

Appendix F
Meeting Notes, Sonoma County CWPP

CWPP Community Meetings were held as follows:

- The Sea Ranch, January 20 and March 10, 2007;
- Sebastopol, May 27, 2008;
- Santa Rosa, May 28, 2008;
- Petaluma, May 29, 2008;
- Glen Ellen, May 30, 2008;
- Guerneville, June 2, 2008;
- Healdsburg, June 4, 2008;
- Sonoma, August 6, 2008.

Meetings included a presentation about wildfire, defensible space, and structural ignitability, followed by an opportunity for local and state firefighters to share their concerns with the community, and an opportunity for local residents to ask questions, share their concerns, and suggest projects they would like to see take place in their communities. Original notes and attendance available on request.

Sample agenda:

Sonoma County Community Wildfire Protection Plan Meeting Agenda and Set-up:

1. Agenda:
 - a. 7:00- 7:05 Welcome, Intro and Objectives—Collins/Thompson/Tunnell (BLM)
 - b. 7:05- 7:30 Fire Behavior/Fire Risks Power Point Pres: Caerleon and Marshall Turbeville
 - c. 7:15 - 8:05—Local Chiefs speak out about risks in our community
 - d. 8:15-8:45 Community speaks out about their concerns
 - e. 8:45-8.50Values and Assets survey form explained
 - f. 8:50 - 9:00 Wrap up, Summary, Follow up Items. Have participants fill out Values and Assets survey
 - g. 9:00 Adjourn
2. Room Set up - We will need:
 - a. Tables & chairs for participants
 - b. A table for handouts.
 - c. Power Point Presentations: If you don't have a projector in the room, we may need a stand for the projector
 - d. A table up front for local firefighters to sit facing audience.
3. Handouts: We will have portfolios for all participants that will include:
 - a. Agenda
 - b. *Living with Fire in Sonoma County*
 - c. Some information about the CWPP process
 - d. Misc. Defensible Space stuff
 - e. A DVD put out by the Ca. Fire safe Council
 - f. A pencil
4. Recording ideas/notes
 - a. We will have giant post-it pads so that ideas can be recorded as people speak
 - b. We will need one person to very good take notes at the meeting. If you think one of your staff may be able to do that, that would be great. Otherwise, I will plug someone in for this job. Let me know.
5. Maps and visuals:
 - a. For each meeting Marshall will print maps that show: FHSZ, fire threat, fuels data, and a map that we can use to mark: potential WUI boundaries for individual communities; areas of concern for firefighters that aren't indicated as high FHSZ; and areas of concern or high value to community members.

Healdsburg Meeting
Healdsburg Fire Station, June 4, 2008, 6:30-8:30 PM

Following presentation, several questions came up about the importance of structural hardening and how important it is for residents to be aware of what to do to make their property safer.

Westside Association requested educational presentation to address concerns about awareness, especially for weekend residents.

Residents expressed concern about defensible space, and insurance company defensible space demands and cancellations.

Many residents expressed concern that neighbors were complacent about fire concerns, and requested education, PSAs, etc. to help get word out. Concern was also expressed about the prevalence of junipers, and request for info about fire safe plants & the relationship between fire safe plants and drought tolerant plants.

Request for workparty with chipper available for River View area.

Water questions: there was discussion about whether it is a good idea to set a sprinkler on the roof before evacuating. Local officials generally think it is better to save water. Questions were also raised about how much water to store, and how to store it.

Evacuation and shelter-in-place options were discussed for the different areas.

There were requests to CDF & HFD for home inspections.

Guerneville Meeting
Russian River Fire Station, June 4, 2008, 6:30-8:30 PM

Attendance: 15

Fire Departments Represented: CAL FIRE, Russian River Fire, Forestville Fire

Firefighters suggest importance of keeping redwood from filling gutters and roofs; discussion of duff removal: away from immediate structure walls, don't need to go to bare earth, but reduce top dry layers and sticks.

Question about compost fires: how frequently do they occur, what can we do to keep them from happening?

Discussion of the importance of having road names on all access roads, especially in areas that have narrow access and many structures.

