

BASED ON THE FOOTS CREEK COMMUNITY FIRE & EMERGENCY PLAN

# Neighborhood Fire and Emergency Planning Guide

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Become a fire safe community today!

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4/21/2014



The following is a guide to help you create your own Neighborhood Fire Plan.

## Starting a Fire/Emergency Plan in your neighborhood

(Based on the Foots Creek Fire & Emergency Plan established in 2003)

Dear Community Member,

Creating a Fire and Emergency Plan requires an initial commitment of time and dedication but once established it gets much easier. All it takes is one or more persons to take charge who are willing to put in the effort to get the ball rolling. After the initial push to get it off the ground it will start rolling on its own and then you can delegate the responsibilities as you need to.

To help you in this mission we are offering all of our forms and information to use as you like. We have learned a great deal over the past 10 years with our Fire Plan and hope to help neighboring communities by making it a bit easier. We have provided blank forms you can tailor to your own needs. Use what works and change what doesn't.

From our early beginnings we have collaborated on this plan with the Oregon Dept. of Forestry, Jackson County Sheriffs, and the Rogue River Fire District. They offer a wealth of information that can help you to understand their concerns and help your group to provide valued support in an emergency situation. Additionally no plan will work without establishing those first responder relationships early on and taking steps to maintain them annually.

The best time to get started on your plan is now and not when you are in the midst of an fire or other emergency. We have used this plan as a way to inform residents not only about fires but cougar sightings and attacks, human predators after children, suspicious vehicles, planned BLM burns, and informative training & information for property owners.

Having a neighborhood Fire and Emergency Plan truly helps to unify your neighborhood. Once you have it up and going it will grow every year as more residents hear about it and learn to trust that your group will handle it with thoughtfulness, confidentiality and due diligence.

We congratulate you on doing your part to keep your community safe and informed.

Shayne Maxwell  
Foots Creek Volunteer Fire & Emergency Committee

## [Creating Your Neighborhood Fire Plan](#)

### **The First Step:**

Make a list of friends and neighbors from all areas of your street. From that list identify two property owners from each area (beginning, middle, end) along your street who might consider being dispatchers for their area (long term property owners are ideal). Be sure to include residents from any side streets off your main road. Try to get two resident dispatchers for every block of 20 properties. This is described in more detail below. Don't worry if you don't know many folks, just find one and ask them to bring a friend or ask if they know of some folks who would help.

Contact your local Oregon Dept. of Forestry and ask them for fire data related to your area that you can present at your first meeting to help educate your Team. Historical data is very helpful and can show (a period of years) how many fires have occurred annually and how many were lighting caused or caused by people. It's a powerful tool.

### **Who To Invite:**

Keep in mind that you are asking residents to trust this group with personal information and they are more inclined to do so if they know the group is comprised of people who they know own property and are vested in the community.

Key requirement are: they have a phone (cell and or land line) and a computer connected to the internet for email. This is critical to keep the plan from becoming too labor intensive. Ask your neighbors about this right out the gate and if they don't have these items then do yourself a favor and move on to someone else as a possible dispatcher.

### **Set The 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting Place, Date & Time:**

Choose a location close to home that has tables and is well lit so folks can take notes and fill out information forms. We have found that the best times to hold a fire planning meeting is after work 6:30 PM Tuesdays or Thursdays as lots of folks have church activities on Wednesdays or you can try a Saturday at mid morning.

### **What You Need To Bring To The Meeting:**

All your data collected from ODF, Fire Plan Descriptions, Fire Survey forms, Fire Survey Description handouts, Dispatcher Conditions forms, Map of your Street or neighborhood, blank notebook, pens for all. Ideally if you have a friend who would take notes that really helps to keep you on message and the meeting moving forward. Keep this meeting light, fun and a way to meet new friends.

### **How Many To Invite:**

Divide up your street into sections either by addresses, left or right forks etc. Example: Foothills Road is divided into 5 sections: Before the Fork, Left Fork, Lower Right Fork (up to 2500), Upper Right Fork (2500 and above) and Hosmer Lane (a part of Foothills Road area). Also note that you may have forks with all odd number address and some with all even number address. Its good to note that for emergency responders.

### **How Many Dispatchers Do We Need:**

A good rule to follow: Create sections or areas of 15 - 20 homes MAX. You will need two dispatcher households per section or area so each dispatcher would call no more than 10 homes. This means in an emergency the two dispatchers can divide up the phone tree list to reach residents faster. It also helps to have two teams per area in case one is out of town.

Consider that each call takes 3 minutes of time, which means it will take each dispatcher 30 minutes to reach 10 residents in their area. In a real emergency or fire, time is critical, every minute counts. Now add on the time to interact with the other dispatchers for updates and covering areas where other dispatchers may not be at home. Ten homes really is the maximum a dispatcher should have to handle in their own area.

If some areas are booming with home development, you can always add a third dispatcher. However it is best after 30-35 homes that you create a new section or area. We suggest a maximum of 3 dispatchers for any one area otherwise it starts getting confusing and sub groups develop which can undermine the larger plan.

