

Public Safety Power Shutoffs Working Group

2023

Energy Resilience & Emergency Management Office

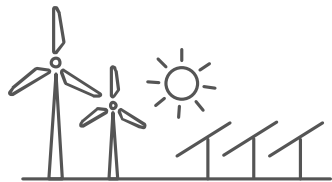
JOHANNA HANSON

OPERATIONS MANAGER



Washington State
Department of
Commerce

Energy Division strengthen communities



CLEAN ENERGY FUND



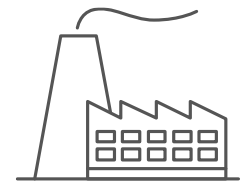
**STATE EFFICIENCY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PERFORMANCE (SEEP) OFFICE**



ENERGY POLICY OFFICE



WEATHERIZATION



GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION



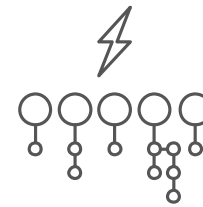
CLEAN BUILDINGS



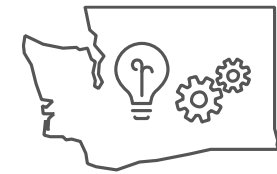
ELECTRIC VEHICLES



RESOURCE ADEQUACY



**ENERGY EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT OFFICE**



STATE ENERGY STRATEGY

Work In Progress

A Short History

- 2018, CA¹. The Camp Fire ignited and spread into developed areas destroying homes. The fire was attributed to a faulty transmission line. The fire caused 85 civilian fatalities and cost an estimated \$16.65 billion. Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) was held liable.
- This event triggered legislation in Ca to hold utilities liable for fires that their equipment sparks.
- That caused utilities and citizen groups to ratify the “Public Safety Power Shutoff” concept which has spread to other wildfire-prone states.

Work In Progress

Work In Progress

A Short History

- 2022 Wildfire season AAR meeting: Utilities raise concerns about needing more guidance for PSPS triggers
- 2023 Wildfire season AAR meeting: Utilities request PSPS Workgroup to develop guidance.

Work In Progress

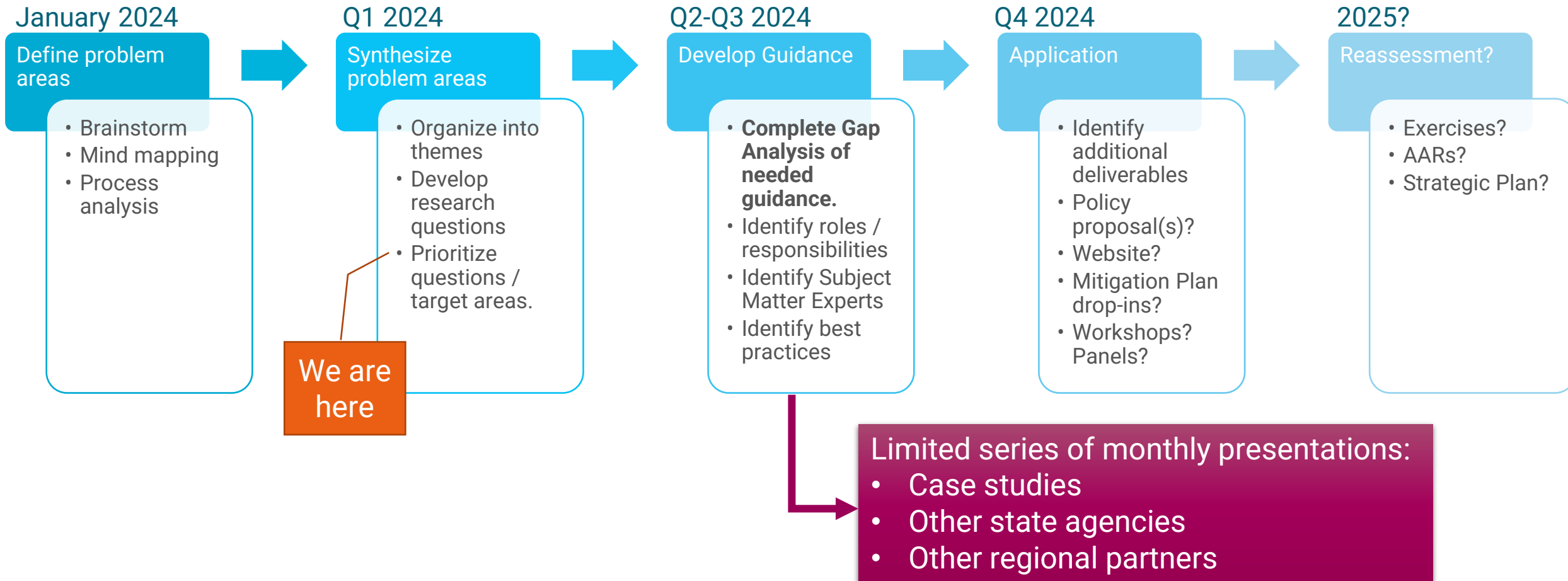
Problem:

