

III. Wildland-Urban Interface Planning

Introduction

Both the National Fire Plan (NFP) and the "Ten-Year Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment" place a priority on working collaboratively with communities in wildland urban interface to reduce their risk from large-scale wildfire.

The incentive for communities to engage in comprehensive forest planning and prioritization was given new momentum with the enactment of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) in 2003. The language in HFRA provides maximum flexibility for communities to determine the substance and detail of their plans and the procedures they use to develop them. HFRA emphasizes the need for federal agencies to work collaboratively with communities in developing hazardous fuel reduction projects, and it places priority on treatment areas identified by communities themselves in a community fire plan. Combine this with the direction of NFP and the "Ten-Year Comprehensive Strategy...", which also states that collaboration and prioritization of projects by a community is essential (USDA 2004, WC CWPP 2006).

HFRA requires that three entities must mutually agree to the final contents of the CWPP:

- The applicable local government (i.e., counties or cities);
- The local fire departments(s) or representative of a county's structural agencies; and
- The state entity responsible for forest management (Oregon Department of Forestry).

Additionally, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides funding mechanisms for grants and training for firefighting and for community response to natural disasters (Kruger 2016). Projects to reduce the risk of future fires may also be eligible under FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program. The Stafford Act provides the legal basis for state tribal, and local governments to undertake risk-based approaches to reducing natural hazard risks through mitigation planning and requires state, tribal, and local governments to develop and adopt FEMA approved hazard mitigation plans as a condition for receiving certain types of non-emergency disaster assistance (FEMA 2017). The NE Oregon Hazard Mitigation Plan (NEOHMP) completed in 2014 also advocates for collaborative and the implementation of action items identified in this CWPP.

The Cohesive Wildfire Strategy (CWS) released in 2014 recognizes the need for collaboration when developing local CWPP plans. Fire adaptation is viewed as a continuum, with communities moving toward fire adaptation through concerted collaborative effort that include CWPPs (CWS 2014)

The Wallowa County CWPP is part of a pilot project for the CWS that puts emphasis on a planning process designed to involve the recommended entities listed above as well as incorporating new approaches toward wildfire mitigation efforts. Details of collaboration and participation will be addressed in Chapter VI.

Wildland-Urban Interface Zone Concept

Wallowa County is the northeastern most county in Oregon. The county is bordered by two states, Idaho to the east and Washington to the north. This area was and continues to be home to the Nez Perce Tribe.

Today, several communities are established primarily within the Wallowa Valley and along some of the county's rivers. The communities in Wallowa County are considered Wildland Urban Interface areas (WUIs), with a high percentage of the structures within or adjacent to forested lands.

In August 2001, the Federal Register provided a comprehensive list of communities identified as Urban Wildland Interface in the vicinity of Federal lands that were considered at risk from wildfire. Wallowa County communities in the federal register include Freezeout Creek, Hurricane Grange, Imnaha River Woods, Imnaha, Lostine, Prairie Creek, Lostine River Subdivision, Ski Run/Ski Run Road, Wallowa Lake Basin,

It is important to note that the urban wildland interface is not limited to communities in the vicinity of Federal land. Many states submitted revised lists for communities within their State regardless of their relationship to Federal land (Federal Register 2001). In an assessment, *Communities at Risk*, conducted by the state of Oregon in 2006, the cities of Enterprise, Joseph, Wallowa, and the County of Wallowa were also identified as at risk (ODF 2006).

Additional Wildland Urban Interface areas of concern not listed by the Federal or State records but are identified in Wallowa County's 2006 CWPP are: Alder Slope, Allen Canyon, Bartlett and Eden Bench, Bear Creek, Davis Creek, Divide Camp, Dry Creek, Flora, Liberty, Little Sheep Creek, Lost Prairie, Powers Meadows, Promise, Troy, and Wallowa Canyon. These areas are comprised of small communities or a high number of scattered residential homes across the county's landscape. This updated CWPP will carry over the Federal, State, and county listings as part of its fire risk assessment.

