



To: Curry Wildfire Preparation Team
From: Kathy Lynn, Resource Innovations
Date: October 3, 2007
Re: Meeting Notes from the 9/27/07 CWPT Meeting

Curry County Wildfire Preparation Team Meeting Notes

Meeting Participants:

- Earl Burke, Bureau of Land Management, Coos Bay District (retired)
- John Flannigan, Coos Forest Protective Association
- Megan Harper, Bureau of Land Management, Coos Bay District
- Chris John, South Coast Watershed Council
- Kathy Lynn, Resource Innovations, University of Oregon
- Ryan Ojerio, Resource Innovations, University of Oregon
- Bill Sharp, City of Brookings Fire Chief
- Joanne Ruoff, Coos Forest Protective Association
- Jim Wolf, Wildfire Planning and Analysis

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

Date	Meeting	Time	Location
10/25/07	October CWPT Meeting – Conference Call	10:00 am – 11:30 am	Conference Call
11/29/07	CWPT meeting	TBD	Gold Beach
1/9/08	CWPT meeting	TBD	Gold Beach
1/9/08	<i>Potential:</i> 2 nd meeting with the Curry Fire Chief's Association	7:00 pm	Harbor Fire Department

Updates

Biomass Meeting Outcomes

The biomass forum was well attended (over 30 participants) by a variety of interested individuals. Several speakers presented a broad overview of biomass opportunities and challenges. At the federal and state level there is a lot of interest in supporting renewable energy technologies and value added products that could be produced from biomass extracted from fuels reduction projects. At the local level the challenge is how to create the markets and infrastructure to utilize existing technologies and drive the development of more efficient technologies to make biomass cost competitive with other energy markets.

The CWPT discussed the logical next step: the formation of a biomass coalition including woods products industry representatives. The coalition would continue to explore biomass utilization in the south coast region. Specifically this coalition could pursue available grant funding for the

costs of feasibility studies or organizational costs. The CWPT agreed to incorporate this step as an action item in the wildfire plan.

- *Bill and Chris agreed to brief the County Commissioners on the outcomes from the biomass meetings*
- *Kathy agreed to draft talking points for the briefing.*

Public Meeting Summary

Although the public meetings did not have as many community participants as the committee had hoped for, there was substantial support from agency personnel. City staff were also well represented at the Brookings meeting. As well, the Curry County Weed Board and South Coast Watershed Councils had representatives at the meetings leading to opportunities for the CWPT to collaborate on reducing gorse infestation; a significant concern among many meeting participants.

A draft summary of the meetings was circulated for comment and will be sent to meeting participants via email. Meeting participants generated ideas for action items and fuels reduction projects. The draft action items and risk assessment reflect these comments. CWPT members mentioned that gorse was highlighted as a concern at the public meetings.

Vulnerable Populations Assessment

Ryan has completed 17 interviews with staff from county and state social service agencies and local non-profits. These agencies and organizations serve diverse populations including the elderly, low-income households and persons with physical or mental disabilities. These populations are at an increased risk to natural disasters because of their reduced capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters.

The interviews revealed that transportation and communication are the principle challenges that these populations will face in the event of a wildfire. On the positive side, Curry County has a strong network of social service providers that is used to coordinating their efforts. Georganne Greene with the Health Department is spearheading an effort to establish the Public Health Preparedness Advisory Committee. One of the principle goals of the committee will be to address the needs of vulnerable populations through disaster preparedness planning. Another concurrent effort underway that may benefit the CWPT is the effort by Region 3 of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HSRA) to compile a database of vulnerable populations. Tracy DePew, the region 3 coordinator, is leading this grant-funded project.

- *A draft summary of the assessment will be distributed later this month and included in the draft CWP.*

CWPP Action Plan

Each of the draft action items represents one or more recommendations that came out of the public meeting summary, stakeholder interviews, resource capability assessment, or structural vulnerability assessment. Meeting participants reviewed each action item suggesting minor changes, rewording and clarification. The CWPT provided the following recommendations and major changes:

- Action Item 1.2 – Chief Sharp will investigate the possibility of enlisting a local insurance association to lead an effort to collaborate with insurance providers to disseminate information about structural vulnerability.
- Action Item 2.2 – The CWPT will conduct a periodic review of structural vulnerability to inform the current risk assessment and fuels reduction priorities. The County GIS will work with the CWPT to establish an appropriate “trigger point” to initiate an updated evaluation.
- Action Item 3.1 – It is difficult to provide clear information to the public about wildfire conditions because of the different rating systems in use and the influence of media outlets from other regions.
- Action Items 3.3 and 3.4 – Combine these two into a single action item that will educate and support property owners in installing usable water storage systems.
- Action Items 3.7 and 2.1 – Combine into a single action item that produces a vulnerable population’s database and map for emergency planning and response.
- Action Item (New) – Include an action item that addresses efforts to utilize biomass to increase feasibility of fuels reduction work. Initiate the formation of a biomass coalition?
- Action Item 5.1 – The CWPT agreed that it would not be realistic to enforce a new ordinance to eradicate noxious weeds along the public right of ways. Recommended modifying this item to an education and outreach action.
- Action Item 5.3 – Chief Sharp said that the effort to update Curry County fire codes is moving forward through the efforts of the Oregon State Fire Marshal (and Fire Districts?)
- Action Item (New) – Work with real estate agencies to provide education kits to real estate agents to educate them about structural vulnerability and wildfire risk.
 - *Resource Innovations will revise the draft action items based on the CWPT feedback and present them in the draft CWPP at the next meeting.*

Identifying and Prioritizing Fuels Reduction Projects

Jim presented the combined risk assessment layers and highlighted areas where high structural vulnerability coincided with high wildfire risk.

Some stakeholder interviews suggested that aesthetics and sensitive habitats should be included in the risk assessment, but data on these values was not readily available in a reliable GIS format so they are not included in the risk assessment maps.

The CWPT identified communication facilities as a high priority value to include in the risk assessment. If such facilities were destroyed in a wildfire, it could severely limit emergency responders efforts to communicate. Jim will seek out this information to identify where fuels reduction work could decrease this threat.

The committee agreed that the plan should include fuels reduction priorities for the following categories:

1. Fuels reduction priorities on public land adjacent to communities at risk
2. Fuels reduction priorities in areas with critical facilities and communications infrastructure (e.g., cell towers, power lines, etc.)
3. Defensible space in high risk neighborhoods
4. Other?

Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting on October 25th will be a conference call from 10:00 am –11:30 am. The objective of the meeting will be to review the draft CWPP and revised action items.