- **The threat landscape is becoming more complex** as climate change causes worsening fire conditions and public sentiment about liability shifts.
- Updates to legislation and mitigation plans create **ambiguity** for how to integrate PSPS practices into current planning.
- **No guidance** for Public Power Safety Shutoffs exists **at the right size** for Washington utilities
- The complex interplay of issues **necessitates gathering a think tank** to define obstacles to and guidance for successful wildland fire mitigation for Washington state utilities.

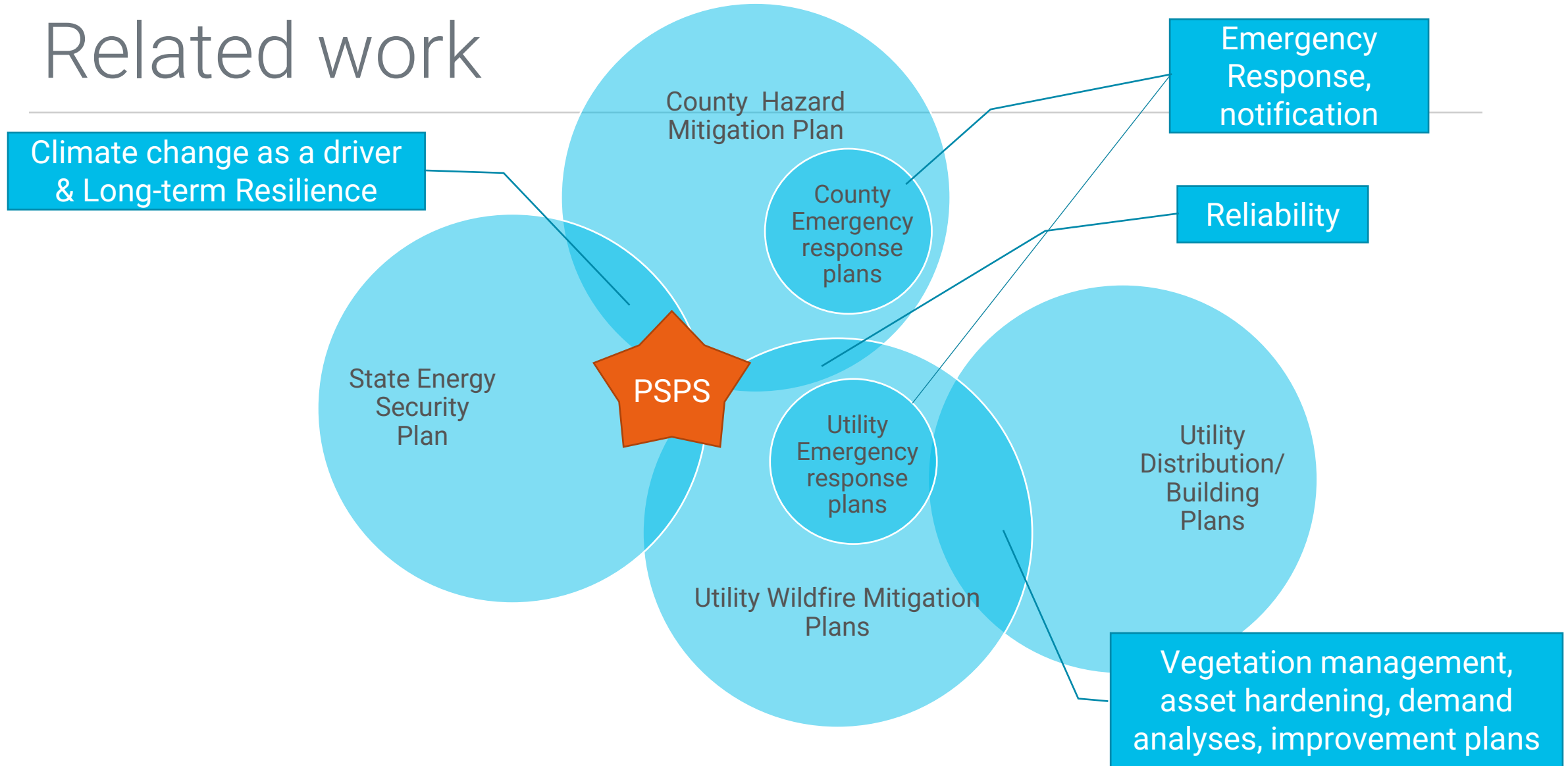
Proposed Workgroup

- **Facilitator:** EREMO
- **Members:** Washington State electric utilities
- **Meeting cadence:** quarterly (and at will)
- **Deliverable:**
 - gap analysis of needed guidance to support PSPS planning in WA state.
 - Other as determined by workgroup

