



Reese Lolley

Slide 1 INTRO: Good morning, Reese Lolley, Strategy and Partnerships Director, WRCD. Thank you for the opportunity to share the work of the WRCD and its many partners in enhancing community wildfire mitigation in Washington.

Issue: We have seen over our lifetime that people, the communities, the places where we live, and the natural resources we enjoy and depend on are increasingly being impacted by fire. We have seen science based predicted trends become reality- longer fire seasons, more area burned with greater intensity and severity, as well wind driven fires increasing the number of rural and urban fire conflagrations.

WRCD MISSION

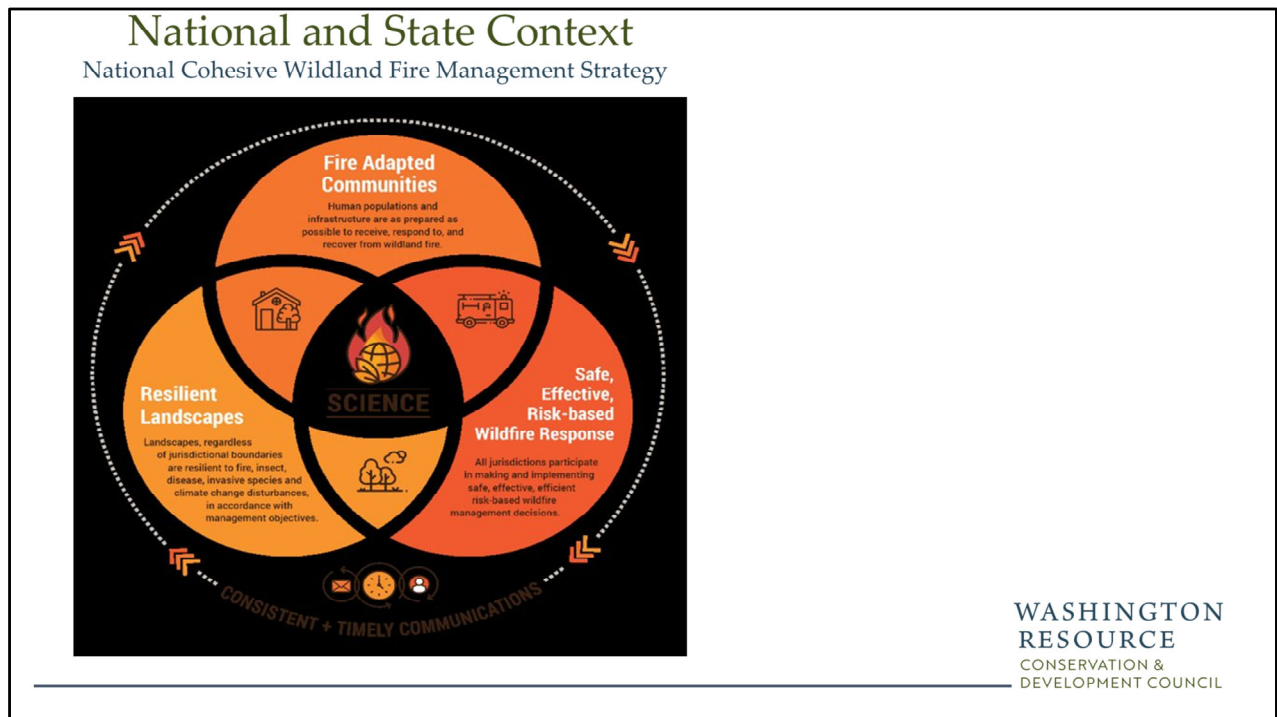
To empower communities by providing them with the tools, resources, capacity, and connections necessary to adapt to the changing world.



Reese Lolley

Slide 2 MISSION - WRCD: The W-RCD is a non-profit that was formed over 50 yrs ago, in 1974, fire was hardly the issue of our state; however, over the last decade to support increasing fire impacts on communities, we have developed a portfolio of Community Wildfire Resilience programs and projects to empower communities by providing them with the tools, resources, capacity, and connections necessary to adapt to our changing world. Our work strives to facilitate connections across geographies and scales to drive change by utilizing a variety of approaches before, during and after fire.

Today, I'll provide national and state context for our fire programmatic investments and work of partners. Keegan Fengler, Program Manager of the Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network at W- WRCD, will then give an overview of our Community Wildfire Resilience Programs, which engage partners and community members in advancing wildfire mitigation efforts.



Reese Lolley

Slide 3 - NATIONAL

How are we engaging in these fire issues Nationally, in Washington, and at WRCD?

