



Wintergreen Fire & Rescue Department 2019-2024 Strategic Plan





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Executive Summary/Introduction

Planning is essential for the success of any public or private undertaking. Strategic planning provides organizations with a collaborative, comprehensive and consistent guide to ensure the best possible outcomes for the organization and the community it serves.

This document provides the Wintergreen Fire and Rescue organizations with the necessary path toward the future growth and success of the organizations. This is a long-term path - not something that is to be achieved in one or two years.

Wintergreen Fire and Rescue has conducted a comprehensive review of its Mission, identification of operational mandates, a stakeholder analysis, and a comprehensive strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats/challenges (SWOT/C) analysis.

A core team of Wintergreen Fire and Rescue members worked collaboratively to refresh the organization's commitment to excellence and provide a path toward future success. The commitment of the Wintergreen Fire and Rescue strategic planning team to produce this document is commendable.

The process does not end with the development of this plan or by simply establishing goals and objectives. To be successful the Strategic Plan must be considered in the annual budgeting and planning process. Effective execution of the annual budget, as well as its goal related objectives (which are the building blocks of the strategic plan), must become fundamental to the day-to-day operations of the department. Each organizational unit and member must function in concert to effectively and efficiently implement this plan which will require continuous review and revision to assure continued relevance and focus.

The Wintergreen Fire and Rescue Strategic Plan is organized into three focus areas: **Service Delivery**, **Resources/Funding** and **People**. Each of the focus areas contains several *Initiatives (Goals)*, for which one or more *Action Strategies (Objectives)* and *Implementation Plans* have been defined to assist in achieving the stated Initiatives. The elements of the Wintergreen Fire and Rescue Strategic Plan will be managed by the senior leadership of the organization, but will be implemented by members at various levels within the organization.



Organizational Background

Both the Wintergreen Fire Department and the Wintergreen Rescue Squad began in the 1970s when Wintergreen Resort was in its early stages.



Archive - Wintergreen's first fire engine

The Fire Department was known then as the Wintergreen Fire Brigade and kept its only fire engine in a shed at Golf Maintenance.



Archive - One of the first ambulances at Wintergreen

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The Rescue Squad had one transport vehicle which was a Chevy Suburban, typically kept at what is now the Food and Beverage loading dock. Both departments were initially staffed only by volunteers, however the demand for emergency services quickly led to a career/volunteer department.

In the late 1980s, the mountain station (Station1) was completed. It has been expanded twice, with the most recent expansion taking place in 2007 to accommodate a ladder truck. In the early 1990s, the need was identified for a second station in the valley, which was built in the Stoney Creek community in Nellysford (Station 2). The Stoney Creek community grew quickly and in the late 1990s the size of Station 2 was doubled. In 2014, Station 2 was expanded again to accommodate a new Tanker and larger ambulances. The stations are owned and maintained by the Wintergreen Property Owners Association (WPOA).



Station 1 - 1980



Station 1 - Currently

The Wintergreen Rescue Squad is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization comprised of approximately 35 volunteers. Volunteers meet on the second Tuesday of every month to cover training topics presented by the career staff and experts in relevant areas of EMS. Volunteers are trained from the level of Driver to Paramedic. Every ambulance which responds from the Wintergreen Rescue Squad will have at least one volunteer on board. The Wintergreen Rescue Squad was named “Outstanding EMS Agency” for the Thomas Jefferson EMS Council in 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2019.

The Wintergreen Fire Department is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization comprised of approximately 10 volunteers. Volunteers complete much of the same training as career staff. Typically, volunteers meet emergency apparatus at the scene and provide critical support. The Insurance Safety Office has rated the Wintergreen Fire district a “2”, which many moderately-sized cities have yet to obtain. In 2017, the Wintergreen Fire Department established its first Fire Auxiliary. The auxiliary maintains a stock of food and supplies to provide immediate support to the firefighters and responders and is ready to respond 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The auxiliary also supports on-scene fire operations when applicable.

Wintergreen Fire and Rescue is a department within the WPOA. Employees (career staff) are required to be fully cross-trained for both fire and advanced medical emergencies. The full-time and part-time employees provide 24-hour fire and rescue coverage for both Wintergreen mountain and valley communities. Since 2006, Wintergreen has provided EMS coverage for all of Nelson County through a

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contract arrangement by staffing a station in Lovingsston. Wintergreen Fire and Rescue staff respond to nearly 3,000 incidents per year. All costs associated with the county-wide EMS program supported by Wintergreen Rescue Squad are paid by Nelson County.