You may only get a few attendees at the first meeting so you need to ask them to bring a neighbor, relative or friend who lives on your street to the second meeting and so on. If you only have a small number at first don't worry, it will grow. We started with about 6 and now we have 20 dispatcher teams. Most of our dispatchers did not know each other initially and now we are a close group. Be patient and stay on course – that is the true key to success in creating a fire and emergency plan that will endure and truly benefit the community.

### **Review Your Information Packet:**

Look over every form in the packet and get familiar with them. You may note that some things may work for your community and others may need to change or eliminate. We have provided all these forms in MS Word format to ODF so you can easily change them to suite your needs.

**Important guidelines to bring up to your dispatchers at the meeting: When acquiring fire surveys some residents may include a gate key or code, be sure to black it out totally. You do NOT want that information as it creates liability. Contact the resident and tell them you removed it and to contact the local Fire Chief and give the gate code to the Fire Dept. Chief. You can notate their fire survey that the Chief has access codes etc.**

### **[The 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting](#)**

#### **Introductions:**

Go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves and give their address and maybe what they do – it's a good ice breaker. Be sure to thank them for doing their part to make your community great.

Hand out the information about what a fire plan is and read through it with the group. Keep in mind that at first folks may seem cautious and guarded but that is normal and will change as they get to know the group better. Inform them that to get this up and running that it will likely take 3 to 4 meetings over the next 2 months. A concerted effort up front is needed but then its own momentum should take over.

Talk with your group about how to section out your neighborhood by the guidelines of 20 homes per two dispatcher teams discussed above. Remember this part stays fluid and will change as your fire plan grows and more residents sign up. Use your map and get consensus on all the sections and what to call them. Try to end sections on an even number address to make it easy for everyone to remember example: 2001 to 3500.

### **Designating Area/Section Dispatchers:**

From your group designate dispatchers for each area. It is important that they live in that area or section. If you don't have enough for a particular section or area then you need to recruit neighbors to get involved from those areas. Married couples are considered as 1 Dispatcher and each area needs a minimum of 2 Dispatchers or in other words, two separate household dispatchers.

### **Assignments To Dispatchers: (you can include yourself as a dispatcher or not)**

Hand out 5 Surveys & Survey Cover Letters to each designated dispatcher and ask them each to get a minimum of 2 completed fire surveys from their neighbors and bring them to the next meeting. Preferably you get all 5, but 2 is a good start. Advise them NOT to go alone. Ask the group to each bring a binder to the next meeting.

### **All Dispatchers Must Complete Fire Survey and Conditions Forms:**

Before ending the meeting, have all the dispatchers fill out a fire survey form completely and check that they all fill in their email addresses. You can now take that information and add it to your new "Dispatchers Contact List form" to hand out at the next meeting. Also all must all sign the Dispatchers Conditions form so they understand what is expected of them and that they agree to it.

### **Setting The 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting Date:**

Confirm the location, date and time with the group and be as flexible as possible to their schedules. A week to 10 days should be enough time for them to secure their first group of fire surveys. Be sure to mark your calendar to send an email reminder to all of them a day or two before the next meeting and to bring a binder. **End meeting.**

### **[Preparing For 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting](#)**

Get one large binder to use as the Master Fire Plan Book and put in the signed Dispatcher Condition forms and Fire Surveys. Confirm you have your meeting place reserved.

Fill in the Dispatchers Contact list form with the information on their fire survey forms using their address number, their name (husband & wife), their home phone and cell phone numbers. It's a given you already know the street name so why retype it repeatedly. If they are on a side street then you can add it for clarity.

Make copies for all dispatchers and be sure to keep a copy in the front of the Master Fire Book along with the Agency/1<sup>st</sup> Responder Contact list.

Make copies for all dispatchers of the Agencies and 1<sup>st</sup> Responders Contact list. You can use the list we provide (be sure to check for updated numbers) or create your own.

Make copies for all dispatchers of the Dispatchers Procedures Check list to hand out. Bring a copy of the Phone Tree List & Resources Lists to show the dispatchers. As the fire surveys come in you will be adding that info into those lists.

Note: It gets much easier as time goes on and as new fire surveys come in you simply add the info to the master list in your PC, email out the particulars to all the dispatchers and make a copy of the fire survey to give to those specific area dispatchers for their books. Using Microsoft Excel has proven to be the best program to maintain a master list quickly and easily.

Once you are up and running you only have to update once a year. This is done by dispatchers calling residents in spring and asking if they have any changes. This also helps residents to get to know their dispatchers.

Since you have been updating the master list as info came in through the year, now you just add in the spring updates and print out the new Phone Tree and Resources lists once annually (before fire season) for all the dispatchers and for the ODF, Fire Chief and Sheriff. This also reminds the agencies that you are organized.

