Section 3
Community Outreach and Collaboration

A key element in community fire planning is the meaningful discussion it promotes among community members. The success of the Lane County CWPP is dependent on the involvement and input of a wide range of federal, state, and local stakeholders. A plan that accurately reflects the community's interests and priorities will have greater legitimacy and success in implementing the recommended actions.

The outreach strategy for the CWPP used the following three-tiered approach to engage interested parties:

- **Lane County Landowner Survey**
- **Stakeholder Interviews**
- **Firewise Workshop**

This section describes the purpose, methods, and findings for each of the three components of the outreach strategy. For a complete summary of the methods and results of each component, please see Appendices E, F, and G. The section concludes with a summary of the key findings synthesized from the Community Outreach and Collaboration strategy.

Lane County Landowner Survey

Purpose

The purpose of the landowner survey was to gain information about how rural Lane County landowners in wildland-urban interface areas perceive the potential risk of wildfire and their attitudes towards risk reduction and preparedness strategies. The survey results may be used to focus public outreach activities aimed at wildfire risk reduction and loss prevention. Additional benefits of the survey include educating and informing the public, incorporating public values into decision-making, improving the quality of decisions, and building trust in this planning process. For more information about the Landowner Survey see *Appendix E: Landowner Survey Summary*.

Methods

The survey was sent to a random sample of 1,500 rural landowners in Lane County in March 2005. The Lane Council of Governments Regional Lane Information Database served as the survey sample frame. Oregon Natural Hazards Workgroup (ONHW) at the University of Oregon received 466 valid survey responses yielding a 32% response rate.

The survey questions included five main themes:

- **Characteristics of respondents**
- **Wildland fire risk awareness and communication;**
- **Fire protection and preparedness;**
- **Reducing wildland fire risk on property; and**
- **Reducing community risk to wildfire.**

Findings

Characteristics of Respondents

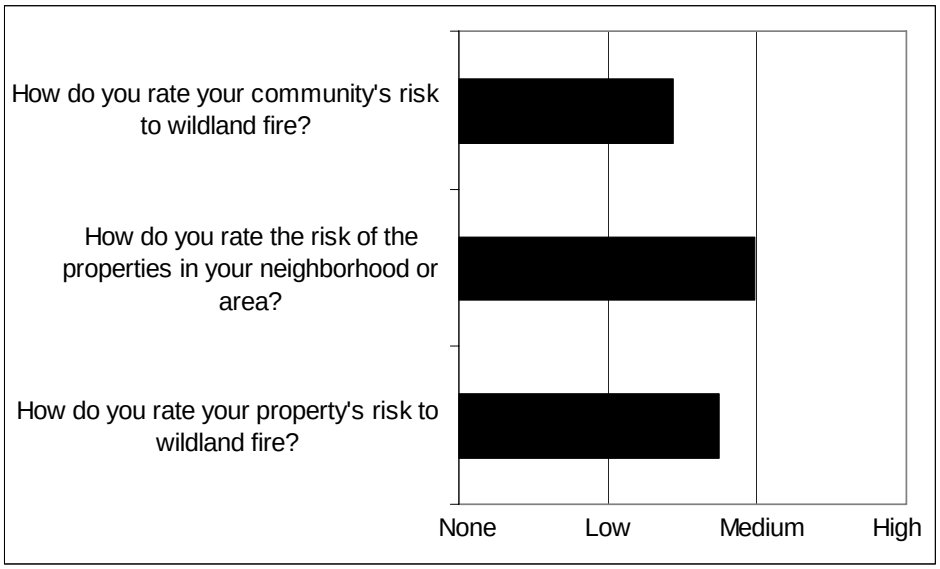
The majority of respondents owned their home (98%) and were year-round residents of Lane County (93%). Eight percent of the landowners primarily used their property for business purposes; of these respondents, 68% indicated that they used the property for agricultural and forest industries

Wildland Fire Risk Awareness and Communication

To better understand perceptions of risk, the survey included several questions about wildland fire risk on respondents' property, in their neighborhoods and around their communities. The survey also asked respondents about wildland fire communication.

Figure 3.1 shows respondents' perceptions of wildfire risk. Over half (80%) of respondents perceived their property as a medium to low risk for wildland fires. Respondents perceived their neighbors' properties to have a higher risk than their own.