Wintergreen Fire Department and Wintergreen Rescue Squad each have a volunteer Board of Directors responsible for administrative and business aspects of the agencies. Operationally, Wintergreen Fire and Rescue uses the "strong Chief" model, whereby the Chief, employed by WPOA, is responsible for all operations related to the staff and volunteers.

Combined, Wintergreen Rescue Squad and Wintergreen Fire Department operate many pieces of equipment. This equipment is as complex as a 95' Aerial Platform truck or as simple as an SUV used for rapid response. Because of the extreme terrain, almost all of the equipment has to be specialized and is therefore more expensive than equipment used in an urban environment for emergency services. The capital needs of both departments are funded by private donations through annual fund drives. Operating expenses for responses outside the first-due area are reimbursed by Nelson and Augusta counties. All staff personnel expenses are paid by WPOA. Volunteers serve as a force multiplier for the department and keep overall costs down. Wintergreen continues to strive to expand this model of hybrid volunteer/career emergency services personnel.

A 4-story training tower and a 48-ft smoke maze trailer were completed in 2013. Training will continue to be a high priority for both agencies. In the future Wintergreen could become a training destination for many of the courses required of EMS and firefighting professionals but rarely offered in central Virginia. This may include training in basic life support, advanced life support, firefighting, and technical rescue classes. Continued access to the Tuckahoe Clubhouse (WPOA Facility) is required to meet this objective.





Station 1 - Rope Training Tower

Mission Statement

The mission of Wintergreen Fire and Rescue organizations is to preserve life and promote health and safety in our Wintergreen and broader Nelson County community through fire prevention, fire suppression, and effective pre-hospital treatment as well as technical rescue activities.

Collaboration with all public safety partners is paramount to accomplish our mission.

Vision Statement

To establish and maintain a comprehensive and effective Fire and EMS system for the Wintergreen and broader Nelson County Virginia community that provides for the health and safety of its residents and visitors.



Process

The Wintergreen Fire Department and Wintergreen Rescue Squad's strategic planning process was initiated in November 2018 at the request of the Wintergreen Chief of Fire/Rescue. A team including all Chief Officers of Wintergreen Fire and Rescue and several volunteers met to discuss the need for and expected benefits of such an effort. Initial agreement was reached that a strategic plan would be beneficial. Agreement was also reached to review several Fire and Rescue Strategic Plans of similar organizations. The team reviewed the John M. Bryson Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations methodology and agreed to follow this as a general guide for this effort. Bryson describes strategic planning as "A deliberate, disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does and why it does it" (Bryson, 2010, p 256-257). Conceptually, strategic planning can be viewed as the "front end" of a strategic management system which links budgeting, performance measurement, and performance management. (Bryson, 2018, p 23).

The key steps in the Bryson basic methodology are:

- Initial agreement
- Determine organizational mandates
- Clarify organization vision and mission statement
- Identify stakeholders and analyze their influence on the organization
- Assess the external environment (opportunities and threats/challenges)
- Assess the internal environment (strengths and weaknesses)
- Identify strategic issues
- Formulate goals, objectives, and strategies to deal with strategic issues

To align with the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services State Strategic and Operational Plan the following terminology was adopted for the Wintergreen Fire and Rescue Strategic:

- Goals are *Initiatives*
- Objectives are *Action Strategies*
- Strategies are *Implementation Plans*

The draft plan was circulated to certain key stakeholders (the Board of Directors of Wintergreen Fire and Rescue, career and volunteer staff, and WPOA Board of Directors for review and suggested changes. Individuals (career or volunteer) will be assigned responsibility for developing performance measurements, monitoring progress and updating the status of each Implementation Plan. A Strategic Plan Administrator will be appointed by the Wintergreen Chief of Fire/Rescue to monitor and report semi-annually on the status of the implementation plans to the appropriate board of directors.



Service Delivery Focus Area

Initiative SD1 - Encourage a comprehensive community wellness & fire safety program for citizens to foster improved community health practice

Action Strategy SD 1a – Increase community outreach/public relations

Implementation Plan SD 1a.1 Increase number of Wintergreen residents with Healthy 12-leads on file in accordance with Medical Director guidelines.

