



SUBJECT: Community Wildfire Protection Plan: Public Outreach Campaign
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DATE: May 9, 2008

For Immediate Release:

Community Meetings to be held for Sonoma County Wildfire Protection Plan

Living in a home nestled in the woods is a dream come true for many Sonoma County residents, but in the event of a wildfire, that dream could quickly turn to ashes. Each year new homes are built in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), thus increasing the total number of homes potentially at risk to wildfire. In recent years wildfires in California and throughout the West have destroyed homes and entire neighborhoods, garnered national media attention, and created momentum for the passage of both federal and state legislation to address wildfire risk.

With generous funding from the Bureau of Land Management and Fireman's Fund Insurance, Fire Safe Sonoma has launched a process to create a County-wide Community Wildfire Protection Plan to assist communities and residents in preparing for and mitigating wildfire threats.

The purpose of the CWPP is to delineate wildfire risks in the wildland-urban interface and to identify and prioritize potential solutions, so that when funding is sought to address wildfire issues, there is a comprehensive over-all plan from which to start. The CWPP neither guarantees funding nor is it regulatory; it is a planning tool that will give us better access to grant funds and help ensure that priority projects are identified. The plan will be updated yearly, and as local communities write their own CWPPs, they will be added to the overall plan.

Citizen involvement is central to the planning process; we will hold six meetings to provide a chance for residents to become involved in the fire plan, and help identify resources they value and would like to protect from wildfire. At the meetings fire officials will also have an opportunity to share information about living with wildfire and the steps residents can take to prepare and protect their homes, communities, and surrounding natural resources. Meetings will be held as follows:

Sebastopol Fire Station, 7425 Bodega Ave., Sebastopol. **Tuesday May 27, 7-9 PM.** For communities served by the following fire departments: Bodega Bay; Bloomfield, Bodega, Gold Ridge, Graton, Sebastopol and Valley Ford.

Santa Rosa Fire Training Tower, 2126 W. College Ave., Santa Rosa. **Wed. May 28, 6:30-8:30 PM.** For communities served by the following fire departments: Bennett Valley, Rincon Valley and Santa Rosa.

Wilmar Fire Station: 3825 Bodega Ave, Petaluma. **Thurs. May 29, 6:30-8:30 PM.** For communities served by: Lakeville; Petaluma; Rancho Adobe; Rohnert Park; San Antonio; Two Rock; Wilmar.

Glen Ellen Fire Station: 13445 Arnold Dr., Glen Ellen. **Fri. May 30, 7-9 PM.** For communities served by these fire departments: Eldridge; Glen Ellen; Kenwood; Mayacamas; Schell Vista; Sonoma; Valley of Moon.

Russian River Fire, 14100 Armstrong Woods Rd, Guerneville. **Mon. June 2, 6:30-8:30 PM.** For: Annapolis, Camp Meeker; Cazadero; Forestville; Fort Ross; Monte Rio; Occidental; Guerneville; Rio Nido; Timber Cove.

Healdsburg Fire Station, 601 Healdsburg Ave, Healdsburg. **Weds. June 4, 7-9 PM.** For communities served by: Cloverdale; Geyserville; Healdsburg; Knights Valley; Mountain; Rincon Valley; Sotoyome; Windsor.

"CAL FIRE is very pleased to work with Fire Safe Sonoma in the development of the Sonoma County CWPP. Reducing fuel loads is crucial for the safety of residents and firefighters alike," said CAL FIRE West Division Chief Chuck Abshear. "Having a CWPP in place is a crucial step towards finding the means to get vegetation projects underway, and we lend our full support to this project."

If you cannot make a meeting, but would like to let us know your concerns, you can find our "Values and Assets Survey" on the web at www.firesafesonoma.org.

For more information, contact Fire Safe Sonoma at 707.565.6070, email csafford@sonoma-county.org.



Further Information about the Community Wildfire Protection Plan:

CWPPs are part of the mandate of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) signed into law on December 3, 2003. The intent of a CWPP is to bring together all of the stakeholders in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)—community members, non-governmental entities, local, state and federal agencies—to collaboratively develop a plan which identifies wildfire issues and prioritizes mitigation strategies, such as fuels reduction, for those areas.

The HFRA emphasizes the need for federal state and local authorities to work collaboratively with communities in developing hazardous fuel reduction programs, and places priority on areas identified by communities themselves in a CWPP. This provides communities with a tremendous opportunity to influence where and how additional federal funds will be distributed on nonfederal lands.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR A CWPP:

- Collaboratively developed with input from non-governmental stakeholders, local, state and federal agencies.
- Must identify areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend types and methods of treatment that, if completed, would reduce the risk to the community.
- Treatment of structural ignitability: Must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed in the plan.

The CWPP process represents a great opportunity to address the challenges of the Wildland /Urban Interface (WUI) in a way that brings about comprehensive and locally supported solutions to wildfire risk problems. Ultimately the plan must be accepted and signed by local government, local fire departments and CAL FIRE.

BENEFITS:

- Opportunity to establish locally appropriate boundaries for WUI communities.
- Federal and State agencies to prioritize identified at-risk communities and watersheds for treatment. USDA Forest Service and BLM must spend not less than 50% of the funds allocated for hazardous fuel reduction projects in the WUI as identified by a CWPP.
- When allocating federal funds for fuel reduction projects on nonfederal lands, federal and state agencies should, to the maximum extent practicable, give priority to communities that have developed CWPPs.
- Provide a context for prioritizing fuels treatment projects in the cross-boundary, landscape-scale manner envisioned in the *National Fire Plan* and *10 Year Comprehensive Strategy*.
- Establishes relationships between Federal/State/Local Agencies/State and National Fire Organizations and Community Groups
 - Assists with bringing together diverse community partners
 - Initiates planning dialog
 - Facilitates implementation of priority actions across ownership boundaries
 - Brings specialized natural resource and technical expertise into the planning process.

For more information about the CWPP: csafford@mcn.org; www.firesafesonoma.org ; or www.cafirealliance.org