Figure 3.1: Perceptions of Wildland Fire Risk (Q-1)



Source: ONHW/CPW, 2005

Personal Experience with Wildland Fire

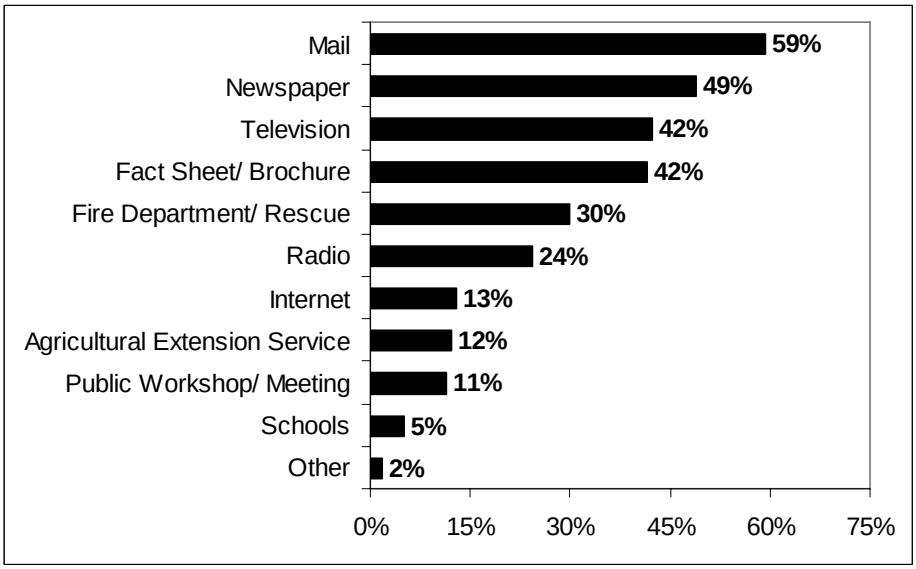
The survey asked property owners about their personal experiences with wildland fire. Forty-five percent reported that they had no previous experience with wildland fire. Just above half (57%), reported that they had witnessed a wildfire, smoke and other effects of wildfire, but few (8%) had actually evacuated their home or sustained property damage.

Sources of Information About Protecting Property

An important component of the landowner survey was gathering data on effective means of wildland fire information dispersal. The survey asked respondents how they received information about property protection in the past, as well as preferences for receiving information in the future.

Survey respondents reported that they received information from news media and local fire departments/rural fire departments. However, 27% of respondents reported that they had not received information about property protection. The survey gathered information about effective means of future correspondence relating to wildland fire property protection (Figure 3.2). Respondents identified mail, newspapers, television, and fact sheets/brochures as the top four preferred methods for receiving information. Effective means of reaching landowners in the wildland-urban interface could be a combination of these preferred methods.

Figure 3.2: Preferred Sources of Receiving Information About Protecting Property from Wildland Fire (Q-4)



Source: ONHW/CPW, 2005

Fire Protection and Preparedness

The survey gathered information about landowners' knowledge of their fire protection service providers. The survey also asked landowners about emergency preparedness, including evacuation procedures and insurance coverage. Table 3.1 shows that 70% of respondents receive fire protection services from a rural fire district. Six percent of respondents reported that they did not know if their property was protected by a fire protection service.

Table 3.1: Fire Protection Services (Q-5)

Fire Protection Service Provider	% Respondents
Rural Fire Protection District	70%
Fire Department	20%
Don't Know	6%
Not Serviced by a Fire Department or District	4%

Source: ONHW/CPW, 2005

Table 3.2 illustrates respondents' answers to questions about wildland fire preparedness. The majority (95%) of the respondents did not know or had not received information about community evacuation procedures. Sixty-six percent of respondents indicated that they did not have personal household evacuation procedures in the case of a wildland fire emergency.

One half (50%) of survey respondents reported that their insurance policies covered losses or structural damage incurred from wildland fire.

However, 43% did not know if their insurance policies would protect their properties from damages or losses from wildland fire.

