

Federal Involvement in Community Wildfire Protection Planning In California

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This document was developed for use by the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and US Forest Service agencies in California. The following provides an outline of agency and community wildfire protection planning and offers recommendations on how to integrate the two processes. National directives have emphasized federal support in the development and implementation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP). It is expected that by 2007, federal fuels funding will be prioritized in relation to agency program integration with CWPPs. All of the aforementioned agencies have made CWPP coordination and involvement in California a priority workload element.

A. Federal Land Management Planning- reference these plans for project compliance and or consistency with agency directives.

- Programmatic and General Plans
 - Forest Plans (USFS)
 - General & or Resource Management Plans (DOI agencies)
- Management Goals and Objectives
- Plans can be Amended

B. Fire Management Planning- information on fire program direction and project development. These plans should be shared and or referenced with partners to better plan and integrate projects across jurisdictional boundaries.

- Fire Management Plans
 - Fire Management Compliance Documents
 - Fuels and Fire Treatment Plans/Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategy plans
 - Project Level Plans
 - Cooperative Agreements/Plans
 - Identification and or definition of WUI and CARs
- State and County Fire Plans
 - CDF Unit and Vegetation Management Plans
 - Multi-hazard plans/Disaster Mitigation Act
 - General County Plan
- Constraints
 - Special Status Species (Wildlife Management Areas)
 - Cultural and Heritage Resources
 - Air Quality
 - Land Management (Wilderness, NRA, WSA, Preserves)
 - Budget, Fiscal and Policy
- Treatments, Strategies and Priorities- Technical data should be made available to community partners to assist with planning and monitoring efforts.
 - Utilize Fireshed Assessments (USFS)
 - Utilize FRID (fire return interval departure)
 - RAMS (Risk Assessments and Mitigation Strategies)
 - Any risk and hazard assessments/plans

C. Opportunities for Collaboration

- Coordinate with local government and community groups such as County Commissioners, Resource Conservation Districts, Resource Advisory Committees, Environmental/ Conservation Organizations, Fire Safe Councils, Home owner associations, local fire departments, private land owners, and private industry.
- Coordinate with agency partners to prioritize efforts within a landscape/multi-agency level. Identify priority areas, partners, agency leads, and communication links/strategies. Develop effective workload strategy.
- If community partners are not yet identified, considering public scoping meetings, etc to create interest and partnerships. Recommend addressing at a county level.
- Utilize existing MOUs and Other Cooperative Agreements to help formalize or initiate coordinated planning efforts.

Opportunities to Integrate within Existing Agency Planning Process:

- During the scoping phase of Land Management Plans
- During the National Environmental Policy Act process or other public comment periods
- During the Project Identification Phase

D. Community Wildfire Protection Plan Guidance

National Direction for Federal Agencies:

- Provide federal leadership in encouraging communities to develop CWPPs.
- Convey the importance of CWPPs to federal line officers and encourage their active participation in their development and implementation.
- In planning fuel reduction projects on federal land:
 - Ensure full collaboration with local communities, state agencies, and all interested parties; and
 - Give priority to projects that provide for the protection of at-risk-communities or watersheds, or that implement recommendations in a CWPP.
- Bring specialized natural resource knowledge and technical expertise into the planning process, particularly in the areas of GIS and mapping, vegetation management, assessment of values and risks and funding strategies.
- Assist the community in identifying and prioritizing areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments on federal lands, and in determining the types and methods of treatment that, if completed, would reduce the risk to the community.
- Provide funding priority to projects and activities identified in a CWPP.
- Promote economic opportunities in rural communities where possible.
- Utilize HFRA and other administrative and contracting opportunities when and where appropriate to implement projects.
 1. Expedited environmental analysis process applicable to BLM and USFS
 2. CWPP involvement exempted from the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)
- Assist in the identification and listing of communities at-risk (CAR) to wildfire. See the California Fire Alliance website for the CAR listing application process and form.

Where to Integrate within the CWPP Process:

- Step 2 of the CWPP process- involve federal agencies (feds as stakeholder in CWPP, especially where federal lands are adjacent to communities).
- Step 5 of the CWPP process- development of community risk assessment.
 - Part A- Fuel Hazard Assessment.
 - Part B- Risk of wildfire occurrence (fire occurrence & history).
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- Part D- Assessment of other community values at risk: wildlife habitat, recreation & scenic values, natural resources, economic bases.
- Step 7 of the CWPP process - Develop Action Plan & Strategy- Tie into existing or planned projects.
- Contents agreed upon by local government, local fire and State Fire Agency. An official CWPP signature page is available for California CWPP on the California Fire Alliance website.

