



A YEAR LIKE NONE OTHER PUT ADAPTATION AT THE FOREFRONT.

In 2020, the working environment for fire adaptation (preparedness, response, and recovery) significantly changed as a result of COVID-19. However, the need for services and support remained and in some cases, increased. The everyday work of the Network members was put to the test - and the Network rose to the occasion. Network members relied on each other to quickly find safe, inclusive, and creative ways to accomplish on-the-ground work, host collaborative meetings and events, and ensure their communities received the services they needed. The adaptability and innovation of WAFAC continues to be a source of inspiration - and exemplifies that support for locally-led solutions ensures a strong commitment to community safety and resilience.

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

**WE CONNECT HARD-WORKING COMMUNITIES
FOCUSED ON FIRE**

The Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (WAFAC) is a peer learning network that supports local action, connects people to resources, facilitates results, and influences 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 communities, agencies, and organizations to develop and act on place-based strategies and priorities.

2020 AT A GLANCE



**COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT
CAFE, WENATCHEE**

The Community for the Advancement of Family Education (CAFE) and partners hosted 16 workshops for 54 Latinx community members focused on fire adaptation and leadership development in Wenatchee. Following the workshops, participants formed a steering committee to maintain momentum and collaboratively coordinated community activities, such as: two community wildfire preparedness workshops with 200+ participants in attendance; the creation of a "Wildfire Preparedness Toolkit"; and weekly wildfire risk reduction and community resilience events for "Make a Difference Month." As a result of CAFE's efforts, the City of Wenatchee proclaimed the month of July as the "Fire Adapted Neighborhood Hero Month"!

**COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT
WHATCOM COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #11**

Situated on a small remote island with no gas station, no health care facilities, one grocery store, one transit ferry, one source of power from the mainland, and where junior and high school students attend school on the mainland - there is a very real possibility of island residents being separated from their families and essential resources during a disaster. The community of Lummi Island and WCFD#11 is committed to preparing for disasters such as wildfire. For years, they have been using the Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) Program and building systems to support each other during such an event. By sharing their work with the Network, WCFD#11 has inspired WAFAC members across the state to adopt and adapt MYN program in new ways, such as helping with wildfire recovery and preparedness efforts in Latinx communities.



**EVEN THOUGH WE ARE SAFELY SEPARATED,
WE ARE MORE CONNECTED THAN EVER.**

NETWORK HIGHLIGHTS

FIRE IN THE SHRUB-STEPPE

The sagebrush steppe is one of the largest ecosystems in North America and one of the most threatened due to human land use conversions, non-native plant invasions, and wildfire. Over the last 10 years, we have seen this fragile ecosystem and the communities in this landscape devastated by wildfire. In the midst of planning the first wildfire in the shrub-steppe conference since 2013, COVID-19 postponed efforts. WAFAC quickly pivoted and developed a five-part [webinar series](#) featuring 14 panelists who addressed hallmark considerations of landscape management and fire adaptation in the shrub-steppe: historical and modern fire regimes; fire's impact on communities; critical habitat for threatened and endangered species; and vegetation management for wildfire mitigation, and native and invasive species. Throughout the series, participants engaged in conversations with experts essential to the resilience of the shrub-steppe ecosystem and Eastern Washington communities.

PARTICIPATION IN WAFAC PEER LEARNING EVENTS

WAFAC members transfer knowledge and practice so that we can learn to safely live with wildfire.



ENGAGING COMMUNITIES IN CLIMATE AND FIRE ADAPTATION

In 2014 and 2015, wildfires severely impacted communities across Washington and it became apparent that Latinx residents did not have access to the resources necessary to prepare for, respond to, or recover from wildfire. With place-based organizations leading the way, a framework was developed to work with the Latinx community in the Yakima Valley and Wenatchee, WA. Through the lens of local climate concerns, in this case, wildfire, WAFAC members - [CAFÉ](#), [Nuestra Casa](#), [Latino Community Fund](#) - and a capacity-building nonprofit, [Sachamama](#), engaged, empowered, and mobilized residents to take action. More than 1,000 individuals and organizations joined conversations around this effort and project partners hosted a series of workshops and community events to increase civic engagement, develop leadership skills, and implement wildfire preparedness efforts.



OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

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



PEER LEARNING EVENTS

In Person Events and Workshops

- Engaging Latinx Communities through Climate and Fire Adaptation (12 workshops)
- Northwest Washington Fire Adapted Communities Workshop

WAFAC Virtual Workshops

- Engaging Latinx Communities through Climate and Fire Adaptation (12 workshops)
- Wildfire Preparedness Day: Pandemic Alternatives
- Language Access Needs and Considerations
- 2020 Post Fire Recovery Panel Discussion
- Wildfire Mitigation and Stewardship Crews
- Natural Solutions: Biochar
- Effectively Using Social Media for Fire Adaptation (3-part series)
- Map Your Neighborhood
- Field Journaling for Fire Adaptation
- Intro to Fire Adapted Communities
- WAFAC Annual Workshop (3 days)
- Wildfire in the Shrub-Steppe (5-part series)

To watch the recordings, visit: vimeo.com/wafac

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

GUY GIFFORD

With boots on-the-ground for 30 years, Guy Gifford, Washington Department of Natural Resources Landowner Assistance Forester is a WAFAC mainstay. Guy has provided technical assistance and professional forestry advice to 1,800 landowners across 35,000 acres in Northeast Washington. Guy has helped Washingtonians reduce and remove vegetation on 7,000+ acres through cost-share grants and assisted 30 Firewise USA® sites. With so much ground to cover and requests for assistance, Guy has relied on the diverse perspectives shared by the Network to find creative solutions to some of the most challenging questions, helping to craft wildfire mitigation strategies that work.