



Linn County  
**Community Wildfire Protection Plan**  
**2022 Update Meeting**  
**NOTES**



**Wednesday, February 22, 2023**  
**2:00 PM– 4:00 PM**  
**Online via Zoom**

Zoom recording: <https://dlcd.box.com/s/ob1yrd2ymgkcc53o012r17445wxksbgp>  
Presentation slides: <https://dlcd.box.com/s/v9r603lyrgn31xhd57kyh3cnm73krfu9>

**Attendees:**

Alyssa Boles, Planning Manager, Linn County  
Kate Bentz, Assistant Planner, Linn County  
Emerson Marsh, Emergency Management Coordinator, Linn County.  
John Schmiedl, Emergency Management Coordinator for Santiam Hospital & Clinics  
Blair Larsen, Community & Economic Development Director, City of Sweet Home  
Nikki Swanson, District Ranger, Willamette National Forest, Sweet Home Ranger District  
Shane Wooton, Fire Chief, Albany Fire Department, and Linn County Fire Defense Board Chief  
Kayla Bordelon, OSU Extension Fire Program, Willamette Valley region (including Linn Co).  
Craig Pettinger, Oregon Dept of Forestry, Unit forester based in Sweet Home.  
Steve Barnett, Linn County GIS Manager  
Stephanie Stafford, OSFM Fire Risk Reduction Specialist  
Susan Millhauser, DLCD, Natural Hazards Planner-Wildfire, Project Manager

**Welcome/Introductions**

- Attendees signed in via the chat.
- The project schedule was reviewed, including focusing on the CWPP over the coming months and pushing the NHMP update out until after the CWPP is complete. An updated project schedule will be shared.
- November 3, 2022 meeting notes were discussed and approved.

**CWPP Project Updates**

- Action item updates
  - Chief Wooten met twice with other county fire chiefs and who provided input on the action item list, which was shared with Susan, DLCD.
- Risk Assessment / Map update
  - Linn County (Kate) has been inventorying what was done during the last CWPP and talking with other counties about their risk assessment. Met with Benton County which recently updated its plan. Recently reviewed the 2007 risk assessment methodology and maps which were based on a customized framework (risk, hazard, protection capability, structural, etc.). Determined preliminary needed data sets and update needs.
    - More recently jurisdictions are using different approaches. Lane County and Benton County used Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer developed by OSU. Morrow County used USFS data.

- Some counties developed criteria for and mapped their own Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) while others used data sets developed by ODF or USFS.
      - ODF (Craig) has some of the home assessment information but it is from 2006-2008.
  - The Steering Committee needs to discuss and agree on the overall methodology to be used. Kate developed a working document “Risk Mapping Data Sources + Ideas”, linked here on Box: <https://dlcd.box.com/s/inhol2qbl3r2vl50s2gwzldzgx4ihhsy>.
    - County GIS staff worked on some draft example maps, which Kate showed, using the statewide [Communities at Risk Report \(ODF, 2020\)](#) (on Box) overlaid with WUI boundaries, and the overall wildfire risk data set from the [Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer CWPP planning tool](#).
    - Stephanie, OSFM, shared that in addition to the risk mapping, we could look at outside fire data reported by all fire agencies in Linn County. Data provided by Stephanie has been added to Box here: <https://dlcd.box.com/s/shuiida5bke4ve3n7416k3rbencek6gl>
    - Kayla, OSU, could connect Kate with OSU staff to get a better understanding of the data and research that went into recent statewide risk mapping.

### **OSU Extension Fire Program Presentation**

- Kayla Bordelon, Ph.D., Regional Fire Specialist, Willamette Valley & North Cascades, OSU Extension Fire Program, gave a presentation entitled “Planning for Fire Resilience Using the Fire Adapted Communities Framework” followed by questions and discussion.
  - The presentation slides are available in Box: <https://dlcd.box.com/s/qby5ygamnru9gt70vnge1ga6uv3z4jo>
- Topics covered included:
  - Overview of OSU Fire Program and Fire Adapted Communities framework
  - Resident mitigation, including home hardening and defensible space – Firewise USA program is a potential resource, Hood River community chipping program example.
  - Wildfire Response – local capacity building, mutual aid, and community interface with incident management.
  - Safety and evacuation - education, safety zones and evacuation planning, ingress and egress. Corvallis example of requiring a developer to add a new egress for a new development adjacent to an existing one.
  - Public / private partnerships for landscape scale treatments for fuels reduction and additional goals, such as habitat and water quality.
  - Public health (physical and mental health, social services) increasing as a concern – air quality public communication planning, clean air shelters, access to air filters, identification of vulnerable populations, etc. Example from City of Ashland Community Response Plan for Smoke – also addresses prescribed fire/controlled burns and public health agency coordination.
  - Prevention, including public education, workforce development, and public safety power shutoffs – human-ignited fires are the majority, public safety power shut offs and possible implications, such as medical equipment, dependence on food in freezers.
  - Regulations, policies, and plans – CWPPs, land use codes, farmland preservation, building codes, incentive programs, regulations, etc.