Nationally:

Fire suppression or Fire Response, was a single focused effective strategy from the early 1900's until 1990's when we saw nearly exponential growth in area burned in the west.

In response to growing impacts, and acknowledgement that Fire Response could no longer solve our "Fire Problems" alone, Congress enacted the FLAME Act in 2009 that engaged Federal Agencies, Tribes, States, NGO's and private entities to develop A **National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy**.

The Cohesive Strategy *added two core pillars* of focused strategy to Fire Response:

Resilient Landscapes –

Typically Federal, State, Tribal, private timber and range lands where people primarily don't live or live in lower densities.


With the observation that fire knows no boundaries, to the pursue goal of coordinating across jurisdictions to more effectively prepare the landscape for better fire outcomes, to achieve healthy and resilient ecosystems for benefit of people and nature.

Fire Adapted Communities –

Dominated by where people live with greater investments in built infrastructure - our communities.

Pursue strategies that achieve the outcome of communities and infrastructure being prepared to receive, respond and recover from wildfire.

Wildfire Fund – Wildfire Response, Forest Restoration & Community Resilience (HB 1168)
2021-2029 (~\$500 million?)



WA 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan & State Forest Action Plan

WA Wildland Fire Protection
10 – Year Strategic Plan

1	CAPABLE, INTEGRATED, SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS	
2	RESILIENT LANDSCAPES	All Lands Restoration
3	FIRE-ADAPTED COMMUNITIES	Community Resilience
4	SAFE, EFFECTIVE RESPONSE	Wildfire Response

Reese Lolley

Slide 4: WASHINGTON

Washington has developed policies over the last decade that mirror the NCWFS –

The WA 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan focused in EWA & State-wide Forest Action Plan, encompassing and focusing on Resilient Landscapes focused goals and strategies.

The WA Wildland Fire Protection 10 – Year Strategic Plan attempts to integrate all pillars of the Cohesive strategy: Fire Response, Resilient Landscapes and FAC.

In 2021, the Legislature passed *HB1168* – creating the Wildfire Response, Forest Restoration & Community Resilience Account, or “Wildfire Fund” with the intent to fund work of these strategies at \$125 million per biennium through 2029. The law requires a minimum of 25% of total funding be allocated to Forest Restoration or All Lands / Resilient Landscapes, and 15% to Community Resilience, as sub-set of FAC practices. **With full funding, our state has made tremendous progress over the last two biennium, along**

with Federal investments, we have created tremendous momentum and return on investments. This year, this biennium, state funding has been cut by over 50% and as we are aware, there are significant changes occurring at the Federal level, which will create threats and some opportunities for continued progress.

Fire Adapted Communities Framework



Reese Lolley

Slide 5 - FAC Framework/tree

While we have been investing in systems to suppress fires since at least 1910, and stakeholders have been negotiating how to manage landscapes in the same time period, wildfire as a significant threat to communities is a relatively new phenomena in our history.

This ponderosa pine tree slab from near Wenatchee indicates low intensity frequent fires occurred every ~ 5-35 years from 1758 until 1908, and **shows no fires were recorded from 1909 until 1973**. While this is one sample from a forested ecosystem, it is representative of ~ **40–45% of the Washington landscape that historically experienced frequent fire intervals**, primarily in Central and EWA, whereas, the other half of the state historically experienced fire every 35-200yrs on average - *my main point is this tree, and its record of fire history, is representative of how dramatically fire was reduced with European settlement and during a slightly cooler climate period.*

The slab also illustrates how forests, plants, and animals and native Americans developed strategies to live with fire, and native Americans actively used fire to successfully live with fire, whereas in the relative absence of fire, from 1910 to present, human communities DID NOT develop a robust set of adaptations. It was during that period where our current infrastructure, laws, economic and social norms, systems, and practices for living in a fire environment were largely created in the absence of fire. While there has been progress, our systems and policies for mitigating the impacts of increasing intensity and extent of destructive fire in rural and urban communities across the west are not keeping up- thus why we are all here today.

There is growing pressure to accelerate systems and practices of effective community wildfire preparedness to increase community resilience over time. While we need to agree on common elements of mitigation that create good outcomes based on science and experience, to successfully implement, we will also need to recognize that our Washington communities are composed of people with diverse identities and circumstances who live in diverse environments. Therefore, the needs, experiences, and values of those diverse community members are key to developing and implementing solutions locally that will help us build better future fire outcomes.