Table 3.2: Wildland Fire Evacuation Procedures and Insurance Coverage (Q-6)

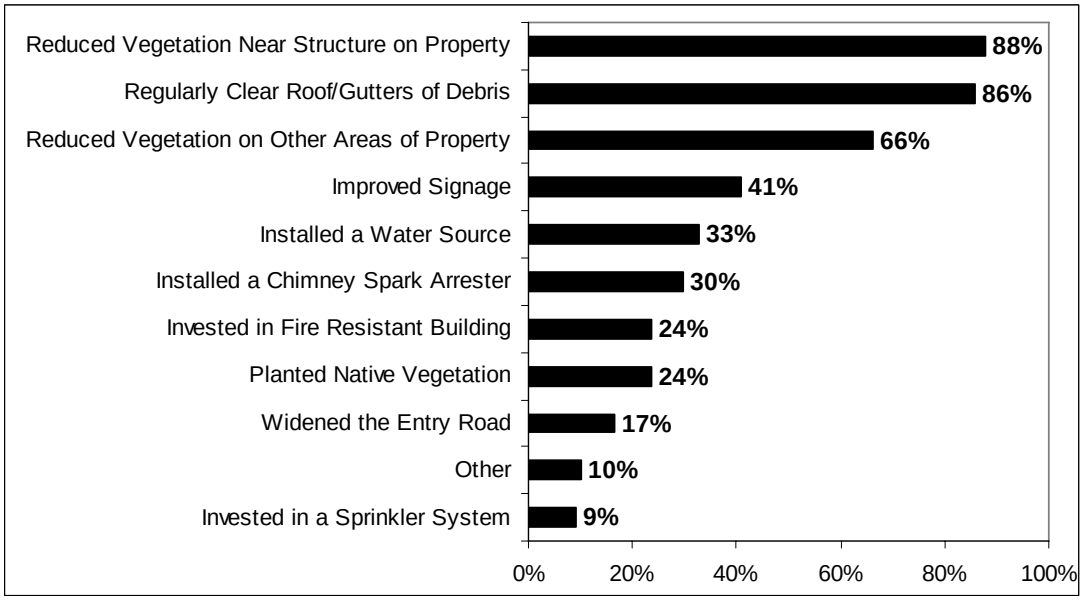
Question	Yes	No	Don't Know
Has your community informed you of their wildland fire evacuation procedures?	4.4%	90.8%	4.6%
Does your household have a wildland fire evacuation plan?	30.0%	66.0%	3.8%
Does your homeowners or business insurance policy include coverage in the event of structural damage or loss due to wildland fire?	49.9%	7.1%	42.8%

Source: ONHW/CPW, 2005

Reducing Property Risk to Wildland Fire

The survey gathered information from landowners about specific measures they have already taken to reduce the risk of wildland fire on their property. The majority (90%) of respondents indicated that they have taken measures to reduce losses associated with wildland fire. Figure 3.3 shows the types of risk reduction measures taken by respondents. The most frequently reported measures were reducing vegetation near structures and clearing roof/gutters of debris. Fewer property owners reported implementing the measures that required higher financial investment.

Figure 3.3: Actions Taken to Reduce Potential Losses from Wildland Fire (Q-7)



Source: ONHW/CPW, 2005

Preferred Risk Reduction Actions and Incentives

The survey asked landowners about their willingness to take different actions to reduce the potential impacts of wildland fire on their property. Table 3.3 shows the likelihood of respondents to take different risk reduction actions. The majority of respondents indicated that they are likely to reduce vegetation and debris (79%) and create defensible zones around structures (65%). Respondents were less likely to improve emergency access or use fire-resistant building materials.

Table 3.3: Risk Reductions Actions Most Likely to Take (Q-8)

Risk Reduction Action	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Likely
Reduce debris and vegetation on property	78.5%	15.2%	6.2%
Clear a defensible zone around the property	64.9%	25.2%	9.9%
Improve emergency access to property	35.1%	20.1%	44.8%
Use fire resistant building materials	32.8%	33.9%	33.3%

Source: ONHW/CPW, 2005

The survey asked landowners which incentives, if any, would motivate them to take additional steps to protect their properties from wildland fire (Table 3.4). The highest percentage of respondents indicated that insurance discounts (70%)or tax breaks/incentives (67%)would motivate them to implement risk reduction steps. About one-third of respondents indicated that grant programs would encourage better protection measures.

Table 3.4: Preferred Incentives to Better Protect Property (Q-9)

Type of Incentive	Percent of Respondents
Insurance Discounts	69.7%
Tax Break or Incentive	68.6%
Grant Program	29.2%
None of the Above	12.2%
Other	5.6%

Source: ONHW/CPW, 2005

Reducing Community Risk to Wildland Fire

The survey asked respondents their opinions and preferences for different strategies to reduce community risk to wildfire. Communities may take a variety of approaches to wildland fire mitigation. The questions in this section help to inform policy decisions by providing better understanding of the level of landowner support for different approaches.