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of EMS Operations or designee

Implementation Plan SD 1a.2 Increase presence at public events, complete biannual new owner orientation

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of EMS Operations or designee

Implementation Plan SD 1a.3 Increase public education opportunities for fire safety and prevention

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations or designee

Action Strategy SD 1b – Offer home health/fire safety inspections

Implementation Plan SD 1b.1 Include mobility assessment of residence

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations or designee

Implementation Plan SD 1b.2 Include fire safety inspections

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations or designee

Implementation Plan SD 1b.3 Create internal checklists for mobility and fire safety inspections

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations or designee

Implementation Plan SD 1b.4 Create pamphlet to include in new resident welcome packages, public events, and mailings

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations or designee



Initiative SD2 - Provide the community with efficient and appropriate emergency fire responses

Action Strategy SD 2a – Review procedures and protocols

Implementation Plan SD 2a.1 - Keep up with the latest science, publications, and training to stay on top of the latest trends and practices involving fire and rescue

Timeline: Continuous

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations, or designee

Initiative SD3 - Establish relationships, partnerships, and work collaboratively with our regional emergency management partners to enhance and effectively deliver public safety services

Action Strategy SD 3a – Develop an exit strategy in case of natural or man-made disaster situations

Implementation Plan SD 3a.1 - Coordinate with WPOA to establish an audible (siren, etc.) warning system for residents in the area of Wintergreen

Timeline: 1 January 2021

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue

Implementation Plan SD 3a.2 - Coordinate with WPOA and government agencies to develop a plan to have 2nd access road from the North end of Wintergreen property on mountain.

Timeline: 1 January 2022

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue

Implementation Plan SD 3a.3 - Coordinate with WPOA to increase awareness of the community evacuation plan with Wintergreen residents

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue, Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations

Action Strategy SD 3b – Increase residents' awareness of the system for reporting Special Health Circumstances, such as mobility issues, power requirements, etc.

Implementation Plan SD 3b.1 - Add information to fund drive mailing, Facebook posts, and Wintergreen Fire and Rescue website

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Facebook Administrator, Chief of EMS Operations, Wintergreen Rescue Squad Treasurer

Implementation Plan SD 3b.2 - Create pamphlet to include in public relations events and mailings to include location where residents can report Special Health Circumstances

Timeline: August 2020

Lead: Wintergreen Rescue Squad Treasurer



Action Strategy SD 3c – Increase communications with local public service departments (police, National Park Service, neighboring fire departments) to improve service delivery

Implementation Plan SD 3c.1 Maintain and/or foster current or new relationships with public service departments, local, state, and federal government organizations.

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue

Implementation Plan SD 3c.2 Incorporate regional fire and EMS drills into annual training

Timeline: Initial August 2020 and ongoing after

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations

Initiative SD4 - Provide progressive EMS service delivery

Action Strategy SD 4a – Improve staffing for all ALS patient transports

Implementation Plan SD 4a.1 Fund and hire EMT level providers, one per shift to supplement ALS providers

Timeline: 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue

Implementation Plan SD 4a.2 Train and/or recruit volunteers to the EMT level or above

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of EMS Operations

Action Strategy SD 4b – Evaluate the need, requirements, and then develop the capability to handle specialty patients

Implementation Plan SD 4b.1 Develop treatment plans for bariatric patients, ventilatory patients, and any other specialty patients as needed and warranted.

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of EMS Operations

Action Strategy SD 4c – Develop agency specific protocols

Implementation Plan SD 4c.1 Use base set of protocols and add desired procedures and medications within the provider's scope of practice

Timeline: December 31 2019

Lead: Chief of EMS Operations

Implementation Plan SD 4c.2 Update agency specific protocols as needed based on research and science data

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of EMS Operations



Action Strategy SD 4d - Become desired agency for EMS pilot programs

Implementation Plan SD 4d.1 Work with local hospitals to test new products, procedures, and technology

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of EMS Operations

Initiative SD5 - Provide safe and efficient technical rescue response services

Action Strategy SD 5a – Develop a more robust capability to react to increasing demands related to climate change.

