



## CLACKAMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

### Staff Presentation Worksheet

Presentation Date: 11-1-2011 Time: 1:30 p.m. Length: 30 minutes

Presentation Title: Clackamas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan 5 Year Update

Department: Emergency Management

Presenters:

- Dana Robinson, Clackamas County Emergency Management
- Gary McQueen, Clackamas County Fire Defense Board Chief
- Chris Paul, Oregon Department of Forestry
- Cindy Kolomechuk, Oregon Department of Forestry

### POLICY QUESTION

Does the Board advocate for continued wildfire protection planning in Clackamas County? Shall they endorse using departmental staff time (Parks and Recreation, Forestry, Land Use Planning, Building Department, Emergency Management, Geographic Information Systems, Administration) to participate in the Clackamas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan five-year review and update process?

### ISSUE & BACKGROUND

Although wildfires are a natural part of the ecosystem in Clackamas County's forests, decades of declining forest health due, in some cases, to lack of proper management, conflicting forest uses and aggressive fire suppression have significantly increased the wildfire hazard as forest fuels and invasive plant vegetation have accumulated to create a forest environment that tends to burn more intensely than in the past. In addition, recent population growth has spurred more residential development close to the forests, in what is referred to as the wildland urban interface (WUI). As development encroaches upon forests with altered fire regimes that are more conducive to larger, more intense fires, the risk to life, property, and natural resources continues to escalate.

State and federal legislation (Senate Bill 360, the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, the National Fire Plan and the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program) have encouraged communities to create Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) to reduce wildfire hazards and create more wildfire-resilient communities and landscapes.

In May 2004, the Board of Commissioners directed County departments to facilitate a collaborative community wildfire planning effort among local, state and federal agencies, community organizations, and individuals. The impetus for this effort was to meet the aforementioned legislation and to encourage Congress to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Self-Determination Act, all of which can be leveraged to provide funding for CWPP implementation.

In September 2005 the BCC adopted a Clackamas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan that focused on public participation, education and outreach, enhancing emergency operations, reducing structural ignitability, identifying fuels reduction and biomass utilization opportunities, and developing a robust wildfire risk assessment. The CCWPP is a non-regulatory document that meets the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, National Fire Plan, and Pre-Disaster Mitigation criteria for community wildfire protection plans.

This was an incredible planning effort that engaged over 50 agencies and over 400 community members. The Clackamas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan has served as a national model, earning the National Association of Counties Achievement Award in recognition of an innovative program that enhances county government.

For the past five years, members of the Wildfire Planning Executive Committee have been collaborating to secure over \$2 million in grant funding for conducting wildfire prevention programs, implementing fuels reduction projects in priority communities at risk, and obtaining data about structure locations and defensible space to aid in wildfire planning and response. The Clackamas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan is now due for a five-year review and update process that will be completed by early summer 2012.

The Oregon Department of Forestry has secured Federal grant funds to hire a facilitator for this process. The Clackamas County Fire Defense Board, United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have also committed staff to participate in this process. County staff members must also be involved in this process to ensure that the CWPP is relevant and meaningful county-wide.

#### **QUESTION(S) PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION**

Will the Board to continue supporting community wildfire planning and project implementation by committing County staff and resources to this CCWPP five-year review and update effort?


**OPTIONS AVAILABLE**

1. By committing staff and resources to updating the non-regulatory Clackamas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, the Board of Commissioners will be supporting a more community-based approach to reducing wildfire hazards. Having an updated CCWPP will enable collaborating agencies to be eligible for securing grant funding for wildfire mitigation project implementation. Continued Board support of the Community Wildfire Planning process will validate the efforts made by residents to actively reduce wildfire hazards in their communities, and will encourage fire districts to develop local community wildfire protection plans.
2. If the Clackamas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan five-year update is not adopted by the BCC, the momentum for wildfire hazard reduction will be lost. The agencies involved in plan implementation will not be eligible for grant funding, and residents will have less exposure to wildfire hazard reduction strategies.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff respectfully recommends that the Board authorize Clackamas County staff (Parks and Recreation, Forestry, Land Use Planning, Building Department, Emergency Management, Geographic Information Systems, Administration) to participate in the Clackamas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan five-year review and update process.

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Division Director/Head Approval   
Department Director/Head Approval \_\_\_\_\_  
County Administrator Approval \_\_\_\_\_

For information on this issue or copies of attachments, please contact Dana Robinson @ 503-655-8371