Western states contain vast forested landscapes that are often remote and steep. With a finite amount of fire protection resources, these states are recipients of lightning starts that annually burn an average of 4,666,030 acres from wildfires based on data between 2008 and 2012 (CWS 2014). In addition to natural lightning starts, each year wildfire growth is further compounded by centuries of fire exclusion, long-extended drought, and increasing insect and disease mortality. As a result, fire suppression resources have become less effective and wildfire behavior more extreme. Wallowa County is no exception with its vast grassland and forested landscape where access is limited due to a multiple of reasons that include inadequate or poor road conditions, dissected steep

terrain, and Wilderness boundaries adjacent to private making it inaccessible for some suppression equipment.

The Cohesive Wildfire Strategy (CWS) acknowledges these issues and the potential threats they pose by recommending *large landscape-scale* changes in vegetative structure and fuel loadings in order to significantly alter wildfire behavior, reduce wildfire losses, ensure firefighter and public safety, and improve landscape resiliency (CWS 2014).

The 2006 CWPP identified and prioritized twenty-two WUI areas in Wallowa County. The new 2016 revision recognizes the need, based on “middle ground” landscape treatment concepts, to reassess the concepts behind Wildland Urban Interface areas as well as their size and number of WUI areas. For this reason new approaches have been developed in addressing the conditions driving wildfire risk and urban interface areas.

The term “middle ground” refers to the areas between communities and the more distant wildlands (CWS 2014). These middle ground areas play a significant role when developing efforts for altering wildfire behavior prior to it reaching communities. Multiple CWPP committee discussions occurred regarding the best methods for addressing these lands. A new approach was agreed to by the CWPP committee that is consistent with the CWS involving additional acreage. There was also agreement to merge the original wildland urban interface areas in more contiguous areas that represent communities at risk within the county.

As a result the group identified two large Wildland Urban Interface “Zones” (WUIZ) that took into consideration this middle ground landscape (Figure VIII – 1). The CWPP committee also recognized the importance of identifying specific issues facing communities in terms of wildland fire risk. These communities at risk (CAR) and their assessments can be found in Chapter VII. While the CAR assessment provided a wildfire risk ranking of relative comparison for communities, the WUI Zone allowed managers to take a holistic approach in wildfire risk mitigation at a landscape level.

