

# Wildfire Mitigation Works and Lessons Learned

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# Prince George Interface Treatments

- Goals:
  - Protect Critical Infrastructure
  - Protect homes
  - Increase success of wildfire suppression
  - Protect existing forest and existing forest values





# Prince George Interface Treatments - Before





# Prince George Interface Treatments - After





# Lessons Learned

- Process was critical, from identification to planning to implementation to final inspection
- Collaboration with the City, the Contractor, and the supervisor required clear and consistent communication
- Adapt to challenges
- Public was very supportive; this was a critical factor in our success!
  - This was achieved through a comprehensive public education campaign: public presentations, advertising, mail outs, conversations
  - Lots of curious residents, lots of questions



# FireSmart Education Program

1. Develop a plan
2. Create capacity
3. Collaborate with partners
4. Implement the plan
5. Reflect on the process
6. Adapt your approach



# Develop a plan

- Set goals
  - Identify the audience. Who are they? Where do they live?
  - What existing opportunities can be leveraged?
  - What are the key messages?
    - The messages need to be tailored for the audience, both regionally and within the community (WUI vs non-WUI, city vs rural)
  - Identify the education initiatives based on the audience. Passive vs active engagement.
  - Set timelines for initiatives
  - Set metrics for participation



# Create capacity

- Who is going to implement the plan?
- Ideally a dedicated staff position, but not always possible.
- If no dedicated staff, identify actors that already are engaged with the community.



# Collaborate with partners

- Collaboration increases capacity!
- There are likely other groups in your area that are working towards the same purpose.
- Identify opportunities to work together



# Implement the plan

- The goal here is to create conversations by creating opportunities for conversations
- Leverage existing opportunities: meet people where they already are and where they already access information
  - Use existing resources like websites, social media, offices for passive engagement.
  - Go to ongoing events for active engagement
- Reduce barriers
- Remember: people want to learn about wildfire and have practical advice.
  - Keep it simple and relatable. Everyone has different perceptions and is in a unique position.
  - Listen



# Social Media

- Social media is a great way to start conversations, but a terrible way to have conversations.
  - Misinformation about wildfire is an emerging and very problematic trend.
- Use social media to direct people to appropriate venues for education



# Reflect and Adapt

- Public education is the most important part of wildfire risk mitigation, but also the most challenging
- Identify successes, but also failures. Failures are the best learning experiences
- Public education is a process
- Be realistic: we are working against a problem that developed over decades, it will take a long time to educate the public
- Be honest: the public needs candid and frank conversations



# Questions?

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