#### **Meeting Check List:**

- New Dispatchers Contact Lists for all (filled in)
- Agency/1<sup>st</sup> Responder Contact Lists – copies for all (updated)
- Dispatchers Emergency Procedures Lists – copies for all
- Copy of Phone Tree & Resource Lists to view
- Large Master Fire Plan Binder
- Note Pad for you & Pens for all (just in case)
- A good 3 hole punch is important to bring or pre-punch all forms first.
- Bring extra copies of all forms and lists for any new arriving dispatchers.
- Blank Fire Surveys and Conditions form for new attendees.

### [The 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting](#)

Start the meeting by asking if there are any new attendees. If so have them introduce themselves and then go around the room again and have everyone re-introduce themselves. It takes awhile to have names sink in.

Ask the group if they all brought in completed fire survey forms from neighbors. If some didn't do it then ask if they need help. Some folks are shy about knocking on strange doors and with some support they can overcome it. Once they feel more comfortable with the plan and procedures they will realize they are doing their community a great service and the shyness disappears. Again, they should never do this alone, always go in pairs.

If you have new Dispatcher signup be sure they fill out a fire survey and sign the Conditions form before they leave at the end of the meeting.

### **Collect Completed Fire Surveys:**

Ask all dispatchers to write the name of their "section area" on the top left corner of each survey before handing them in to you. Example: Lower Right Fork Section or Upper Left Fork – whatever the name of the section where the property is located. If they collected fire surveys from an area that isn't theirs then they need to write in the section the residence is located in.

Ask them to give the completed fire surveys to you stacked in order of address: lowest to highest as that is how you are going to organize them in the Master Fire Book. This makes it quick and easy for you to separate them at a glance.

### **Discussion On Engaging and Informing The Community:**

Open discussion on how to inform your community of the Community Fire Plan and how to get everyone signed up. That is your primary goal now that you are accumulating dispatchers. You need to get your Dispatchers fired up by suggesting ways they can make that happen. Be sure to take notes – great ideas fly by quickly.

Is there a store or business close by that would allow you to have a secure drop box for residents to drop off fire surveys? Its good for business and easy for residents. Perhaps a flyer with a fire survey stuck on the outside of resident mailboxes. Talk to ODF and ask if they could help with a direct mail piece to your community that would include their info and your Fire Survey and introduction letter.

Be sure to provide a fax # on the survey form so residents can fax in their Fire Surveys to you. Also determine whose address you can use so residents can mail in their fire survey – ideally the Master Book holder's address.

In our community we went so far as to create a logo and web site where folks could download the fire survey and other community information. It was campy and fun and gave our rural community a little identity.



Move the discussion to Dispatcher Fire Books. Read the following to the group.

### **Creating Dispatcher Fire Books:**

Every dispatcher is responsible to maintain & update their own binder for their area. This binder does not belong to them, it belong to the Fire & Emergency Committee. Dispatchers will only have copies of the resident completed fire surveys for their area (unless you decide differently). Each dispatcher will have the complete neighborhood phone tree and resources list among other things. There are important reasons for this explained below.

### **What each Dispatchers Fire Book should include:**

Blank Fire Surveys with introduction letters attached  
All Dispatchers Contact List  
Contact list of Agencies and First Responders  
Dispatchers Procedures Check List  
Phone Tree List  
Resources List  
Road Block Team List (eventually)  
The Official Fire and Emergency Plan (eventually)  
Copies of completed Resident Fire Surveys (for their area only)

### **Keeper Of The Master Fire Book: (This will likely be you as the organizer)**

The group must now designate the keeper of the Master Fire Book. This person is the overseer of the project and must be willing to do the following:

Collect all completed surveys from all dispatchers and create:

Phone Tree = with home, cell and alternate #s

Email List = needs to be managed by the Master Book keeper only

Resources List = a list showing residents skills, equipment, water sources...

The Keeper of the Master Fire Binder needs easy access to a copy machine so they can copy the completed fire surveys as they come in and provide copies of the completed fire surveys to their perspective area dispatchers. The original completed Fire Surveys should be organized by section and by address and kept in the Master Fire Binder.

### **Why Do Dispatchers Only Have Their Own Area Fire Surveys:**

It was consistently demonstrated that residents did not want their personal information in the hands of all the dispatchers but felt ok with their local section dispatchers having it. The Master Fire Book holds all the original completed fire surveys from all sections and the dispatchers only have copies of their area.

Additionally, residents were ok with the Fire Chief having a copy of all the fire surveys but not comfortable with the Sheriff having all their information. There is no special reason but its enough that they are uncomfortable and if you plan to make this work you have to earn the trust of your community. Each community is different so you need to feel out your community and whatever you decide you need to inform your residents up front. Above all you must keep residents information confidential and secure.

### **Assignments To Dispatchers:**

Hand out another 5 fire survey along with introduction letter to each dispatcher. Review what came out of the discussion and who is going to do what for the next meeting. If you need more dispatchers ask the group to find some more people. The more hands doing the work, the lighter the load.

