

# HUMBOLDT COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN, 2019

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## PART 1—Background and Introduction

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors formed the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council (HCFSC) to oversee the preparation of a countywide plan to support the development and implementation of community fire-safe programs and activities. The third edition of this plan, now known as the Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, or CWPP, has been thoroughly revised under the direction of the HCFSC to incorporate new information and understanding of wildfire risks and to update the overall strategy for preparedness and response. The purpose of the CWPP is to inspire and guide actions that will help mitigate the potential for wildfire loss in all vulnerable communities within the boundaries of Humboldt County.

#### Why Does Humboldt County Need a CWPP?

According to the 2018 Strategic Fire Plan for California, “loss of life and structures as a direct or proximate result of wildland fires is at an all-time high,” and “recent trends have shown an increase in the number of ignitions, area burned, and impacts to ecosystems.”<sup>2</sup> It is fortunate that Humboldt County communities and wildlands have avoided, thus far, the significant losses experienced by neighboring counties during the last few years. This CWPP’s risk assessment concludes that weather and fire patterns, together with Humboldt County’s rugged topography and dense fuel loads, combine to create a generally high fire risk during dry parts of the year. There are indications that the level of risk could continue to grow in the face of climate change, increasing fuel loads, the spread of forest diseases such as sudden oak death, and continued residential and commercial development in the *wildland urban interface* (WUI).

Currently, there are periods of high fire risk for every Humboldt County community, including coastal areas, when conditions are just right for a single fire ignition to have potentially devastating consequences. It is also becoming increasingly common that,

**ACKNOWLEDGING AND LEARNING FROM THE  
LOSSES OF OUR NORTHERN CALIFORNIA NEIGHBORS<sup>1</sup>**

**Butte County:**  
*Camp Fire* (November 2018): Most destructive and deadliest California wildfire.  
153,336 acres, 18,804 structures lost, 86 lives lost.

**Mendocino County:**  
*Mendocino Complex* (July 2018): Largest California wildfire.  
459,123 acres, 280 structures lost, 1 life lost.  
*Redwood Valley Fire* (October 2017): Twentieth most destructive and eleventh deadliest California wildfire.  
36,523 acres, 546 structures lost, 9 lives lost.

**Napa and Sonoma Counties:**  
*Tubbs Fire* (October 2017): Second most destructive and fourth deadliest California wildfire.  
36,807 acres, 5,636 structures lost, 22 lives lost.

**Shasta and Trinity Counties:**  
*Carr Fire* (July 2018): Eighth most destructive and fourteenth deadliest California wildfire.  
229,651 acres, 1,604 structures lost, 8 lives lost.

**Sonoma County:**  
*Nuns Fire* (October 2017): Ninth most destructive California wildfire. 54,382 acres, 1,355 structures lost, 3 lives lost.

**Napa and Solano Counties:**  
*Atlas Fire* (October 2017): Fourteenth most destructive and fifteenth deadliest California wildfire.  
51,624 acres, 783 structures lost, 6 lives lost.

**Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI):** The zone where structures and other human developments meet, or intermingle with, undeveloped wildlands.

<sup>1</sup> CAL FIRE Incident Information. (2018) Retrieved from [http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/incidents/incidents\\_statsevents](http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/incidents/incidents_statsevents)

<sup>2</sup> 2018 Strategic Fire Plan for California. (2018). [PDF]. Retrieved from <http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/pub/fireplan/fpupload/fpppdf1614.pdf>

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during times of high fire danger in Humboldt County, a large portion of local and state firefighting resources are committed to other incidents throughout the state. A wildfire ignition during one of these periods, when resources are stretched thin, could potentially spread quickly, threatening citizens' lives, as well as homes, schools, and businesses.

Humboldt County attracts residents and visitors with its natural assets such as beaches, redwoods, rivers, mountains, forests, oak woodlands, and high prairies. Over the years, many homes have been built here, often intermixed with these beautiful wildlands. Every year, these homes and natural assets are increasingly vulnerable to damage or loss from wildfire.

This CWPP is intended to raise awareness about this increasing risk and provide guidance for addressing it. The level of risk varies from one area of the county to another and each community's relationship with wildfire is different. An enhanced understanding of wildfire's role in the environment will help distinguish situations where wildfire is undesirable due to unacceptable risks and situations where fire can be beneficial for reducing fuel loads and creating more fire-resilient landscapes.

Through the risk analysis and identification of action steps intended to minimize risks to communities, this CWPP will be a useful tool for residents, local Fire Safe Councils, tribes, wildfire management and protection agencies, county policy makers and planners, and other partners. Working together, Humboldt County can prepare for wildfire so it is not a disaster for communities or the environment.

### **What This CWPP Is Not:**

While there is a supportive relationship between this CWPP and other plans, it is important to be clear that this CWPP is not intended to replace or be a substitute for any of the following plans or plan types:

- The Humboldt County Emergency Operations Plan or Disaster Contingency Plans,
- An incident-specific, local, or countywide evacuation plan,
- The Humboldt Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan,
- The Humboldt County General Plan Safety Element,
- A pre-fire attack plan intended to be used as one of many tools to guide emergency responders during wildfire suppression efforts, and/or
- A fuels or forest management plan.

### **1.1.1 PLAN CONTEXT**

This plan meets the three minimum requirements of Community Wildfire Protection Plans as set forth in the federal Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003. This CWPP:

1. Is developed through a collaborative process,
2. Prioritizes areas for hazardous-fuel reduction, and
3. Identifies actions to reduce structural ignitability.

*For a detailed description of the federal CWPP requirements, see Appendix A.*

### **1.1.2 CWPP PURPOSE, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **Purpose**

*This Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is intended to inspire and guide actions that will help mitigate the potential for wildfire loss in all vulnerable communities within the boundaries of Humboldt County.*

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### Goals

With the implementation of the actions identified in this CWPP, the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council and its collaborators are working towards the following goals for 2018–2023:

1. **WILDFIRE IGNITION PREVENTION:** REDUCE HUMAN-CAUSED WILDFIRE IGNITIONS.
2. **WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS:** INCREASE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION TO WILDFIRE.
3. **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS:** INCREASE RESIDENTS' ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY PREPARE FOR AND SURVIVE WILDFIRE.
4. **FIRE PROTECTION:** SUPPORT FIRE-PROTECTION SERVICES FOR PEOPLE, PROPERTY, COMMUNITIES, AND NATURAL RESOURCES.
5. **RESTORATION OF BENEFICIAL FIRE:** RESTORE BENEFICIAL FIRE AT THE LANDSCAPE SCALE.
6. **INTEGRATED PLANNING:** MAXIMIZE INTEGRATION OF PLANNING EFFORTS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY AND ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE TO WILDFIRE.

