

**Evaluation of the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition
Public Meeting of May 12, 2016**

GSSFC Public Meeting

On May 12, 2016, the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition (GSFFC) hosted a public meeting, held at the Santa Fe Community Convention Center at 201 W. Marcy Street in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The public meeting was primarily organized by the GSFFC's Communications Team. The meeting was conceived of as a "Fire Fair," with booths hosted by Coalition partner organizations on different themes related to the Fireshed and wildfire safety. Topics represented in the booths include fire ecology, fire adapted communities, land use history, fire mitigation treatments, firefighter and public safety, and climate change. Booths were hosted by representatives from the Forest Service, the Forest Stewards Guild, the Pueblo of Tesuque, U.S. Geological Survey, and Santa Fe City Fire Department.

The event kicked off at 5:30 pm. Partners staffed their booths, and guests arrived and checked in at the greeting table. Guests were asked to sign in and were given a brief comment card (see Appendix B) and encouraged to fill out an evaluation of the event. A total of 37 people filled out the sign in sheet, and most included their organization and email. Organizations represented among guests who signed in include The Wilderness Society, Pueblo of Tesuque, Santa Fe City Fire Department, Seeds of Wisdom, Santa Fe Fat Tire Society, New Mexico Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute, Carpe Diem, Audubon, Ecotone, Santa Fe Conservation Trust, Santa Fe Search and Rescue, U.S. Geological Survey, Forest Stewards Guild, Trout Unlimited, Sierra del Norte HAD, Monte Serano Neighborhood, Rachel Wood Consulting, New Mexico Forest Industry Association, Santa Fe-Pojoaque Soil & Water Conservation District, New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, and New Mexico Prescribed Fire Council. In total, approximately 60 to 70 people attended the public meeting, including partners.

Guests then circulated and discussed topics with partners at the booths and among themselves. At approximately 6:00 pm, emcee Porfirio Chavarria convened the formal portion of the meeting, and guests gathered in seats at one end of the room. Mr. Chavarria briefly reviewed the mission of the GSFFC, then introduced four speakers. Santa Fe City Fire Chief Erik Litzenberg discussed the city's role in the partnership, highlighting the Fire Department's important activities to protect city resources and mitigate the risk of wildfires in the wildland urban interface. Eytan Krasilovsky, Southwest Region Director of the Forest Stewards Guild, discussed the forest management implications of the GSFFC's work. Governor of the Pueblo of Tesuque Frederick Vigil talked to the group about the Tesuque Pueblo forest and fire management program, and the importance of forests in the Pueblo's culture. The Pueblo of Tesuque is a GSFFC partnering organization. Santa Fe Mayor Javier Gonzales then addressed the audience and expressed full support for the GSFFC project and its mission, noting that protecting the city's watershed is a high priority in his administration.

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Guests then continued discussions in small groups with Coalition members until the event wrapped up at 7:30 pm. As they arrived, guests were given a brief questionnaire to evaluate the event and the GSFFC. Shortly before the event ended, Mr. Chavarria randomly drew several of the questionnaires that were submitted, and the individuals whose names were drawn were awarded fire safety kits donated by the Santa Fe City Fire Department and caps donated by the Forest Stewards Guild.

Purpose

Prior to the meeting, the GSFFC Communications Team established the purpose of the meeting.

- (1) to introduce the concept of a fireshed to the interested public in Santa Fe
- (2) to introduce the Coalition and to explain its mission and values, why the organization exists, who the partners are, and where support comes from
- (3) to make people more aware of the condition of forests and wildlands in the Santa Fe Fireshed, the potential threat of wildfire and some of its possible effects, and some of the mitigating efforts that can be made to reduce the risk
- (4) to begin the process of moving people towards a fire adapted mentality, and to help people become more comfortable with the idea of wildfire as a positive aspect of living the West, as long as we are prepared and live in conditions that keep fires under control
- (5) to give people positive, action items that they can work on that would contribute to building a resilient, fire adapted landscape and community.

