

2011

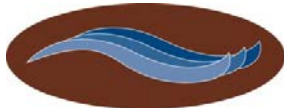
Multnomah County
Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Are You Prepared?



Prepared in coordination with
Oregon Department of Forestry
July 2011

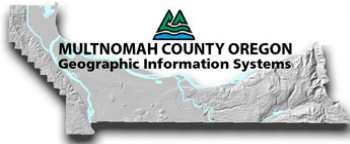




WEST MULTNOMAH
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



**Multnomah
County**



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Multnomah County greatly appreciates the time, commitment and energy these people have invested in the Multnomah County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Joe Partridge
Multnomah County Office of Emergency Management

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recent fires in Oregon and across the western United States have increased public awareness of the potential losses to life, property, and natural and cultural resources. In August, 2010 the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) began working with Multnomah County Emergency Management, the City of Portland's Wildfire Technical Committee, local fire agencies, and community organizations throughout the County to develop an integrated Multnomah County Wildfire Protection Plan (MCWPP). The goal of this plan is to reduce wildfire risk to citizens, the environment, and infrastructure throughout Multnomah County.

The MCWPP is non-regulatory in nature, meaning that it does not set forth any new County policies. It does, however, provide a starting point or foundation for coordination and collaboration among agencies and the public in the County to identify and prioritize future wildfire projects and assists in meeting federal planning requirements and qualifying for assistance programs. The MCWPP works in conjunction with other County plans and programs, including the Multnomah County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and Emergency Operations Plan.

MCWPP Mission & Goals

The mission of the Multnomah County Community Wildfire Protection Plan is to integrate wildfire awareness into public outreach and education, emergency operations and vegetation management programs to promote actions that create safe communities and a more wildfire resilient landscape.

Goals:

- I. Promote public awareness, understanding, and actions to reduce risk.
- II. Reduce risk to people, property and environment.
- III. Maintain a comprehensive, countywide risk assessment.
- IV. Support a disaster resilient economy.
- V. Develop and maintain collaborative partnerships and funding strategies for implementing the CWPP.

MCWPP Objectives

The MCWPP Steering Committee identified the following key objectives and assembled technical subcommittees to develop prioritized mitigation action plans (please see Table 1.1 MCWPP Action Plans) to address them.

- Assess the Wildfire Risk
- Develop Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Biomass Utilization Projects
- Enhance Emergency Response Operations
- Involve the Community in Wildfire Prevention
- Reduce Structural Ignitability through Regulatory Alignment

Fire District Coordination

The local fire agencies that provide structural and wildland urban interface protection are the cornerstone of community resiliency in Multnomah County. These organizations know their communities and are committed to protecting them from wildfires and other hazards. They are also aware of the larger-scale countywide wildfire related issues that require collaboration and coordination from the partners engaged in this planning process. The most critical needs identified include: wildland training & equipment, communications, funding and community education.

Each fire agency developed local action plans and identified communities at risk to wildfire. Resource A: Local Fire Agency Action Plans articulates the specific needs for each local fire agency and will guide wildfire preparedness and prevention efforts.

Communities at Risk

The CWPP process is designed to identify and prioritize areas for wildfire prevention and response efforts. These “areas” are referred to as Communities at Risk (CAR). Each fire agency in Multnomah County is considered a Community at Risk. However, since wildfire hazards vary within fire district boundaries, fire agency personnel identified 57 additional Local Communities at Risk that are particularly vulnerable to wildfire. The Local Communities at Risk have unique wildfire hazards and potential impediments to emergency response. The following issues are common to the majority of high-risk communities.

- Structural Ignitability
- Access Limitations
- Protection Capability
- Water Supply
- Recreation/Transients
- Debris Burning
- Fuels Loading
- Community Preparedness

Community Involvement

Community involvement is a key component to the MCWPP. Multnomah County Emergency Management and Oregon Department of Forestry worked with local fire agencies to host a series of five public outreach events between March and May 2011 to promote the principles included in the Multnomah County Wildfire Protection Plan. The community wildfire meetings provided fire prevention education materials to over 125 concerned residents. The MCWPP includes a variety of strategies for involving the public in wildfire prevention, preparedness and response.

Sustaining Fire Plan Efforts

To ensure recognition by the public and commitment from partner agencies, the Board of County Commissioners accepted the MCWPP in July, 2011. Oregon Department of Forestry and the Multnomah County Fire Defense Board also accepted the plan in recognition of the collaborative development process. In addition, the Portland City Council recognized the City’s Wildfire Technical Committees role in the preparation of Multnomah County Community Wildfire Protection Plan in Fall, 2011.

Multnomah County Emergency Management will house the MCWPP and will work with the City of Portland’s Wildfire Technical Committee to implement the Plan. Multnomah County will provide annual progress reports on plan implementation and the MCWPP will undergo a five-year review to ensure that the document maintains its relevance and effectiveness over the long term.