### Objectives

Objectives are statements of desired future activity and conditions in pursuit of the above goals. The Humboldt County Fire Safe Council is working towards the following core objectives to be achieved by 2023:

#### OBJECTIVE 1

THE HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL AND ITS COLLABORATORS WILL SUPPORT EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE RATE OF HUMAN-CAUSED WILDFIRE IGNITIONS THROUGH EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH AND OTHER COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS.

#### OBJECTIVE 2

THE HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL AND ITS COLLABORATORS WILL FACILITATE COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS, RESILIENCE, AND ADAPTATION TO WILDFIRE BY SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING FIRE SAFE COUNCILS, FIREWISE® AND FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES TO REDUCE STRUCTURAL IGNITABILITY AND HAZARDOUS FUELS.

#### OBJECTIVE 3

THE HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL WILL ASSIST ITS COLLABORATORS IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES TO HELP RESIDENTS EFFECTIVELY PREPARE FOR AND SURVIVE WILDFIRE.

#### OBJECTIVE 4

THE HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL WILL SUPPORT ITS COLLABORATORS IN INCREASING FIRE AGENCIES' CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FIRE-PROTECTION SERVICES FOR ALL PEOPLE, PROPERTY, COMMUNITIES, AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

#### OBJECTIVE 5

THE HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL WILL FOSTER WILDFIRE RESILIENCE THROUGH EDUCATION AND PROMOTION OF ECOSYSTEM-RESTORATION ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING HAZARDOUS-FUEL REDUCTION, PRESCRIBED FIRE, AND MANAGED WILDFIRE WHERE APPROPRIATE.

#### OBJECTIVE 6

THE HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL AND ITS COLLABORATORS WILL COOPERATE TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY AND ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE TO WILDFIRE BY COORDINATING PLANNING EFFORTS AMONG LOCAL, STATE, REGIONAL, TRIBAL, AND FEDERAL STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING THOSE IDENTIFIED IN THIS CWPP.

### 1.1.3 PLAN ORGANIZATION

This CWPP is organized into the following six parts.

#### Part 1: Background and Introduction

**WHAT:** *Part 1* provides an overview of what a CWPP is, why it's necessary, and its audience. It describes the process used to develop this edition of Humboldt County's CWPP and delivers a progress report on the actions implemented since the 2013 CWPP.

**AUDIENCE:** *Part 1* is for everyone. Anyone who picks up this CWPP as a resource to support wildfire preparedness should read *Part 1* to understand the purpose of this plan; its place in the context of wildfire planning, mitigation, and resiliency; and which parts of the plan will provide them with what they need to prepare themselves and their families, homes, and communities for wildfire.

#### Part 2: Risk-Assessment Summary

**WHAT:** *Part 2* is a summary of the risk assessment detailed in *Part 5*, including a table of identified issues and priority needs for each of the four chapters of *Part 5*. The issues and needs identified in the risk assessment informed the priority actions in *Part 3*. It is assumed that a basic understanding of local wildfire risks and hazards will inspire Humboldt County residents to prepare for the eventuality of wildfire.

**AUDIENCE:** *Part 2* is recommended for anyone who is interested in an overview of the wildfire risks and hazards for Humboldt County communities. It is written as an introduction and summary for concerned residents who want a better understanding of local wildfire issues. It is also written as a summary for decision makers, both locally and beyond, regarding the factors that affect wildfire preparedness and response in Humboldt County.

#### Part 3: Countywide Action Plan

**WHAT:** *Part 3* is divided into six chapters based on the goals in *section 1.1.2* above. Each chapter identifies a set of metrics and priority actions to meet the goals and objectives of the HCFSC over the next five years. It is designed as the five year, strategic work plan for the HCFSC to guide its actions and measure its success. A more detailed version of each action plan, including potential action steps, is found in *Appendix O*. The implementation of *Part 3* is subject to the availability of funds and other resources, and the willingness and ability of community members and CWPP collaborators to take action. It is also important to note that any vegetation treatment recommended in this CWPP must be undertaken with the consent and involvement of the property owner, and under observance of all applicable local, Tribal, state, and federal laws and/or regulations.

*Part 3* is made up of the following chapters:

- |                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 3.1 Wildfire Ignition Prevention | 3.4 Fire Protection                |
| 3.2 Wildfire Preparedness        | 3.5 Restoration of Beneficial Fire |
| 3.3 Disaster Preparedness        | 3.6 Integrated Planning            |

**AUDIENCE:** *Part 3* is for the members of the HCFSC and their potential implementation partners. The HCFSC's involvement in the implementation of each priority action ranges from supporting the efforts of other agencies and organizations that have primary responsibility, to leading the action implementation. All are welcome to join the HCFSC as it further evaluates action item recommendations, develops more detailed work plans, secures funding, and implements the **Countywide Action Plan**.

## Part 4: Planning Unit Action Plans

**WHAT:** *Part 4* contains information on local fire risks and preparedness for each of the 14 planning units within Humboldt County, functioning as a “mini-CWPP” for each. Each **Planning Unit Action Plan** includes a brief introduction to the planning area, discusses its wildfire environment, community preparedness, wildfire-protection capabilities, and evacuation issues and options, concluding with a list of *Priority Action Recommendations*. Additionally, potential actions organized under the CWPP goals identified in *section 1.1.2* above are included in an *Action Catalogue* for each. The feasibility analysis and implementation of the action recommendations made by these plans will be subject to the availability of funds and other resources, and the willingness and ability of community members and plan partners to take action. It is also important to note that any vegetation treatment recommended in this CWPP must be undertaken with the consent and involvement of the property owner, and under observance of all applicable local, Tribal, state, and federal laws and/or regulations.