Publicity

The Communications Team made a strong effort to publicize the Fire Fair. The team includes the Public Information Officers for the Santa Fe National Forest and for New Mexico State Forestry, who coordinated much of the publicity for the event. Another member of the Communications Team is a specialist in social media, who created Facebook and Twitter accounts for the GSFFC. Other members of the Communications Team assisted in publicity in a variety of ways.

The Communications Team created a press release, which was sent to media outlets in the Greater Santa Fe region. This generated notices and articles in local newspapers. The Team produced a flyer (see Appendix C), which was distributed through email to many contacts, and posted around Santa Fe at public sites, including trail heads, markets, schools, restaurants, and other places interested parties might frequent. The Facebook and Twitter accounts were used to post and circulate messages encouraging the public to attend the meeting. Representatives from Coalition partners were interviewed on local radio, which allowed them to promote the event and spread a lot of information to the public about forest management, fire safety, and the GSFFC's mission.

Evaluation

Two tools were used to evaluate the public meeting. The first was the questionnaire handed out to guests at the welcome table. Sixteen of those in attendance returned questionnaires with an evaluation. The second was a set of orienting questions sent to members of the Communications Team (see Appendix A), with an invitation for partners to respond either to the questions or in their own words. Four of the partners also submitted evaluations from their perspectives.

Public Evaluation

The questionnaire for the public included 11 questions.

The first question asked where the guest heard about the Fire Fair. Two respondents indicated they had read about the event in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*; two had heard about it on the radio; two read about it on local websites, including SantaFe.com; three indicated they heard about the event from friends, neighbors or word of mouth; two heard about the Fire Fair from GSFFC partners, and one each heard about the meeting from the New Mexico Prescribed Fire Council, the Santa Fe Fire Department, and email, coworkers, and a sign on the Dale Ball Trails.

The second question asked where the guest lived. Seven indicated they lived in Santa Fe, the Santa Fe area, or identified specific locations in the City of Santa Fe. Several guests lived near the wildland urban interface around Santa Fe, including in Cuyamungue, Pueblo of Tesuque, Hondo Hills, La Barbaria, La Cueva, and Glorieta. Two guests indicated they live on Hyde Park Road, and one guest lives in San Antonito in the East Hills.

The next question inquired about the guest's field or background, and a subsequent question asked what organization the guest represented. Four guests said their field is community leadership and organization. Other fields or backgrounds represented include engineering, health care, architecture, librarians, computer science, and bike shop. Organizations represented include the Pueblo of Tesuque, Sierra del Norte HAD, Monte Sereno Neighborhood, Santa Fe Fat Tire Society, and the New Mexico Prescribed Fire Council and East Mountain Interagency Fire Protection Association.

Two open-ended questions asked guests to evaluate the Fire Fair, and two other open-ended questions asked guests to evaluate the GSFFC project. In response to a question asking what interested each guest most at the Fire Fair, guests provided the following responses:

- Cooperative planning
- Overview
- Information, able to talk to personnel involved

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- The well-orchestrated approach to the fireshed
- General info and awareness
- General information
- Groups working together for common goals
- Wildfire prevention and education
- Helping our community be firewise
- Containing and preventing fire
- Tesuque Governor's talk
- Outreach

In response to a question about what could be improved at the Fire Fair, guests offered these responses:

- Specific advice
- Orientation of the endeavors
- Printout of maps
- Be more specific about how to prevent fires
- More presentations and general Q&A
- Longer presentation and Q&A
- Very little

Asked how they felt about the GSFFC project after the Fire Fair, and given five choices on a scale ranging from strongly support to strongly oppose, twelve guests indicated they strongly support the project, and one guest indicated support/neutral about the project.

Asked how the Fire Fair has changed their opinion of the GSFFC project, and given three choices, increased support, no change or increased opposition, ten guests said the Fire Fair increased their support for the GSFFC project, and two indicated no change in their support for the project.