Implementation Plan SD 5a.1 Develop protocols and operating procedures

Timeline: Mid 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations, Shift Captains

Implementation Plan SD 5a.2 Train staff and volunteers to appropriate level

Timeline: Mid 2020, then ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations, Shift Captains

Implementation Plan SD 5a.3 Invest in current and future equipment as needed

Timeline: Mid 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue, Administrative Captain

Action Strategy SD 5b – Explore the possibilities of technical rescue disciplines not currently practiced

Implementation Plan SD 5b.1 Explore required equipment for structure collapse/trench rescue or other heavy rescue not currently available within a reasonable response time to Wintergreen.

Timeline: December 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations, or designee

Implementation Plan SD 5b.2 Explore funding opportunities available for equipment and training

Timeline: Mid 2020, then ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue

Implementation Plan SD 5b.3 Coordinate training with other regional teams that possess the necessary equipment

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations



Initiative SD6 - Explore Mobile Integrated Healthcare - Community Paramedicine (MIH-CP)

Action Strategy SD 6a – Monitor state and local progress on the development of MIH-CP

Implementation Plan SD 6a.1 Attend state level meetings on policy and code development

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of EMS Operations

Implementation Plan SD 6a.2 Explore how program would be funded if program was initiated at Wintergreen Fire and Rescue, such as grants and/or fee for service.

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of EMS Operations, Chief of Fire/Rescue



Scene Photo - A motor vehicle crash on Wintergreen Drive results in simultaneous demands for fire hazard control, patient care, and technical rescue services.



Resources/Funding Focus Area

Initiative RF 1 – Handle all transports in full compliance with Code of Virginia.

Action Strategy RF 1a – Develop funding resources through resort, WPOA or externally (county or individuals) in order to support adequate staffing.

Implementation Plan RF 1a.1 - Explore "on-call" pay structures for staff living close to stations.

Timeline: 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue

Implementation Plan RF 1a.2 - Explore mutual-aid from volunteer EMTs in Nelson County.

Timeline: 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue

Initiative RF 2 – Support expanded roles in Service Delivery

Action Strategy RF 2a – Prioritize funding new and innovative projects.

Implementation Plan RF 2a.1 Continue and expand "in-house grants" program.

Timeline: 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue

Initiative RF 3 – Seek Alternate Funding Sources

Action Strategy RF 3a - Maximize local, state, federal, and private grant opportunities.

Implementation Plan RF 3a.1 - Continue to access Rescue Squad Assistance Fund monies when appropriate.

Timeline: 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue, or designee

Implementation Plan RF 3a.2 - Provide appropriate assistance to Nelson County to assure favorable position for in-County funding opportunities.

Timeline: 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue

Implementation Plan RF 3a.3 - Empower more staff to write for grants (approved by Chief of Fire/Rescue). Consider structure which allows a stipend payment for grants awarded.

Timeline: 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue



Implementation Plan RF 3a.4 - Continue to pursue special event revenue.

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue

Action Strategy RF 3b – Develop a donor program for businesses within the Nellysford area.

Implementation Plan RF 3b.1: Engage volunteer(s) for in-person fundraising appeals.

Timeline: 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue

Initiative RF 4 – Increase effectiveness of fundraising and revenue generating activities to achieve increased giving levels over present

Action Strategy RF 4a - Strengthen fundraising techniques for the annual Capital Campaign and promote year-round giving.

Implementation Plan RF 4a.1 – Explore creative approaches to fundraising mailings, balancing emotional and rational arguments, and enhanced use of testimonials.

Timeline: July 2019

Lead: Treasurers

Implementation Plan RF 4a.2 – Target low-responding segments with more-focused messages, distributed in part via appropriate organizations.

Timeline: Sept 2019

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue, Treasurers

Implementation Plan RF 4a.3 – Improve use of social media, especially in support of Capital Campaigns. Encourage volunteers to help build our social media audience. Explore media other than direct-mail for younger target segments. Explore ways for Resort to assist with marketing communications.

Timeline: Sept 2019 & ongoing

Lead: Treasurers

Implementation Plan RF 4a.4 – Explore methods to recognize and reward donors at low cost to Wintergreen Fire and Rescue. Develop communication tools to feedback fundraising results to the community (signage/website, etc.).

Timeline: 2020

Lead: Treasurers

Action Strategy RF 4b – Develop program promoting bequest donations.

