

Module 6: Effective Volunteering and Graduation

Introduction

This is the culminating event for your Citizen Fire Academy. At this point, your CFA participants should be fairly knowledgeable on fire behavior and strategies. This module will give them an opportunity to present an individual or community wildfire preparedness plan and talk about volunteer opportunities.

The volunteering portion of the module should be viewed as the culmination of efforts to connect the class with what they need to be effective volunteers who improve community resilience to fire. It is not a stand-alone module mentioned only at the end. Throughout the program, the CFA facilitator should refer to the volunteer organizations, activities, and projects that are open to CFA participants.

In order to build capacity for fire resilience within the greater community, your class will need to learn how to use the information they have learned and share it with neighbors and friends. The volunteering portion of the module is designed to help participants hone the necessary skills for communicating with their communities, both friends and strangers. Additionally, exercises in this module should guide participants to meaningful volunteer activities that align with their talents and abilities.

After the end of the CFA program, it will be important for the facilitator to stay engaged with the class as participants complete their volunteer hours. The CFA facilitator should be ready to connect CFA volunteers with volunteer opportunities that they come across.

The wildfire preparedness plan presentations will vary depending on your students. Past experience shows that forest landowners will more likely focus on individual plans, whereas homeowners in neighborhoods will focus on neighborhood-scale preparedness planning. CFA participants may even present research projects on different fire-resistant

plants or mulches. It is up to you to decide how flexible to be and how creative you want the participants to be!

This is also your opportunity to celebrate everyone's hard work and recognize participants for their efforts in this program and in the community, which is why we recommend closing this event either with a lunch or dinner. If funds are limited, you could even do this as a potluck. Consider inviting leaders from fire and forest-related management agencies to this event. It gives them the chance to see how capable your CFA graduates are, and the graduates will feel valued.

Room setup

There are a couple of setup options depending on your preferences. You will need enough space for presentations, discussion, and video. This module can be held in a traditional schoolroom layout, or, for a more conversational module, a half-moon/cabaret layout style is appropriate. (See "Room setup," page 7)

If you are serving a meal during the module, it is recommended that access to a kitchen be available.

Total time needed

Classroom: 4 to 5 hours

Equipment needed

- Computer with PowerPoint
- LCD projector
- Laptop and projector screen
- Internet connection for the online volunteer hours report form
- Flip chart, markers, stickers, and easel
- Handouts
- Graduation certificates or badges
- Refreshments or kitchen supplies

Background resources

- “Prior Collaboration Improves Wildfire Response and Recovery” https://ewp.uoregon.edu/sites/ewp.uoregon.edu/files/WFRes_FS2_Raton.pdf
- “Homeowners Associations as Promising Structures for Wildfire Risk Reduction” https://ewp.uoregon.edu/sites/ewp.uoregon.edu/files/WFRes_FS1_Caughlin.pdf
- “Private Forest Owners and Wildfire Risk” http://www.nwfirescience.org/sites/default/files/publications/NWFSC_RB2.pdf
- “Why People Don’t Take Action” activity
- CFA volunteer service activities
- Volunteer hour report form
- Volunteer hour online report form <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/160EBNgCgIHvUu27QHA1II4f9PwmsBdfoJ1u9vq2ev9Y/viewform>

Host prep

- Recruit panelists
- Familiarize instructors with objectives, content, agenda, and structure of session
- Communicate with CFA participants to confirm location and time
- Remind participants to bring their presentations
- Set up a meeting with local agencies, organizations, and districts to develop tangible options for CFA volunteers
- Edit volunteer jobs template to include locally developed volunteer options
- Recruit panelists from partnering organizations who are willing to discuss volunteer options. If possible, include Firewise community representatives to present on how to develop Firewise communities.
- Request that panelists prepare a 2- to 3-minute talk to discuss their agency and how volunteers can help
- Familiarize host and panelists with objectives, content, agenda, and structure of session

- Familiarize CFA participant presenters with presentation equipment and structure of session
- Reserve classroom
- Confirm projector, laptop, and microphone (if needed for presentations)
- Set up room
- Confirm catering (if applicable) or create an email list for a potluck

Class prerequisites

- Read one or more of the following documents
 - “Prior Collaboration Improves Wildfire Response and Recovery”
 - “Homeowners Associations as Promising Structures for Wildfire Risk Reduction” (good for groups where many CFA participants are a part of an HOA)
 - “Private Forest Owners and Wildfire Risk” (good for groups where many CFA participants are forest landowners)
- Prepare a 3- to 5-minute presentation on wildfire preparedness plans. Presentation times may be altered depending on the class size.
- Written volunteer plan
 - Prior to this module, participants should be encouraged to fill out the volunteer plan portion of the wildfire preparedness plan as much as possible and continue working towards its completion during the module.

Learning objectives

Participants will:

- Apply what has been learned throughout the program to a wildfire preparedness plan for their personal property or neighborhood
- Recognize factors that may influence public perception of local mitigation activities
- Recognize how learning styles affect group dynamics and how different people are best engaged
- Differentiate between communication techniques that motivate (safety, health, ecology) versus those that do not (fear) for

effective communication with neighbors whose perception of risk may vary

- Manage volunteer hours using the worksheet
- Prepare to serve as CFA volunteers

Participants will be recognized for their efforts in the program and be encouraged to continue learning.