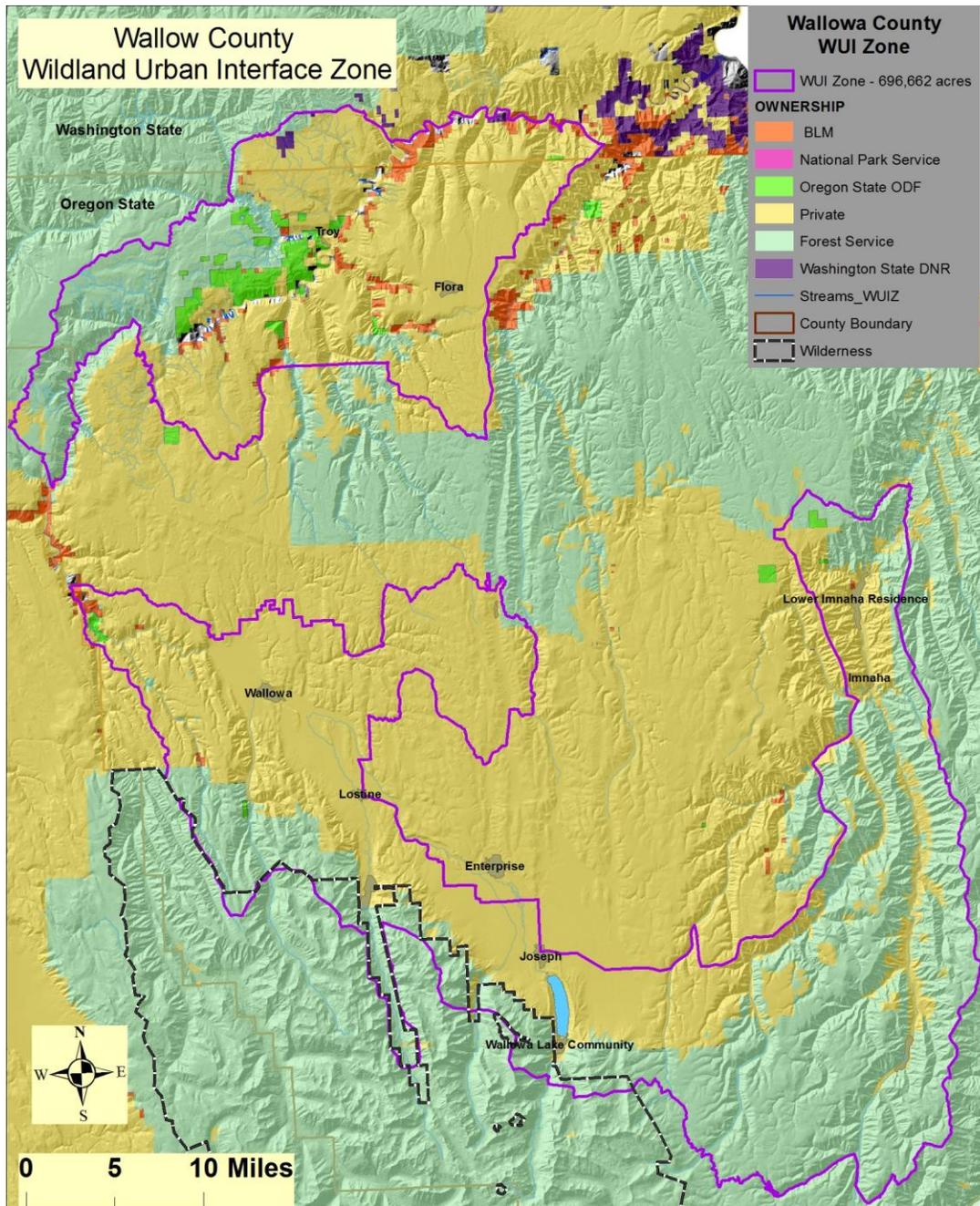


Figure III – 1. Wildland Urban Interface Zone. Incorporates the landscape between communities and distant lands.

There were several positive aspects identified for this new WUI Zone concept model:

1. It addresses the all hands-all lands concept where fire prone landscape areas have the need to involve both landowners near communities and landowners where large fires can develop then spread toward communities posing a threat to life and property. It dissolves property lines when it comes to fire threats, acknowledging fire has no boundaries and approaching cross-boundary treatments as a whole instead of isolated units.

2. It allows for a holistic approach to treating large acreages, recognizing the need for both first entry risk reduction as well as maintenance of previous investments, thereby addressing treatments in a temporal and spatial approach. It is important to include treatment of lower priority areas and maintenance of previously treated areas, particularly when that ground separates two high priority areas on the landscape. There is a growing need to balance previously completed activities with new treatment areas to protect earlier investments during a single entry approach.
3. Previous individual WUIs were rated against each other, resulting in competition for funding between wildland urban interfaces. This new approach recognizes that although some communities may be of higher risk and need, it does not eliminate opportunities for landowners in moderate or low risk areas to initiate or continue to promote risk reduction measures. It also allows for specific attributes that contribute to fire risk to share funding with other communities with similar mitigation needs.
4. Defensible space is no longer limited to land immediately adjacent to homes and structures but now includes lands that provide an extended treatment buffer between distant forest and communities, thereby creating an opportunity to stop the fire in the middle ground, well in advance of reaching structures. Designing projects that improve wildfire buffers between large forest blocks and private lands increases management and suppression options, while preserving ecosystem integrity in the event of a wildfire. It also provides opportunities to consider large-scale application of tools which otherwise would not be applicable and/or cost effective at a smaller scale.
5. The WUIZ allows for consideration of mitigation measures that protect natural resources values to occur during treatment endeavors, where and when appropriate. It increases fire managers' ability to protect important community values and investment in locations that meet multiple resource management objectives.
6. Creates opportunities to protect areas that may otherwise not be considered. Provides options within the WUIZ to seek out areas considered of value to county citizens that are not necessarily associated with a specific threatened community. It gives individuals an opportunity to be involved in mitigation efforts and creates a sense of ownership in protection efforts focused on these values such as: favorite recreation sites, viewpoints, forested byways, historic sites, visual and scenic resources, etc.
7. Provides opportunities for increased participation by *all* county residents, not just those directly at risk, to provide input on their forest and valued interests.
8. Enables possibilities of assisting multiple landowners with risk reduction treatments through a single funding source and project design. Distribution of funds would not be limited to one "WUI" area but to the entire WUIZ that meet the criteria of the funding source. This approach eliminates the competition for funding that previously existed.
9. Eliminates the need to separate the three national Cohesive Strategy goals. Landscape approaches (WUI Zone) allows for achieving multiple goals and

