

City of Medical Lake *Lessons Learned*

Spokane Region
Gray & Oregon Rd Fires

Presented by
Terri Cooper, Mayor
Sonny Weathers, City Administrator

<https://youtu.be/aNe4LZ0VCog?feature=shared>



GRAY ROAD FIRE STATISTICS MEDICAL LAKE, WA

- 🔥 START DATE: 8/18/2023
- 🔥 638 PERSONNEL
- 🔥 SIZE: 10,085 ACRES
- 🔥 240 HOMES
- 🔥 326 TOTAL STRUCTURES
- 🔥 ONE FATALITY



OREGON ROAD FIRE STATISTICS ELK, WA

- 🔥 START DATE: 8/18/2023
- 🔥 653 PERSONNEL ASSIGNED
- 🔥 SIZE: 10,898 ACRES
- 🔥 126 HOMES
- 🔥 384 TOTAL STRUCTURES
- 🔥 ONE FATALITY



3

SPOKANE COUNTY MEDICAL LAKE & ELK COMMUNITIES SIMULTANEOUS FIRES – 3 HRS

- 🔥 41 MILES APART TAXED RESPONSE TEAMS
- 🔥 HIGH WINDS & SMOKE HINDERED AIR ATTACK
- 🔥 COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS - POOR
- 🔥 366 HOMES TOTAL LOSS / 710 STRUCTURES

4

FUNDING RESPONSE

Lessons Learned: TIME

- 🏛️ GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY FUND
- 🏛️ DEPT COMMERCE → STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT → SPOKANE COUNTY EM
- 🏛️ FEMA DECLARATION - SIX MONTHS LATER
- 🏛️ WA STATE - MTCA DEBRIS CLEANUP → DEPT COMMERCE → CITY OF MEDICAL LAKE
- 🏛️ FEMA 2ND AWARD → HUD → COUNTY CDBG →

5

REDUCING RISK AND VULNERABILITY



POWER, WATER AND COMMUNICATIONS

- UNDERSTAND WEAKNESSES AND VULNERABILITIES
- INVEST IN BACKUP GENERATORS FOR CRITICAL FACILITIES
- INVEST IN EMERGENCY BROADBAND BACKUP



PRIORITIZE SAFETY

- KNOW YOUR LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM & REVIEW/UPDATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS
- BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS BEFORE THE EMERGENCY HAPPENS
- KNOW AND COMMUNICATE YOUR EVACUATION PLAN



WUI MANAGEMENT

- COMPREHENSIVELY ADDRESS WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE
- ENGAGE IN LOCAL AND STATEWIDE POLICY MAKING
- WILDFIRES SHOULD BE TREATED THE SAME AS OTHER DISASTERS WHEN IT COMES TO TOXIC DEBRIS CLEANUP



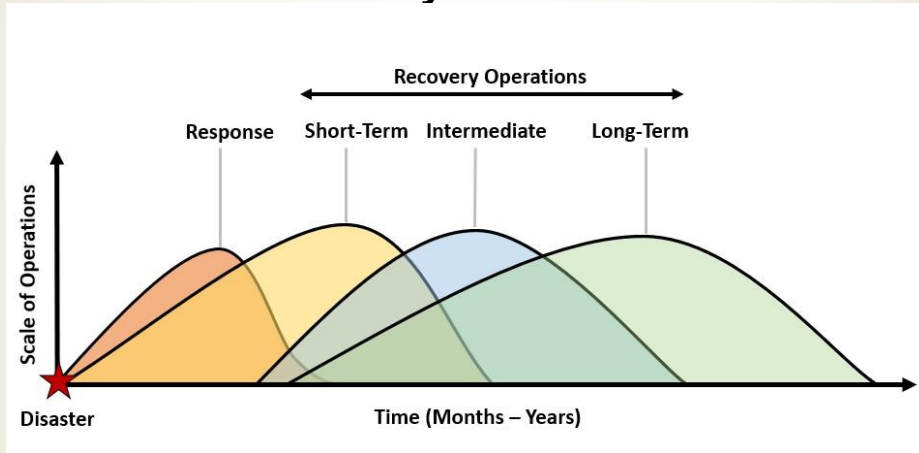
PREPAREDNESS

- CREATE LOCAL LTRG
- OUTREACH
- EDUCATE
- COLLABORATE
- BUILD COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
- UPDATE DISASTER MITIGATION PLAN
- WORK WITH LOCAL DNR AND CONSERVATION BEFORE AND AFTER DISASTERS

6



Recovery Continuum



7

Understand the Journey Stages of Disaster (Timelines)



8

Craig Fugate stated:
 “All disasters start locally and end locally.”
 Your community is in charge of the LTRG!



9



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

“A disaster-ready and resilient Washington State”



Photo of Community Organized Tree Removal Efforts

Photo of Community Organized Tree & Vegetative Debris Removal

What is a Long-Term Recovery Group?

“The Long-Term Recovery Group is a cooperative body that is made up of representatives from faith-based, non-profit, government, business and other organizations working within a community to assist individuals and families recover from disaster.”

-NVOAD, Long-Term Recovery Guide

10

Key Components of an LTRG



1. Disaster Case Management
2. Volunteer Coordination
3. Reconstruction/Rebuild Coordination
4. Unmet Needs Roundtable
5. Donors & Fundraising Mgmt
6. Advocacy
7. Hosting and Coordination with Major VOAD Partners

11

endeavoring to make these fires known for the remarkable recovery more than the devastating losses

12



thank you

Contacts:

Terri Cooper, Mayor
(509) 601-8217

tcooper@medical-lake.org

Sonny Weathers, City Administrator
(509) 565-5050

sweathers@medical-lake.org