

PAVING THE WAY FOR EVOLUTION

Throughout 2021 the same word arose again and again - EVOLUTION. WAFAC welcomed 10 new organizational members who are working on community resilience across the state beyond traditional wildfire sectors. The Network expanded our focus to understand the complex systems at play across the fire and social landscape and how these systems can unlock resources, strategies, equity, and leadership at the local level. All of this takes work, intention, and commitment. We know that the web of relationships that exist within the Network will pave the way for opportunities to share power that leads to meaningful, lasting impact. WAFAC continues to find better ways to live with fire by supporting community-based fire adaptation work and the local people leading that work through real connections, real partnerships, and real outcomes.

--Hilary Lundgren, Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network Program Director

WE CONNECT HARD-WORKING COMMUNITIES

SEEKING A BETTER FIRE FUTURE

The Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (WAFAC) is a peer learning network that supports local action, connects people to resources, facilitates results, and informs on-the-ground projects to help Washington better adapt to wildfire. Our members are leading the way to better prepare our communities before, during, and after fires by engaging local organizations and agencies to develop and act on place-based strategies and priorities.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHTS

CASCADIA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chelan County, WA

Cascadia Conservation District (CD) is dedicated to encouraging the wise stewardship of all-natural resources - with partnerships at the center of their work. Working closely with researchers, fire districts, land management agencies, community-based organizations, Firewise USA® sites, and local municipalities, Cascadia CD identifies and implements community fire adaptation projects with residents that contribute to large-scale landscape restoration and public safety across the county.

cascadiacd.org

FIRE ADAPTED METHOW VALLEY (FAMV)

Okanogan County, WA

In 2021, FAMV piloted an equitable wildfire mitigation program for the elderly, low-income, and other vulnerable community members. They collaborated with agencies, nonprofits, volunteers, and contractors to identify best practices and workable solutions for client selection, risk assessments, vegetation removal, funding, and client contributions to address each individual's unique, personal circumstances and reduce wildfire risk.

fireadaptedmethow.org

"Being a member of the WAFAC Learning Network has opened doors and opportunities to develop state-wide relationships to increase the wildfire resilience for residents -- no matter what side of the state someone lives on."

Matthew Axe, King Conservation District

2021 AT A GLANCE

257

ACRES OF FUEL
REDUCTION

2

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE
PROTECTION
PLAN UPDATES

158

WILDFIRE RISK
HOME ASSESSMENTS

43

PUBLIC EDUCATION
EVENTS

61

COMMUNITIES
ASSISTED IN WA



STARTING IN OUR OWN BACKYARD, WE ARE
LEVERAGING THE POWER OF COMMUNITIES

NETWORK HIGHLIGHTS

POLICY LEARNING GROUP

It is difficult to imagine a future where this nation can live with wildfire without also imagining a fundamental shift in wildfire policy and governance. Tackling the conversations about wildfire policy and governance, however, can be daunting. Over the course of six months in 2021, 70 wildfire practitioners from 17 states across the nation joined the national Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FAC Net) and WAFAC to learn more about how to engage with agencies, elected officials, staff, and more in order to be more effective in their own communities.

At a state level, WAFAC wildfire practitioners connected their work to the state legislative and policy process. Participants met monthly to deepen their individual skills, hear from those working in the policy sphere, and learn more about effective strategies to engage with policymakers and staff.

The skills, knowledge, and partnerships developed in the policy learning group led to

- An **empowered group** of community members who testified at the state legislature hearings on Bill 1168 Forest Health and Reducing Wildfire Risk.
- **New partnerships** with the Washington Environmental Council and Sustainable Northwest and **strengthened relationships** with the Washington Prescribed Fire Council and the Latino Community Fund who work actively on landscape and community wildfire policy issues.
- **Better understanding** of how to engage with local and State-level decision-makers, what information they need, and how to connect on-the-ground work to State-level strategic plans and initiatives.
- **Strategic connections** with decision-makers at the local level who are now supporting and advocating for on-the-ground implementation of community fire adaptation projects.

"The Policy Learning Group cultivated an understanding of how vital nonprofit organizations are in developing and implementing public policy to advocate for strong, healthy, and informed communities."

Alma Chacon, Community Advancement for Family Education

OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

With gratitude and appreciation, the Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network is supported by:



FIRE ADAPTED
COMMUNITIES
LEARNING NETWORK



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TRAINING & LEARNING EVENTS

Washington Policy Learning Group Workshop Series

- Legislative Tools, Policy, and Plans
- Providing Bill Testimonials
- Tracking the Legislative Process
- Understanding Advocacy Sideboards for Municipalities and Fire Departments in WA
- The Role of the Washington Forest Health Advisory Committee
- The Role of the Washington Wildland Fire Advisory Committee
- HB1168 Forest Health and Reducing Wildfire Risk Engagement Opportunities
- SSB 5141 Recommendations for the Environmental Justice Task Force

List of [Policy Learning Group topics and Additional Resources](#)

Understanding Legal Issues that Affect Wildfire Preparedness and Recovery

Demystifying Wildfire Insurance Coverage

Fire in the Shrub-Steppe - **Invasive Species and Native Seeds & Grasses**

Effective Outreach Strategies for Building Social Acceptance for Prescribed Fire

Intro to Fire Adapted Communities for:

- 21 New WAFAC Members
- The Columbia River Gorge Commission & Climate Action Plan Partners
- Pacific Education Institute
- Pacific Northwest Fire Science Consortium Conference
- Washington State Community Risk Reduction Coalition

In 2021, WAFAC supported 21 organizations to attend 13 trainings.

To access recordings, tip sheets, and resource guides, visit:
fireadaptedwashington.org/learn