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News from Region X

Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network

Washington State is fortunate to have a new organization of partners working together to find solutions to wildfire and forest health problems. The Washington Fire Adapted Communities (WA-FAC) Learning Network is the first state-level expansion of the national Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, a program designed to share best practices and innovations. Its steering committee comprises representatives of federal, state and local agencies and organizations, all of whom bring broad experience to the table.

The group first came together in January 2015 in response to an urgent need to develop integrated strategies and partnerships to implement wildfire resilient/risk reduction solutions that are most appropriate and effective for Washington. It meets regularly and works continuously toward a shared goal: to accelerate the adoption of fire adapted community concepts that help to produce more sustainable and resilient landscapes and communities.

A fire adapted community acknowledges and takes responsibility for its wildfire risk and implements appropriate actions at all levels. Among the concerns are the safety of residents and the protection of homes, businesses, infrastructure, forests, parks and other community assets. Since each community or group has a unique set of circumstances and capacities, the actions they take will vary. But the

core work involves forming and sustaining effective partnerships, discovering new strategies and building new capacities to meet changing conditions.



WA-FAC Learning Network Committee

The US Bureau of Land Management, Spokane District, provides critical funding to the WA-FAC Learning Network. Through this support, along with the contributions of other organizations, selected communities receive assistance from network staff along with some funding to host community-wide wildfire workshops, develop local business and community resilience initiatives and share lessons learned.

This article was produced by FEMA Region X Mitigation Division and originally appeared in the FEMA Best Practices newsletter in December 2015.

Wildfire information on the web:

- www.fireadaptedwashington.org
- www.fireadapted.org
- www.facnetwork.org
- www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPractices/FireLandscapes/fac/facnet
- mil.wa.gov/emergency-management-division
- www.ready.gov

Development Pressures in the Wildland Urban Interface

Population increases in the wildland urban interface (WUI) exacerbate the wildfire problem by adding new residents who may have little or no experience with wildfire. In the past 50 years, the 220 million acres of identified WUI in the United States have become populated with over 120 million people living in 50 million housing units and working in several hundred thousand businesses. This is a growth rate of 300% in the WUI, which is faster than the general population growth rate for the same time period (IAWF 2013).

Wildfires Cause Flooding, Mudflows, and Erosion

North Central Washington State

The record-breaking Washington state wildfires of 2014 and 2015 burned away much of the natural vegetation that is essential for absorbing rainwater. As a result, downstream communities and property have a heightened risk for severe flash flooding, mudslides, debris flows, and other erosion.

To reduce the danger, federal, state and local government agencies, along with non-profit groups and private land owners, have worked cooperatively to plan and implement hazard mitigation projects. These have included seeding and other ground treatments, installation of debris racks, temporary berms, sediment retention basins and other measures. Flood warning systems have been improved, and many more projects are being planned and funded. Despite the various protective measures and the natural regeneration that will occur, even light rainfall events can bring catastrophic flooding for the next several years. Full recovery from

Maps and Information:
www.centralwashingtonfirerecovery.info
www.okanogancd.org
landslides.usgs.gov/hazards/postfire_debrisflow
mil.wa.gov/emergency-management-division
www.ready.gov

such intense and widespread wildfire is a very slow process.

An important way to reduce financial loss due to flooding and mudflow is through purchase and retention of flood insurance. Floods are the most common natural disaster in the United States, yet most homeowners insurance does not cover flood damage.

Flood insurance from the National Flood Insurance Program is available not only in areas at high risk of flooding, but in moderate- to low-risk areas as well. To protect your investment, you can purchase coverage for your home’s structure for up to \$250,000 and its contents for up to \$100,000. For businesses, structural and contents coverage is available up to \$500,000

Sample annual premiums for a home in a moderate or minimal flood zone:

Building coverage	Contents coverage	Annual premium
\$20,000	\$8,000	\$167
\$50,000	\$20,000	\$262
\$250,000	\$100,000	\$452

These are rates as of November 1, 2015. Building characteristics may affect policy pricing.

For more information regarding a flood insurance policy, please contact your insurance agent. To assess your flood risk, find an agent or get more information, visit FloodSmart.gov or call (800)-427-2419.

NORFMA News

Survey results from NORFMA 2015 Annual Conference

After the NORFMA 2015 Conference, a survey was sent to the members to gather feedback to continue to improve the conference experience. Over 70% of respondents found our usual late-September conference timeframe convenient. Two trainings, “Floodplain Management 101” and “Elevation Certificates”, were rated as Very Useful -- participants said they were a good way to sharpen skills, and convenient for smaller communities that don’t have opportunities or budget for multiple trips. Tours or river activities were suggested, in addition to the usual Tuesday welcome social event, as opportunities to connect with colleagues. For detailed survey responses, visit NORFMA’s website.

Introducing our State Floodplain Coordinators

Each State in Region-X has a State Floodplain or NFIP Coordinator. We would like to introduce one of our four coordinators each month.

Maureen O’Shea is the new Idaho State Floodplain Coordinator at IDWR. Maureen has extensive experience working with the National Flood Insurance Program. She spent two years with FEMA, about three years working as a State

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Ask the Help Desk

The Region X Service Center is here to help with technical, training, mitigation, mapping, and project status questions. How can we help you?

Send your questions by email to RegionXHelpDesk@starr-team.com.

NORFMA (cont.)

Regional Floodplain Coordinator with the State of North Carolina, and over five years working as a local planner and floodplain administrator in both North Carolina and Northern California. Contact Maureen by phone at (208) 287-4928 or by email, Maureen.OShea@idwr.idaho.gov.

CFM Section on www.norfma.org

NORFMA will soon expand the CFM section on our website to include a page where you can list your name for inclusion on the next

CFM exam to be offered through NORFMA. When there are enough people interested in taking the exam, we will arrange a time, location and proctor. We hope that this will be especially convenient for smaller communities who have less geographical access and fewer financial resources, to assist their personnel in studying for and obtaining this important certification. We want to support local staff in continuing education and developing the tools and knowledge to help our communities administer the NFIP.

Upcoming Training

Floodplain Administrator 101

March 2, 2016
Weiser, Idaho

March 22, 2016
Rigby, Idaho

Topics covered:

- NFIP Overview
- Inspections
- Flood Openings
- Floodproofing
- Elevation Certificates
- LOMCs
- Maintaining Records, and
- Training Opportunities

There is no cost for these workshops.

Please RSVP to Maureen O'Shea at (208) 287-4928 or by email, Maureen.OShea@idwr.idaho.gov.



Online Training

(All times Pacific)

NFIP Basics

February 4, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

Introduction to CRS

February 16, 10am
April 19, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

CRS and Higher Regulatory Standards

February 17, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

Elevation Certificates

February 18, 10am
April 14, 10am
Online* - 2 CEC

Floodplain Development Permit Review

March 3, 9 am
Online* - 1 CEC

Inspecting Floodplain Development

March 3, 10:30 am
Online* - 1 CEC

CRS: Preparing for a Verification Visit

March 15, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

CRS: Flood Warning & Response (Activity 610)

March 16, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

Using Risk MAP Products in Floodplain Management

March 17, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

Tools for Determining BFE

April 13, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

CRS and Natural Floodplain Functions

April 20, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

*To register for online courses, visit STARR's training site online at j.mp/starronlinetraining, or email RXTraining@starr-team.com.



Increasing Resilience Together