Subject: Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) March 12, 2015

Meeting: Cooperators Meeting on March 26, 2015 at 2 pm

Location: La Grande Fire Department Cove Avenue La Grande

Union County Cooperators,

Union County fire protection agencies are in the process of revising the 2005 CWPP. The update is a collaborative effort by a core group of the following participants: Union County Emergency Service, Oregon Department of Forestry, Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla National Forests, Bureau of Land Management, and Union County Fire Defense Board. The updates are intended to meet changing conditions in several arenas including on the ground environmental conditions, new guidance and policy direction, continued shifting demographics of the area, and technological advances. In addition, the update will reflect the county’s Community Wildfire Protection Plan accomplishments that have occurred since the 2005 version.

The CWPP core group has begun assessing the County utilizing the most current data available through an extensive mapping process called the West Wide Risk Assessment, a recently completed assessment of 17 western states and local existing data.

It is our intention to collectively work with all rural fire departments, community members, and cooperators to establish a partnership in the development of the CWPP. Through this partnership a holistic approach toward community fire protection is the desired outcome.

Part of the new approach will be using the new National Cohesive Wildfire Strategy (CWS) as a planned approach in helping cooperators and communities understand wildfire risks and their active participation before, during and after a wildfire. The CWS also emphasizes the continued awareness toward the ecological health of ecosystems that depend on fire disturbance.

We have incorporated the three key goals as our foundation for achieving the new CWPP.

1. **Fire-Adapted Communities** take into consideration of how human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property. Included in this goal is the education of community members on the considerations of home protection, ingress/egress, “Ready, Set, Go”; their role in the three phases of wildfire: pre-fire preparation, during the fire, post fire and recognizing the role of fire in ecosystem development. This goal also includes opportunities to evaluate the current infrastructure and identify obstacles, deficiencies, or opportunities for protecting life and property.
2. **Wildfire Response** is a means of building an all jurisdictional participation in making and implementing safe, effective, and efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions. The CWPP group is currently identifying a number of threat and risk issues within Union County, and is further narrowing down any additional issues relevant to individual WUI areas. This goal is anticipated to further substantiate the need for any additional improvements to assist in wildfire response including geographic pre-positioning of suppression needs (i.e.: water sources, communications), ecological treatments, and capability shortages (i.e.: training, equipment, etc.)
3. **Restore and Maintain Landscape** is designed to recognize fire-related disturbances from an ecological stand point of fire resiliency and an expansion of fire protection consideration to include all jurisdictions by promoting a landscape level approach. Developing a program that actively manages the land to make it more resilient to disturbance, in accordance to management objectives and to expand treatment opportunities to include middle ground and beyond that will assist in altering potential for extreme fire severities. This will provide the foundation for building a platform toward living with fire for both communities and ecosystems.

By addressing these three goals we, as a county, can begin to consider what and where improvements are needed, shortfalls exist, and opportunities for new innovative ideas can occur. We encourage you to bring ideas and concerns to the meeting. It is out hope through these collaborative efforts the county will increase opportunities to acquire funding for implementation of our community plan.

“In a perfect world with available finances, what needs to be done to better protect life (firefighter and public), property, and ecosystems in Union County?”

We have provided you with two additional supplements in an attempt to generate ideas, but the CWPP committee is interested in any additional issues facing Union county.

1. A map displaying WUI Zone boundaries and their locations.
2. A map with known infrastructure that could potentially be impacted by a wildland fire.
3. A list to help identify specific issues that could potentially impact or enhance the counties capabilities of response in terms of planning for, providing protection during a wildfire, and continued efforts after a wildfire has occurred. This list is not all encompassing, therefor you are encouraged to provide additional thoughts, ideas, or needs that may not be mentioned.
4. Consider ideas specific to your cooperator group’s ability to effectively interact and coordinate with each of the other cooperators in a wildfire emergency situation. What is needed and is there opportunities for improvement?

This meeting is being conducted for cooperators only, with the intent to involve homeowners, community members, and the remaining county citizens at a later time this spring. The meeting is designed to provide a good fundamental understanding of the CWPP’s revision process and gain your input. If you are interested in submitting your specific input in advance of the meeting, please feel free to send them to Joe Hessel or JB Brock, emails provided below.

We would also like to invite you to additional CWPP public meetings scheduled this spring. Dates of these meeting will be announced at a later time. We look forward to your input.

Thank you for your time.

Joe Hessel JB Brock

Oregon Department of Forestry Emergency Manager

La Grande Unit Forester La Grande, Oregon

541 963-3168 541 963-1009

[jhessel@odf.state.or.us](mailto:jhessel@odf.state.or.us) jbrock@union-county.org