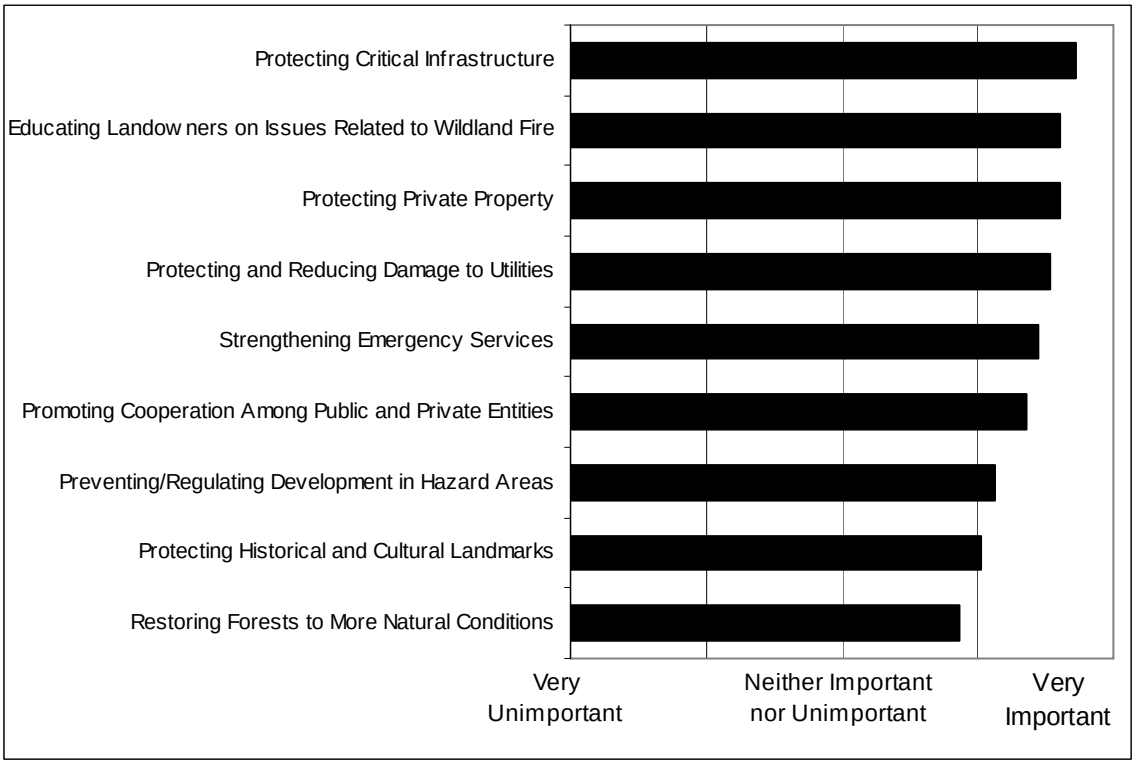
Hazardous Fuels Treatment

Respondents indicated their levels of support for four methods of hazardous fuels treatments in their communities. The treatments included: no action, mechanical thinning, prescribed burning, and chemical treatments. Of the four, the two preferred methods of hazardous fuels reduction were mechanical thinning (92%) and prescribed burning (74%). Respondents support for chemical treatments were split; 48% supported and 43% unsupported. Sixty-nine percent of respondents were unsupportive of no action being taken to reduce hazardous fuels.

Landowner Priorities for Future Wildland Fire Planning

The survey asked landowners about their opinions on the importance of different planning priorities for wildland fire. Table 3.5 shows the level of importance placed on different planning priorities by respondents. The majority of respondents indicated that each of the planning priorities listed were very or somewhat important. Protecting critical infrastructure, educating landowners, and protecting private property were the priorities ranked with highest importance. Of the priorities listed, respondents indicated that restoring forests to natural conditions was the least important.