*Part 4* is made up of the following chapters:

4.1	Orick–Redwood Park	4.8	Humboldt Bay Area
4.2	Upper Yurok Reservation	4.9	Kneeland–Maple Creek
4.3	Mid Klamath	4.10	Eel
4.4	Hoopa	4.11	Mad–Van Duzen
4.5	Trinidad	4.12	Mattole–Lost Coast
4.6	Redwood Creek	4.13	Southern Humboldt
4.7	Willow Creek Area	4.14	Avenue of the Giants

**AUDIENCE:** Each *Planning Unit Action Plan* contained in *Part 4* is a resource for local residents that can be used as a strategic action plan for community-based wildfire preparedness. These plans are intended for use by community members, organizations, and agencies working and living within each unit. It is the intention of the HCFSC that one or more local groups be sustained within each planning unit to lead local action. It is understood that some units have more capacity than others. The HCFSC, with individual members from higher-capacity areas, can provide guidance for building capacity where needed. Anyone who is developing projects and/or seeking funding can use their area’s *Planning Unit Action Plan* as a resource for grant applications.

## Part 5: Risk-Assessment Detail

**WHAT:** *Part 5* describes the planning-area context in a qualitative assessment of the factors that contribute to wildfire in Humboldt County. It explores issues such as structural ignitability, marijuana production, sudden oak death, and climate change, and their impact to local wildfire risk. It includes detailed information on what is at risk, fire history and behavior, response capacity, and community preparedness in the face of wildfire.

*Part 5* is made up of the following chapters:

5.1	Assets and Values at Risk	5.3	Wildfire-Protection Capabilities
5.2	Wildfire Environment	5.4	Community Preparedness

**AUDIENCE:** Anyone interested in a more thorough understanding of the factors contributing to wildfire risk and hazard in Humboldt County is encouraged to read *Part 5*. The detailed information and references in *Part 5* are a resource for grant writing and community preparedness project development.

**Part 6: Appendices**

**WHAT:** *Part 6* contains background and supporting information for the rest of the plan. The main body of the CWPP was streamlined as part of this latest update to make it more user-friendly and accessible to a wider audience. However, there are details that the HCFSC did not want to lose; those are now found in the appendices.

Of particular note is *Appendix H, Living with Wildfire*, which is a stand-alone guide that can be used independent of the rest of the CWPP. It contains resources for enhancing fire-safety awareness, reducing structural ignitability, and advice on how to meet local and state legal standards while preparing your home and property for the eventuality of wildfire.

*Part 6* is made up of the following chapters:

- A CWPP Requirements
- B Planning Process Details
- C Accomplishments Since Last Plan
- D Background Information for Assets and Values at Risk
- E Background for Wildfire Environment
- F Climate Research Summary
- G Background for Wildfire Protection
- H Living with Wildfire
- I Regulations and Compliance
- J Humboldt County SRA Fire-Safe Regulations
- K Public Resource Code (PRC) 4291
- L Acronyms
- M Glossary
- N References
- O Countywide Action Plan Detail

**AUDIENCE:** The appendices contained in *Part 6* can be used by anyone who is interested in the details behind the main body of the CWPP. It is intended to serve as a reference for grant writing and project development. *Appendix H, Living with Wildfire* is a resource for residents and property owners who want to take action to prepare their families, homes, and surrounding landscapes to successfully co-exist with wildfire. *Appendix O* is designed to facilitate easier implementation of the priority actions of *Part 3*.

**PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT READING FOR  
HUMBOLDT RESIDENTS**

**Part 4: Planning Unit Action Plans** contains information on local fire risks and preparedness for each of the 14 planning units within Humboldt County. Each *Planning Unit Action Plan* is a resource for local residents that can be used as a strategic action plan for community-based wildfire preparedness.

**Appendix H, Living with Wildfire** is an excellent resource for residents and property owners. It is a stand-alone guide, which can be used independent of the rest of the CWPP. It serves as a useful handbook for homeowners who want to take action to prepare their families, homes, and surrounding landscapes to successfully co-exist with wildfire. It contains resources for enhancing fire-safety awareness, and advice on how to meet local and state legal standards while preparing your family, home, and property for the eventuality of wildfire.

**PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT READING FOR ANYONE  
PLANNING A HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION PROJECT**

Before engaging in wildfire hazard-reduction activities such as clearing vegetation, consult *Appendix I, Regulations and Compliance*. Performing fuel-reduction projects or other wildfire-protection activities, although advisable and sometimes required, can have an adverse impact on the environment. It is important to be aware of federal, state, and local laws to safeguard the environment. The most important relevant policies and regulations are described in this appendix.

### 1.1.4 CWPP HISTORY

This CWPP is the second update, or third version of the Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

#### 2006 Humboldt County Master Fire Protection Plan

The original Humboldt County CWPP was called the *Humboldt County Master Fire Protection Plan* (MFPP). The need for a countywide fire plan was born out of the Humboldt County General Plan update (GPU) process. During the GPU community-scoping meetings, members of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors and county planners heard from community members that there were serious challenges in rural areas related to local fire protection. In addition, the destructive wildfire season of 2002 led to a statewide mobilization encouraging all Californians to make their homes, neighborhoods, and communities fire safe. These factors, combined with the availability of outside funding, provided the motivation for the county to draft its first fire plan under the guidance of the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council, which was formed for this purpose. The effort brought together for the first time local Fire Safe Councils (FSCs), fire departments, and other key players in wildfire management and community protection at the countywide scale.

#### **2006 MFPP Highlights:**

- ❖ The MFPP was intended to serve as a guiding document for reducing the risk of wildfire to local communities, to support local fire service, and to develop policy recommendations to be integrated into the General Plan update.
- ❖ Consultant services for the initial development of the plan were provided by Plan West Partners and RNB Special Data Inc.
- ❖ Public outreach facilitation and completion of the plan were provided by ForEverGreen Forestry.
- ❖ The risk-assessment portion of the MFPP was prepared using a quantitative Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies (RAMS) model, which divided the county into 11 planning compartments for analysis.
- ❖ Twenty-four community workshops were held around the county in 2004 and 2005 to educate residents on fire-safety issues, using a mapping process to understand local issues and identify risks, hazards, and priority actions from the community perspective.
- ❖ The MFPP process surveyed local fire service to document their resources and needs.

