintenance?
- Including a Target Completion date would help to create some accountability.
- Suggested to include/clarify that time range is for target completion. (Look at language in action item worksheet template as an example; use ST, MT, LT for potential completion date.)

- Would it be beneficial to include successful/completed items from 2007? Yes, these can be included on the action item worksheets.

Plan Maintenance, Monitoring, and Evaluation

Susan provided an overview of the Plan Maintenance process outlined in the 2007 plan (see presentation) and the committee discussed desired updates:

- Annual or semi-annual meetings outside of fire season, Emergency Manager would convene with support from the Planning Dept. (March-May/Nov-Jan)
- Semi-annual for convening to get updates on actions and potential funding and identifying needs to create new partnerships,
- Once a year monitor some information to update data and problem areas that are included in the risk assessment.
- Overall update of the risk assessment would be more like 3-5 years based on availability of the QWRA data.
- Need to set County up for success to keep the process going. Gather contact information, resources, such as a meeting plan that details what should be covered in the meetings generally, and other information housed in one place.
- Have a form for people to fill out with accomplishments, etc. in advance of the meeting. But not make it too onerous.
- Regarding 5 year updates, may want to offset in future years so there isn't staff burnout between the CWPP and NHMP. May want to update the CWPP sooner or update the CWPP based on annual meetings, so it doesn't have to be such a big push every five years. Doesn't necessarily have to be readopted. Could have an addendum or annex to the plan.

The committee briefly discussed the five-year plan review questions included in the 2007 CWPP and some other suggested strategies for CWPP monitoring and evaluation (included in the presentation).

- County staff will further discuss, including Emergency Management.

CWPP Action Item Refinement

- The [updated action item spreadsheet](#) was shared with the committee for their review.
- The committee discussed a few specific action items with the CWPP committee listed as the lead. See the action item worksheet for additional notes.
 - See spreadsheet for updates on 4.6 and 5.2, Kayla and Christian will connect regarding 4.6.
 - Sweet Home FD is working on a new action item related to fuels reduction
 - Unfunded engine needs for 1.1 were mentioned, the information provided by OSFM will be added to the worksheet and then we'll follow up with the districts to see if they're still needed.
- Worksheets are being updated as conversations are being held with action leads, which may lead to updates of the action items, it's an iterative process.

Next Steps

- Continue to refine action items, update action item worksheets.

- Action plan and assessment strategy development – Susan will work on a draft for committee review, with feedback from Kate and Emerson regarding assessment (monitoring and evaluation)
- Community open house in November on draft plan elements - Kate will organize a workgroup meeting to get going on this.
- Draft plan review for the committee to discuss at the December meeting.

Next meeting: TBD, December 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>