Table 3.5. Priorities for Wildland Fire Planning (Q-11)

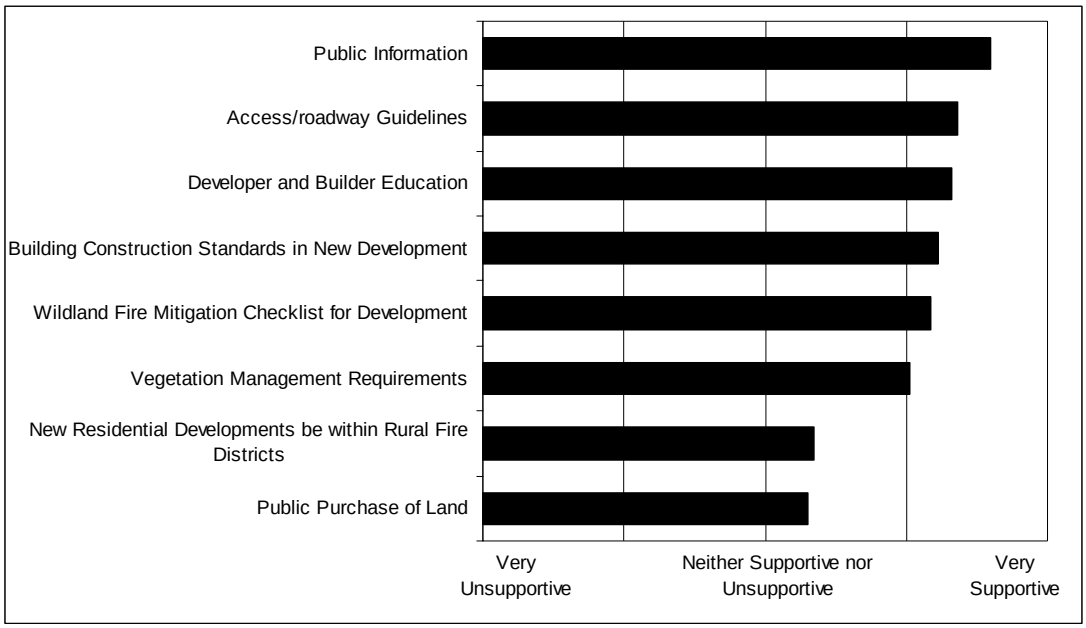


Source: ONHW/CPW, 2005

The survey asked respondents' opinions on responsibility for protecting property against wildland fire. The majority (94%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the responsibility for protecting property is shared between private landowners, local, state and federal agencies. Eighty-four percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that property owners are responsible for wildland fire protection. Fewer respondents agreed that the Oregon Department of Forestry or the community fire department is solely responsible.

There are a number of regulatory and non-regulatory activities that communities can implement to reduce wildland fire risk. Figure 3.5 shows respondents' levels of support for different risk reduction strategies. Respondents indicated the highest level of support for a public information strategy; 95% were very or somewhat supportive. Seventy-eight percent or greater of respondents were very or somewhat supportive of four out of five of the regulatory strategies listed. The most popular were access/roadway guidelines (88%) and building construction standards for new development in high hazard areas (83%). Of the risk reduction strategies listed in the survey, respondents indicated the least support for requiring that new rural residential developments be within rural fire protection district boundaries (50%) and for public acquisition of land in high hazard areas for open space (46%).

Figure 3.5: Regulatory and Non-Regulatory Strategies Wildland Fire Risk Reduction



Source: ONHW/CPW, 2005

Conclusions drawn from the landowner survey have been synthesized with the other outreach activities and are included in the closing section of this section.

Stakeholder Interviews

Purpose

ONHW conducted telephone interviews with 18 stakeholders identified by the steering committee for the Lane County CWPP. The purpose of the stakeholder interviews was to document key issues, concerns, and current activities related to the CWPP requirements of collaboration, hazardous fuel reduction, and the treatment of structural ignitability. For more information and a list of the stakeholders interviewed, see *Appendix F: Stakeholder Interview Summary*.

Methods

Stakeholders came from a pool that included both public and private interests. All stakeholders have expertise in either fire issues or the authority to help with implementation of the plan. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. ONHW completed the interviews in February and March 2005. Interviews were transcribed by hand during the interview, and then typed into a computer template afterward. Following completion of the interviews, all of the answers were documented then analyzed for common themes.

Interview questions corresponded to four main areas:

- **Risk Perception and Current Activities**
- **Key Issues Related to Hazardous Fuel Reduction**
- **Key Issues Related to Structural Ignition**
- **Collaboration and Participation**

Findings

Stakeholders mentioned several themes repeatedly through all categories of questions: 1) funding obstacles; 2) follow-up and maintenance of policies and programs; and 3) education of landowners. The remainder of this section summarizes other themes of the interviews within the four areas of interview questions.

Risk Perception and Current Activities

The following is a brief summary of the stakeholders' perception of wildland-urban interface fire risk, current policies and programs, and funding for programs related to wildland-urban interface fire.