objectives in the same location, creating a synergy or mutually reinforcing positive effect (CWS 2014).

The WUIZ method helps address issues with reduced budgets, declining forest management staff, increased wildfire potential and their combined impacts on risk and safety. Uniting agencies and public efforts creates additional avenues for funding acquisition at all levels that may otherwise be unattainable.

The rationale for a WUIZ is further supported by the Management Options outlined in Chapter 3 of the Cohesive Wildfire Strategy. Applying a “one size fits all” wildfire risk mitigation solution is not realistic for all counties in Oregon. The WUIZ allows each county to focus on attributes specific to their area. These options can be designed to either change wildfire extent and intensity, number of human caused ignitions, or to alter risk by changing the degree of exposure (CWS 2014) of both firefighting personnel and local values.

The CWPP committee created the following final definition. The wildland-urban interface zone is:

“An area strategically identified that provides effective wildfire defense for communities, infrastructure, and other values at risk that meet or intermingle with wildland fuels and offer opportunities for broadened mitigation measures designed to interrupt wildfire spread and modify wildfire behavior in order to protect social, economic, and environmental interests”.

The National Fire Plan and the Ten-Year Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment place a priority on working collaboratively within communities in the WUIZ to reduce their risk from large-scale wildfire. **The Cohesive Wildfire Strategy places strong emphasis on community and agency involvement early in the process to create a sense of ownership by all parties.** For this reason by developing the WUIZ, it is intended to emphasize an “in it together” approach for reducing wildfire threat. It creates opportunity to draw into discussions county residents who may not have land or structures at threat but place a high value on recreational and/or local natural resources.

Plan Review Schedule and Mechanisms

Plan maintenance will be directed by Wallowa County Emergency Services and coordinated with the plan’s steering committee members, a core group of who have agreed to be a standing committee to assist with monitoring and evaluation.

Plan review and maintenance will be set annually, at a minimum. The annual meeting will consist of a plan review, re-evaluation of priority mitigation action items, and progress of accomplishments and challenges.

A total plan revision should occur at least every 5 years or as needed based on evolving local, state, and national strategies and policies, funding opportunities and local conditions.

Plan revision is recommended as the infrastructure needs of Wallowa County change. Specific considerations during revisions include: population fluctuations, land use changes, completion of fuels reduction projects, emergency service improvements, computer software/hardware updates, new and revised data, and extreme wildfire hazard fluctuations. Revisions should be directed in part by applicable policies and guidelines at all jurisdictional levels regarding matters such as: Land Management, Fire Management, Rural Housing Development, etc.

Annual evaluation of strategies and recommendations will be necessary as changes to wildfire risks become altered or circumstances (if less than a year) make it necessary to re-evaluate the plans progress and intent. Given the dedicated time, collaborative effort, and cost to revise the CWPP it is vital that follow-up monitoring and evaluation of the plan occur. Understanding that communities change, infrastructure needs are adjusted, and forests are dynamic, the risk of wildfire to communities cannot be viewed as static. At a minimum the CWPP committee should meet to complete an annual progress report of accomplishments and challenges. A form to record progress is located in Appendix L.