#### 2013 CWPP

The first update of the Humboldt County CWPP began in 2012 and was completed in 2013. The significant changes in that CWPP included:

- ❖ The MFPP title was changed to CWPP to align with the guidelines of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.
- ❖ ForEverGreen Forestry provided consultant services to draft the updated plan based on a style developed through statewide experience.
- ❖ The RAMS risk assessment was replaced by a more qualitative analysis based on California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) data and local knowledge and experience.
- ❖ The 11 RAMS planning compartments were reorganized into 13 planning units more reflective of local FSC boundaries and local fire agency jurisdictions.
- ❖ Thirteen *Planning Unit Action Plans* were developed to be used by local communities as the functional equivalent of their local CWPP.
- ❖ Sixteen community meetings were held in 2012 to share information and to update the previously identified risks, hazards, values, assets, and priority projects using a similar community mapping exercise.
- ❖ The format was changed to be more user-friendly to encourage the Plan's use by local FSCs and other community members.

## **2019 CWPP**

This CWPP is the second update, or third version of the Humboldt County plan. The major revisions to the 2013 plan include:

- ❖ A focus on further streamlining the document and making it more useful to support local fire safety and fire protection practitioners and other plan partners.
- ❖ Planning units were increased to 14; the northern part of the Southern Humboldt unit was carved out to create the new Avenue of the Giants unit.
- ❖ An online wildfire-preparedness survey was provided on Open Humboldt.
- ❖ Fourteen community workshops were held in 2017 to share information and further update the risks, hazards, values, assets, and priority projects identified in the two previous planning efforts of 2004-2005 and 2012.
- ❖ Laptops were available at most workshops for reviewing the CWPP geographic information system (GIS) data on the Humboldt GIS Portal, to register with Humboldt Alert emergency notification system, and to complete the Open Humboldt survey.
- ❖ The County Office of Emergency Services (OES) was an active participant in all the community workshops, providing an emphasis on evacuation preparedness.
- ❖ Several local Fire Safe Councils and fire departments used the workshops as a fundraising opportunity and provided meals for purchase or donation.
- ❖ Background information was included specifically for plan partners to use in funding applications.
- ❖ Metrics were added to the Action Plans, and potential implementation steps and outcomes were defined for each priority action to facilitate their successful completion over the next five years.

## **1.2 COLLABORATIVE PLANNING PROCESS**

This plan is an update to the 2013 Humboldt County CWPP. It was guided by the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council, with staff support provided by the Humboldt County Department of Public Works, Environmental Services and consultant services provided by ForEverGreen Forestry.<sup>3</sup>

### **1.2.1 HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL'S ROLE**

The Humboldt County Fire Safe Council, or HCFSC as it is referred to in this plan, provided overall guidance for this CWPP update. The CWPP was the main focus of the HCFSC's efforts from its quarterly meeting in April 2017 through plan approval in early 2019. Background information on the HCFSC can be found on its website <https://humboldt.gov/FireSafeCouncil>, the "Humboldt County Fire Safe Council" Facebook page, and *section 5.4.1 of Chapter 5.4 Community Preparedness*.

#### **CWPP Update Committee**

The CWPP Update Committee, comprised of HCFSC members, provided guidance for the CWPP update and made relevant decisions between the quarterly HCFSC meetings, as necessary. The Committee met three times between May and September 2017 to begin this process. At these meetings, the Committee discussed:

- What worked and didn't work with the 2013 CWPP,
- What the HCFSC needed from this updated CWPP, and
- Any changes they thought would make this CWPP a more useful strategic plan for the HCFSC and its partners.

The Update Committee provided guidance in the development of the table of contents, purpose, goals, and objectives (later approved by the entire HCFSC), and the community-outreach process (*see*

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<sup>3</sup> ForEverGreen Forestry: [www.forevergreenforestry.com](http://www.forevergreenforestry.com)

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*section 1.2.2 Community-Outreach Process below*). For more information on the Update Committee, see *Appendix B.1*.

Finally, the Update Committee reviewed the planning units used in the 2013 CWPP and proposed the division of *Planning Unit 13, Southern Humboldt*, into two units, adding *Planning Unit 14, Avenue of the Giants*. The list of planning units is shown in the table below. These are also illustrated on *Map 1.2.1, CWPP Planning Units* (below).

FIGURE 1.2.1 CWPP PLANNING UNITS	
1. Orick–Redwood Park	8. Humboldt Bay Area
2. Upper Yurok Reservation	9. Kneeland–Maple Creek
3. Mid Klamath	10. Eel
4. Hoopa	11. Mad–Van Duzen
5. Trinidad	12. Mattole–Lost Coast
6. Redwood Creek	13. Southern Humboldt
7. Willow Creek Area	14. Avenue of the Giants

### **Community Project Team**

The Community Project Team was an informal group of technical experts and community representatives who were consulted on a case-by-case basis as needed. Their role was more advisory in nature, while final decisions were the responsibility of the CWPP Update Committee and/or the HCFSC. Members of this group provided advice during the development of the Open Humboldt wildfire-preparedness survey, the community-outreach strategy, the risk-assessment approach and content, and the countywide action plan.

### **CWPP Work Groups**

At the HCFSC’s October 2017 meeting, the six new goal areas (*see section 1.1.2 above*) were approved and Work Groups formed around each of these goals to replace the existing HCFSC committee structure. (*For a list of current HCFSC Work Groups and previous HCFSC committees, see Figure 5.4.2 in Chapter 5.4, Community Preparedness.*)