Request for green waste dumpsters to help residents remove green materials and debris from their yards

Question about advisability of installing an extra water tank on property so that there is extra water for firefighting:

Response: good idea, do it, talk to your local fire department about best plumbing for firefighter use.

Question about the dangers associated with propane tanks: do they explode, what should we do?

Response: they are designed to vent upwards rather than exploding, but they need to have clear space around them: maintain vegetation.

Question about how to deal with erosion issues that arise when doing defensible space clearance on steep slopes:

Response: It is crucial to consider erosion: rain is a certainty. Potential to leave enough tree stem so that root system remains intact; suggest speaking to a professional before starting work.

Question about safety of metal roofing over other roofing types:

Response: metal roofs can be good for fire assuming the underlayment is up to Class A requirements. Need to ascertain what underlayment is, and also make sure that there is no build up of vegetation under roofing.

Discussion of overwhelming fear of people about fear: importance of realizing that, while it is important to do defensible space clearance and look to your structure, the potential of a really bad fire is not huge: many factors must align for it to be really really bad.

Strong suggestion from all local firefighters that people must move their wood piles away from structures when fire season starts.

Concerns voiced by firefighters about cars parked on access roads blocking access for large fire apparatus. Plea to make sure this doesn't happen.

Request for help and information about creating community cohesiveness for overall defensible space/fuels awareness and emergency planning.

Response: Educational meetings are a help, as are community chipper programs, keep in contact with Fire Safe Sonoma.

Request for chipper programs from all participants.

Glen Ellen Meeting

Glen Ellen Fire Station, May 28, 2008, 6:30-8:30 PM

Attendance: Residents and California State Parks

Fire Departments Represented: CAL FIRE, ,

Notes:

Concerns were expressed about PG&E leaving debris on roadsides.

Residents requested both educational programs and chipper programs to help encourage their neighborhoods to create defensible space.

There was a request that any educational materials be produced in Spanish as well as in English.

There were questions about how to create fire safe councils (Sobre Vista)

Petaluma Meeting
Wilmar Fire Station, May 28, 2008, 6:30-8:30 PM

Attendance: 6

Fire Departments Represented: CAL FIRE, Petaluma Fire, Wilmar, Two Rock,

Notes:

Two Rock has a growing Gorse problem: Questions about how to address, how much of a fire risk do they pose? Discussion of potential to write a grant to address.

Discussion of fire behavior in Petaluma and surrounding areas: grass fires very fast moving.

Petaluma Fire views their highest wildfire risk on I Street and the D Street area. Rancho Adobe expresses concerns about the backside of the Meecham Road area because of eucalyptus and difficult access and fast moving potential.

Sonoma Mountain area: will have problems relating to SOD, though local official thinks that defensible space regs are pretty well followed. There is risk due to equipment use, power lines and juveniles.

Rancho Adobe stresses importance of educating homeowners about defensible space, awareness.

Concerns expresses about the Water Agency's promoting xeroscape environments, which are often fire prone.

Discussion of issues at Two Rock: in areas, difficult access, homes very close together,

Request for need for Spanish Language educational materials, both for farm workers and residential.

Request for public educational events, and suggestion to have press releases go out whenever there's an incident.

Discussion of issues relating to plowing fields during hot times of day leading to grass fires. Suggestion for education for ranchers, preferably peer to peer.

Discussion of debris burn escapes causing problems, and potential solutions.

Santa Rosa Meeting
Sebastopol Fire Station, May 27, 2008, 6:30-8:30 PM

Attendance: 15 (attendance sheet doesn't reflect number of people there)

Fire Departments Represented: CAL FIRE, Sebastopol Fire, Graton Fire, Occidental Fire, Bodega Fire, Gold Ridge Fire

Notes

Question about advisability of Sheltering in Place.

Response: While Sheltering in Place can be beneficial to save structure from small fires that start in the wake of the fire front, there are many safety considerations that must be met: good defensible space, a ignition resistant structure, residential fire sprinklers, good access, considerable physical and emotional stamina, considerable knowledge about what to do. Difficult for homeowner to make assessment. Importance of personal safety, and potential change in tactics for firefighters if it's known that resident is there. Importance of knowing how to shelter in place if trapped by a fire: importance of not evacuating too late.