- Infrastructure and business – business continuity and protection of critical infrastructure, road improvements, workforce development (forestry services industry), further upstream workforce housing, insurance concerns and increasing costs.
- Recovery – more recent recognition that recovery planning should be built into the CWPP planning process. Emergency and disaster management can provide a good framework. Also address post fire ecosystem effects, such as debris flows, flooding, etc. Modeling is getting better that can point to recovery projects that increase resilience, such as road repairs.
- Partnerships and community engagement – use as a lens to develop and implement CWPPs and all fire resilience programming – benefits of robust public engagement.
  - Most flexibility and useful in the plan development phase.
- Resources to learn more available from FAC Learning Network at <https://fireadaptednetwork.org/resources/>, including a new tool for developing tailored plans: <https://fireadaptednetwork.org/introducing-the-fire-adapted-communities-pathways-tool/>.
- Q&A
  - Importance of public involvement early on in the process was discussed.
  - Does ODF reach out to communities to see if they want to be Firewise Communities? Could this be an additional action item?
    - ODF has current projects around defensible space and brush clearing with work crews across the county.
    - Currently only one Firewise Community in Linn County.
    - May not be the appropriate organizing structure for some communities. Seems to work better in communities where people have more time and energy as volunteers to participate. Chipping programs can be helpful.
    - Senator Golden (SB509) legislation that encourages use of Firewise program: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Downloads/ProposedAmendment/22484>

## USFS Update

- Nikki Swanson, Sweet Home District Ranger, Willamette National Forest, provided an overview of current and planned projects to reduce fire intensity near private land, followed by questions and discussion.
  - Opportunities to be proactive in the Sweet Home District to reduce spread. Bruler Fire 198 acres, time was of the essence.
  - Working in collaboration with private timber landowners, ODF, private landowners, watershed councils, and others to agree in advance where to have potential containment lines, pre-prep roads and fire lines.
  - Shared Sweet Home RD Roadside Hazardous Fuels Reduction Phases map. Started with focus on the Middle Santiam but expanded more broadly.
  - Last three years there have been 327,000 acres of cumulative fire in the Willamette NF.
  - Removing vegetation 10" less in diameter up to 150' feet from the edge of the road.
  - Goal is to be able to hand a composite map to incident command at the outset of a fire.
- Q&A
  - Important work since the last update of the CWPP has been completed, it will be helpful to have ODF review and input on 2007 plan actions.

- Linn County doesn't typically interface with the USFS. Would like to get a copy of the maps. Other communities have maps with site specific areas for fuels reduction. Would like to include more detail about specific project work.
- There are some USFS actions identified in the 2007 plan that Kate would like Nikki to review. Nikki requested a copy of the 2007 CWPP, which Susan will send.

## CWPP Goals and Action Items

- Goals: the group reviewed the project goals.
  - At the last meeting there was a suggestion of adding a new goal, Goal 6, focused on building capacity for local municipalities, and possibly reworking Goal 1 and 2 to move the life safety component of Goal 2 into Goal 1.
    - There was support to add a new goal addressing capacity of local municipalities. Proposed: *Build staff and financial capacity and ability of local municipalities and the county to implement and coordinate...* For example, this would include actions like coordination on recovery plans, alert and warning systems, etc.
    - Alternatively, language about building capacity could be added to Goal 5: *Increase opportunities for collaboration and coordination to implement wildfire projects.*
    - The Goal 2 title needs to be revised to more accurately reflect the types of projects listed. There was support to move life safety/a focus on people to Goal 1. [Note: in the 2007 plan narrative Goal 2 states: *Increase stakeholder knowledge about wildfire risk through education and outreach.*]
  - It should be made clear that the plan isn't creating new regulations or constraints for the community but to identify projects and provide resources to meet future goals. Perhaps in a purpose statement.
- Action items: The action item leads were tasked with updating the status and text of the action items by **April 14 deadline**.
  - Under Goal 2, there may be different opportunities to involved county public health in some of these programs. Kayla offered to chat with Kate about how to break out, different audiences, etc.
  - Re: action 3.6, Shane asked about formal agreement for access to county maps to the Incident Management Teams from County GIS. Does this already exist? If not, that should be added.
    - Linn County has mapping they can provide but not access to USFS or ODF.
  - Consider recovery planning and recovery that's built for future resilience.
    - Emergency Management is considering working on disaster recovery plan – since we're working on it might want to include. Transitioning to a new system for COOP planning. Warning systems upgrades and consistency between local jurisdictions, community engagement and social media. Evacuation planning and templates – once we get better data for the maps starting conversation for pre-defined zones for fire evacuation. Lessons learned from Lane County.
    - Could expand on 1.5 – predefined zones and access/egress resources.
  - Kate will reach out to the County roads department.
  - Public health – Emerson will touch base with their Emergency Manager and see if he can join in future meetings.
  - Climate data needs to be included in NHMPs as of April 2023, need to be careful how we approach this going forward.

## Next Steps

- Continue to review and refine action items:
  - **Due date: April 14 for updated action items spreadsheets and draft worksheets.**
  - Susan to send out a fillable action item worksheet and is available to assist or support as needed.
- Mapping and risk assessment – internal conversations will be ongoing. If interested in being involved contact Kate.
- Mitigation strategy will be informed by identified action items in conjunction with the risk mapping.
- Public engagement
  - There is interest in developing a survey to allow input earlier in the process.
  - OSU Extension has capability/connections with Spanish speaking communities.
- Susan to share documents in Box so everyone can be working as we go.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, May 17, 2023, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Support this project by linking the following webpage to your jurisdiction's webpage.

**Project webpage:**

<https://www.co.linn.or.us/planningbuilding/page/community-wildfire-protection-plan>