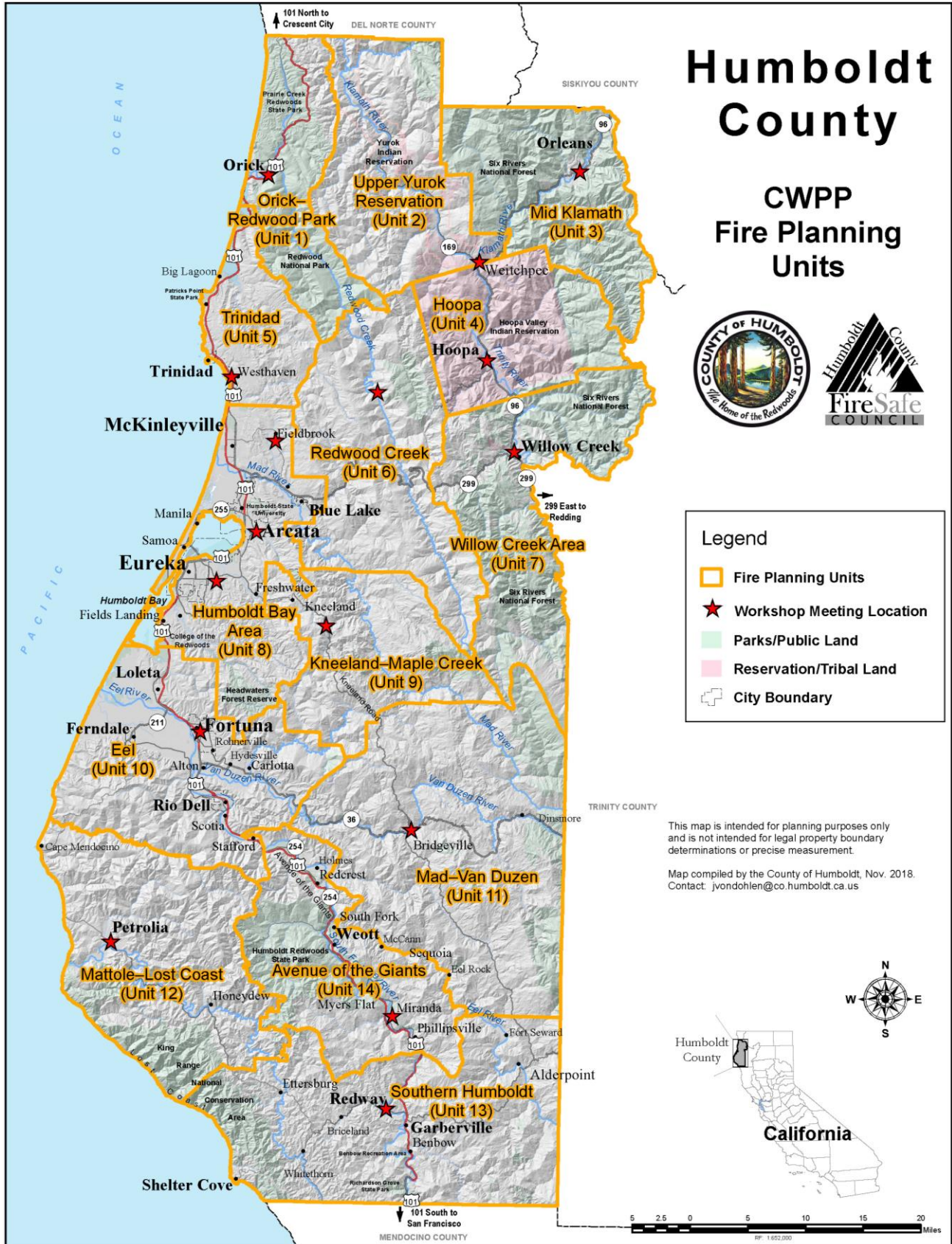
From October 2017 through July 2018, the six Work Groups met via conference calls and email to flesh out the details of the Goals and Objectives language shown earlier in this chapter. They then identified a set of metrics to meet the objectives of each goal. Finally, the Work Groups identified at least one priority action for the HCFSC to undertake over the next five years to achieve each metric, with a list of other potential projects to meet the metric, objective, and goal.

*See Appendix B.2 for more information on the Work Group membership and process, and Part 3, Countywide Action Plan for the results of that process.*

The following map shows the 14 CWPP fire-planning units, as well as the 2017 workshop locations. See *Community Workshops* below for more information on the workshops.

HUMBOLDT COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN, 2019

Map 1.2.1 CWPP Planning Units



## 1.2.2 COMMUNITY-OUTREACH PROCESS

To ensure maximum public involvement in this planning process, this CWPP update incorporated several elements of a community-outreach strategy, including:

- Collaborative Planning Teams
- Stakeholder Outreach
- Community Workshops and Outreach
- Review of Draft Documents

### Collaborative Planning Teams

As discussed above, the CWPP Update Committee oversaw the initial review of the 2013 CWPP and this update, and the Community Project Team provided technical advice as needed. The HCFSC Work Groups were later formed to support the detailed tasks of developing the CWPP goals, objectives, metrics, and priority actions.

### Stakeholder Outreach

Any member of the Humboldt County public interested in the CWPP is considered a project stakeholder. Stakeholders were invited to participate in a variety of ways:

- Stakeholders from each of the planning units had opportunities to help plan and host community workshops and/or to participate in helping update their *Planning Unit Action Plan*.
- Targeted outreach to specific stakeholder groups was made via email, phone calls, and in some cases presentations to stakeholder groups at their meetings.
- Targeted outreach to particular individual stakeholders was made when specific technical assistance was needed.

### Community Workshops

The Humboldt CWPP is known for its intensive community-based process. Between September 2004 and March 2005, 24 meetings were held around the county to learn from residents what they perceived to be high wildfire hazard and risk areas in their neighborhoods, and what they wanted to do (proposed projects) to address these wildfire threats to their communities. Between March and June 2012, 16 more meetings were held to facilitate the first CWPP update and ensure that each of the 13 CWPP planning units hosted at least one meeting.

As discussed above, the CWPP Update Committee added one more planning unit at its April 2017 meeting, to bring the current total to 14 fire-planning units. Hence, between October and December 2017, 14 workshops were held—one in each planning unit—throughout the county to review and update the information gathered in the previous two planning processes. These community workshops were well attended by local Fire Safe Councils, Firewise® Communities, volunteer firefighters, public agencies, private industry, and other interested community members, with personnel from the County and CAL FIRE facilitating the process.

The 14 workshops held throughout the county are shown above in *Map 1.2.1, CWPP Planning Units*. Workshop locations are indicated on the map with a red star. A list of the workshop dates and locations is available in *section B.4 Community Workshops, in Appendix B*.