Washington Context



Reese Lolley

Slide 6 - WA Context: (red sections of wheel:)

The FAC wheel indicates that there is an overlap in core strategies or pillars of the Cohesive Wildland Fire Strategy- Fire Response and Resilient Landscapes.

The Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) graphic highlights a range of possible investments in rural-urban areas to support community fire resilience—many of which align with the Washington Wildland Fire Strategic Plan's Goals (1–4). While Wildfire Response and Resilient Landscape Treatments are essential components of a fire-adapted community, Community Fire Resilience specifically emphasizes strategies and practices that are also essential for a community's capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfire.

Unlike Response and Landscape strategies—where leadership, funding, and response-level systems are typically more clearly defined—Community Resilience strategies and practices often remain fragmented, under-resourced, and inconsistently coordinated in Washington. Given this disparity, and the fact that Washington's State Wildfire Fund

distinguishes between these three strategic focus areas, it is critical to improve clarity around roles, responsible agencies, community organizations, and funding pathways for advancing community resilience practices.

Stronger differentiation, coordination, and shared understanding among agencies and practitioners are essential to ensure communities and infrastructure are better prepared for wildfire.

While not exhaustive, the Fire Adapted Communities wheel provides an illustration of potential Community Resilience strategies, practices and programs, such as:

- Partnerships, engagement, and coordination- between govt. Agencies, tribes, local organizations and citizens- both at the state and local levels.
- Codes and ordinances- creation, implementation, and enforcement.
- Community, Neighborhood, and resident mitigation, with mitigation practices spanning from county, to municipality, to neighborhood and individual parcels and structures..
- Planning – for example CWPP's, where communities bring mitigation and preparedness practices together, and prioritize efforts and coordinate implementation plans to continuously create better fire outcomes.

I will now pass it over to Keegan Fengler, Program Manager of the Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, to provide an overview of our Community Wildfire Resilience Programs, advancing wildfire mitigation efforts in Washington.

WRCD MISSION

To empower communities by providing them with the tools, resources, capacity, and connections necessary to adapt to the changing world.



Keegan Fengler

Slide 7 – Introduction

Good morning. As Reese mentioned, my name is Keegan Fengler, and I'm a program manager with the WRCD.

At the WRCD, we support community wildfire resilience in a variety of ways—today, I'll focus on three core efforts that support resident mitigation efforts:

- **Community Wildfire Protection Planning (CWPP)**
- **The Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (WAFAC)**
- **The Community Wildfire Ambassador Approach (CWA)**

Community Wildfire Resilience

Community Wildfire Protection Planning

Planning as a Path to Resilience





COMMUNITY WILDFIRE
PROTECTION PLAN

FIREADAPTEDWASHINGTON.ORG/TOOLKIT/COMMUNITY-WILDFIRE-PLANNING/





Technical Assistance

CWPP Learning Series

Tool Development

Keegan Fengler

Slide 8 – CWPPs: Planning as a Path to Resilience

As many of us know, the impacts of wildfire on what we value in Washington are increasing. Fires are more frequent and more intense, and more people are living in high-risk zones—what we call the Wildland-Urban Interface, or WUI.

Yet many communities still lack the tools, partnerships, and plans they need to prepare and adapt. That's where **Community Wildfire Protection Plans**, or **CWPPs**, come in.

CWPPs are collaborative, community-driven frameworks that help communities understand the potential local impacts of wildfire and set priorities for wildfire mitigation. These plans also connect communities to potential partners, resources, and funding.

But one of the biggest barriers to CWPP development is local capacity—time, expertise, and technical support. That's where we come in.

With support from DNR and additional resource support from the national Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, we provide:

- Step-by-step planning guidance
- Support for engaging collaborators
- Wildfire risk data and planning tools
- Templates, guides, and examples
- Ongoing learning and networking opportunities

To date, our natural hazards planner has supported **17 communities**—including Yakima, Asotin, San Juan, Skamania, and Kittitas Counties. We tailor our support to fit each community's unique needs.

We've also created a suite of tools to make planning more accessible:

- An Action Plan Guide & Template
- A CWPP Strategy Crosswalk
- A Post-Fire Recovery Toolkit
- A Partner Engagement List

We offer open learning sessions, covering topics like:

- How to build CWPP planning teams
- Defining the WUI
- Evacuation and pre-fire recovery planning

At the core, CWPPs are about protecting what matters most—people, homes, and communities. And our goal is to make the process easier, more collaborative, and more impactful.

Slide 8 - Post in Chat: <https://www.fireadaptedwashington.org/toolkit/community-protection-plans/>

Community Wildfire Resilience Washington State Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network A Network for Practitioners



WAFAC MEMBERS

Each member plays a critical role in community fire adaptation.

