

W. J. O. a.

AGENDA COVER MEMO

AGENDA DATE: December 15, 2004
TO: Board of County Commissioners
DEPARTMENT: Lane County Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management Division
PRESENTED BY: Linda L. Cook
AGENDA TITLE: Progress Report on Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

I. MOTION

No motion is proposed

II. DISCUSSION

A. Background

In December 2003, President Bush authorized the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA), which requires communities to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Communities with CWPPs in place will be given priority for funding of hazardous fuels reduction projects carried out under the auspices of the HFRA.

In May 2004 the Lane County Board of Commissioners authorized a new Title III project intended for developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan pursuant to the Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

Upon completion of the plan, the project team will request that the Board of Commissioners adopt the plan by resolution. As such, the purpose of this report is to keep the Board informed during the plan development process. By doing so, the project team can receive feedback and, if necessary, take corrective action, so that the Board will be inclined to adopt the plan upon completion.

The project is underway and an extensive working structure has been established for developing the plan. The plan development process involves bringing together local, state and federal fire agencies as well as public and private landowners to contribute to, and comment on, the plan content. Existing fuel reduction strategies and public outreach programs are being identified and documented as well as opportunities for implementing new strategies and programs.

The project team members will deliver presentations on the following topics: a) the risk assessment process and findings b) mapping activities and c) proposed pilot projects.

III ATTACHMENTS

Project Plan

Project Schedule

MASTER PROJECT PLAN

Project: Develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

Introduction: In December 2003, President Bush authorized the Health Forest Restoration Act, which requires communities to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Communities with CWPPs in place will be given priority for funding of hazardous fuels reduction projects carried out under the auspices of the HFRA.

In Lane County an extensive working structure will be established for developing the plan. The plan development process will involve bringing together local, state and federal fire agencies as well as public and private landowners to contribute to, and comment on, the plan content. Local fuel reduction strategies and public outreach programs already in place will be identified and documented as well as opportunities for implementing new ones.

Project Goal: Develop a CWPP that is adopted by Lane County Commissioners, and validated through implementation of pilot projects by June 2005 and paid for with by Title III Funds in the amount of \$164,400.

Project Objectives: The project objectives are development of the **plan document**, creating a digitized **Community Base Map** and testing plan concepts by implementing **pilot projects**.

- **Plan Document Objectives:** The process for analyzing and gathering input for the plan document is as important as the plan document itself. As such, the plan shall meet the following requirements pursuant to the Healthy Forests Restoration Act:
 - (1) **Collaboration:** The Plan will document how the Plan was collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties.
 - (2) **Prioritized Fuel Reduction:** The plan will identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure.
 - (3) **Treatment of Structural Ignitability:** The plan will recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.
 - (4) **Consensus:** The Steering Committee comprise of 1 representative each from Lane County Emergency Management, Lane County Land Management, the Fire Defense Board and the Oregon Department of Forestry will agree on the final contents of the plan.

Generally speaking, the plan development process shall follow the methodology outlined in the handbook entitled "Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan" sponsored by the National Association of Counties, et. al. The methodology has been adapted in this document for Lane County. Language from the handbook has been used in this document by permission from the National Association of Counties. The full text of the handbook can be found in Attachment A of this document.

- **Community Base Map Objectives:** The Community Base Map shall depict the following:
 - (1) Inhabited areas at potential risk to wildland fire.
 - (2) Areas containing critical human infrastructure—such as escape routes, municipal water supply structures, and major power or communication lines—that are at risk from fire disturbance events.
 - (3) A preliminary designation of the county's Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) zone.
- **Pilot Project Objectives:**
 - (1) Conduct tree thinning and/or other fuel reduction practices as identified in the plan development process in forest areas surrounding rural schools with limited access and a relatively high level of hazardous fuels.
 - (2) Conduct the projects in the spring months of 2005 when fire behavior is considered manageable.
 - (3) Document and incorporate observations and lessons learned from the pilot project(s) into the Plan document.

