

February 9, 2005

Chiloquin – Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), Enhancement of Public Safety and Fuels Management Planning Program

2004 Progress Report

This report will discuss progress toward accomplishment of the goals and objectives described in the PL 106-393 Title III Project Submission Form for the project. Several of the goals and objectives have been combined in this report for clarity reasons and to avoid redundancy.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Develop a Wildland Urban Interface Community Wildfire Assessment Plan Develop a WUI Community Wildfire Mitigation Plan

These two short term objectives have been combined into what will become the Chiloquin-Agency Lake Community Fire and Mitigation Plan. Preparation of the Plan began in the spring of 2004 with Chief Dewaine Holster initiating several comprehensive data collection efforts and hiring a Program Coordinator to oversee timely completion of the project.

Doug Miller, a Chiloquin resident, was selected by Chief Holster and the Fire District's Board of Directors to coordinate and manage preparation of the Plan. Mr. Miller is also employed by the Chiloquin Ranger District, Fremont-Winema National Forests as an Environmental Planner, and is a member of the Northwest Oregon Interagency Incident Management Team (Type 2). In 2004, Mr. Miller recorded 77 hours of project time.

One of the earliest decisions made by the Chief and the Coordinator was to use the process and plan outline found in "A Framework for Community Fire Plans" developed by the University of Oregon with contributions from County, State and Federal agencies. The comprehensive nature of this plan best fits the needs of the District; however modifications and exclusions from the original were made to more accurately reflect Chiloquin's size, capabilities and specific environment. This plan also focused much attention on cooperative efforts and community involvement in assembling, implementing and monitoring the Plan.

The planning process emphasized formation of a broadly represented community steering committee. A Chiloquin Community Wildfire Committee was rapidly assembled and held its initial meeting to become familiar with the Plan, and the Committee's responsibilities within the Plan, on June 30, 2004. The Committee has agreed to meet as necessary, determined by Chief Holster and Coordinator Miller. This Committee consists of individuals representing the following:

- Woodland Park, Rainbow Park, Oregon Shores subdivisions and the Sprague River Road's Nine Mile area
- Jeld-Wen, Inc.
- Train Mountain
- Klamath Tribes
- Oregon Department of Forestry, Klamath/Lake District
- Klamath County Emergency Services
- US Forest Service, Chiloquin Ranger District
- City of Chiloquin
- Chiloquin Fire District Board of Directors

Chief Holster is currently negotiating a contract with Klamath Fire, Inc. to write the Community Fire and Mitigation Plan. The Plan will incorporate structure assessment and landscape fuel hazard data, a WUI definition and boundary, community values and risks, local area fire fighting capabilities, fire prevention and emergency evacuation strategies, public outreach and Plan monitoring and evaluation. The Plan will aid the Chief in identifying high priority properties where fuels reduction efforts to create defensible space may be most effective in protecting lives and properties within the District.

In 2004, National Fire Plan monies granted to the Fire District employed eight local people for 3,591.25 hours of work to reduce hazardous fuels. A 2005 National Fire Plan grant application to maintain funding for this work has received tentative approval from the Oregon Department of Forestry. The Fire District recently submitted another National Fire Plan grant application for 2006, in hopes of providing continuity in funding these efforts.

Continue GIS mapping
Properties Identified
Roads Identified

The Chief prior to submission of the Title III grant request had started data collection efforts. Many water sources throughout the Fire District had already been identified and GPSed for mapping purposes.

Early collaboration with the Keno Fire District, Wildland Fire Technologies, Inc. and Aspen GIS Services, Inc. yielded development of a database to record and analyze structure assessment data collected within the Fire District. Several Chiloquin volunteer firefighters were then employed to collect the structure assessment data and enter it into the database. While assessing structure vulnerabilities, access, surrounding vegetation and other fire hazards on each property, these District personnel also mount high visibility address numbers at each residence. Currently they have completed assessment of approximately 30% of the structures located within the District. Not including the Fire Chief or Project Coordinator, three firefighters received pay through the Title III grant for 1,093 hours of time spent on the assessment. Structure assessment data

collection is temporarily suspended due to winter weather, but will continue as conditions improve.