### **Set Next Meeting Date:**

Confirm the location, date and time with the group and be as flexible as possible to their schedules. A week to 10 days should be enough time for them to secure more fire surveys. Be sure to mark you calendar to send an email reminder to all of them a day or two before the next meeting and to bring their binders. **End meeting.**

## Next Steps

Now that you have a handful of completed fire surveys you can start creating the phone tree and resources list. Ideally you want to create these in an Excel Spreadsheet. Its easy to stick it into a Word document from there if you choose. Excel allows you to sort by address or name or section etc. and that can come in handy when spring updates come in from lots of dispatchers.

You can utilize the spreadsheet we created or create your own. In our case we also kept emails in the spreadsheet but we do not give those out to all the dispatchers. Only the keeper of the Master Fire Binder manages the emails for the same reasons as the fire surveys. For the Phone Tree we included Name, Address, and 3 phone numbers areas. In some cases we had 4 phone numbers so we just made the font smaller to accommodate. Also leave a few blanks at the bottom of each page so dispatchers can write in the info from new sign ups that come in after printing.

### **Creating the Phone Tree:**

In creating the Phone Tree there is an important category: Medical Issues. If a resident lists a Medical Condition in the fire survey then we put a bright red bold asterisk \* next to their name in the Phone Tree. We did this so dispatchers would call them first in case of fire or emergency and also so they could quickly refer to the fire survey to see what kind of medical issue they had – especially if they were on oxygen etc.

Some residents have older relatives living with them that might require help evacuating. Some are hard of hearing and won't hear the phone ring or a knocking at the door during an evacuation. It's critical to pay special attention to those residents.

Additionally we sent out email to all residents asking those with medical issues to also sign up with the Jackson County Disaster Registry through the Rogue Valley Council of Governments. We consider it back up system to our own.

Below is an example of both the excel spread sheet we use as the Master followed with a Word document for the dispatchers.

# Master Fire Book Phone Tree List (Excel Document)

## 2008 FC FIRE & EMERGENCY COMMITTEE PHONE TREE

BEFORE FORK AREA						
	Address	Phone	Work & or Cell #	Addr #'s	Addr #'s	Email #1
<b>Dispatchers</b>						
<i>Mike &amp; Amy Wilson</i>	<b>1057 Fools Creek</b>	<b>582-0000</b>	<b>778-0000/601-0000</b>	<b>659-0000car</b>		
<i>Joe &amp; Mary Johnson</i>	<b>448 Fools Creek</b>	<b>582-0000</b>	<b>941-0000</b>	<b>840-0000</b>		
<b>Residents</b>						
David & Barbara Smith	255 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
David & Barbara Smith	432 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
* David & Barbara Smith	784 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
David & Barbara Smith	786 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
David & Barbara Smith	788 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
David & Barbara Smith	862 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
David & Barbara Smith	865 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
* David & Barbara Smith	913 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235	See Survey		foolscreek@albc.com
* David & Barbara Smith	937 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
David & Barbara Smith	941 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
David & Barbara Smith	943 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
David & Barbara Smith	1055 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235	Home/ale-vacant		foolscreek@albc.com
* David & Barbara Smith	1195 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
David & Barbara Smith	1196 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
David & Barbara Smith	1225 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
David & Barbara Smith	1253 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
David & Barbara Smith	1305 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			foolscreek@albc.com
* David & Barbara Smith	1367 Fools Creek	555-1234	555-1234/555-1235			

Red Asterisk indicated medical condition. Check Survey

SAFE ZONE = NONE

(MS Word Document)

## **DISPATCHERS PHONE TREE**

Date Updated: \_\_\_\_\_

### **BEFORE THE FORK**

<u>Area Dispatchers</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Work &amp; or Cell #</u>	<u>Other #'s</u>	<u>Email</u>
<b>Mike &amp; Amy Wilson</b>	<b>1057 Foots Creek</b>	<b>582-0000</b>	<b>778-0000 /601-0000</b>	<b>659-0000car</b>	
<b>Joe &amp; Mary Johnson</b>	<b>448 Foots Creek</b>	<b>582-0000</b>	<b>941-0000</b>	<b>840-0000</b>	
<b><u>Before Fork Residents</u></b>					
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>255 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		<i>E</i>
<i>David &amp; Barbara Jones</i>	<i>432 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		
<i>David &amp; Barbara Anderson</i>	<i>784 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		<i>E</i>
<i>* David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>786 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		<i>E</i>
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i> <i>Ben Anderson</i>	<i>788 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i> <i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		<i>E</i>
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>862 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		<i>E</i>
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>865 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		<i>E</i>
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>913 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>	<i>See Info</i>	<i>E</i>
<i>* David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>937 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		<i>E</i>
<i>* David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>941 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		<i>E</i>
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>943 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>	<i>Home4sale</i>	
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1055 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1095 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		
<i>* David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1111 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		<i>E</i>
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1185 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		<i>E</i>
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1195 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		<i>E</i>
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1196 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		<i>E</i>
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1225 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		
<i>* David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1253 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1305 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		
<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1367 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-1234</i>	<i>555-1234/555-1235</i>		<i>E</i>
<b>FIRE SAFE ZONE =</b> <b>2222 Foots Creek</b>	<b>Air Evac GPS:</b>				

Ideally you want to do all this on your computer for ease of printing multiple copies. Again you should start in Excel then either cut and paste into a Word document those items necessary or print directly from Excel for the dispatchers copies. If you want to email the Phone Tree and Resources Lists to your dispatchers then use the Word format to convert to a PDF as not everyone has Excel and most can open PDFs. Note: MS Word formatting can go totally screwy when you email them that is why we convert to PDF.