STEP ONE: Convene Steering Committee

The first step in developing the CWPP shall be formation of a Steering Committee with representation from Lane County Emergency Management (LCEM), Lane County Land Management Division (LCLMD), Lane County Fire Defense Board (LCFDB) and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). Together, these four entities will form the core decision-making body responsible for the development of the CWPP.

Roles and Responsibilities:

ONHW – ONHW will attend and contribute to 6-8 steering committee meetings during the 9-month project. ONHW will be responsible for recording and distributing meeting minutes to all steering committee members.

LCEM – LCEM will be responsible for providing logistical and administrative support for steering committee meetings such as securing a location for the meetings and sending out meeting notices.

STEP TWO: Formalize Core Project Team

A core project team shall be formally established and will be responsible for project deliverables. The core project team will be comprised of representatives from the following: ONHW, LCEM, LCPW, LCLMD

Roles and Responsibilities:

LCEM – perform role of project manager. Monitor project and ensure tasks are completed according to schedule and within budget. Update project plan as necessary. Perform contract administration and fiduciary duties (i.e., monitor budget, process contractor invoices and inter-department fund transfers, etc.)

ONHW – ONHW will be responsible for conducting stakeholder interviews, a landowner survey and 2 stakeholder forums/meetings. ONHW will be responsible for creating the plan document.

LCPW-GIS – develop Community Base Map.

LCLMD – generally, all or most tasks associated with conducting a community risk assessment and documenting relevant findings in the plan document as outlined in Step Six (below). Summarize and compile relevant information from land use, natural resource, and capital improvement plans to support the development of mitigation strategies.

STEP THREE: Involve Federal Agencies

Once convened, the Steering Committee shall engage local representatives of the USFS, BLM and Lane County Public Works GIS to share perspectives, priorities, and other information relevant to the planning process. Because of their on-the-ground experience, mapping capabilities, and knowledge of natural resource planning, these land management professionals will be key partners for the core team.

Role and Responsibilities:

LCEM – establish appropriate contacts with USFS and BLM and arrange for them to participate in the plan and map development process.

LCPW-GIS – establish ongoing communication with USFS and BLM to ensure the development of the most comprehensive maps feasible and leverage pre-existing work products. Keep ONHW apprised of progress on maps.

STEP FOUR: Engage Interested Parties

The success of a CWPP also hinges on the ability of the core team to effectively involve a broad range of local stakeholders, particularly local school districts, organized neighborhood associations, community forestry organizations that work in forest management, and other stakeholder groups that display a commitment to fire protection and fuels management.

Substantive input from a diversity of interests will ensure that the final document reflects the highest priorities of the community. It will also help to facilitate timely implementation of recommended projects. In some circumstances, the core team may wish to invite local community leaders or stakeholder representatives to work along with them, or the steering committee may wish to include them in final decision making. As early as possible, core team members should contact and seek active involvement from key stakeholders and constituencies such as:

- All Fire Chiefs in Lane County
- Existing collaborative forest management groups
- Elected Officials
- Resource Advisory Committees
- School Districts
- Homeowners Associations—particularly those representing subdivisions in the WUI
- Division of Wildlife/Fish and Game—to identify locally significant habitats
- Department of Transportation—to identify key escape corridors
- Oregon Emergency Management
- Water districts—to identify key water infrastructure
- Utilities
- Recreation organizations
- Environmental organizations
- Forest products interests
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Watershed councils

Roles and Responsibilities:

ONHW

- **Conduct Stakeholder Interviews:** ONHW will work with the steering committee to identify stakeholders to be interviewed. Individuals interviewed may include County staff, other public agencies, rural fire districts, utilities, businesses, and non-profit organizations. ONHW will review the results of interviews with rural fire districts already conducted by LCEM to avoid repetitive questioning. Approximately 15-20 interviews will be conducted. The purpose of the stakeholder interviews is to identify key issues, concerns, vulnerabilities, risk perceptions and current activities.
- **Conduct Surveys:** ONHW will develop, print and mail a survey to 1500 randomly selected landowners in rural Lane County and all rural fire districts. ONHW will work with the steering committee to identify appropriate mailing lists for the landowner's survey. ONHW will be responsible for coding, data entry and analysis of returned surveys (up to 400 surveys). ONHW will submit a draft survey instrument for review and approval by the steering committee prior to mailing.

