



WAFAC members organizations are finding creative ways to reach community members by offering learning opportunities and events that fit the needs and desires of those they serve. These four examples provide a brief look into a few different approaches to educate and engage residents and build capacity for greater wildfire preparedness in our diverse communities.

BUILDING CAPACITY IN COMMUNITY

Latino Community Fund (LCF): Wildfire Preparedness and Leadership Development

LCF organizes cohorts dedicated to educating Latinx community members on wildfire risk and resilience. Class content and structure are tailored to directly serve their students and eliminate barriers that usually prevent members of the Latinx community from accessing these types of opportunities. Classes are taught in Spanish, both online and in-person at varying times to accommodate different schedules, and childcare is provided.

Cohorts focus on topics relevant to participants, including the impacts of smoke inhalation on farmworkers, safety and preparedness at home, and general wildfire risk awareness. Throughout the program, students participate in community projects, develop leadership capacity, and ultimately leave with knowledge they may not otherwise have had the opportunity to learn.

Learn more:

https://www.latinocommunityfund.org/environmental_justice



Wenatchee Valley Fire Department (WVFD): Women's Chainsaw Class



In October 2024, WVFD hosted a Safety in Woods Working (SAWW) class for women to build capacity and skills in thinning and precision tree falling. Although WVFD has run SAWW classes for three years, this is the first time one was offered specifically for women, as the classes are generally male dominated. The 3-day course focused on PPE, safety, and operation. Participants helped with fuel reduction projects as to further develop skills. Ultimately, the course enabled attendees to enhance their comfortability with chainsaws and build capacity to do their own defensible space work around their homes.

Learn more: <https://www.wenatcheevalleyfire.org/single-post/women-s-chainsaw-course>



FOSTERING ENGAGEMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY EVENTS

Mt. Adams Resource Stewards (MARS): Trout Lake FAC 2025 Park Clean-Up Day



With support from MARS, Fire Adapted Community Trout Lake (FACT) hosted a clean-up day at a local county park in May 2025 on National Community Wildfire Preparedness Day. Due to its central location and popularity in Trout Lake, the county park made for the perfect space to hold a volunteer mitigation event. Participants learned more about fuel reduction and wildfire preparedness while having a tangible, positive impact in their community.

In addition to reducing overall wildfire risk at the park and for neighboring landowners, the volunteer's hard work provided free wood chips and fire wood to residents, including seniors in the area.

Learn more about FACT: <https://www.mtadamsstewards.org/fact>

Fire Adapted Methow (FAM): Fire Resiliency Fair

As a part of its Neighborhood Ambassador Program, FAM hosted a Fire Resiliency Fair at the suggestion of some of its neighborhood ambassadors. The event was open to all residents in Program neighborhoods and focused on fire resistant landscaping, defensible space, prescribed fire, and evacuation planning. Several other local wildfire practitioners and organizations were invited to attend the event to share about their work and available resources.

The small event size made for an intimate space where residents were able to connect with organizations in their community they may not have otherwise had the opportunity to speak with. FAM successfully reached folks who did not know much about wildfire preparedness in their area and even recruited a few new ambassadors.



Learn more: <https://www.fireadaptedmethow.org/programs>



WATCH THE WEBINARS

To hear more from all four organizations themselves about their community engagement and outreach efforts, check out the two webinars linked below. You might find some new ideas or collect tips for developing your own educational opportunities .

Creative Capacity Building

Hilary Heard from WFVD shares about the Women's Chainsaw Class and Cristina Gonzalez discusses LCF's Wildfire Preparedness and Leadership Development Program.

Getting People Fired Up With Community Engagement

Sarah Allaben from MARS presents on a Park Clean-Up Day in Trout Lake and Sheah Ellis with FAM outlines the recent Fire Resiliency Fair.

LESSONS LEARNED

Partner with other community organizations in your area. This can ease the burden on event organizers and offer other groups the opportunity to share their mission with the community at the same time. For example, invite another organization to provide food or the event space.

Take lots of photos. It's always good to have photos for future events and outreach efforts.

Respect volunteers time. People have varying levels of ability and time they can commit to an event. Respect the time and activity they are able to contribute.

Consider event insurance. You never know what might get in the way, event insurance is a relatively easy and cheap way to make sure you do not lose any investments.

Be flexible. Things happen, be prepared to pivot depending on any number of factors including number of attendees, weather, and more.

Always keep learning and being creative. Visit the [WAFAC Website](https://www.wafac.org/) for more community engagement resources.