**Creating A Resource List:**

Now that you have a few surveys to work from you can start your resources list. We use the same formula as the Phone Tree. We keep our database in an Excel spreadsheet – its easier. If needed you can always paste it into a Word Document. See example below.

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If possible try to keep all the resources for one topic on one page for easy viewing. Always start with the lowest address number and keep in chronological order – it is essential in an emergency. Also be sure to leave blank spaces below each category (training etc) for dispatchers to add info acquired after the printing of the resource list.

<b>Resource Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Home Phone</b>	<b>Area</b>
<b><u>Training</u></b>				
<i>CERT, CPR, First Aid, Ham Radio</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>256 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	<i>BF</i>
<i>CPR Training</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>862 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	<i>BF</i>
<i>Tree Faller</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>870 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	<i>BF</i>
<i>Ham Radio Operator</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>914 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	<i>BF</i>
<i>Medical Training &amp; Equip. Skills</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>943 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	<i>BF</i>
<i>Search &amp; Rescue &amp; CPR</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1056 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	<i>LRF</i>
<b><u>Equipment</u></b>				
<i>Utility Trailer</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>259 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	
<i>Horse Trailer, Tractor</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>448 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	
<i>Trucks, Lrg Stock Trailer, generator</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>949 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	
<i>1 Ton Truck, R.V. w/ 4 KW Gen</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1051 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	
<b><u>Water Sources</u></b>				
<i>Pond (they own but on 951 FC)</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>941 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	
<i>Swimming Pool - In Ground</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1095 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	
<b><u>Parking, Pasture &amp; Animal Areas</u></b>				
<i>1 Acre Fenced Pasture</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>256 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	
<i>Irrigated Pasture - Animals</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>788 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	
<b><u>Other</u></b>				
<i>Ham Radio Operator</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>255 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	
<i>Scanner</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1057 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	
<i>Dirt Road Access to BLM</i>	<i>David &amp; Barbara Smith</i>	<i>1305 Foots Creek</i>	<i>582-0000</i>	

Defining what dispatch area the resource is in. This is very important so at a glance your dispatchers can see who is closest to their area in a crisis. Example:

2800 Fooths Creek Road – **URF** (which means Upper Right Fork) or **LRF** for Lower Right Fork or **BF** for Before the Fork etc.

We do this so if we need to know everyone that has a tractor or has medical training etc. we can get it all in one place which is handy in an emergency.

If you have a better way, don't hesitate to use it. It's all about what works for your community and your group.

### Preparing for 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting

You should now have your first drafts of the Phone Tree and Resource List. Make complete copies for all dispatchers and ideally punch holes in all copies so they can easily add them into their binders. Later on you can have them do this for themselves.

Make copies of all the completed fire surveys. This can get a bit confusing as you have 2-3 dispatchers for each area so take one area first and print out copies for each dispatcher from that area. Remember, each area only gets their "own area" fire surveys. Mark them with Post It notes with the names and area of that dispatcher. Double check to make certain you have not left anyone out.

*Example: Joe & Mary Martin / Upper Right Fork area.*

Once you have all the surveys copied and marked with Post Its you can add to each of these stacks: a Phone Tree and a Resources List so every dispatcher has one including one for the Master Fire Book. Paper clip each stack to avoid confusion at the meeting.

Congratulations: you have just completed the hardest part of getting your neighborhood Fire Plan off and running. Now email a meeting reminder to all dispatchers.

#### Meeting Check List:

- Dispatcher Packets – labeled

- Blank Fire Surveys & introduction letters

- Blank Dispatcher Condition Forms (for new comers)

- Master Fire Binder

- Note Pad for you and Pens for all

- \*If you have time, do a nice official looking cover page for dispatchers binders.

- It's a nice touch and makes it more official.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting

Go through introductions around the room again and ask if there are any new attendees. If so have them introduce themselves and give them a blank fire survey and conditions form to complete and hand in by the end of the meeting.

Ask if anyone has secured completed fire surveys and if so have them write their area in the upper left hand corner of each (URF or ULF etc) and sort them by address then give them to you. Note: this repetitive action is needed to start each meeting while you are

getting going but once you have a good percentage of surveys you can adopt your own policy on how best to handle updates and new completed fire surveys that come in. It is important that updated or new info be emailed out to all dispatchers as it comes in for them to write into their books. Emergencies can happen at any time and you want to be prepared. Printing new lists will only happen in spring after annual updates are completed and handed out at your annual spring meeting.