Each participant must maintain an ongoing commitment to work through the plan with community, cooperators, and fire agencies in Wallowa County. Community outreach and education is a continuous process of building on established relationships and developing new affiliations whenever possible. Outreach opportunities can be found in Chapter V. Annual reviews should be announced in order to include representation from the stakeholders who participated in the development of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Mechanisms for initiating a CWPP Committee meeting are outlined in Appendix L page 9, under the form titled *Go/No Go CWPP Evaluation, Revision, or Committee Meeting*. This table is designed so that any question that receives a “yes” answer warrants the need for the CWPP Committee to meet and discuss changing conditions or progress. It provides the Evaluator key, unbiased questions or conditions that would typically create a need to re-assess the County CWPP. These questions can and should be modified or changed to meet the needs of the CWPP committee or process.

Mechanisms to identify the need for public meetings will be left up to the CWPP Committee unless there is a high level of demand for fire agencies assistance by landowners or unexpected tensions between parties. Notification of meetings in Wallowa County should not be limited to one type of outreach. Multiple avenues should be used to encourage as many citizens as possible to attend the meeting. The best forms of public announcement and access utilized at the time of this revision were: radio, Facebook, internet web sites, newspapers, US Postal Service, and local residence assistance. As thoroughly as possible, record and maintain a detailed list of

participants that have participated in some fashion in the CWPP development and implementation.

All records of accomplishment, data, funding acquired, equipment, and infrastructure improvements should be identified and recorded to the CWPP file. The file will follow the current planning process with a joint effort between Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and Wallowa County. Whenever possible, geographic location points with longitude and latitudes and/or polygons should be made known. This allows up-to-date information to be entered in the CWPP file. Whenever possible map or document accomplishments to display across boundary treatments, level of landowner participation, specific locations of mitigation action items, and areas where maintenance work will not be overlooked in the future.

There is a form (Annual Community Wildfire Protection Plan Evaluation Form) available for reporting annual accomplishments in Appendix L. The form provides a level of standardization for the CWPP committee when assessing progress. During the year each fire management agency is responsible for updating plan achievements, at a minimum. Progress or obstructions to work completion should be identified and posted to maintain discussions throughout the year in an effort to prevent redundant occurrences. The annual information should be presented at the annual CWPP committee meeting. Annual postings will inform the collaboration group of trends in implementation issues, successes, and other topics contributing to or preventing success in plan implementation. Ongoing upkeep of records and documentation throughout the year can be used during the next plan update. Written communications of progress are needed for tracking purposes.

In an attempt to provide consistent messages, common language definitions are provided in the *Glossary of Terms*. These definitions provide a level of standardized terms and concepts necessary for clear communication between agencies and with members of the public. Eliminating confusion in definitions is the first step to a common vision and expected outcome. Shared terms among agencies can be found in Appendix J: *Glossary of Terms*.

Customized terms or reporting may occur within specific fire agency guidelines and/or policies. An example is the reporting of new fire starts. Each agency has its own required reporting process and form for database upload. There is however, specific, standardized information that is *required* in order for a holistic County approach during the next revision. New fire starts regardless of responding agency *must* report at a minimum fire start date, latitude and longitude, cause, and fire size to provide meaningful statistical information. This ensures consistent and statistically valid data and is a priority of this plan.

Agencies also have customized terminology of definitions and conditions regarding forest management as outlined in their agency's direction. Management direction and terms must remain tailored to their agency's specifications. This plan does not serve as a means of bypassing the individual processes and regulations of the participating

agencies. Each project must adhere to any pertinent local, state or federal rules or guidelines in determining the point of project implementation. The plan is a coordinating document for wildfire mitigation measure and forest projects related to safety, education and outreach, information development, fire protection, and fuels treatment for altering fire behavior.

National Priorities

The National Strategy, supported by scientific analysis, processed over 100 different data sources to thoroughly examine wildland fire issues across the nation in order to understand the differences and similarities among locations.

National Strategy for prioritizing where activities should be emphasized was based on the premise that planned actions have a greater likelihood of being most effective and efficient in areas where conditions contributing to the issue are most severe (CWS 2014). Four spatially prioritized opportunities and challenges were assessed in the CWS at the national level.