Proposed Work Flow



Related work



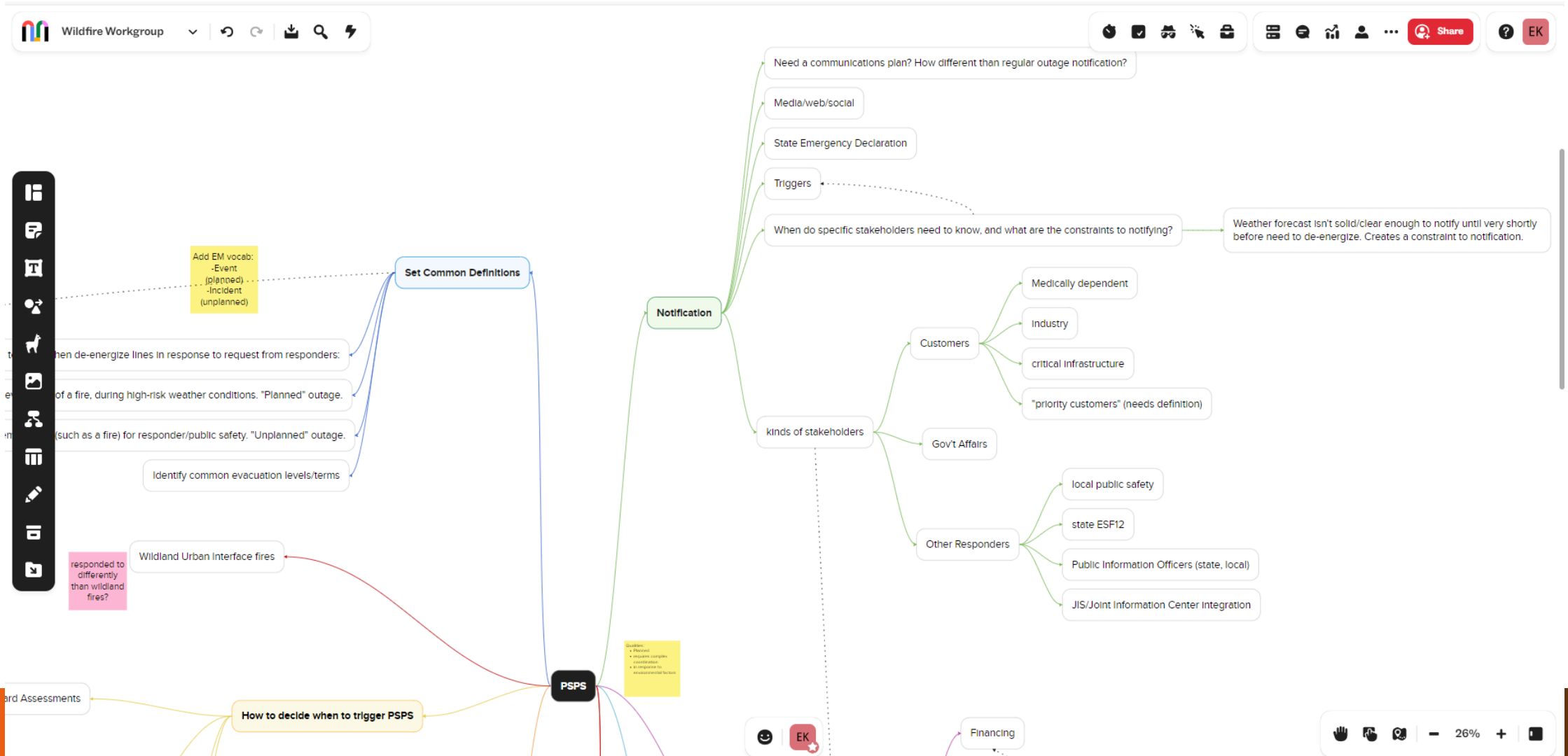
Work In Progress

Related work

- **Communications/ Notification Plan (for State's documentation)**
 - Understand triggers for notifying EREMO
 - Document coordination between utilities, local jurisdictions, DNR, and EREMO
- **DNR/EREMO workgroup to develop Wildfire Mitigation Plan template. (First drafts released for comment as of 1/8/24)**

Work In Progress

Current work: Mural brain map



Research themes collected for discussion

- **Need common definitions**
- **How to decide when to trigger PSPS?**
 - Hazard assessments/ environmental thresholds
 - Situational assessment
 - Coordination and process of decision making
- **How to notify of a PSPS?**
 - Communication methods
 - Types of stakeholders: medically dependent, industry, critical infrastructure, priority customers, gov't affairs, public safety, responders
- **How to identify critical infrastructure partners?**
- **What would incentives for ignition-resistant improvements look like (Wildland Fire Commission recommendation #7)?**
- **What are community support best practices?**
 - Financing
 - Shelters
 - Generators
 - Mutual aid
 - Medically vulnerable populations
 - Livestock
 - Community education/awareness
- **What other resources would utilities need to support PSPS programs:**
 - Internal/contractor staff to patrol
 - Local fire district assistance
 - Mutual aid between utilities
- **What alternatives are there to PSPS practices?**

Public Safety Power Shutoffs Qualities

- planned (notice event), though often with 24 hours notice or less
- temporary de-energization of select transmission and distribution assets
- done in response to environmental factors which raise the risk of wildfire ignition
- Initiated by the utility (proactive) instead of by a request from responders or for the safety of crews (reactive)