- Fire departments
- Conservation Districts
- Nonprofits
- State agencies
- Federal agencies



Participants at our 2023 Annual WAFAC Workshop, Wenatchee WA

Keegan Fengler

Slide 9 – WAFAC: A Network for Practitioners

Next, I want to share about **WAFAC**, the Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network—a key initiative I manage at the WRCD.

WAFAC is the only true **statewide networks** in the country dedicated to wildfire resilience. There are other state based networks but most only serve a section of the state.

It was launched after the devastating 2014 and 2015 fire seasons, which revealed the urgent need for better coordination, communication, and collaboration among those doing this work at the local level and was modeled after the national Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network.

WAFAC is built on a peer learning model. It connects practitioners from across Washington—conservation districts, tribes, fire departments, nonprofits, HOAs, agencies, and more—to share ideas, learn from one another, accelerating adoption and implementation of community mitigation practices- moving forward together.



Keegan Fengler

Slide 10 – How WAFAC Supports Resilience

WAFAC members benefit from:

- Networking and collaboration opportunities
- Webinars, trainings, and field visits
- Staff support for planning and coordination
- An online library of toolkits, templates, and best practices
- Peer-to-peer learning and mentorship
- And, when available, funding to support local work

A key component of a peer learning network is **reciprocity**—the idea that members both give and receive. The real power of the network comes from the willingness of members to share their time, insights, and experiences. And what we’ve consistently seen is that **people get more out of the network than they put in.**

Currently, WAFAC has **110 members from 51 organizations**, each playing a unique role—from education and fuels mitigation to emergency planning and CWPP implementation.

Just in the last two years, we've hosted:

- 8 in-person sessions, including training and field visits
- 15 webinars and 20 informal “coffee break” discussions
- Dozens of one-on-one coaching sessions

We also ensure that lessons don't stop at the meeting. Our blogs, videos, and tools keep the learning alive and accessible on our website.


At its heart, WAFAC is about connection—bridging the gap between state and local, knowledge and action, silos and shared solutions. And that connection is what fuels long-term wildfire adaptation.


Post in Chat: <https://www.fireadaptedwashington.org/>

Community Wildfire Resilience

Community Wildfire Ambassador Approach


Supporting Resident Leaders






COORDINATORS

Recruit and train ambassadors (residents/volunteers) to be experts at the community level.





AMBASSADORS

Help to engage and motivate their neighbors in their wildfire preparedness efforts.



WILDFIREAMBASSADOR.ORG





WHO IS SERVED BY CWA

CWA is designed to be utilized by local organizations to develop continued engagement between ambassadors and coordinators.

Keegan Fengler

Slide 11 – CWA: Supporting Resident Leaders

The third effort I want to highlight is new, the **Community Wildfire Ambassador Approach**, or **CWA**—is a growing initiative we’re leading in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources.

CWA is designed to support those organizing **resident-led wildfire efforts**—the community connectors, neighborhood organizers, and trusted messengers who are doing the real work of resilience on the ground.

It’s not a new “program” with checklists and requirements. It’s a flexible approach focused on empowering **ambassadors**—residents who bring people together, share information, and help neighbors take action.

CWA complements existing efforts like Wildfire Ready Neighbor, Firewise USA®, or IBHS Certified Home, s, and CWPP implementation. It strengthens what’s already working by helping ambassadors navigate available resources and connect with others doing similar work.

Post in Chat: <https://www.wildfireambassador.org/>

What We've Built Together

The CWA model is peer-to-peer, just like WAFAC. Ambassadors learn from each other, and **coordinators**—often from conservation districts or nonprofits—help guide and support them.

Over the past year, we've seen real progress:

- **32 participants** completed our two coordinator trainings
- **Two pilot coordinator positions** were funded by DNR—in the Methow Valley and San Juan Islands
- We hosted **three support webinars**
- And we recently **launched a website** to house CWA tools, resources, and stories

The momentum is growing, and so is community interest.

What's especially powerful is how CWA and WAFAC **work in tandem**—sharing members, tools, and values. Both networks support place-based leadership, build capacity, and center relationships in the resilience process.



Keegan Fengler

Slide 12 – Closing Reflection

Fifteen years ago, I attended a community resilience workshop on earthquake preparedness. A California official was asked if she had earthquake insurance. She said no—and explained that she instead chose to invest in upgrades to her home to minimize damage and keep it livable after a major quake.

That shift in thinking stuck with me.