1. In areas that historically were frequented by fire, successful suppression efforts have exacerbated fuel conditions that contribute to higher intensity wildfires. As a result, these fires become more damaging and costly while threatening both firefighter and public safety (CWS 2014).
2. Homes, communities, and other values are at risk simply because of their proximity, or juxtaposition with flammable natural vegetation in environments conducive to wildland fire (CWS 2014).
3. Human ignitions account for the majority of wildfires throughout the Nation, requiring response organizations to be maintained in most locations (CWS 2014).
4. There is a need for highly competent multi-jurisdictional response resources with capabilities to quickly suppress the majority of wildfires. The effects of large wildfires are not only costly from an economic and ecological impact standpoint, but also threaten the health and safety of firefighters and public (CWS 2014).

On a measure of High, Moderate, Low, or Very Low, the CWS’s broad scale look at a national assessment (mapping) of the above four topics resulted in Wallowa County as:

Category	National Rating
Vegetation and Fuels Management	High Priority
Homes, Communities, and Values at Risk	High Priority
Managing Human-caused Ignitions	Low
Effective and Efficient Wildfire Response	High Risk of Wildfires More Potential for Resource Benefits

Table III – 1. National Priority rating for Wallowa County relative to counties from all lower 48 states. Information was taken from maps located on pages 61 – 64 of the Cohesive Wildfire Strategy.

The National Strategy emphasizes the safe and effective response to wildfire as the highest priority. Acknowledging that equipment and personnel are important for wildfire response, areas such as improved coordination, communication, and training are important components of intergovernmental preparedness and should be included locally as well.

Wallowa County Plan Priorities

Details of prioritization of elements within this plan are outlined in Chapter VII, describing various levels of risk, threat, and effects geographically on the landscape. Recognizing possible time and budget constraints, prioritization should be given to firefighter and public safety first and foremost.

Elements key to firefighter and public safety are given the highest importance with actions that provide the most efficient approach to wildfire risk reduction. Using analysis completed in the West Wide Risk Assessment for the State of Oregon, local data, community knowledge and expertise, county components were identified that took precedence as priority. Potential for high priority conditions within the county included both temporal and spatial considerations:

- a. Treatments across jurisdictional boundary creating a contiguous landscape of treatments.
- b. Deficiencies in equipment and infrastructure where improvements would increase fire response success.
- c. Locations of high fire threat (includes start density) and fire effects (potential negative impacts to values) that result in a high and extreme fire risk.
- d. Potential threat to firefighter and public safety exceeding what would be considered an inherent risk or one that is preventable through a mitigation action. An example would be poor ingress/egress,
- e. Identified high fire occurrence level locations with long response times or no local response capabilities.
- f. Areas where concentrated ignition starts are coupled with vegetation that contributes to extreme fire potential.
- g. Actions that improve suppression effectiveness and successful value protection.

Conditions where multiple high potential for a undesirable outcomes overlap one another convey locations and actions needed to address the most efficient use of funds while still meeting both the local and national intent.

Roles and Responsibilities:

As part of the priority process, information was gathered from multiple facets of the population. These sources provided key information and played a role in the development of this plan. Our CWPP development occurred through that collective effort from multiple agencies, cooperators, and public members. Understanding the

roles and responsibilities of those involved will provide insight on development and implementation of the plan.

County Commissioners

Final approval of the CWPP will be conducted by the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners. As part of CWPP planning and development, the county commissioners maintain oversight of the planning and implementation process. Plan maintenance will be coordinated through Wallowa County Emergency Service. In addition, they will:

1. Remain informed on progress through all stages of the plan.
2. Provide final Plan approval and approval of any revisions to the CWPP.

Wallowa County Emergency Services (WCES)

Wallowa County Emergency Services was a primary lead during the CWPP committee meetings, media venues, oversight of plan development, and coordination with county officials. Its roles in the CWPP include:

1. WCES is responsible for apprising the county commissioners and cohesive wildfire strategy group on the progress of the CWPP on topics regarding plan maintenance, plan implementation, and progress.
2. Provides oversight to the CWPP committee on all aspects of plan development.
3. Maintains involvement in plan implementation and public contact to ensure firefighter and public safety is priority.
4. Coordinates with local fire management agencies to meet the three goals of the CWPP.
5. Holds and maintains the CWPP document, forms, and project files.

