EMERGING FIRE SAFE COUNCILS

CREATING A FIRE SAFE COUNCIL
Presenters

Presenting today

• Elizabeth LaMar
  • California Fire Safe Council

• David Duncan
  • Chair, Grove Street Fire Safe Council

• Roberta MacIntyre
  • President/CEO, Fire Safe Sonoma
GETTING STARTED

You want to do what?
WHAT IS A FIRE SAFE COUNCIL?

• Fire Safe Councils are grassroots, community-led organizations that mobilize residents to protect their homes, communities, and environments from catastrophic wildfire.

• Fire Safe Councils educate homeowners about community wildfire preparedness activities while working with local fire officials to design and implement projects that increase the wildfire survivability of their communities.

• Many Fire Safe Councils have successfully implemented such projects as hazardous-fuel-reduction projects, Community Wildfire Protection Planning, and homeowner training.
WE CAN’T TEACH EVERYTHING
WIKIHOW IS A GREAT RESOURCE
DECIDING TO START A FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

• Why start a local Fire Safe Council?
  • What is the goal?
  • Do you have “champions?”
  • How will the work get done?
  • Will you have longevity?
INITIAL MEETING

• Appoint a facilitator
• Take Meeting Minutes
• Develop a Membership Roster
  • Collect contact information
• Display a Map of the Community
• Share Fire Safety Brochures and Materials
How to Build a Successful Team

Phases of Team Development

Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning — based on group development model by Bruce Tuckman

All phases are necessary and inevitable for a team to grow, tackle problems, find solutions, plan work, and deliver results

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FORMING

- Questioning
- Socializing
- Displaying eagerness
- Focusing on group identity & purpose
- Sticking to safe topics

STORMING

- Resistance
- Lack of participation
- Conflict
- Competition
- High emotions
- Starting to move towards group norms

NORMING

- Reconciliation
- Relief, lowered anxiety
- Members are engaged & supportive
- Developing cohesion

PERFORMING

- Demonstrations of interdependence
- Healthy system
- Ability to effectively produce as a team
- Balance of task and process orientation

ADJOINING

- Shift to process orientation
- Sadness
- Recognition of team and individual efforts

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Characteristics

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Strategies

- Forming
  - Taking the ‘lead’
  - Providing clear expectations and consistent instructions
  - Quick response times

- Storming
  - Normalizing matters
  - Encouraging leadership

- Norming
  - Recognizing individual and group efforts
  - Providing learning opportunities and feedback
  - Monitoring the ‘energy’ of the group

- Performing
  - Celebrating
  - ‘Guide from the side’ (minimal intervention)
  - Encouraging group decision-making and problem-solving
  - Providing opportunities to share learning across teams

- Adjourning
  - Recognizing change
  - Providing an opportunity for summative team evaluations
  - Providing an opportunity for acknowledgments
FIRST ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING(S)

• Have a facilitator - meeting norms
• Establish Board of Directors and Executive Board Members (Officers)
• Choose a name
• Develop a Mission Statement
• It is a business!
FIRST ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING(S)

• **Craft a Business Plan**
  • Determine Overall Objectives
  • Discuss Projects Ideas and Determine Feasibility
    • Committees
  • Assign Responsibility for Projects
    • Think of individual skillsets
RECRUITING MEMBERS

- Make an effort to engage and learn from your community counterparts:
  - Local Fire Agencies
    - Environmental Groups
    - Insurance Industry
    - Local Political Leaders
    - Homeowner Associations
    - Other Local Groups
SUSTAINING MOMENTUM

• Recruit New Members
• Ask Each Member to Bring An Idea For a Fire Safe Project
• Continue to Communicate With Existing Fire Safe Councils
• Participate in Community Events
BUSINESS PRACTICES

Do it right – the first time!
IT IS A BUSINESS

- If not managed well, things will go poorly
- There are ethical and legal ramifications
- There are tax filing requirements
- It is imperative to keep good records
THE BUSINESS STRUCTURE

• Use consistent official formation
• Subsidiary under another organization?
• Form as an association?
• Draft bylaws
• Specific policies
• Not necessary to be tax-exempt
THE BOOKS

• Use an industry standard budget method such as the “Generally Accepted Accounting Principals”
• Have internal controls
• Financial Records
• Know ahead of time what tax records are needed
TAX EXEMPT?

• First form as a legal business and have
  • Articles of Incorporation
  • Bylaws

• Then file for tax exempt status
  • See the related publications and training for non-profits on the IRS website
  • The letter of determination
INSURANCE

• Insurance for Board Members
• Errors & Omissions
• Liability
• Workers Compensation
• Contractors?
GETTING THE WORK DONE

- Board members
- Volunteers
- In-Kind
- Contract
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Get the training
- Identify the goal & outline the project
- Cost out resources & create the budget
- Use a timeline
- Assign tasks and monitor
- Keep good records
MARKETING

• What is News?

• Who Are the Media and How Do They Differ?
  • Newspapers
  • Television
  • Radio
  • Newsletters/Mailers/E-News

• Locating the Media
MARKETING

- Other Media
  - Calendar Listings
  - News Releases
  - Social Media
FUNDING

It is true, money does not grow on trees…
DONATIONS

• You don’t have to be tax exempt
• Crowd funding
• Direct mail
• Business sponsorships
GRANTS

• Have shovel-ready projects ahead of opportunities.
• Start small and prove your ability to manage money and projects.
FUNDRAISERS

• It is a lot of work!

• Typically
  • Raffle
  • Dinner
  • Auction

• New ideas
  • Game show
  • Virtual comedy night with celebrity
  • Film festival
MEMBERSHIPS

• Having memberships has its own challenges
• Requirements to be a member
• Quorum requirements
• Voting rights
RESOURCES
THANK YOU!

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