The focus of the workshops, and one of the main objectives of the CWPP process, was to engage in meaningful discussions at the community level in order to determine priorities and strategies to address the threat of wildfire to local communities. At each workshop, local residents worked with firefighters and agency partners to identify projects to help prepare their homes, neighborhoods, and communities for wildfire. Local fire experts also shared information regarding how to prepare a property for fire and what to do before, during, and after a wildfire. *See the following table for more information.*

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<b>FIGURE 1.2.2 OVERALL PURPOSE AND DESIRED OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOPS</b>	
<b>PURPOSE</b>	
<b>PROVIDE INFORMATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Fire protection capabilities and needs.</li> <li>❖ Prevention of unplanned human-caused wildfires.</li> <li>❖ Wildfire and emergency preparedness.</li> <li>❖ The role of wildfire in our local environment.</li> <li>❖ The Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).</li> </ul>
<b>SEEK INFORMATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Obtain local knowledge and concerns to include in the updated CWPP.</li> <li>❖ Provide an opportunity for direct input into priorities for community fire safety.</li> </ul>
<b>DESIRED OUTCOMES</b>	
<b>1. INCREASE UNDERSTANDING OF:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ How to reduce unplanned, human-caused wildfire ignitions.</li> <li>❖ What to do before, during, and after a wildfire to reduce potential losses (Ready Set Go! Evacuation).</li> <li>❖ How to help your community become more adapted to a wildfire environment.</li> <li>❖ Local fire department needs, successes, and challenges.</li> <li>❖ The positive role wildfire plays in ecosystem and landscape resiliency.</li> </ul>
<b>2. SPARK ENTHUSIASM TO PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL GROUPS WORKING TOGETHER TO ADDRESS WILDFIRE ISSUES (E.G. FIRE SAFE COUNCILS AND FIREWISE® COMMUNITIES) AND LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS.</b>	
<b>3. REFINEMENT AND PRIORITIZATION OF LOCAL CONCERNS AND PROJECTS (ON MAPS AND RECORDED FOR ACTION PLANS) TO INSPIRE FUTURE ACTION AND INCREASE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE FOR FUNDING.</b>	

The community mapping methodology used to capture public input at these workshops utilized large-format maps and markers for a typically one-hour process, to identify the following attributes based on local knowledge and information:

- Assets and values at risk,
- High fire hazard and risk areas,
- Safety resources for fire protection (e.g. water, equipment, evacuation routes),
- Updated road conditions,
- Existing fire-safety and fuel-reduction projects, and
- Proposed projects.

*For more information on the community-outreach process, the workshops, and/or the mapping process, see Appendix B, **Planning Process Details**. For the results of the mapping exercise at each workshop, see the respective **Planning Unit Action Plan** in Part 4.*

*See the following page for a sample workshop poster.*

Figure 1.2.3 Sample Community Workshop Poster

**IS YOUR COMMUNITY  
PREPARED  
FOR WILDFIRE?**

Are your home and neighborhood ready?

Come learn about the  
**Humboldt County  
Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP),  
Fire Safe Councils and Firewise Communities, and  
how you can prepare your home and community for the next wildfire.**

Help identify priority projects in your community to survive the next fire.

**Lower Eel-Van Duzen  
River Communities**  
Including Carlotta, Ferndale, Fortuna, Hydesville,  
Loleta, Rio Dell, Scotia, Stafford, Table Bluff, and  
all residences in the surrounding area.

**Monday, November 27<sup>th</sup>  
5:00 pm –8:00 pm  
Fortuna Fire Hall  
320 S. Fortuna Blvd.  
5 pm: Open-House & Meal – 6 pm: Program**

**Tri-tip sandwiches provided by the Fortuna Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary.  
Donations will benefit the Eel River Valley Fire Explorers.**

For more information on the CWPP, visit [humboldt.gov/FireSafeCouncil](http://humboldt.gov/FireSafeCouncil), email [cimmitt@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:cimmitt@co.humboldt.ca.us) or call 707-267-9542.

Support for this project provided by the State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Fund.

### Online Survey

An online survey for Humboldt County residents was shared on Open Humboldt from October 2017 through January 2018, titled *Are You Ready for Wildfire? Help us understand what your wildfire concerns and priorities are.* The survey was based in part on the work of, and in cooperation with, Dr. Sarah

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McCaffrey and the Santa Clara County CWPP.<sup>4</sup> It included 24 questions ranging from level of preparedness and challenges and barriers to increasing preparedness, to priorities for countywide actions and participation in local Fire Safe Councils and fire departments. There were 364 people who visited the survey and 165 responses from most areas of the county, generating 8.3 hours of public comment.

In general, respondents were overwhelmingly concerned about wildfire in Humboldt County and believed the county is minimally prepared to address it. Nearly forty percent of respondents indicated that their property and family are prepared, many having completed fire-safe actions within the last six months. Over ninety percent supported prescribed burning as a tool to reduce fuels in the county. Evacuation planning was another priority issue. Approximately forty percent were interested in being contacted by local volunteer fire departments and/or Fire Safe Councils.

*To see the complete survey and results, including demographic breakdowns, visit [https://www.opentownhall.com/portals/131/Issue\\_5560/survey\\_responses](https://www.opentownhall.com/portals/131/Issue_5560/survey_responses).*

### **CWPP Review**

Several opportunities were provided for stakeholder and public review of the CWPP, beginning with the Administrative Review in May and June 2018. The public review followed from mid-August to early-October 2018. Finally the signatories were provided an opportunity to review and certify the plan as meeting the requirements of a CWPP from early November through early-February. Specific parts of the CWPP were completed, reviewed, and finalized on a separate schedule as described below.

#### **Administrative Draft**

Based on the information collected during the process described above, an *Administrative Draft* of the CWPP was circulated in May 2018. The plan was presented to the HCFSC at its May 10, 2018 meeting to launch the internal review period. The *Humboldt County CWPP Administrative Draft* was provided for review and feedback to members of the HCFSC, key stakeholders and planning partners, and members of the Community Project Team.

The review focused on plan content, providing reviewers an opportunity to help fill information gaps and offer guidance on the feasibility and appropriateness of recommended actions. Reviewers had six weeks to review the document, with comments due on June 15, 2018.

The results of this Administrative Review were incorporated into the public review draft of the CWPP in June and July 2018.