Question about what is the best water connection for a water tank:

Response: call your local fire department and ask them what will work best for them

Question about mandatory evacuation: who does it, can they force us to go?

Response: Sheriff's Department, they can't force you to go, can stop you from coming back in, and if asked to evacuate, one should do so.

Question about Knox Boxes: What are they, how do we get them?

Response: Secure box that is attached to gate or home; firefighters have key for box, gate or house key stored in box. All are keyed the same for all SO. Co. residents; order from Knox Company and make sure you get a box keyed for Sonoma County Department of Emergency Services.

Question: Should I wet down my property before evacuating:

Response: Probably not: water will evaporate when fire hits, and could reduce water available for firefighting.

Question: Gutter covers: do they work or are they worse:

Response: key is keeping roof edge clear of debris: if debris piles up on gutter guard, need to clean it.

Question: How can I force my neighbor to clear his property for my defensible space:

Response: No enforcement if no structure.

Concern voiced regarding dead trees from SOD on Jonive Rd., Lu Dan Rd,

Question about efficacy and desirability of gel products:

Response: great if you have time to apply them before it's too dangerous.

Question about potential for Rx burns in area:

Response: While a good thing, difficulties can arise from air quality issues, potential for escape, etc.

Question about dying fir trees: is it due to SOD

Response: firs probably dying due to bark beetles. SOD impacts oaks.

Fire Fighter plea for importance of defensible space: CAL FIRE can't protect all 29,000 structures in the County: crucial that residents do defensible space work and structure improvements to help them do their job.

Request for more educational meetings/presentations

Discussion about problems with neighbors: importance of talking to them, keeping lines of communication open

Discussion of why can PG&E leave debris behind after line maintenance

Discussion of issues with very large properties with much SOD mortality, long access roads, very difficult for homeowners to contend with keeping up with the fuels problems.

Discussion: Importance of homeowners understanding where their potential evacuation routes are and keeping fuels under control on those roads.

Discussion about all of the good work that the West County Fire Safe Council did, and hope that they might re-emerge.

Discussion of importance of doing outreach to the Planning Department so that they consider fire and forest issues when issuing permits.

Suggestion to make DS a prerequisite for home sale, and importance of outreach to the Real Estate community.

Importance of keeping fire issues uppermost in peoples' minds, even though they change: 75% of the homeowners in the Oaklands Hills are new since the 1991 fire.

Sonoma Meeting

Sonoma Valley Fire Station, May 28, 2008, 6:30-8:30 PM

Attendance: 38

Fire Departments Represented: CAL FIRE, Sonoma Valley Fire, Schell Vista

Notes:

Frustration with vegetation clearance on County road easements discussed.

Concern expressed with vegetation buildup in Jack London SHP abutting communities, especially dead vegetation from SOD.

Question regarding amount of space needed for roadside vegetation clearance: 10-25 feet suggested.

Concern expressed regarding homeowner fire insurance cancellations: several in the room have recently been cancelled. Questions were posed regarding the standards that the industry is using to justify cancellations.

Questions about efficacy of gel and foam products, and how to apply.

Concerns expressed regarding the impact of defensible space clearing on wildlife.

Concerns regarding regrowth of SOD dead trees, questions about what is killing the madrones.

Concerns expressed regarding untended lots with much vegetative growth and dead grass. Additionally, many were concerned with abandoned structures and junk left on non-occupied lots. Suggested that they contact their local fire department and the county for abatement possibilities.

Santa Rosa Meeting
Santa Rosa Training Tower, May 28, 2008, 6:30-8:30 PM

Attendance: 16,

Fire Departments Represented: CAL FIRE, Santa Rosa Fire, Rincon Valley Fire, Bennett Valley Fire.

Notes

Compliments to Bennett Ridge Community for their fire safety efforts from SR Fire

Request from homeowner for home safety evaluation:

Response: call CAL FIRE or local agency.

Discussion by Registered Professional Forester of potential to do timber harvest plans for fire fuels reduction and using proceeds from timber sale to finance work.