Thirteen guests indicated they would like to receive information about upcoming GSFFC events, and provided contact information. Additional comments made by guests included:

- Thank you!
- Great job!
- Best local resources for 2.5 acre risk assessment would be good to know
- Would like more fire prevention and what to do in a fire information. Not enough citizens attended.

Communications Team Evaluation

Following the event, an email was sent to the Communications Team asking for an evaluation of the event. A few questions on planning for the meeting and on the meeting itself were included as a guideline, although Team members were given the option of ignoring the questions and sending their own evaluation. The questions are included in Appendix A.

What went well in planning the event?

- Working together
- Planning a positive, interactive event
- Logistics (arranging the site, arranging for the mayor to speak)
- Press coverage
- Creating a feedback survey
- Informal discussions
- Establishing the goals for the event helped make other aspects fall into place, although it took clarification from other entities
- Initial brainstorming and planning session set a good tone
- The workload was spread around effectively

What could be improved in planning?

- Having a communications plan in place is key before we hold other public events; we need a clear idea of goals and objectives so we'll know when we achieve them
- Start planning earlier
- Have an agenda of the meeting to share with the public along with the flyer
- The flyer we used went through various iterations before it was ready (and some of the early iterations before it was finalized were used in advertising)
- The miscommunication between the Communications Team and the Coalition were a source of frustration; the Coalition's expectations were unclear, information flow and interaction between the Communications Team and the Coalition were frustrating, with a lot of rehashing of the same things, but the positive outcomes of this were it showed interest by the Coalition and the Communications Team pieced things together and took ownership of the public meeting

Was the amount of promotion adequate? How could we do better?

- Promotion for this event was sufficient, but more promotion materials and clear messaging would improve promotion efforts
- Including television in promotion would reach a bigger audience
- Use the "events" sections in papers such as the *SF Reporter* to promote future meetings

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- Ensure everyone in the Coalition promotes the event in their own professional and personal networks

At the public meeting, did the Fire Fair format work well? What steps might improve the format, or what alternatives might we consider?

- The format worked well
- Booths should be labeled by topic, as it was confusing
- More time for group interaction
- A field trip would be a good event
- The format worked well since we don't have any Coalition projects yet
- The next step is to roll out the Resiliency Strategy to the public and getting feedback
- Engaging the public more now will pay off in the future
- Unexpected speeches went longer than planned, but also gave respect to leaders
- There was lots of information on paper and in exhibits, which was kind of boring

Were you happy with the turnout?

- Turnout was good, but we should try to reach younger age groups as well
- Yes, but we could have more
- In the future we need more media coverage and more messages to the public; The issues are time and money – are we willing to put in the effort and do we have financial resources for more outreach?
- The same faces as all events were there
- To reach a larger audience and new participants and those with little knowledge on these topics, plan an educational hike for the public, like the SF Watershed Association does; These are popular and if you combine forest and fire ecology talks with wildlife observation, the public will enjoy it

Were the topics for the booth well chosen? Were all interests represented?

- Good representation
- Mountain bikers could be represented, or a booth on recreation interests, including the ski area, trail organizations, hunting groups, horsemen
- We should have a way for interested groups and individuals to sign onto the Coalition
- More landowners to share treatment stories
- Excellent to have a booth for Pueblo of Tesuque
- A booth for wildlife, fisheries, and water interests would be good

Was the May 12 date OK?