Perception of Wildland Fire Risk

- There is a perceived threat from fire in the wildland-urban interface area by all of the stakeholders.
- The wildland-urban interface conditions exist and the threat is increasing. Increasing protection capabilities is difficult without strategic planning.

- The main fire threat is from the build-up of hazardous fuels when debris accumulates on the forest floor after thinning or other treatments.
- There is a need for outreach in areas that are unprotected by a Rural Fire Protection District.

Current Policies and Programs

- Lane County zoning codes, including Chapter 15 and Chapter 16 sections 10 and 11, were mentioned as mitigation elements.
- Fire Defense Board and Fire Prevention Co-op activities were identified as existing programs.
- Stakeholders identified a current emphasis is on response plans.
- Oregon Department of Forestry's current plans and programs focus on prevention and response.
- Oregon Forest Land Urban Interface Protection Act of 1997 (better known as Senate Bill 360) was also mentioned.

Funding

- Nearly 50% of the stakeholders have received some form of grant funding for various activities related to WUI fire issues.
- Government agencies and Rural Fire Protection Districts currently apply for grants and matching funds for mitigation projects, fire planning, outreach, equipment needs, and GIS mapping.
- Private sector stakeholders raised questions on their eligibility.

Key Issues Related to Hazardous Fuels Reduction

Stakeholders provided their issues and concerns related to identifying and prioritizing fuel reduction treatments. They were also asked about their concerns regarding fuel treatments and about resources to help the plan move forward with fuel reduction projects.

Identifying and Prioritizing Fuel Reduction Treatments

- The risk assessment can and should be used to identify and prioritize hazardous fuels projects.
- Urban and under-protected areas should be a priority.
- Fuels need to be treated on a landscape scale vs. a site-specific scale (e.g. defensible space projects and landscape scale projects should be done in conjunction with one another).
- Public and private projects need to be more coordinated and can facilitate the sharing of labor, tools, and knowledge.

Types and Methods for Fuel Reduction Treatments

- Most methods have been proven to work well, but the effectiveness of a particular method is dependent upon the nature of the hazard and the topography of the area.
- Prescribed burning presents unique challenges in Lane County, specifically around smoke management, diminished air quality, and complaints from residents. Another concern is that safety fuels can hold heat and flare up long after the fire crews have left. However, some stakeholders believe prescribed burning is good for forest health on a larger landscape scale.
- Opinions over the use of chemical treatments are split. Some stakeholders see chemical treatments as an affordable means of fuel reduction, while others had concerns about their environmental impacts.
- Brush cutting is effective, but is costly and requires dedicated maintenance.
- Debris removal is an important component of fuel reduction but is costly.

Key Issues Related to Structural Ignition

Stakeholders provided insight on regulatory and non-regulatory policies and programs that might be effective in motivating property owners to reduce their risk to wildfire. A follow-up question was then asked regarding the obstacles that may hinder implementation of these policies and programs.

Non-Regulatory Policies and Programs

- Homeowner and landowner awareness plays an important role in reducing structural ignitability, but current levels of education and awareness are lacking.
- Free or easy debris removal programs are lacking but would be a great resource to enable the public to reduce their risk by removing hazardous fuels from their properties.
- Firewise Workshops and Firewise Communities USA programs at the local level (fire district, town, or neighborhood levels) could help educate homeowners and landowners.

Regulatory Policies and Programs

- Defensible space incentives or fire protection requirements from the insurance industry should be explored.
- County building ordinances that regulate building and roofing materials are needed, and need to be followed up on and maintained over the long-term.

Obstacles

- Funding for both non-regulatory and regulatory policies and programs is lacking.
- Human resources for long-term follow-up and maintenance of policies and programs could be a problem.
- Lack of education of landowners and the public of their responsibilities in following regulations.

Collaboration and Participation

Stakeholders answered questions related to their current level of participation in reducing the wildland-urban interface fire risk to Lane County. Other questions asked about current and future collaboration opportunities among stakeholders or other agencies. All stakeholders interviewed stated that their organizations are willing to collaborate on more site-specific local community fire plans that follow the countywide plan.

- There is currently limited collaboration among several agencies regarding wildland-urban interface or disaster protection issues. Examples of such agencies include the following:
    - US Forest Service and BLM Interagency office collaborates with the Oregon Department of Forestry on wildfire response
    - Lane County Fire Defense Board
    - Lane County Fire Prevention Co-op
    - Lane County Interagency Emergency Response Team
    - EWEB collaborated with 27 agencies to develop a Hazardous Materials GIS Tool
- Opportunities for collaboration will be increased through the process of this plan.
- The plan will need to designate a leader to drive the process and keep up the interest in the issues in order to ensure long-term collaboration and participation.
- Careful consideration must be given on how to establish effective collaborative process to accomplish risk reduction.

