



Community to Community Fund Report – Lake Christine Fire

The Lake Christine Fire ignited in Basalt on July 3, 2018. By July 4, much of the hillside above the town was engulfed in flames and those living near the historic downtown were evacuated. Throughout the day fire departments from throughout the region banded together to fight the fire and seemed to be gaining the upper hand. However, in the early morning hours of July 5, a dramatic shift in the wind sent a wall of flames racing toward the neighboring community of El Jebel, home to hundreds of low-income families. Seemingly against all odds and all through the night, the local fire fighters held the line and kept the fire from igniting the mobile homes and businesses in El Jebel. When the sun rose on July 5, it was bittersweet. While most of the community was saved, three homes were destroyed, displacing five families, and more than 1,800 people evacuated to emergency shelters.

Throughout the month of July, fire fighting efforts continued. The fire grew and moved up Basalt Mountain and into the wilderness, although never far enough away from homes and structures for people to feel safe. Helicopters were making laps to drop water on hot spots. Fire fighting teams from around the country trekked into the wilderness each day to build and fortify containment perimeters and beat back the flames.

While evacuated residents were soon allowed to return to their homes, they remained on high alert, ready to flee at a moments' notice. And when they returned home, they found spoiled food and everything smoke-saturated.

Fire Statistics

- Ignited July 3, 2018, around 6:00 pm
- Cause: tracer rounds at shooting range
- 12,588 acres burned
- 3 residential structures lost; 5 families displaced
- Over 500 homes and 1,800 people evacuated
- Over 500 firefighters at peak response
- Estimated firefighting cost: \$17.1 million
- 100% containment October 9

Disaster Philanthropy

Foundations often play an essential role in responding to disasters. In addition to funding, they can offer support in other ways by leveraging their relationships and expertise to help organizations and civic leaders respond to all stages of a disaster. Effective disaster philanthropy not only addresses the immediate relief and short-term recovery of impacted communities but also pays attention to long-term needs such as planning, preparedness, and mitigation.

In responding to the Lake Christine Fire, ACF tapped into its network of foundations and philanthropic resources to learn more. Through these connections ACF learned best practices and approaches to handling disaster philanthropy when it's in your own backyard. And ACF gained important insights, including:

- Assessment of damage and critical needs in the aftermath can inform early response priorities and long-term strategies.
- Recovery is a marathon, not a sprint. It takes time to discern the long-term needs and it is essential that the distribution of donations is patient and flexible.
- Planning and preparedness lay the groundwork for effective response.

Guided by philanthropic strategies and best practices from Center for Disaster Philanthropy, Aspen Community Foundation uses the following framework for disaster philanthropy:

Response – addressing the immediate needs of individuals and families, particularly those who are low-income, whose lives were seriously affected by the disaster

Recovery – providing continued health and social services for survivors, helping first responders to replenish depleted supplies and equipment, and supporting environmental restoration efforts

Mitigation – supporting efforts to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impacts of natural disasters

Preparedness – creating networks of government, emergency management officials, local first responders, and nonprofits to effectively and efficiently respond to future disasters; raising community awareness and communicating vital information about disaster preparedness and planning