#### **Public Review Draft**

A public review version of this CWPP was presented to the HCFSC at its August 16, 2018 quarterly meeting and officially released to the public for review on August 17, 2018. Between the release date and the final closure of public review on October 12, 2018, the public had eight weeks to review the document and submit comments. *Part 4, Planning Unit Action Plans* followed its own public review process with staggered postings to the web and rolling deadlines, depending on the area of the county. Public comments were reviewed, and where appropriate, incorporated into this final version.

#### **Final Review and Approval**

This final version of the Humboldt County CWPP was reviewed and certified in late 2018 and early 2019 by the four key signatories: County of Humboldt Board of Supervisors, Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association, CAL FIRE, and the HCFSC.

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<sup>4</sup> SWCA Environmental Consultants: prepared for Santa Clara County. (2016). Santa Clara County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Retrieved from <http://www.sccfd.org/santa-clara-county-community-wildfire-protection-plan>.

### 1.3 ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE LAST PLAN

The HCFSC, its members, and partners collaborated over the last five years to implement the 2013 CWPP. Implementation committees were formed to focus efforts on successful completion of items identified in the *2013 Countywide Action Plan*. Action items were grouped into categories, and committee members pursued implementation as resources were secured and opportunities arose. (For a list of previous HCFSC committees and current Work Groups, see Figure 5.4.2 in Chapter 5.4, *Community Preparedness*.) This section contains a summary of committee accomplishments over the last five years using the previous committee structure:

FIGURE 1.3.4 CWPP IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEES, 2013-2017	
➤	Helping Firefighters Help You
➤	Ensuring Adequate Water Supplies for Fighting Fire
➤	Managing Hazardous Fuels
➤	Maintaining Air Quality
➤	Firewise Communities
➤	Planning for Safe Evacuation

The following is a summary of the work completed by the HCFSC committees from 2013-2018.

#### 1.3.1 HELPING FIREFIGHTERS HELP YOU

This committee provided support to mitigate challenges that have been impacting the sustainable provision of fire and rescue services throughout the county. As part of this effort, committee members, the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs’ Association (HCFCA), the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), and County staff collaborated to provide technical assistance to local fire and rescue service providers. The committee supported them to better understand the root causes of their challenges, identify strategies for improvement, and take action to sustain services into the future.

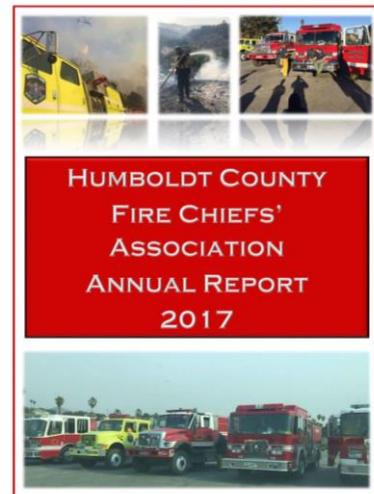
Since the publication of the 2013 CWPP, the following was accomplished:

- Technical assistance and funding supported a planning effort to address the mismatch between fire-related district boundaries and where fire service regularly provided emergency response, putting a strain on already limited resources, including:
  - Formation of the Fruitland Ridge Fire Protection District and a voter-approved special tax that generates much-needed reliable revenue for the new district.
  - Boundary expansions for the Telegraph Ridge Fire Protection District and the Fieldbrook Community Services District (for fire services only) through a formal annexation process. The annexed areas are now contributing revenue to support the fire services they receive.
- Technical assistance to address sustainable fire service issues in key areas of the county: Avenue of the Giants, Garberville, Redway, Honeydew, Petrolia, Rio Dell, Scotia, and Shelter Cove. This also included the area referred to as the “Mad River/Redwood Creek Study Area,” including fire and rescue response from the Willow Creek, Blue Lake, and Kneeland fire districts. This work is ongoing; the appropriate solution for each area is complex and could take years to resolve.
- Measure Z, the Public Safety and Essential Services half-cent sales tax passed by Humboldt County voters in 2014, helped greatly to overcome some of the challenges faced by the local fire service. Measure Z was intended to create funds to be used to maintain and improve essential services for public safety. Over the three years of Measure Z funding, over \$5.5 million was contributed to support local fire services to purchase equipment, pay dispatch fees, and continue a multiyear sustainable fire-services planning effort. These purchases and activities

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have directly affected and benefitted local fire and rescue agencies and organizations; sustaining and improving the Level of Service throughout the county.

- The feasibility of various sustainable-revenue sources to support fire and rescue services continues to be analyzed, including:
  - Implementing voter-approved special taxes or benefit assessments (new district formations or annexations).
  - Ensuring that fire-related districts with special taxes or benefit assessments are maximizing revenue recovery.
  - Maximizing cost recovery from all potential sources, including insurance billing for services rendered (out-of-district or non-district resident incidents).
  - Using Impact Fees.
  - Saving costs through sharing resources or consolidation.
  - Evaluating existing and potential new revenue-sharing agreements between the County and local fire service.
- A strategy to support critical volunteer recruitment and retention efforts.
- County staff, HCFSC members, and Humboldt State University interns assisted in the production of the *Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association Annual Report*.<sup>5</sup> The *Annual Report* provides up-to-date details about local fire and rescue service. It functions as a directory of associated agencies and organizations. This annual documentation helps demonstrate the importance of the services provided by local volunteer fire departments and their significant, invaluable contribution to upholding public safety in Humboldt communities.



### 1.3.2 ENSURING ADEQUATE WATER SUPPLIES FOR FIGHTING FIRE

This committee explored ideas to increase firefighting water sources and expand the public's understanding of how to ensure easy access to water sources. Detailed instructions for how to properly equip water tanks and clearly mark them for firefighters were included in the two published editions of *Living with Wildfire in Northwestern California*,<sup>6</sup> and widely distributed throughout the county. The committee began developing a poster and a sample water-tank fittings model to display at hardware stores. Funding to support this effort was sought but not secured within this planning period. Work in this area of need is ongoing.