Pass out your dispatchers packages and have them put them into their books.

### **Fire Safe Zones:**

You will note an area on at the top or bottom of each area Phone Tree page called "Safe Zone" with GPS coordinance. Once you have organized your teams of dispatchers, reviewed procedures, created a Phone Tree and Resource list and are well on your way to collecting fire surveys, you will be ready to meet with the Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF) Representative for your area to determine what are the Safe Zones for your community.

It is important not to bring in agencies until you are somewhat organized and have collected at least 20-25% of residents fire surveys. These folks are busy and won't take kindly to attending a meeting that has no strong purpose or direction. First impressions are important and lasting.

What is a Safe Zone? It is an area designated by the ODF where folks who are trapped by fire can be extracted by helicopter. It's your last way out when all other options are cut off by fire. It does NOT mean it is safe from fire just that is a possible option that is relatively free from trees or other fire hazards. Get the GPS of this site and give it to ODF, the Fire Chief and the County Sheriff – all have access to air evacuation if needed.

In our case we purchased large tackle type boxes for each Fire Safe Zone. The boxes include rolls of caution tape to prevent frantic people from driving into a residents septic field etc., a air pressured horn to make noise in case smoke is heavy, bright orange flags to wave to get attention, high visibility vests, orange marking paint for parking etc., a hand held sledge for putting in stakes if needed for caution tape and a first aid kit. Those gracious enough to lend their property for a Safe Zone should not have their septic drain field destroyed in the process.

### **Moving the Meeting on:**

Review what areas still need dispatchers and who you can recruit.

Open discussion on ideas to inform the community of the Fire Plan and follow up on your last meetings ideas.

### **Creating an Official Fire and Emergency Plan:**

Discussion on creating the actual Official Fire & Emergency Plan which is basically a report of the history of fires in the area, historic uses of the area such as mining etc. goals and objectives, the need for a plan, defining your community and its identifying its risks, action plan and so forth. You can review our community plan and modify it for your own use. This too is included in electronic form you can easily cut and paste what is applicable to your area and plan or you can create your own from scratch. Either way it is important to create the official F&E Plan

Delegate to willing dispatchers different assignments to gather information and make sure they ask if they can get the data electronically – it saves a lot of time. Again, the Oregon Dept. of Forestry is an excellent resource as is your local Fire District and you might even check the Jackson County Comprehensive Plan. We learned things about our area from the County that none of us were aware.

If possible ask your dispatchers to get you their info asap so you can stick it into the template and that way you may even be able to hand out the first draft at your next meeting. Even better is if you can email the first draft out to the dispatchers before the meeting to proof for you. This gets them up to speed on their own community background and with proofing, many eyes are better than just two.

See the Official Fire and Emergency Plan enclosed in this packet.

### **Dispatcher Assignments:**

Quickly review who is taking on what tasks and note it down.

Ask if anyone needs blank fire surveys & description flyers and hand them out.

Collect fire surveys and conditions forms from any new dispatchers.

Set your next meeting time, place etc.

**End meeting.**

[yes there is more.....](#)

### **Next Steps**

#### **Meeting the Emergency First Responders:**

Once you determine your group is ready you should contact your local Fire Chief and let him know what your community is working on. Ask him if he is willing to review your procedures and Official Fire & Emergency Plan. He may have some handy tips and ideas none of us have thought of. Email him your data and ask him to email his comments.

You can do the same with the ODF and the Sheriff's Dept. as well. A suggestion would be to work directly with the County Sheriff himself and he can determine if he has the time to help you out or if you want to delegate it to one of his deputies. Either way its best if he is personally informed of your communities organized efforts.

Once you have feedback from these agencies and your draft plan is complete, set up a meeting with the Fire Chief and have him come to your community. When you set up the meeting be sure to speak with him directly. Explain you would appreciate having him meet your dispatchers and tour the area to show him your "Safe Zones", as set up by ODF, for evacuation in the case of a catastrophic fire. It's important to tell him this when you set up the meeting so he can try to find the time to preview it on his own and not feel put on the spot with a crowd.

When you meet with the Fire Chief it is nice to have the meeting at someone's home and be sure all your dispatchers are in attendance. You could hold your 4<sup>th</sup> meeting at this location before the Fire Chief arrives. Dispatchers will appreciate one less meeting.

We suggest you do the same with the Sheriff and ODF so they can meet the dispatchers and you can personally give them their own Community Fire & Emergency Plan binders. If you want to combine meetings that is fine too. Each agency manager should have their own binder for your community fire plan that includes, phone tree, resource list, dispatchers contact list, your completed fire plan, dispatchers procedures and in our case the Fire Chief also has copies of all area completed fire surveys.