Discussion of Napa's Ordinance that requires neighboring property owners to clear DS on other's property: also potential for similar requirement in Sonoma, potential advantages and disadvantages/problems.

Discussion of Santa Rosa City Ordinance demanding permission to cut trees more than 4" DBH
Concerns voiced about city owned lands that are brushy and need thinning.

Response: call relevant city FD to ask for evaluation and possible treatment.

Concerns about the fire risks associated with Eucalyptus: discussion of potential for firebrands, general mess under trees

Question: Embers: how far do they go?

Answer: ½--2 Mi, record 15 miles.

Discussion of increasing length of fire season: this year May-November

Discussion of risks associated with lawn mower fire starts: ½ the fires in Bennett Valley caused by mowing.

Discussion of importance of timely evacuation and risks of people attempting to escape too late.

Firefighters stress the importance of keeping gutters and roofs clear of debris.

Request for wildfire education meetings for residents.

Concerns about neighbors who won't act: Discussion: often a financial issue; lack of enforcement potential in areas without near structure.

Discussion of recent fires on St. Helena Rd: Residents want to know how they can communicate information to firefighters regarding access to fire, etc.:

Response: Difficult for FFs to sift through all of the information they get, especially at the beginning of a fire.

Resident requesting information about create a communication system within the neighborhood to let neighbors know what's going on.

Response: Create a phone or email tree for the neighborhood. See Circle Oaks for examples, or contact Fire Safe Sonoma

Mapping question: Some old fire roads are no longer mapped, though some are potentially driveable for firefighters.

Response: Sonoma County GIS has mapping program underway, and is always looking for local help to map roads like this. Contact Sonoma County GIS.

Question: How do we make our deck safe?

Response: Use fire resistive materials for framing and decking.

Firefighter suggestion to maintain vent screens, potentially change aspect of vents away from wildfire; suggestion to look into fire safe vent designs.

Firefighter suggestion to talk to new neighbors about fire danger when they move in.

What does it cost to per acre to thin to DS standards: depending: \$3000-\$700/acre, depending on nature of work, slope, vegetation density, etc.

Much discussion of problems with neighbor cooperation and difficulty of reaching people who don't care or are afraid to think about it.

Question about potential for doing prescribed burns in Sonoma County: CAL FIRE can burn 5-20 acre plots, pending permission from all homeowners, authorities, etc. Discussion of problems relating to smoke from Rx burns for local residents.

The Sea Ranch Community Meeting
January 20, 2008 2 PM. Del Mar Center, The Sea Ranch.

Introduction by Community Manager John Fox: Overall risks at TSR; TSRA's disaster response capabilities, especially the effort currently going into developing the disaster response plan. He also discussed TSR's Fuels Management Plan, and the Forest Fuels Risk Reduction Group, which formed in 2006 to examine enhancements of the Fuels Management Plan. The group has formally been renamed and reformed as The Sea Ranch Fire Safe Council. Also he discussed CDF's 4291 inspections at TSR, and the Association's decision to fund more inspections.

Fire Chief Dan Levin proud of strides that have been made in making public safety a priority at TSR. He also discussed the importance of personal responsibility for wildfire safety and the importance of understanding relative risk.

- Community Members then expressed their concerns, including the following.
- The importance of the application of hard science data to look at the risks of vegetative fuels at TSR
- Issues with lots where 100 feet of defensible space goes over property lines, and if the Assn. will force adjacent landowners to maintain their lots.
- Questions about structural ignitibility, and how the CC&R regulations for construction may impact Firesafe building materials.
- Unbuilt lots and compliance with fire safety
- Concern with increasing fuel loads, and whether the fuels management plan is truly addressing concerns, and whether the FMP will be modified to address bad issues.
- Concerns about decadent coyote brush and woodpiles
- Concern that even defensible space won't save homes
- Concern that the Assn. is ignoring forest areas on common areas, but demanding that property owners maintain theirs.
- How to develop individual landscape plans that will fulfill the multiple objectives of wildfire safety, views, environmental and wildlife considerations.
- Questions about water availability in water hydrants located on hills—the Assn. is working on solutions to low water availability.

NOTE: following this meeting, TSR developed its own CWPP.