- Surprisingly, it worked well

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- The decision to go ahead was good; It tested the Coalition's structure on a low complexity task, and we passed the test and learned from the experience
- We need a communication plan for all Coalition members to work from
- It was good that we met on the 12th and we now can start implementing what we learned in future events

Frequency of meeting of the Communications Team:

- About once a month for face-to-face meetings, with conference calls in between as needed
- Meetings at about the same frequency; Face-to-face is most effective, although all forms of communication should be used as necessary
- Meetings at about the same frequency; Include time for each topic on agenda

Additional Comments

- More handouts about what homeowners can do to protect their homes
- Extra batteries for the microphone

Conclusion

Overall, the evaluations of the Fire Fair were positive. The format emphasized personal contact with the public, and throughout the evening there were many conversations going on in pairs and small groups around the room. As one participant commented, there was "good energy" in the room. The overall goal of this meeting was to introduce the GSFFC to the public, and to orient the public to the Coalition's goals and partners. The general sentiment from both partners and the public was that this goal was achieved. In addition, spontaneous presentations by the Governor of the Pueblo of Tesuque and the Mayor of Santa Fe communicated support from political entities for the project.

Many members of the public in attendance provided emails and expressed an interest in receiving information from the GSFFC. The Coalition may consider adding a membership category in addition to the partners. Members could be families or individuals who receive periodic updates on the Coalition's projects, as well as notification of public events.

The Coalition also should consider expanding partners participating in the project, to include additional land management agencies, businesses, neighborhood associations, and non-profit organizations. This had upsides and downsides, but should be a topic for discussion at a future meeting.

Thanks to everyone who worked hard to make the Fire Fair a success.

APPENDIX A
Communications Team Evaluation Guidelines

The following questions were sent to the Communications Team as an optional guideline for evaluating planning and the public meeting.

Event Planning

- (1) What went well in planning the event? What did we do that worked best?
- (2) What could be improved in planning for future events? What was the most frustrating part of the planning?
- (3) Did we do enough to promote the event? How could we improve promotion next time? Where else could we promote the event?
- (4) In planning events like this, should we meet face-to-face more often, less often, or about the same? How can we be most efficient and effective – meeting face-to-face, through email, through conference calls, or in another format?
- (5) In retrospect, was the decision to go ahead with the event on May 12 a good one, or do you think we should have postponed the event to a later date?

Public Meeting

- (6) Were you happy with the format for the event? What was good/bad about the format in comparison to other possible formats?
- (7) Were you happy with the turnout? Would the event have been better with more guests or fewer guests? If more, how can we increase turnout in the future?
- (8) Were all the important interests represented in the booths? Who or what perspective was missing?
- (9) Any other thoughts or comments on the planning and the event, and what we might do differently next time?

**APPENDIX B
Comment Card**

The guests completed evaluations using this card, which was handed out when they arrived.

Thanks for being a part of the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition's Fire Fair!

How did you hear about the Fire Fair? _____

Do you live in the greater Santa Fe area? **Yes** **No** **Where?** _____

How would you describe your field/background?

Education **Community Leadership** **Community Organization** **Firefighting** **Media** **Other** _____

What interested you the most at the Fire Fair? _____

What could have been improved at the Fire Fair? _____

Would you like to receive information about upcoming GSFFC news and activities? **Yes** **No**

Email: _____

Organization: _____

After the Fire Fair, how do you feel about the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Project?

Strongly Support **Support** **Neutral** **Oppose** **Strongly Oppose**

How has the Fire Fair changed your opinion of the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Project?

Increased Support **Increased Opposition** **No Change**

Additional comments: _____

Continue on reverse if necessary

Please write your name here for the drawing for door prizes:

Continue comments:

APPENDIX C
Flyer to Advertise the Fire Fair



MAY 12, 2016
5:30-7:30pm
Santa Fe
Convention Center
201 Marcy St, Santa Fe
Peralta & Lamy Rooms

WHAT IS A FIRESHED?

The Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition is a partnership of agencies, private organizations, and concerned citizens who are working to improve the ecology and reduce the fire risk in the forests surrounding Santa Fe

Come to a public meeting organized by the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition to learn!

Information Booths include:

- Fire Ecology
- Fire Adapted Communities
- Land Use History
- Rx Fire, Managed Fire, Thinning
- Firefighter and Public Safety
- Climate Change

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