Resilience isn't just about bouncing back—it's about **preparing to stay standing**.

It's about recognizing the long road of recovery and choosing to adapt now.

This is the same mindset shift we're working to cultivate across Washington. And that work doesn't happen overnight. It takes time, trust, and support.

Final Slide – Close

So whether we're working through CWPPs, connecting through WAFAC, or supporting local leaders along with our partners through the CWA approach, Firewise USA, and Wildfire Ready Neighbors, our focus remains the same:

Support people. Build relationships. Strengthen communities.

There's incredible work happening across this state. The right people are in place. The tools are getting sharper. The networks are growing.

And with sustained support and collaboration, this momentum can continue—and scale.

I am now going to pass back to Reese to share about a topic based webinar series we host this past year around insurance and wildfire. Our members are definitely asking for more ways to support their communities and want to better understand the insurance industry.

INSURANCE LEARNING GROUP

Resource Guide

ENGLISH

SPANISH

Learning Series Summary

ENGLISH

SPANISH

"ECOSYSTEM" OF WILDFIRE INSURANCE

[FIREADAPTEDWASHINGTON.ORG/TOOLKIT/INSURANCE-CLEAN-UP/](https://fireadaptedwashington.org/toolkit/insurance-clean-up/)



Greater member survey of issues and concerns.

Webinar Series:

- Kenton Brine from the Northwest Insurance Council
- Frank Frievault from the WUI FIRE Institute at Cal Poly
- Heather Kanzlemer, Principal and Consulting Actuary at Milliman

Summary Resources created

Reese Lolley

Slide 13 - Insurance

In closing, we wanted to briefly highlight the WAFAC Insurance Learning series we held in 2024-25. The WA- Fire Adapted Learning Network holds an in person workshop annually, and in 2023, we heard loud and clear from practitioner participants that residents were increasingly raising concerns about losing insurance coverage and price increases in wildfire-prone areas and they were not clear why.

We hosted a four-part Insurance Learning Group series that was open to anyone who wanted to better understand the role of insurance in addressing wildfire and other natural hazards- noting we had over 180 registrations and many more views of recorded sessions. Drawing on a survey of member questions, the sessions explored how the insurance industry operates, how fire risk is assessed, and the current state of the property insurance market. The goal was to deepen understanding between insurance providers, consumers, and community fire practitioners, and to identify potential solutions.

In the interest of time, and the focus of today's presentation on existing wildfire mitigation efforts at the community level, please see OIC Workgroup website under Community wildfire resilience resources in the Materials section for links for key takeaways and summary resources. We would be happy to provide additional insights from the Learning Series and recommendations for Workgroup review as useful at a later time.



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In gratitude,



RESOURCES LEGACY FUND
CREATIVE SOLUTIONS. LASTING RESULTS.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION, WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND
WASHINGTON RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Reese Lolley

Closing slide:

Over the next 3 decades predictions in the west indicate that fire season length is expected to grow 1-2 months, area burned is predicted to double or triple by 2050, and fires over 100K are expected to become more common, as well as occurrence of urban conflagrations. Continued investments in Fire Response and technology will be core to success, but the science and evidence continues to indicate that a very small number of fires we are unable to suppress, will create the greatest impact to communities. Therefore, we must continue to develop and invest in systems of effective community mitigation that support fire responders, save lives, and drastically reduce impacts to homes and community infrastructure. It has been done before.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the National Commission on Fire was established in response to high rates of fatalities and property loss from residential fires. The Commission's landmark America Burning report laid out a national strategy to address these risks. Fifty years later using science, best practices, regulation, and engaging communities, residential fires now account for less than 1% of emergency call volume—a testament to what can be achieved when we make a long-term commitment and come together in solving a complex problem.

With the leadership of the Legislature, many agencies, and community members, we have made tremendous progress over the last decade in preparing, responding and recovering from increasing pressures of wildfire in Washington, but our work is far from done.

I want to thank our members, partners and funders ... for your dedication to this work, for coming together with us to work on solving truly challenging, but solvable problems for the benefit of Washington communities and citizens.

I am also happy to share that while we have worked with WDNR and CD's and the Conservation Commission for over a decade, we formalized our partnership in a MOU this year.

Finally, thank you, Rep. Reeves and Engell, and Sen. Short and Saldaña, for your leadership on these critical issues. And thank you to the workgroup members for investing your time and effort in developing wildfire mitigation recommendations that truly matter for our communities, especially as we face headwinds of increasing social and economic impacts from wildfire. We look forward to continued partnership and collaboration with the workgroup and its members. Thank you.