

Outreach & Education Committee Meeting

4/15/2011 10:00 a.m.

Grants Pass Public Safety, Parkdale Station

Attendees: Brian Ballou, Sandy Shaffer, Neil Benson, Derek Zwagerman, John O'Connor, Brian Pike, Brad Inman, Ali True, Jenny Zeltvay, Lin Bernhardt

Reno report: Sandy circulated info about Ready Set Go (RSG), summarizing an 8-hour session on this topic. Being "Ready" is being a fire-adapted community. There are 11 components that are to be in place to have a fire-adapted community. A fire-adapted community is able to withstand a wildfire on its own. There is a lot of local enthusiasm for RSG, particularly from the JJLCG. However, it isn't clear who is tasked with developing a plan for implementing RSG in the Rogue Valley. Josephine County/Grants Pass is interested in implementing RSG, but a broader implementation will require broader interagency participation, such as from the RVFCA. One of the gaps, said Jenny, is the Stay and Defend component. Her perception is that there will be apprehension with encouraging homeowners to stay and defend their homes during a wildfire emergency.

Discussion/issue: Whether to reprint the Wildfire: Are You Prepared? publication, or one of the publications from NV Extension Service, or a blend of the two? Is this the correct media? The survey, from which the results are now being tabulated, may provide direction about the public's preferred media (including meetings and workshops).

Ali proposed that a rep from the fuels committee be involved, since federal lands will be involved in the fire-adapted communities aspect of RSG.

Brian B proposed that the chiefs be approached individually to gauge their support of RSG, especially the Stay and Defend component. Brian P said he'd be willing to implement it, with the support of RVFCA, so the message is consistent across the two-county area. Derek said Medford Fire supports RSG and has the materials on its website. Ali thinks RSG is different enough from Firewise that it may compromise Firewise messages. Sandy suggested checking with national Firewise to gauge its support for or concerns with RSG.

John noted that IV Fire is finalizing its revised community fire plan, and is considering implementing Firewise. An effort to roll RSG into the IV fire plan would have to happen quickly.

Jenny said that at the Reno conference, Firewise and RSG were spoken of as being complementary.

Next steps: Rebrand Wildfire: Are You Prepared? to RSG? New materials? Meet with fire chiefs individually? Incorporate survey results?

The committee agreed to develop a product using the RSG slogo paired with the existing Wildfire: Are You Prepared? logo.

Brad voiced concern that we would undercut previous efforts with a switch into a new brand. O&E efforts are haphazard on getting information out to the public, and a uniform, professional outreach media approach, citing the Channel 12 TV ads with Scott Lewis, has not been used enough.

Brian B will compose a set of questions so everyone who talks with chiefs will bring back comparable responses. The questions will be sent to O&E committee members.

Surveys: Responses have been high, nearly 60% in Ashland, and around 40% elsewhere. Tabulation is underway.

Ashland Firewise: Classes are scheduled for community and professional audiences. Topics include plants and landscaping practices, legal requirements for defensible space and ignition prevention, composting and recycling, and other topics. The fuel reduction assistance grant is creating a lot of response from HOAs and other homeowners. Interest in Firewise Communities is strong. A really cool Firewise landscaping practices brochure is nearly ready for publication.

Animal evacuation planning: Josephine County remains very active. The Cave Junction and Grants Pass meetings were well attended. Quite a few people said they'd be willing to volunteer. An effort is underway to promote DART training to get more signups. Training is April 27-29 at Medford Airport.

Title III: In Jackson County, the grant applications were revised for a single year and are undergoing a public review process. Another grant application opening will likely occur in July. Josephine County Title III decisions likely won't be made until June.

Next meeting: May 19, 10:00 a.m., at the Jackson County Emergency Operations Center, 400 Pech Rd, Central Point