Conclusions drawn from the stakeholder interviews have been synthesized with the other outreach activities and are included in the closing section of this section.

Firewise Communities Workshop

Purpose

ONHW and Oregon Department of Forestry conducted a Firewise Communities Workshop on April 5, 2005 at the University of Oregon for CWPP stakeholders. Participants in the workshop included representatives of federal and state fire and forestry agencies, rural fire protection districts, local planning and emergency management departments, utility providers, the private forestry industry, the real estate industry, watershed councils, and elected officials, among others. For more information about the Firewise Workshop see *Appendix G: Firewise Workshop Summary*.

Methods

The National Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Program developed Firewise Communities Workshops in 2000 to address the wildland-urban interface fire problem at a community level. The workshops have three main goals:

1. To improve safety in the wildland-urban interface by learning to share responsibility.
2. To create and nurture local partnerships for improved decisions in communities.
3. To encourage the integration of Firewise concepts into community and disaster mitigation planning.

These goals are consistent with the emphasis that CWPP planning puts on collaboration. Workshop participants worked in small groups to complete interactive scenarios designed to assess and reduce the wildfire risk of a fictional community.

During the workshop facilitators asked participants to consider how Firewise concepts apply to issues in Lane County. A worksheet was created for the workshop participants to identify opportunities and obstacles in Lane County for each of the three requirements of the CWPP: 1) reducing structural ignitability, 2) prioritizing fuel reduction projects, and 3) collaboration. Participants discussed their ideas in small groups and shared these results with the whole group at the end of the workshop. ONHW analyzed the worksheets to compile the opportunities and obstacles most commonly identified by participants. In each section below, the ideas identified most frequently occur at the top of the list.

Findings

Treatment of Structural Ignitability

A CWPP must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan. Workshop participants

were asked to list opportunities and obstacles to implementing structural ignition reduction projects in Lane County.

Opportunities

- Education and outreach through various sources including media, town hall meetings, and publications.
- Incentive programs, especially the use of insurance related incentives, to encourage participation in projects to reduce risk.
- Collaboration with community groups, developers, neighbors, fire agencies, and others to better educate residents and implement projects.
- Available grant money from the National Fire Plan and other sources for implementing projects to reduce structural ignitability.
- Updating or revising Lane County codes and ordinances to reduce structural ignitability.

Obstacles

- Lack of homeowner education and awareness regarding the true risk of wildfire in Lane County and how defensible space can reduce risk.
- Lack of funding to implement projects, along with the cost of fire resistant building materials for homeowners.
- Lack of collaboration and involvement among homeowners, agencies, and developers to implement projects.
- Lack of regulations to enforce the use of fire resistant building materials and practices within the county.

Prioritized Fuel Reduction

A CWPP must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure. Participants were asked to list opportunities and obstacles to implementing prioritized fuel reduction projects in Lane County.

Opportunities

- Education using community outreach, public forums, media and other sources emphasizing examples of fuel reduction projects and homes saved by defensible space.
- Incentive programs such as rebates or other support to help landowners with debris removal, as well as insurance or property tax incentives to encourage fuel reduction.

- Collaboration and participation to share costs, tools, and manpower to implement fuel reduction projects on a larger scale.
- Finding uses for the biomass generated from fuel reduction projects, such as selling the chips or using it as an energy source.
- Available grant money from the National Fire Plan and other sources to aid in implementation of fuel reduction projects.

Obstacles

- Debate surrounding the best method to conduct fuel reduction treatments on private and public lands based on differing topography, environmental issues, public perception, and cost.
- Long term maintenance of fuel reduction treatments.
- The size and scope of the county and the sheer volume of work that is needed to begin and maintain fuel reduction projects as the wildland-urban interface continues to increase.
- Public perception of low wildfire risk and of fuel reduction projects as aesthetically unpleasant.
- The cost of implementing fuel reduction treatments on properties and removing debris.
- Special needs populations who require extra assistance with fuel reduction projects.

Collaboration

A CWPP must be collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties. Participants were asked to list opportunities and obstacles to collaboration.