Community to Community Fund

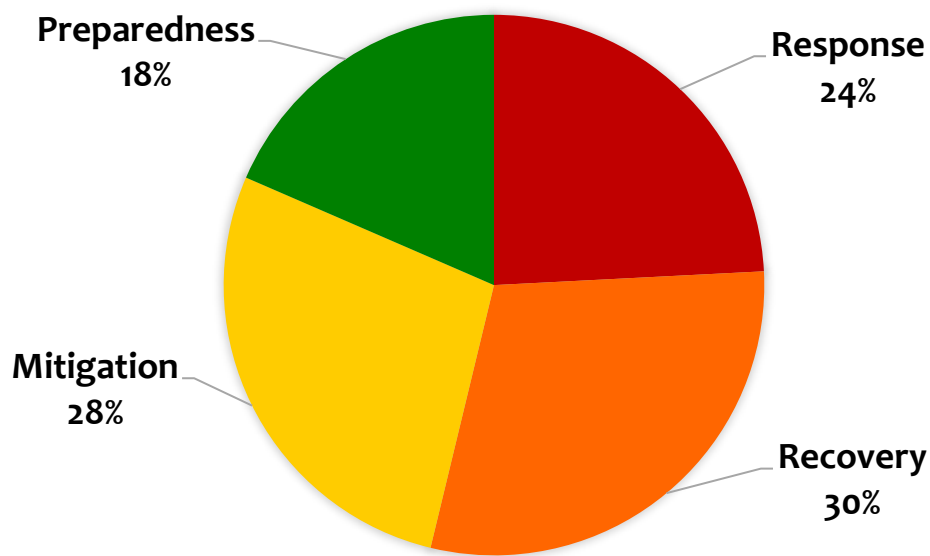
Aspen Community Foundation's Community to Community Fund for disaster relief provides a vehicle for donors to support the immediate and long-term needs of disaster victims and their families as well as impacted agencies and communities. Monies from this fund are disbursed to provide immediate relief as well as to organizations and entities with the capability to address the short- and long-term needs of individuals, families, and communities.

Since Hurricane Katrina, Aspen Community Foundation has channeled local funding to help other communities impacted by natural disasters. We know what it is like to provide funding for disaster relief and recovery. Lake Christine showed us what it means to be involved, on the ground, helping our community recover from disaster.

While the community is extremely fortunate that the damage from the Lake Christine Fire was not more extensive, the IRS limits how contributions to the Community to Community Fund can be used. The Fund may be used to address the immediate response to provide shelter and necessities to all affected. Beyond that, however, contributions cannot be distributed to individuals merely because they are victims of a disaster; potential beneficiaries must lack resources to obtain necessities. Of the five families who lost their homes, only two would potentially qualify and were helped in various ways to obtain replacement housing; additionally, four of the five families benefited from Go Fund Me campaigns. Beyond this immediate response, donations may be used to affect public benefit.

Donations for the Lake Christine Fire showed the generosity of our region and beyond. Thus far, \$292,648 has been contributed by 316 donors.

DISBURSEMENTS



RESPONSE

- Grocery Cards – ACF purchased 500 grocery cards and together with Valley Settlement, Mind Springs Health and the Mobile Intercultural Resource Alliance (MIRA) Bus distributed them to low-income evacuated residents to replenish pantries and purchase cleaning supplies and other household items.
- Clothing – ACF purchased essential items such as underwear and diapers and delivered them to evacuation shelters.
- Needs Assessment – Valley Settlement canvassed low-income neighborhoods in El Jebel and Basalt to identify ongoing needs
- Resource Outreach – Valley Settlement worked with the MIRA Bus to connect low-income residents to government and nonprofit services.

RECOVERY

- Environmental Restoration – Roaring Fork Conservancy’s plan to restore the burned area
- Resettlement Support – ACF is working with nonprofit partners to identify and meet the material needs of low-income residents as they return home or find replacement housing
- Continued Health and Social Services – ACF is working with nonprofit partners to help residents access mental health and other services.

MITIGATION

- Wildfire-Adapted Communities Toolkit – ACF is supporting fire departments in outreach to local neighborhoods and towns about specific steps to reduce their wildfire risk.
- Strategic Communications Plan – ACF is strategizing with Colorado Public Radio on ways to develop real-time radio reporting capacity for local disasters.

PREPAREDNESS

- Community Fire Forums – ACF hosted three public meetings about the Lake Christine Fire and to educate about wildfire preparedness and mitigation.
- Disaster Playbook – ACF is assembling a playbook outlining philanthropic roles and responsibilities for prevention, preparedness, immediate response, and long-term recovery in the event of future disasters.
- VOAD – ACF will reinstate a regional VOAD, a network of nonprofit, faith-based, and other social services groups that coordinate efforts to ensure more efficient service delivery to people affected by disasters. The VOAD achieves this by facilitating effective cooperation, coordination, communication, and collaboration at all community levels in advance through shared planning, operational agreements, and funding expectations.