



Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

Working Together: Collaboration for Fire Adapted Communities

Yakima Valley Workshop

January 2014

In September 2013, the a state-wide conference in Washington, Collaboration for Fire Adapted Communities, brought together civic leaders, developers, business owners, first responders, land managers and homeowners to share and better understand each other's roles in wildfire, barriers to effectiveness, and adaptive actions we can take together to better respond before, during and after wildfire. Several of the Yakima Valley participants in that conference decided that a similar gathering, focused specifically on local community needs, issues and resources, would be useful. The resulting Working Together workshop in January was attended by

A fire adapted community “is a community that is willing to change the way they live, in order to adapt and thrive in the presence of wildfire.”

Annie Schmidt
Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition

47 participants from a range of fire adapted communities (FAC) roles, including representation from private organizations and federal, state and tribal agencies.

The first part of the day included an overview of changing fire policy and an introduction to the fire adapted communities concept, providing all participants with a shared understanding to work from. Speakers highlighted the

roles of different actors in the wild-land urban interface (WUI) before, during, and after wildfire. Each presentation incorporated group discussion of the challenges faced by people in their respective roles and how they could work together to overcome those challenges.

In the afternoon, participants broke into smaller workgroups and drafted strategies and proposed actions that can make Yakima County better adapted to wildfire, and discussed opportunities and follow-up actions.

Groups identified four priority actions:

- A quarter of the participants, representing a cross-section of FAC roles, committed to meeting monthly to address specific actions identified and form an open Yakima Valley Fire Adapted Communities Coalition within thirty days of this workshop.

Yakima County Commissioner Kevin Bouchey welcomed workshop participants, and thanked them for their work on behalf of the community. © Paul Jenkins



- Work will include finding specific ways to more effectively engage homeowners and residents about their role in adapting to wildfire, and let them know how other FAC roles can assist them. First actions on this include having an FAC booth a local home and garden show; organizing broad, coordinated outreach for the national Wildfire Preparedness Day on May 3; and engaging Block Watch programs.
- A plan will be developed, specific to the Yakima Valley, and with



Breakout groups worked to draft strategies and actions for making communities in Yakima County better adapted to wildfire. © Paul Jenkins



Annie Schmidt from the Leavenworth, WA Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network pilot community summarized the elements of creating a fire adapted community using a metaphor of roots, trunk and branches of an apple tree.

© Paul Jenkins, Fire Corps Volunteer

clear actions outlined, to enable valley-wide and local coordination and engagement of all FAC roles. This will be a revision of the current Yakima County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), to be signed by county commissioners and the state forester by the end of the year.

- The Yakima Valley community of Tieton-Naches will be engaged through work with local community stakeholders to adapt the FAC framework locally, reviewing community accomplishments—and the challenges they have encountered—in implementing their five-year-old CWPP.

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The Fire Learning Network (FLN) and Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network are part of the *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience through Collaboration: Landscapes, Learning and Restoration*, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior. For more information, contact Lynn Decker at ldecker@tnc.org or (801) 320-0524.

Working Together: Collaboration for Fire Adapted Communities Conference & Workshop Information

Washington (state-wide)—September 25-26, 2013

(includes slides from presentations)
<http://www.scwrcd.org/wui2.html>

Yakima Valley—January 30, 2014

(agenda)
http://www.scwrcd.org/docs/Yakima_FAC_Workshop_2014.pdf



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