The intent of the survey is to explore how Rural County landowners perceive risk and their attitudes towards risk reduction and preparedness. This data will be crucial for gaining an assessment of landowner's preparedness regarding wildfire hazards. Additionally, the survey results will help develop baseline information about County landowner's perceptions of wildfire risk. This information will be used to help focus public outreach activities aimed at wildfire risk reduction and loss prevention. This baseline data will also serve as a resource for involved partners to gauge the effectiveness of their current outreach and marketing activities.

- **Conduct Stakeholder Forums/Meetings:** ONHW will facilitate 2 stakeholder forums/meetings, designed to identify key public issues, concerns, and gather input on the draft goals of the plan. These forums will be based on the Firewise Community workshop format.

LCEM – Provide administrative support for stakeholder forums such as sending out meeting notices.

STEP FIVE: Establish a Community Base Map

Using available technology and local expertise, the project shall include the development of a base map of the community and adjacent landscapes of interest. This map will provide a visual information baseline from which community members can assess and make recommendations regarding protection and risk-reduction priorities. To the extent practicable, the map should identify:

- Inhabited areas at potential risk to wildland fire;
- Areas containing critical human infrastructure—such as escape routes, municipal water supply structures, and major power or communication lines—that are at risk from fire disturbance events; and
- A preliminary designation of the county's WUI zone.

Roles and Responsibilities:

LCPW-GIS – Develop community map based on direction from the Steering Committee, and input from the core project team, stakeholder interviews and other pertinent data gathered during the project.

STEP SIX: Develop a Community Risk Assessment

Conducting a community risk assessment helps the core team and members of the community more effectively prioritize areas for treatment and identify the highest priority uses for available financial and human resources.

A meaningful community assessment shall be developed by considering the risk factors such as fuel hazards, risk of wildfire occurrence, buildings at risk, community values at risk and local capabilities. An appropriate adjective rating shall be used (such as high, medium, and low) that best represents the risk to the community posed by each factor. The results will be displayed on the base map to develop a useful tool for the final decision-making process.

State and federal land managers shall be contacted as a resource in locating the best available data and in producing quality maps that display and aid assessment of that data. Engaging key stakeholders in the rating process will be essential to a successful outcome.

Roles and Responsibilities:

ONHW – assist Lane County Land Management Division in developing a methodology for conducting the risk assessment. Facilitate discussions and provide connections with state partners that have already conducted risk assessments or are currently working on a community risk assessment. Comment on the draft sections of the risk assessment and integrate the risk assessment into the plan document.

LCLMD – conduct risk assessment and document findings:

- Research and document local WUI Zone
- Research and document capacity of fire protection agencies and community mitigation efforts that make fire response effective
- Research and identify population and property densities to be protected; Research and document human and economic values associated with communities
- Review Risk data provided by ODF (Jim Wolf) and determine whether local data is sufficiently represented; modify if appropriate
- Review Hazard data provided by ODF (Jim Wolf) and determine whether local data is sufficiently represented; modify if appropriate
- Finalize risk assessment and present at Stakeholder Forum #1 on March 8

LCEM – provide data to risk assessment

- Assist LCLMD with risk assessment by contributing Fire District data previously gathered
- Conduct Fire District visits and survey as requested or necessary

LCPW – GIS: Show risk assessment data on the map as applicable

STEP SEVEN: Establish Community Hazard Reduction Priorities and Recommendations to Reduce Structural Ignitability

Once the risk assessment and base map are completed, the core team shall convene all interested parties to discuss the results and their implications for local protection and hazard mitigation needs. A key objective of these discussions is to develop the community's prioritized recommendations for fuel treatment projects on federal and nonfederal lands in the WUI, along with the preferred treatment methods for those projects.

Recommendations shall also be developed regarding actions that individuals and the community can take to reduce the ignitability of homes and other structures in the community's WUI zone.

The discussion and identification of community priorities should be as open and collaborative as possible. Diverse community involvement at this stage is critical to the ultimate success of the CWPP.