CWPP Committee Members

Multiple fire management agencies were represented on the CWPP committee. Those participating on a regular basis included: Oregon Department of Forestry, Wallowa County Emergency Services and Fire Chief, Umatilla Fire Management, Wallowa-Whitman (Wallowa Fire Zone) Fire Management, Bureau of Land Management Fire and Fuels, local private landowner, and Blue Mountain Cohesive Wildfire Strategy Pilot Project Lead. These individuals worked through numerous meetings assessing county conditions and identifying mitigation action items needed to reduce impacts from wildfires. Their ongoing responsibilities include:

1. Oregon Department of Forestry provides the lead in developing the risk assessment for the CWPP and its five year revision (ODF 2015).
2. Provide local knowledge and data to be incorporated into the county CWPP.
3. Continued public contact and implementation of the action items identified within the CWPP. Submit progress reports for their agency on meeting those action items.
4. Work together collaboratively between agencies and public to meet the three goals of the CWPP.
5. Continue as part of a collective group to assist members of the public in acquiring funding to reduce wildfire risk.
6. Collectively participate and provide assistance at public meetings on the CWPP concepts.
7. Recommend, review, and give input into the content of the CWPP Plan.
8. Participate in ongoing CWPP meetings.

Rural Fire Departments

Rural fire departments play a complex role in county protection services. These fire resources not only are important in fire response; they are also crucial for communications with local landowners in their areas. Many of the rural firefighters are members of the communities in which they serve and have an established rapport with citizens. As a result they are often the first contact for risk mitigation information. Their participation includes:

1. Participate on the CWPP committee through a representative and convey input to that representative about knowledge of local fire issues in their districts.
2. Provide representation at public meetings to share concepts behind the CWPP with community members.
3. Work with other fire management agencies to educate and encourage members of the public to implement and meet the CWPP goal of Fire Adapted Community.
4. Provide periodic reports to committee members on known landowners' fire risk reduction measures.
5. Continue to update fire statistical information for the State of Oregon Fire Marshal's Office; including but not limited to the following information: fire location using latitude/longitude, fire size, and fire cause.

6. Collaboratively work with other local fire management agencies in meeting the goal of Wildfire Response.

Cooperators

Wallowa County cooperators are significant players when it comes to wildfire prevention and participating in wildfire events. For the purpose of this document, cooperators are considered non-fire agencies that play a role before, during, and after a wildfire event. Cooperators are considered: agencies that supply assistance to direct tactical or strategic approaches and wildfire support to a wildfire event; infrastructures that could pose increase risk during a wildfire event; and they partake in prevention functions not only in the WUI Zone but in some cases throughout the county (i.e. Transmission lines, railroads). Examples of cooperators are Oregon State Police, Pacific Power Co., Union Pacific Railroad, and American Red Cross.

Their responsibilities differ somewhat from their fire agency counterparts.

1. Work collaboratively with lead fire management jurisdictional agencies in preparing for wildfire response regarding infrastructure.
2. Understand their role in emergency fire situations where infrastructure may pose threat to or assist in community protection.
3. Coordinate with Wallowa County Emergency Services in development or changes to infrastructure as part of annual progress report.
4. Participate in risk reduction whenever/wherever possible and fire prevention to reduce the number of human caused fires.
5. Support public and firefighter safety as the number one objective during a fire incident.
6. Has potential to be actively involved with fire agencies in all phases of a wildfire.
7. Actively participate in fire emergency simulations conducted by Wallowa County Emergency Services and Fire Organizations

Wallowa County and Adjacent Fire Management Agencies

Closest suppression resource concepts and cross boundary approaches, include fire agencies adjacent to Wallowa County. Wallowa County supports WUI Zones that are adjacent to or fall into another Fire Management agencies protection responsibility. This is particularly true in areas near Troy, Minam Community, the Tram-way on Mount Howard. These locations are bordering or expand into Umatilla National Forest – Umatilla County and Baker County.