Implementation Plan RF 4b.1 - Develop working group of experienced owners to stimulate this area of giving

Timeline: 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue



Initiative RF 5 - Assure that Wintergreen Fire and Rescue are positioned financially to continue operations long-term.

Action Strategy RF 5a - Develop Continuity of Operations Fund (Catastrophic Reserve-CR)

Implementation Plan RF 5a.1 – Set aside 5% of Capital Campaign donations as a CR

Timeline: 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue

Implementation Plan RF 5a.2 - Direct memorial gifts & real estate donations to CR Fund

Timeline: 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue



Matching Attack Trucks - New Attack trucks provided by grant from Nelson County.



People Focus Area

Initiative P 1 – Create an improved system of personnel skills and performance evaluation

Action Strategy P 1a – Ensure standards are clearly stated and followed

Implementation Plan P 1a.1 Review and revise job descriptions at each employee rank and EMS certification level

Timeline: December 2021

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations

Implementation Plan P 1a.2 Develop a list of skills for each revised job description in P1a.1 above.

Timeline: December 2021

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations

Implementation Plan P 1a.3 Establish committee for the development of Fire and Rescue skills evaluation in conjunction with the two implementation plans above

Timeline: December 2021

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations

Implementation Plan P 1a.4 Implement skill performance criteria into yearly evaluations

Timeline: December 2021

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations

Action Strategy P 1b – Update staff and volunteer orientation programs to ensure accuracy

Implementation Plan P 1b.1 Develop committee to review and revise staff orientation program

Timeline: December 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations

Implementation Plan P 1b.2 Develop committee to review and revise volunteer orientation program

Timeline: December 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations

Implementation Plan P 1b.3 Establish process for formal feedback to improve orientation programs

Timeline: December 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations



Action Strategy P 1c – Review and revise guidelines for the operation of specialized equipment

Implementation Plan P 1c.1 Review and revise current policies, processes, and procedures for the operation of existing specialized equipment

Timeline: July 2021

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations

Implementation Plan P 1c.2 Develop policies, processes, and procedures for the operation of specialized equipment as equipment is acquired

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations

Action Strategy P 1d - Improve hiring and retention of career staff and expand volunteer participation from Wintergreen and the surrounding communities

Implementation Plan P 1d.1 Survey current and former staff and volunteers to determine what steps would help with retention

Timeline: December 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue or designee

Implementation Plan P 1d.2 Evaluate and revise as necessary the interview and promotion process for career staff positions

Timeline: December 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue, Chief of EMS Operations, Chief of Fire Operations

Implementation Plan P 1d.3 Explore incentives to increase the number of volunteers

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue, Chief of EMS Operations, Chief of Fire Operations

Initiative P 2 – Become a regional training hub

Action Strategy P 2a – Increase the number of active instructors within the department

Implementation Plan P 2a.1 Review and revise policy to ensure instructors that are sent to class by the department will in turn teach classes for the department

Timeline: December 2020

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue

Implementation Plan P 2a.2 Review and revise the list of training classes that are reimbursed under the department's training policy

Timeline: December 2020

Lead: Chief of EMS Operations



Action Strategy P 2b – Make access to training easier

Implementation Plan P 2b.1 Develop a regular schedule for base courses (Driver Pump Operator, etc)

Timeline: December 2021

Lead: Instructor Cadre

Implementation Plan P 2b.2 Develop a regular schedule for offering continuing education credit classes

Timeline: December 2021

Lead: Instructor Cadre

Implementation Plan P 2b.3 Improve coordination with surrounding Nelson county agencies in training

Timeline: December 2021

Lead: Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations, Instructor Cadre



Technical Rescue - Team is participating in training exercise.



Initiative P 3 – Create public relations program

Action Strategy P 3a- Improve staff/volunteer recruitment

Implementation Plan P 3a.1 Develop more engaging displays for property owner gatherings

Timeline: July 2021

Lead: Captains/Lieutenants

Implementation Plan P 3a.2 Increase the frequency of and target high traffic dates for open houses

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue, Chief of Fire Operations, Chief of EMS Operations

Implementation Plan P 3a.3 – Improve community awareness of Wintergreen Fire and Rescue through public relations efforts. Explore periodic community meetings and newsletters.

Timeline: Current & ongoing

Lead: Chief of Fire/Rescue, Treasurers, Volunteer Boards