Recommendations included in the final CWPP should clearly indicate whether priority projects primarily serve to protect the community and its essential infrastructure or are geared toward reducing risks to the other community values. Under the provisions of the HFRA, only projects that primarily serve to protect communities and essential infrastructure are eligible for the minimum 50 percent WUI funding specified in the legislation.

The Steering Committee will make the final decision about which recommendations to include in the CWPP.

Roles and Responsibilities:

ONHW – assimilate information and data produced throughout the plan development process and distill into hazard reduction priorities and recommendations for reducing structural ignitability. Incorporate the information into the plan document.

LCEM – provide logistical and administrative support for meetings convened by ONHW.

LCLMD – Identify requirements for any potential new standards and regulations.

STEP EIGHT: Develop an Action Plan and Assessment Strategy

Before finalizing the CWPP, ONHW with input from core team members and key community partners shall develop an action plan that identifies roles and responsibilities, funding needs, and timetables for carrying out the highest priority projects.

Additional consideration should be given to establishing an assessment strategy for the CWPP to ensure that the document maintains its relevance and effectiveness over the long term.

ONHW: Develop action plan and assessment strategy; incorporate into plan document.

STEP NINE: Finalize the Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The final step in developing a CWPP is for the steering committee, core team and key stakeholders to reconvene and mutually agree on the fuels treatment priorities, preferred methods for fuels treatment projects, the location of the wildland-urban interface, structural ignitability recommendations, and other information and actions to be contained in the final document.

Roles and Responsibilities:

ONHW - ONHW will work with the Steering Committee to describe and develop a plan maintenance section that outlines strategies for the plan implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. There will be specific emphasis placed on incorporating the actions of the CWPP into existing County plans, policies and programs. This section will also include a recommendation to the County to formally adopt the plan. ONHW will facilitate a session with the steering committee to identify implementation strategies, formalize a committee to oversee

the plan maintenance, and adopt a timeline for review, reporting mechanisms, and modification procedures. This section of the plan will also identify existing programs, plans, and partners that can assist with implementation of mitigation activities, as well as strategies for continued public involvement.

ONHW will prepare and submit a draft of the CWPP to the steering committee for review and comment. The plan will include the introduction/overview, the inventory and assessment, the action items, and any relevant supporting documentation. Drafting the plan will be an ongoing activity with the objective of sharing sections of the plan with the Steering Committee throughout the project.

ONHW will revise the plan based on comments received from the steering committee and other reviewers. ONHW will submit three (3) copies of the final plan in three ring binders. A CD-ROM disk containing the final report and other relevant information, including an Adobe™ Portable Document Format (PDF) of the plan, will also be submitted to the County. The draft and final plan will be linked to the County's Website.

STEP TEN: Implement Pilot Projects

This step will be fleshed-out and refined as the project progresses.

Roles and Responsibilities:

LCEM - Update and incorporate pilot projects into the master project plan and timeline. Develop sub-project plans and timelines for the pilot projects.

CWPP Project Schedule (10/28/04 - Version 3)

OCTOBER

10/28/04 - 11/2/04: Develop Emergency Response Plan

- Develop and implement emergency response plan for the Sheriff's Office.

11/2/04 - 11/10/04: Develop Emergency Response Plan

- Develop and implement emergency response plan for the Sheriff's Office.

11/10/04 - 11/17/04: Develop Emergency Response Plan

- Develop and implement emergency response plan for the Sheriff's Office.

11/17/04 - 11/24/04: Develop Emergency Response Plan

- Develop and implement emergency response plan for the Sheriff's Office.

11/24/04 - 12/1/04: Develop Emergency Response Plan

- Develop and implement emergency response plan for the Sheriff's Office.

12/1/04 - 12/8/04: Develop Emergency Response Plan

- Develop and implement emergency response plan for the Sheriff's Office.