1. Collectively report all fire starts according to their agencies protocols.
2. Understand the three goals of the CWPP its ideas and recommendations.
3. Work collaboratively toward the three goals of the CWPP during all phases of planning, implementation, and reporting.
4. Knowledgeable of WUI Zone concept. Understands fire risk, threat, and effects on the landscape and the need to reduce fire risk based on all hands all lands concept.
5. Function as part of joint effort of fire suppression in protecting life and property and minimizing wildfire impacts to communities while meeting the goal of wildfire response.
6. Oregon Department of Forestry notifies owners of properties within the county's forestland-urban interface (WUI Zone) areas (ODF 2015).
7. Participate in site visits and demonstration projects.

Community

The communities of Wallowa County are familiar with wildfire on the landscape; due to mother nature a small number of residence have firsthand experience of fire near their communities. For the most part, fire suppression resources have been highly successful in protecting the local communities.

With only a fraction of landowners having participated in risk reduction, community members are being encouraged to join with fire management agencies in protecting their local values. Oregon Senate Bill 360 is an option to enlist the aid of property owners toward the goal of turning fire-vulnerable urban and suburban properties into less-volatile zones where firefighters may more safely and effectively defend homes from wildfires (ODF 2015).

1. Property owners in identified forestland-urban interface areas, once notified that their land meets the criteria of forestland-urban interface, have two years to reduce excess vegetation, which may fuel a fire around structures and along driveways (ODF 2015).
2. Appropriately apply funds received for risk reduction to property based on funding source guidelines.
3. It is the CWPP committee's desire that landowners reach out to fire managers to convey their fire risk concerns and property needs.

Although some community members have participated more than others, input was vital toward a collaborative CWPP. Wallowa County residence are scattered across the landscape with the highest concentrations located along state highway 82 from Wallowa to the town of Joseph. In order to reach out to as many community members as possible the county tax assessment office inserted a letter and link to the wildfire risk survey in the annual property tax statements.

According to the Annual Population Report completed by Portland State University, the 2015 population estimate for Wallowa County was 7,100. Sixteen communities were identified around the county with populations ranging from less than 100 to approximately 1,940 residents, with the highest population centers in Enterprise and Joseph.

Western states support vast areas of forested and rangeland acres where potential fire spread may threaten rural communities. Wallowa County, Oregon is no exception. Because of the vast amount of forested public and private land surrounding the communities and their proximity to one another, a single WUI Zone concept met several recommendations for the western states outlined in the National Cohesive Strategy.

Summary

A comprehensive approach to the CWPP planning process is important to successfully meeting management and policy direction, promoting collaborative planning and addressing wildfire mitigation measures.

The 2014 Cohesive Wildfire Strategy played a significant role in the planning by putting emphasis not only on the forest areas in close proximity of private lands but takes into consideration expanding wildfire mitigation actions well beyond the property lines into the general forested areas. By recommending large landscape-scale changes to vegetative structure and fuel loadings an effort can be made to safely and successfully engage wildfires prior to them reaching communities. Creating this type of defensible space not only provides added protection for communities but protects social, economic, and environmental interests as well.

Establishing a WUIZ accomplishes the need to address middle ground areas that lie between untreated areas and urban interface areas and provides the ability to allocate funding to multiple areas meeting the criteria of the monies.

In order to ensure plan goals and action items are being met, periodic progress reporting and annual meetings are needed. These are designed as a means of checks and balances among fire management agencies, community members, and public officials. Collaboration that continues through the implementation process promotes coordinated efforts across jurisdictions and property lines while achieving the three goals of the CWS.

Forests and communities are dynamic in nature, exhibiting changes over time, so too is the CWPP document . The CWPP is a fluid, active document that should be updated and assessed annually to meet landscape and communities changes. Plan strategies will be evaluated for new opportunities, changes in regulations, implementation progress, and validity of plan intent. Updates of the CWPP should include appropriate amendment measures that take into consideration National, State, and Local priorities.

The plan is an all-inclusive document where community members and organizations play an active role in fire mitigation. Wallowa County Emergency Services will provide a lead role in CWPP implementation with the support of ODF and local fire management agencies. Through this collaborative effort community members can be provided with assistance and guidance as part of the plan implementation. Engaging as many groups and individuals in wildfire mitigation creates a holistic approach toward meeting the goals and objectives of the plan.

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