



FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES LEARNING NETWORK

Notes from the Field

FAC Net Members Discuss Innovative CWPPs

February 2015

FAC Net members discuss innovative community wildfire protection plans in a webinar meeting of the CWPP Community of Practice.

The CWPP Community of Practice held a members-only webinar on February 25 that highlighted innovative community wildfire protection planning efforts from Travis County (Texas), Bend (Oregon), Lake Tahoe Basin (California and Nevada) and Ashland (Oregon). Network members from these places discussed their own planning efforts—including community engagement, plan organization, outreach and how their CWPPs have evolved—as well as the new CWPP guidance that was recently developed for New Mexico (see box).

Highlights from Case Studies

The Travis County CWPP core team engaged land managers, planners, fire departments and other emergency responders, and other community leaders. According to Justice Jones, “the plan serves as a springboard for transforming our communities at risk into fire adapted communities.” Outreach related to the CWPP targeted urban, suburban and rural audiences with messages tailored for each.

Deschutes County, Oregon is covered by seven CWPPs. Creators of the 2016 Greater Bend CWPP have reorganized its action plan around the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy) goals. Ed Keith

and Alison Green noted that they also added a large section on business wildfire resiliency. Another innovation was an appendix with post-fire recovery information for residents, which will also be available as a stand-alone document. Project staff are circulating the document for signatures on the final version.

In the Lake Tahoe Basin, the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team updated their “Multi-jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy” in 2014. The new plan has the same goals as the Cohesive Strategy: resilient landscapes, fire adapted communities and safe and effective wildfire response.

The team changed how it designated wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas, resulting in more private land falling into the WUI category than had been the case in 2007.

“This was the most useful process that we went through.”

on the use of the FAC Net’s FAC Self-Assessment Tool for community engagement

This highlights the need for better cooperation between private and government entities. The Lake Tahoe Basin CWPP tiers from the this plan and is essentially its implementation plan. The CWPP team worked hard to make the plan accessible to a wide spectrum of audiences. They invested in a designer, which resulted in a more attractive document that has been viewed by more people.

Related Resources

Visit the FAC Net YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCw0iViThjzZbd5A4bf3tGkw>) to view recordings of the webinar presentations.

Email info@fireadaptednetwork.org for more information about the CWPP Community of Practice.

See the New Mexico CWPP guidance at <http://allaboutwatersheds.org/library/inbox/2015-community-wildfire-protection-plan-cwpp-update-guidelines/view>.

“The plan serves as a **springboard** for transforming our communities at risk into fire adapted communities.”

on the CWPP for Austin, Texas



surveyed were aware of fire risk, Ashland’s wildfire history and actions necessary to be safe. About half had taken some action related to wildfire preparedness. The city has created a wildfire mitigation commission, and the Chamber of Commerce is creating a fire plan task force that includes key stakeholders. This group will form the foundation for a CWPP advisory committee.

New Guidance

In addition to these examples, Eytan Krasilovsky of the Forest Stewards Guild spoke to the group about new CWPP guidance developed in New Mexico. Among other things, the guidance uses the Cohesive Strategy as a frame, and requires a list of prioritized projects. It also includes the following suggestions or best practices for CWPPs:

- Develop a plan to keep your core team active;
- Use plain language;
- Plan at multiple scales;
- Ensure the plan recognizes vulnerable populations (elderly, disabled and disadvantaged);
- Make action plans specific;
- Don’t label large areas or entire counties as WUI;
- Connect your CWPP to other plans and work with land use planners; and
- Plan for before, during and after wildfire in your CWPP.

Forest Schafer from the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District stressed the importance of creating a CWPP that allows for flexibility in prioritizing fuel reduction projects. Action plans for five areas surrounding the lake are adapted from results from the FAC Net “FAC Self-Assessment Tool.” According to Schafer, “this was the most useful process that we went through,” for planning around community engagement. The sub-plans include actions that the entire community can implement, not just agencies. Participation from a wide variety of groups is essential in the creation of fire adapted communities.

Ashland, Oregon is in the process of revamping their CWPP. According to Chris Chambers, forest division chief for the city, more than a decade ago the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 provided a means for Ashland stakeholders to craft a

CWPP and offer an alternative plan for treatments on federal forestlands. That plan, while outdated, has been useful and it catalyzed a 7,600-acre project that is about three-fourths complete. However, Ashland’s first CWPP did not engage the community in collaborative wildland fire planning, which is being addressed in the new plan. The main sections of the new plan will mirror the goals of the Cohesive Strategy. It will also include sections about vulnerable populations and post-fire recovery.

Alison Lerch, Ashland’s fire adapted communities coordinator, described how, in preparation for launching into the planning process, the city worked with a contractor to conduct a community engagement study. They contacted more than 400 residents and asked them about perceptions of wildfire risk and the fire plan. Two-thirds of those

For more about the FAC Learning Network, visit:

<http://fireadaptednetwork.org/>

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The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network is supported by *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together*, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior through a subaward to the Watershed Research and Training Center.

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