NOVEMBER

(11/01/04 – 11/30/04) Risk Assessment – Values to be Protected

1. Research and identify population and property densities to be protected;

(11/22/04 – 11/30/04) Community Base Map – “Values to be Protected” Layer

2. Research and identify population and property densities to be protected; Research and document human and economic values associated with communities

(11/22/04 – 11/30/04) Risk Assessment – Values to be Protected

3. Research and identify population and property densities to be protected; Research and document human and economic values associated with communities

(11/22/04) Steering Committee Meeting #3: Values to be Protected

4. Research and identify population and property densities to be protected; Research and document human and economic values associated with communities

5. Research and identify population and property densities to be protected; Research and document human and economic values associated with communities

6. Research and identify population and property densities to be protected; Research and document human and economic values associated with communities

7. Research and identify population and property densities to be protected; Research and document human and economic values associated with communities

DECEMBER

(12/13/04 – 12/31/04) Community Base Map – “Values to be Protected” Layer

- Map population and property densities to be protected;

(12/13/04 – 12/31/04) Risk Assessment – Values to be Protected

- Research and identify population and property densities to be protected; Research and document human and economic values associated with communities

(12/15/04) Status Report for Board of Commissioners

JANUARY

(1/05/05) Steering Committee Meeting #3:

- Debrief BCC meeting
- ONHW to present proposed list of stakeholders to be interviewed
- ONHW to present proposed questions for stakeholder interviews
- Steering Committee to approve final set of questions
- ONHW to present first draft of landowner survey questions

(01/03/05 – 01/21/05) Risk Assessment – Risk

- Review Risk data provided by ODF (Jim Wolf) and determine whether local data is sufficiently represented; modify if appropriate

(01/24/05 – 02/11/05) Risk Assessment – Hazard

- Review Hazard data provided by ODF (Jim Wolf) and determine whether local data is sufficiently represented; modify if appropriate

(1/06/05 – 03/09/05) Stakeholder Interviews:

- Interview stakeholders; include questions about risk of wildfire occurrence, community values at risk and local preparedness and firefighting capability
- Compile interview results into summary report

(1/26/05) Steering Committee Meeting #4

- ONHW to present proposed methodology for upcoming landowner survey
- Review and approve survey methodology, format and questions

FEBRUARY

(2/01/05 – 02/25/05) Conduct Landowner Survey:

- Over a 4-week period surveys are printed, mailed, returned and analyzed

(02/14/05 – 03/04/05) Finalize Risk Assessment

- Finalize risk assessment and present at Stakeholder Forum #1 on March 8

(01/03/05 – 03/04/05) Finalize Community Base Map

- Finalize Community Base Map and present at Stakeholder Forum #1 on March 8

MARCH

(03/08/05) Stakeholder Forum #1 (1 of 2; 4 hrs):

- Designed for invitation-only target audience of stakeholders
- Discuss overall process for developing a CWPP
- Present results of the stakeholder interviews and resident survey
- Present Risk Assessment findings
- Present Community Base Map
- Direct stakeholders to begin work identifying specific inhabited areas at risk of wild land fire and known fuel hazards

(03/15/05) Steering Committee Meeting #5:

- Present results of stakeholder interviews and resident survey
- Present Risk Assessment findings
- Present Community Base Map
- Present outcomes of Stakeholder Forum #1
- Present proposed Action Plan and Assessment Strategy

APRIL

(04/04/05) Steering Committee #6

- ONHW to facilitate process for prioritizing projects and identifying action items

(04/04/05 – 04/29/05) Plan Document – Create First Complete Draft of CWPP

- Write section describing collaborative process
- Write section describing prioritized fuel reduction treatments and methods
- Write section describing recommended measures for homeowners and communities

(04/04/05 – 04/29/05) Pilot Projects

- Implement Fuels Reduction Projects at 2 schools

MAY

(05/11/05) Stakeholder Forum #2 (2 of 2; 2 hrs):

- Present lessons learned from pilot projects
- Develop prioritized recommendations for fuel treatment projects
- Discuss preferred methods
- Finalize location of WUI
- Develop structural ignitability recommendations

(05/12/05 – 05/25/05) Create Final Draft of plan document

(05/25/05) Steering Committee Meeting #7:

- Present draft of plan document
- Discuss content for plan maintenance section
- Identify implementation strategies
- Formalize a committee to oversee plan maintenance, step 9, etc.

JUNE

- Deliver final draft of Plan Document for adoption