### **Preparing for the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

You should have more completed fire surveys in hand which should immediately be put into the phone tree and resources list.

You have a couple of choices on how to handle the new completed fire surveys: you can type up one email organized by areas to your dispatchers for them to add to their phone tree and resource lists or you can add it to the Master phone tree and resource list then reprint both to give out to your dispatchers at the next meeting.

Yes it's a pain to do that again but when just getting started you want to get it right and you run the risk of errors when folks are copying information down by hand. Don't forget you have to copy the fire surveys and give them out to the dispatchers for their area only.

Put the original fire surveys into the Master Book and be sure to update your own phone tree and resource list with the new data.

### **Creating an Email Tree:**

We cannot stress enough the importance of an email tree. It's a fast, easy, effective way to inform a great number of people about vital information. Our email tree has become so effective that we have folks from nearby communities asking to be put on it. It is also a great tool to get residents signed up with a fire survey in fact we make it a requirement to be on the email tree, unless they are from a nearby community that may not have its own fire plan in place. It helps them see the importance of having a F&E Plan and motivates them to start their own.

Set up two email phone books or directories: Dispatchers Only and Residents Only. Do not duplicate the dispatchers in the residents list even though they too are residents.

When adding emails to the list be sure to use their last name first for easy reference and put a dash (-) after their name then add their street number. This is important as residents will reply to you to say their email has changed and only give their name and you have to sort through it all to find their old one and change it.

### **It is very important to follow some guidelines with an email tree as folks HATE junk mail and take their privacy very seriously:**

Only use the Email Tree for information directly related to the community.

Never use it for political or personal reasons for yourself or for anyone else.

Always (and I do mean always) mail to the residents as BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) and never directly. Put your email address in the "TO:" area for all.

Always keep email addresses confidential to ONLY the Keeper of the Master Book. Be extra careful not to let those you email to see each others address (use BCC). If forwarding email: sometimes it's best to cut only the information out and paste it into a new email.

TIP: We created a file for all the emails we receive and send out so we have a record to refer to if necessary. Since you are emailing yourself for all BCC's, when it comes in just transfer it to that email file. It's not critical but we have found it useful.

Once you get more than 25 to 30 emails in your Email Tree you will need to send out email in two groups otherwise it may get bounced as SPAM. Some web based email clients allow you to make up groups and sent once to all groups. We use a stand-alone email client as web mail can have hacking vulnerabilities. To make sure both emails get through we add an "A" at the end of the subject line for the first group mailing and a "B" for the second group mailing.

Periodically it's good to print out a complete list of all residents and dispatchers emails and keep it in the Master Book. If ever you have a computer failure you at least have a manual list to work from to get it back. Without that you are a back to reading each and every fire survey or emails etc to find that information again.

#### **Other Email Fire & Services Notification Opportunities:**

There is a great service you can provide to your community by getting signed up for email notifications with some of the agencies that do work in your area or offer services:

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – notification of planned burns
- OSU Extension – forest and land use management, vegetation/landscape info etc.
- Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF) – fuel reduction programs, fire safety etc.
- Your local Watershed Council – issues affecting your watershed.

We forward these emails "as is" directly to the residents, using BCC of course.

ODF offers a great fire notification tool through cell phone texting: Make a list of dispatchers from each area include their name, cell phone number and their particular service provider (example AT&T or US Cellular) and give that list to Brian Ballou at ODF to get signed up for cell phone text message notification of fires in your area.

#### **Meeting Check List:**

- Copies of completed fire surveys to give to each area dispatcher
- Blank Fire Surveys & Survey Description flyers
- Blank Dispatcher Condition Forms
- Master Fire Book
- Note Pad and Pens for all
- Send our email reminder to dispatchers

It is important to discuss all the above mentioned topics with your dispatchers so they get the full measure of the work you are doing as the Keeper of the Master Fire Book. It may be their turn one day and they should understand the responsibilities involved. Of course by the time you hand it over all the hard stuff will be done 😊.

### **The 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting:** (and probably the last for awhile)

Yes you still have to do introductions to keep those names fresh in their minds. Introduce any new comers and if you already have all your dispatchers in place then ask if they would be an alternate should someone drop out. People move away or have other complications in life where they can no longer help out and its nice to know you have easy alternatives to call on.

Pass out the copies of the completed fire surveys to the appropriate dispatchers and new Phone Trees and Resources lists if you opted to reprint them and have them put them into their binders.

**One key issue about security to discuss:** When you replace Phone Trees or Resources List or update Fire Surveys each year in Spring you must have one person collect the old ones from all dispatchers and guarantee they are shredded or burned promptly. Never throw them into the trash can. Also do this every spring when you meet to update your books.

Ask if there are any new completed fire surveys to turn in and again have them list their area on the upper left hand corner and sort by address before turning them in to you. They will start doing this on their own eventually but be consistent so they get it.

Open discussion on how things are going with getting the word out and ask what kind of feedback they have been getting. Is there something else your community wants to see from your Fire & Emergency Committee that you aren't doing?