Behavior objectives

Participants will:

- Present wildfire preparedness plans
- Use individual skills to contribute to CFA outreach and community fire resilience
- Develop volunteer opportunities that are effective and personally meaningful
- Support, engage, and report to appropriate agencies
- Effectively communicate with neighbors and friends on the dangers of and mitigation strategies for wildfire
- Instruct community members on how to access information, resources, and contacts to answer questions
- Develop a sense of ownership and responsibility to complete volunteer hour requirements through project-based work
- Effectively record hours and gauge impact

Delivery methods

- Presentations or video
- Panel discussion
- Break-out exercises

Instructor guidance

This should be one of the most fun modules of the course and an opportunity to get CFA participants excited about the next phase of the program. It is recommended that this module be conducted in a setting that facilitates discussion between participants, presenters, and panelists. The CFA facilitator should meet with forestry- and fire-related agencies, organizations, and community groups prior to this module to discuss possible volunteer options.

During CFA participant presentations, keep the environment light and positive, as it can be difficult for some adult learners to speak in public. Three to 5 minutes for presentation and 2 minutes for questions and answers are usually sufficient. If there are no questions from the group, it will be up to you to ask questions that tie concepts together from prior modules. Be strict on time so that boredom is not an issue.

Volunteerism is an important part of the program, even if the CFA facilitator opts to not make volunteer hours mandatory. As volunteers, participants solidify concepts learned throughout the course by putting them to use, whether helping friends and family conduct HIZ assessments, encouraging their communities to take proactive measures in wildfire preparedness, or assisting with fire preparedness projects in their community.

Assign one or more of the three short articles listed under “background resources” as a class prerequisite or use them in class to spark a discussion on how collaborative efforts can tangibly benefit wildfire preparedness and response.

Throughout this module, the CFA facilitator should encourage participants to offer to conduct informal assessments for their neighbors, friends, family, and larger community. Remind them that doing so can go towards completing their required volunteer hours.

Sample agenda

Location: Classroom

1:00 p.m. Introduction of agency panelists

1:15 p.m. Discussion on assigned reading material

1:30 p.m. “Why People Don’t Take Action” and role-play activities

2:00 p.m. Participant presentations of wildfire preparedness plan

2:45 p.m. Refreshment break

3:00 p.m. Continuation of presentations

4:00 p.m. CFA volunteer video and/or a presentation from a former CFA volunteer

4:15 p.m. Facilitated discussion: Agency and Firewise community panel discussion with participants on volunteer opportunities

5:00 p.m. CFA participant recognition and graduation ceremony. Informal discussion of volunteers' plans, continuing education, and communication. May be done in conjunction with dinner to save time.

5:30 p.m. Dinner and program evaluations

6:30 p.m. Wrap up and adjourn

Content outline

- Introduction and overview of agenda
- Wildfire preparedness plan presentations
- Who is in your community: Communicating with and understanding your audience
 - Review one or more of the three short articles: “Prior Collaboration Improves Wildfire Response and Recovery,” “Homeowners Associations as Promising Structures for Wildfire Risk Reduction,” or “Private Forest Owners and Wildfire Risk”
 - Ask participants about responses they have heard when talking about fire
 - Write down perceptions and brainstorm methods to reach those who do not know or do not care
 - “Why people Don’t Take Action” exercise
 - Role-play interactions with the public
- Making an impact in your community
 - Presentation or video of former CFA or Firewise volunteers regarding the work they completed and challenges they faced
 - Round robin conversation with CFA participants about what they want to do as volunteer projects
 - Additional CFA volunteer job descriptions
 - Presentation on possible volunteer ideas for those who haven’t selected a project or who want or need additional hours

Exercises

“Why Don’t People Don’t Take Action”

Use the worksheet to go over several common reasons why landowners and homeowners do not take action to prepare for wildfire. Have participants suggest additional reasons if they know of any.

Write out the reasons on a chart or whiteboard and distribute stickers to participants. Have each participant put stickers next to what they consider to be the top three reasons why people in their neighborhood don’t take action. The CFA facilitator should then go through the reasons that received the most dots. As a group, discuss possible solutions to these reasons.

After the exercise is completed, take some time to have participants role-play conversations between CFA volunteers and the public using reasons from the list.

Alternative delivery methods

This module may be split up in two shorter modules, one focused on effective volunteerism and one on wildfire preparedness plans and graduation.

If modules are done separately, the volunteer module will take about 2.5 to 3.5 hours, including the “Why People Don’t Take Action” exercise, panel discussions with agency representatives, and discussion about volunteer plans. The written volunteer plan may be assigned as homework to be turned in during the graduation module, instead of being assigned as a class prerequisite.

A standalone graduation module’s required time will vary depending on whether or not a meal is served. This module could last from a few hours to half a day. Completed wildfire preparedness plan presentations will be given at this module, including each CFA participant’s volunteer plan. Agency representatives may not be available if they have already served as panelists during the volunteer module; however, it may still be a good idea to invite them to speak on CFA participant progress and future plans.

Suggested homework

There is no homework for this module.

Self-assessment questions

One question for each of the short documents if assigned as a class prerequisite.

“Prior Collaboration Improves Wildfire Response and Recovery”: What were some of the factors that helped the community of Raton prepare for and respond to wildfire?

“Homeowners Associations as Promising Structures for Wildfire Risk Reduction”: What are the ways that Homeowners Associations can help prepare for wildfire?

“Private Forest Owners and Wildfire Risk”: What are the four types of forest landowners identified in the survey? What type of forest landowner category fits you the best?