- requires complex coordination with stakeholders and local emergency management
- Should consider critical infrastructure and medically-dependent customers
- Helps the utility avoid liability from equipment sparking fires during dry and windy conditions.
- “a tool of last resort” in the mitigation planning tool box

PSPS definition

- Need consensus on a definition
- Need the definition to distinguish between de-energization due to crew/responder safety and due to weather conditions because the processes and justification are different

Work In Progress

Draft recommendations—not validated yet

- A PSPS is a safety measure initiated by utilities to de-energize specific powerlines during critical fire weather to reduce the risk of the electric system resulting in an ignition.*

Work In Progress

Pre Wildland Fire Season Workshop

- April 4, 9am-5pm
- Wanapum Dam, near Ellensburg.
- Hybrid option available
- Agenda:
 - BPA – Situational Awareness/ GIS
 - EREMO – GIS and universal outage map
 - EREMO – Grant opportunities
 - EREMO – PSPS wildfire workgroup (?)
 - DNR – Wildfire Mitigation Template Q&A, Operational updates
 - PSE – PSPS Program
 - Tacoma Power – community connections: placard ID Program, etc
 - CA wildland fire SME panel – PSPS Alternatives
 - Pierce Co–Wildfire Preparedness/CWPP
 - Volunteer group – ASL/Emergency Messaging
- Invites sent out, but will update again when agenda confirmed.

Example questions from the utilities

- Are PSPS programs **required**?
- What is the State's expectation for programs to support communities during a PSPS (shelters, generators, etc)
- What resources (financial, programmatic) are out there to help with those supporting programs?
- How much vegetation will DNR allow utilities to clean up under transmission lines?
- How should utilities who share assets or buy power from a competitor approach some of these mitigation sections?

Proposed Work Flow