It's important not to let your dispatchers get discouraged if folks turn down doing a fire survey. Our first year was slow going then as residents realized we meant business they really started coming around. Our first fire scare had residents signing up left and right. Ask everyone for a round of applause for their hard work – they and you deserve it.

### **Annual Public Meetings:**

Bring up the idea of holding an annual spring time meeting for your community where you can invite residents to meet their Area Dispatchers, the Fire Dept. Chief, the Sheriff, and ODF. Also invite the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and the Jackson County Wildlife Supervisor "Cricket" to come and answer questions about bears, cougars, skunks etc.. All of these representatives can talk about programs or helpful tips and residents love it. It also helps lend credibility to your Community Fire and Emergency Plan.

Be sure to ask for a show of hands during the meeting as to who has signed up for the Fire Plan and who would like a fire survey to fill out. We averaged 15 to 20 new sign ups each spring.

Ask the Fire Dept. Chief if they would be willing to provide free Fire Address Plaques for residents at the meeting. Those are the red reflective signs you see all over. They make it easy for firemen to find your address in an emergency. Free is always a draw.

This is also a great way for folks to meet their neighbors and feel like a community that is working together for a common cause – to prevent fires and other disasters from destroying their community.

A couple of tips: have the meeting during a hot weather week, if its raining people are not thinking about fires. Make a billboard or large two sided sign saying boldly **“Community Public Fire Meeting Here Tonight at 6PM”** and put it out early in the morning the day of the meeting (leave it all day) at the meeting location. It has to be big bold writing to be seen by cars racing by to work. Also send out an email to all those already signed up and be sure to mention your guest speakers and free plaques.

### **A few Useful Things for Dispatchers to Know:**

ODF fights the wild land or brush fires and the Fire District handles the house fires. Yes they work collaboratively but that is a good rule of thumb for your dispatchers to know. ***Dispatchers should advise residents to ALWAYS call 911 first in an emergency.***

#### **Bridges:**

If you have a creek on your road many of your residents will have bridges to access their property. The Fire Dept. and ODF are very particular about what they will cross with their expensive equipment. They suggest that home owners get their bridges certified and weight rated by a structural engineer and then copy the Fire Dept. so in an emergency they will get equipment in without delay. If there is any doubt about a bridge, they will not cross it and folks have lost their homes to fire with the trucks sitting only a few yards away.

#### **Locked or Coded Gates:**

Residents with locked gates or gate codes: Dispatchers **do not** accept that information in any form. They are to advise residents to contact the local Fire Chief and give him a key or the gate code and then let their area dispatcher know so they can notate their survey that the Fire Dept. has the access information. It's good to have that noted during a fire when ODF is trying to find access.

As the Fire Chief has probably arrived at your meeting....

Have the dispatchers introduce themselves to the Chief and state the area they dispatch for. He needs to get to know all of you. Be sure to review your procedures with him and ask him if he has any suggestions. This is a great time to ask him for his cell phone numbers (typically they have more than one cell phone). Also ask him to please inform his staff and crews about your fire plan and dispatchers. You may even want to ask to do a presentation to the fire fighters during a training night but that is up to you.

Now is a good time to push the team one more time to get those fire surveys from their areas and hand out a new stack of blank surveys with introduction letters.

Set the next meeting a couple of months out and instruct your dispatchers to drop off new completed fire surveys as they come in. You can always mail them their copies or have the stop by again to pick them up.

Before heading out to tour Safe Zones, present the Fire Chief with his own Community Fire Plan Binder containing your plan, phone tree, resources list, procedures, dispatchers contact list and copies of all the fire surveys broken down into area sections. Inform him that this information is to be kept confidential and secure and that you will provide the Chief with annual spring updates along with the Sheriff and ODF.

## **End the Meeting**

## **Future Steps**

**Road Block Team:** Coordinate this effort with your County Sheriff, set out procedures and recruit volunteers from the community – home owners only.

Now, take the completed fire surveys you received at the meeting and add all the data into the Phone Tree and Resources list and copy the fire surveys for those area dispatchers. Be sure to send out an email of info for all dispatchers to add to their lists. Don't wait to do this because if a fire happens and those folks are not called, it will defeat everything you have worked so hard to accomplish thus far.

Your last order of business before you take a breather is to create the Fire & Emergency Plan Books for the Sheriff and for ODF.

All the forms and info go into those books with the exception of the fire surveys. Again this is based on our community's wishes and you need to determine what works for your community. If they don't mind then you need to include the fire surveys by area and address.

A good practice to do at your next meeting and at every spring update meeting is to read off the phone tree and make sure you all have the same chronological order of fire surveys that match their updated phone tree. Its surprising how a survey can come up missing or a name left off the Phone Tree. It still happens to us after 10 years.

As you have signed up for all the email notifications, all you need to do keep folks informed as things come in. You may even put out an email request to residents to please encourage their friends and neighbors to get signed up.

**You have done it! Congratulations.**