Required Components of a CWPP:

- Collaboration
 - Collaboratively developed
 - Contents agreed upon by local government, local fire and State Fire Agency. See signature page on California Fire Alliance website.
 - Pertinent parties involved in planning process
 - Incorporate federal projects within CWPP
- Prioritized Fuel Reduction
 - Provide fuel treatment recommendations on agency and private lands for prioritization within CWPP (RAMS, FMPs, Fireshed Assessment, Fuels and Vegetation Mgmt Plans, CDF Unit Plans)
- Treatment of Structural Ignitability
 - Identify structures at risk- federal, state and local fire protection plans
 - Reference any fire protection plans, CFRs, state, local and county codes, abatement plans.
 - Treatments which address construction standards, exterior roofing, decking, enclosed roofs, windows, chimneys, openings and vents, etc
 - Fire wood storage, propane tanks, natural gas, power lines

E. Prioritizing CWPP workload

- Work with your local federal and state partners and identify strategic CWPP workload effort. Identify agency leads at the county or unit level to coordinate and distribute Fire Safe Council/CWPP workload.
- Make sure plans meet minimum requirements of CWPP and have submitted a copy of the signature page to the California Fire Alliance <http://www.cafirealliance.org/cwpp.php>
- Be strategic with your CWPP workload- consider the following:
 - Proximity to agency land/DPA
 - Percentage of land in proximity to agency land
 - Hazard risk rating (high, moderate, low)
 - Reference RAMS Reports, the *draft Community Risk Rating and Performance Measures, NASF Field Guidance- Identifying & Prioritizing Communities at Risk*
 - California Fire Alliance Fire Planning & Mapping Tools Website (<http://wildfire.cr.usgs.gov/fireplanning/>)
 - Relative values at risk in order of life, property, and resources
 - Support and involvement in agency pre-fire projects
 - Existing cooperative or mutual aid agreements
 - Community investment in pre-fire planning and implementation (cost-share, etc)
 - CWPP developed at a county or watershed level
 - Local capacity to implement pre-fire activities
 - Depending on the local field office assessment, a higher priority for CWPP completion may go to a community with existing infrastructure (fire safe council) and partnerships to not only implement work quickly but assist other communities in developing fire safe councils and CWPPs. Although, in some cases a community may be in dire need of
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- agency leadership and assistance in developing a CWPP and this may be the higher priority.

E. References:

- CWPP Handbook (<http://www.stateforesters.org/pubs/cwpphandbook.pdf>)
- Leaders Guide for Developing a CWPP (http://www.firesafecouncil.org/education/attachments/CWPP_LG.pdf)
- Healthy Forest Restoration Act (http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=108_cong_bills&docid=f:h1904enr.txt.pdf)
- Benefits of having a CWPP include National Fire Plan funding priority for projects identified in a CWPP. The United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management can expedite the implementation of fuel treatments, identified in a CWPP, through alternative environmental compliance options offered under the HFRA (<http://www.fireplan.gov/>)
- National Association of State Foresters Briefing Paper- Community Wildfire Protection Plans, May 11, 2005- Adopted by California Fire Alliance as CWPP guidance for agencies (<http://www.cafirealliance.org/downloads/CWPPBriefingPaper.pdf>)
- Community Wildfire Protection Plan Certification and Agreement Signature Sheet must be signed by the three entities. Communities with a completed CWPP are required to attach this signature page to their plans and submit to California Fire Alliance (<http://www.cafirealliance.org/cwpp.php>)
- If a community wants its plan to be identified by all Federal and State agencies making funding decisions, please submit the [CWPP Reporting Form](#).
- CWPP Lessons Learned- identifies consistent errors, weaknesses or strengths that might aid communities to avoid common mistakes and include elements that improve their own plans (http://www.cafirealliance.org/downloads/cwpp_lessons_learned.pdf)
- The Development of a Collaborative Fuels Treatment Program (http://www.west.gov.org/wga/initiatives/fire/implem_plan.pdf)