

Fire Adapted Communities Cycle: A Facilitation Guide

Fire Adapted Communities understand their risk and are taking action to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfire.

The FAC Cycle illustration (right) is a way to start the conversation with individuals, communities, agencies, organizations and partners about what it means to be fire adapted.

Scenes represented at right include:

- Community prevention education (Before the Fire)
- Landscape-level prescribed fire (Before the Fire)
- Individual home preparedness (Before the Fire)
- Community response (During the Fire)
- Community and landscape recovery (After the Fire)

The illustration scenes in no way represents every element of a fire adapted community. Can you think of other ways a community can prepare for, respond to, or recover from wildfire?

Responses may include: community collaboration, forest restoration, community wildfire protection plan development, adoption of codes and ordinances, evacuation route signage, development of Firewise ambassadors, and more.



Communities can start living better with wildfire at any point along the cycle. The more actions a community takes, the more adapted it becomes. At what point did your community start adapting to wildfire? What opportunities exist to increase community engagement at different points along the cycle?

Responses will vary. Engagement opportunities can be significant during and immediately after a wildfire when public interest is high. Encourage respondents to discuss how different points along the cycle will require different engagement strategies and messages.



In the Before the Fire section, both prevention and prescribed fire are highlighted. Do you see a contradiction in talking about both preventing and using fire?

What actions do you see the homeowners taking in the individual preparedness scene? Can you think of other actions a homeowner should take before a fire?

Responses may include: preparing an evacuation "go kit," working with their neighbors on community defensible space, volunteering with their local fire response agency, increasing the visibility of their address, reviewing and updating their insurance policy and more.

Does your community use prescribed fire as a tool? Why or why not? What challenges exist to the use of prescribed fire in your community?

Responses will vary.

Businesses can prepare before the fire too. A business is shown in the After the Fire section with an "open" sign in the window. What actions, if any, do you think that business took before the fire that enabled it to reopen quickly?

Responses may include: development of a business continuity plan, redundant communication and sales systems, information backed up off-site, creation of defensible space around the business building itself.

In the response scene, several things are happening. What do you see in this scene?

Responses may include: Communication with residents by the response agency, initial attack of a wildfire, a family evacuating quickly with a pet and prepared "go bags," and more.

What other actions, not represented here, would facilitate a safe and effective response?

Responses may include: Establishment of cooperative agreements among first responders, a well-equipped and well-trained fire department, development of pre-attack plans and identification of interagency communication frequencies, work with incident management teams and local response agencies before the fire to facilitate dissemination of fire adapted communities information during the fire.





In the recovery scene, the landscape and the community are shown recovering. In this case, the business is open (perhaps due to advance continuity planning) and nature is getting a boost with some tree planting. What other actions may be needed to help the landscape post-fire?

Responses may include: Seeding, erosion control, bank stabilization, and more.

Fire burned in the mountains in the background of this graphic. What risks exist to communities and infrastructure downstream or adjacent to burned areas? What should your community know about post-fire impacts?

Responses may include: Flooding, debris flows, mudslides. Responses about what a community should know may include the fact that they have risk, the need to review and update flood insurance, actions they can take to help the landscape recover, and more.

How would you communicate these risks to your community after a fire? What resources would you need to prepare for post-fire impacts?

Responses will vary.

What other things may a community experience after the fire? Are there ways to prepare for these impacts ahead of time?

Responses may include: property damage, home losses and resulting housing shortages, damage to agriculture and infrastructure, decreased sales tax revenue and more.

Overall Notes/Additional Questions:

- The goal of taking actions is to decrease the impact of wildfire on your community. Just because a community may experience the FAC cycle many times, it doesn't mean that the impact of wildfire must always be the same. The more actions taken by the community to live better with wildfire, the less impactful wildfire will be.
- Community preparedness, response and recovery must necessarily include ALL portions of the community. How are you reaching out to non-native English speakers? Children? Seniors?
- How does a learning network approach help you along different points of the FAC cycle?
- The National Cohesive Strategy includes three main components: resilient landscapes, fire adapted communities, and safe and effective response. How do you see these components reflected in this illustration?

Note that the five scenes can be presented as one cycle (as shown on page 1) or as individual scenes. A simpler cycle can also be presented by eliminating the prevention and prescribed fire scenes.