Chief Holster initiated a District-wide WUI hazardous fuels survey in early June of 2004 by contracting Klamath Fire Inc. to identify, evaluate and create GIS mapping (at a landscape level) of fire behavior fuel models, landscape condition classes and primary cover types (over story vegetation). This survey was completed by Klamath Fire, Inc. in December 2004 and their report is provided as an attachment to this document. The data and analysis contained in this report will be included in the Chiloquin Community Fire Plan to aid in determining priority areas for fuels reduction projects within the the WUI.

Although District roads data has not yet been fully integrated into the GIS mapping program, the Chief has been working with the Klamath County Public Works Department and Aspen GIS to facilitate incorporation of this important data set to the District and its Fire Plan.

Continue Current Fire Prevention Efforts Through Public Education

On June 3, 2004, the Coordinator presented a brief description of the upcoming efforts to develop the Fire District's Community Fire Plan to the local Community Action Team (CAT). The CAT members asked several pertinent questions about the Plan, expressed appreciation for the information received and looks forward to periodic updates from the District.

One of the responsibilities adopted by members of the Chiloquin Community Wildfire Committee was to act as conduits of fire plan information to the areas they represent within the community. Awareness of wildfire and possible mitigations available to the Fire District and property owners will be a major thrust of the Plan and the Committee in the months to come.

The Chief and Coordinator have agreed to make the next Committee meeting a public meeting to promote awareness of the Community Fire and Mitigation Plan, its goals and objectives, and to introduce the Committee members to the citizens they represent.

In January of 2005, the Chiloquin Fire District initiated an Internet website to provide information to the public about the District's personnel, history, training, fire prevention efforts and the Community Fire Plan. The website address is: <http://www.chiloquinfire.com>

Increase Interagency Cooperative Planning

From the onset of this effort the Chief has insisted upon a high level of cooperation with other agencies and entities. He and the Coordinator have worked closely with the Keno Fire District to develop assessment strategies.

Keno and Chiloquin have emphasized the need for seamless formatting of fire and mitigation plan documentation in order to provide their publics with understandable and consistent information.

On July 23, 2004, both Fire Districts hosted a VIP tour of wildland fire mitigation projects conducted near their communities by themselves, other communities, ODF and the US Forest Service. City, County, State, Tribal and Federal officials were shown on-the-ground efforts to reduce hazardous fuels and discussed future funding possibilities to further protect urban interface communities from wildland fire. The tour was highly successful and informative for all attendees.

Chiloquin Fire District has also met twice with fire, planning and management officials of the Forest Service's Chiloquin Ranger District and Oregon Department of Forestry. The first meeting on September 13, 2004, achieved agreement on a definition for the wildland urban interface as it will be presented in the Community Fire Plan. The second meeting on February 7, 2005 then used that definition, combined with the fire hazard survey data collected by Klamath Fire, Inc. for private lands and similar data provided for adjacent Forest Service lands, to establish an actual WUI boundary surrounding the District. Although the Chiloquin Ranger District has already treated a substantial amount of acreage within and adjacent to the District, determining this boundary will assist the Forest Service in obtaining additional fuels reduction funding to treat still more acreage within the WUI, thus better protecting properties within the Chiloquin Fire District.

The Chiloquin Ranger District has also provided GIS and computer assistance to the Fire District and provides a Fire Management Officer as its representative to the Community Wildfire Committee. Cooperation in wildland fire operations continues to be a paramount priority between the Chiloquin Fire District and the USFS Chiloquin Ranger District.

On September 23, 2004, the Chief and the Coordinator outlined Chiloquin's Community Fire Plan efforts at a meeting of the Klamath County Fire Defense Board. The Chief emphasized the duplication of plan formats used by Chiloquin and Keno, encouraging similar formatting use by other County-wide departments to provide consistency and clarity to the public. Chiloquin's WUI definition was also presented to the Board and received support from ODF.

CONCLUSION

As the process of writing the Chiloquin Community Fire Plan proceeds, the District will continue ongoing data collection in support of the Plan. Chief Holster and Coordinator Miller will continue public outreach efforts and periodic update and input gathering meetings with the Community Wildfire Committee. Agency cooperation opportunities are vigorously pursued by the Chief and his volunteer

staff. The timeline for Plan completion in 2006 is on track, with no foreseeable obstacles to achieving that goal.

Dewaine Holster
Fire Chief