Opportunities

- Brings people with diverse expertise together for better solutions to problems.
- Exhibiting collaboration increases success with grant applications.
- Work with real estate agencies and other groups and businesses to raise awareness of wildland-urban interface wildfire issues.
- Use the media to capture public attention of current collaboration efforts and encourage future efforts.

Obstacles

- Differing priorities, values, and interests among partners.
- Lack of time and communication needed to foster working relationships among partners.

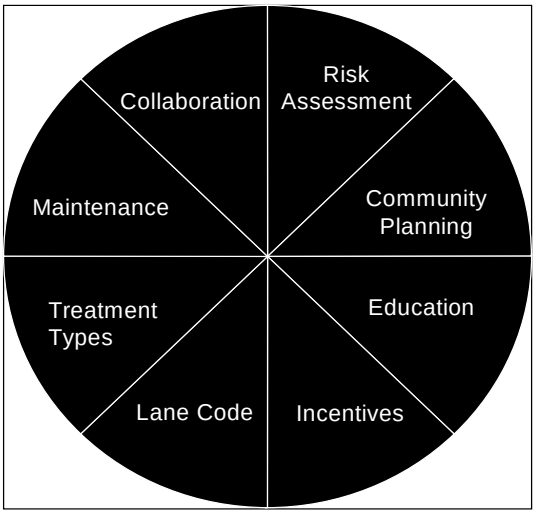
- "Turf battles" and conflicts over jurisdictional authority.
- Resistance or lack of interest in collaborating with others.

Conclusions drawn from the Firewise Workshop have been synthesized with the other outreach activities and are included in the closing section of this section.

Summary of Key Findings

Several common themes emerged from the landowner survey, the stakeholder interviews, and the Firewise Workshop. The section below summarizes these common themes into eight key findings, which are depicted in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6. Lane County CWPP Key Findings



Source: ONHW/CPW, 2005

Risk Assessment

Overall, Lane County has a moderate risk to wildland-urban interface fire, but high-risk areas exist throughout the county. The wildfire risk assessment should be used as a decision-making tool to help prioritize fuels reduction projects. Information in the risk assessment should be shared with local communities and updated and enhanced over time with local data.

Community Planning

Information sharing with local communities is especially important due to the large scale of Lane County. The ability of the CWPP to address structural ignitability issues is limited at the countywide level due to

the lack of site-specific data. The Lane County CWPP should encourage the development of more refined community fire plans in local communities and neighborhoods through the development of partnerships and resource sharing.

Education

Although fire prevention education programs exist, one-quarter of landowners surveyed indicated that they are not receiving any information. Community outreach results identified a need for improved coordination and dissemination of educational activities regarding wildland-urban interface fire risk. Educational messages should come from trusted sources, such as fire protection districts and Oregon Department of Forestry. Information should be distributed through the preferred methods identified in the landowner survey, including mail, newspaper, and television.

Incentives

Many stakeholders interviewed expressed support for incentive programs, such as tax breaks and insurance benefits, as effective non-regulatory approaches to increasing participation in wildfire mitigation activities. Two-thirds of landowner survey respondents indicated that tax and/or insurance incentives would motivate them to take additional steps towards reducing risk to their property.

Lane Code

Multiple sources in the stakeholder interviews and Firewise Workshop identified the need to update the Lane Code to require wildfire safety measures in rural residential zones similar to those required in areas zoned as forestlands. Most new development occurs in rural residential areas. The landowner survey results indicate that the majority of property owners are supportive of requiring standards for building materials, emergency access, and vegetation management for new development in wildfire hazard areas.

Treatment Types

Community outreach results indicate high levels of support for reducing hazardous vegetative fuels in Lane County. Debate exists over which treatment methods are most appropriate due to environmental and health concerns and to the range of forest types and topography found in the County.

Maintenance

The Lane County CWPP and its components require long-term maintenance to continue to effectively support efforts to protect people and property from wildfire. Stakeholders identified the need to institutionalize a process and establish a coordinator position to facilitate ongoing planning and coordination of wildfire mitigation activities in Lane County. This will help to ensure that the CWPP remains a functional document.

Collaboration

Stakeholders and community members within the county recognize that reducing risk to wildfire is a shared responsibility and requires collaboration between citizens, non-profit organizations, agencies, and the business community. Collaboration creates opportunities to develop better solutions, share resources, and more efficiently utilize limited funding. The Lane County CWPP can help to initiate improved coordination and establish a process for ongoing collaboration.