### 1.3.3 MANAGING HAZARDOUS FUELS

This committee tracked fuel-reduction efforts and supported County staff pursuits of project funding to mitigate hazardous fuels. To assist homeowners with recommendations for reducing wildfire hazards around their structures and along access routes, the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council created the Fire-adapted Landscapes and Safe Homes (FLASH) program—a cost-share program designed to help property owners reduce their vulnerability to loss from wildfire. Since 2010, four grants have been awarded to the County of Humboldt through the California Fire Safe Council Grants Clearinghouse to

<sup>5</sup> Humboldt County Fire Safe Council. (2018). Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association Annual Report, 2017. Retrieved from <https://humboldtqov.org/Archive.aspx?AMID=75>

<sup>6</sup> Living with Wildfire in Northwestern California, 2nd edition. [PDF] Retrieved from <https://humboldtqov.org/livingwithwildfire>

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support FLASH. Between all four grant rounds, nearly 900 acres of fuel reduction was completed by 300 property owners, 247 home-risk assessments were completed, and 782 site visits were conducted.

FLASH has been a very successful program. Each interaction between property owners and FLASH representatives provides an opportunity to discuss topics such as local fire history, forest health, wildlife habitat, homestead fire preparedness, thinning techniques, and disposal of materials. It serves as a means to widely share the fire-safety message. Some landowners have followed through with additional fire-safety measures recommended during the home-risk assessments, supplementing their fuel reduction work (e.g. hardening homes and developing water sources).

Local Fire Safe Councils, Tribes, community organizations, private landowners, and CAL FIRE have also completed other important hazardous fuel-reduction projects throughout the county. Projects include shaded fuel breaks, roadside vegetation management, prescribed fire and cultural burns, defensible space maintenance, and chipper programs. More detail about these efforts can be found in the *Planning Unit Action Plans* in *Part 4* of this CWPP.

### 1.3.4 MAINTAINING AIR QUALITY

A dedicated representative of the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD) was an active participant in HCFSC efforts, facilitating the activities of this committee, and initiating meetings and discussions as needed by the HCFSC. For example, discussions at HCFSC meetings and case-specific coordination enabled a deeper understanding of the air-quality considerations necessary when planning prescribed burns.

Community education and outreach were a focus of this committee, including air-quality information and regulations in the first and second editions of *Living with Wildfire in Northwestern California*. NCUAQMD developed Twitter and Facebook accounts to educate the public about open burning, burn regulations, and how to obtain a burn permit. These new educational methods are in addition to NCUAQMD's website, which is an established communication point for wildfire information.<sup>7</sup> The need for additional fire-monitoring equipment over the last few wildfire seasons was identified as a priority. Due to terrain, meteorological conditions, and numerous wildfires in the region, smoke tends to stay localized for extended periods of time. In response, additional monitors were purchased and placed in Redding, to be deployed in Humboldt County as needed. The placement of monitors in and around fires and population centers provides real-time, hourly information to NCUAQMD and Air Resource Advisors assigned to fires. This information, along with weather data provided by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Incident Meteorologist, assists in the production of timely air quality advisories, alerts, and notifications.

### 1.3.5 FIREWISE® COMMUNITIES

In 2013 the HCFSC began assisting communities pursuing recognition as Firewise® Communities. The Firewise® Communities/USA Recognition Program empowers communities to work together in reducing their wildfire risk. Redwood Valley/Chezem (2014), Shelter Cove (2014), Hydesville (2015), and Kneeland (2015) successfully earned Firewise® recognition and joined the existing list of Humboldt County's Firewise® Communities. Additionally, the HCFSC helped ensure that existing Firewise® Communities were able to fulfill the requirements necessary to maintain their Firewise® status from year to year. There is now a total of ten Firewise® Communities in Humboldt County, *see section 5.4.2 for a list of all local Firewise® Communities*.

Funds from the Title III Secure Rural Schools Act in the amount of \$130,000 were invested in a small grant program to support Firewise® activities throughout the county. Types of Firewise® projects included:

- Creation of Firewise® Community Assessments and Action Plans.
- Firewise® Day events.

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<sup>7</sup> North Coast Air Quality Management District: [www.ncuaqmd.org](http://www.ncuaqmd.org)

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- Demonstration projects to model defensible space and fuel breaks.
- Community chipping programs.
- Public education on home hardening, creating defensible space, and general emergency preparedness.
- Documentation of the Firewise® mini-grant projects, including before-and-after photographs, and summarizing project activities for widespread community education.

Title III funds were also used, in collaboration with the Six Rivers National Forest (SRNF) and CAL FIRE, to develop the first and second editions of *Living with Wildfire in Northwestern California*. This widely distributed free publication covered a range of topics intended to educate residents on the importance of personal fire safety and preparedness and how communities can adapt to living in a wildfire environment. It listed information on local resources, including fire-protection agencies and community fire-safety organizations, such as Fire Safe Councils and Firewise® Communities.

### 1.3.6 PLANNING FOR SAFE EVACUATION

This committee provided support to the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services (OES) to review and provide content for Operational Area<sup>8</sup> emergency plans, and enhance effective communication among all fire agencies, emergency medical services, allied agencies, and the public. These partnerships are critical to the health and safety of local residents and emergency services personnel. With this goal in mind, HCFSC members were involved in OES' efforts to create a county evacuation plan. Incident-specific evacuation planning forms were created; the Humboldt County Emergency Evacuation Plan was begun. This group began the process of identifying Community Liaisons to help with community resource and needs profiles, and to assist as local points of contact during incidents. This group also supported increasing awareness about the importance of registering with the Humboldt Alert system, to notify registered residents of evacuation alerts and other public-safety notifications.

*See Appendix C, Accomplishments Since Last Plan and each of the 14 Planning Unit Action Plans for more details on HCFSC and partner accomplishments since the 2013 CWPP.*

## 1.4 MAINTAINING THIS PLAN

This plan was written to be the five-year strategic plan for the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council from 2019 to 2023. Each of the six *Countywide Action Plan* chapters in *Part 3* and *Appendix O* includes Metrics, Priority Actions, and Potential Action Steps to facilitate execution of this CWPP over the next five years. Work Groups will review and report on their progress at each quarterly HCFSC meeting. Funding will need to be secured to support plan maintenance and to update the plan again within the five-year planning horizon.

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<sup>8</sup> An "operational area" is an intermediate level of the state emergency services organization, consisting of a county and all political subdivisions within the county area.