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Creating a Community Wildfire Protection Plan



Action Steps in Community Wildfire Protection Planning

The steps below outline how a community can mobilize to create its own CWPP. The Nebraska Forest Service is available to help communities prepare their plans.

- Establish a group of local leaders with an interest in and commitment to developing a CWPP.
- Get state or federal land managers involved.
- Seek participation from stakeholders interested in community wildland fire protection activities.
- Work with experts to develop a community map that identifies populated areas and vegetative cover.
- Assess your community's wildland fire response capability. Identify areas at high risk for wildland fire (such as fuel hazards) and community infrastructure and homes that also are at risk.
- Identify and prioritize areas for fuels treatment.
- Develop a plan for educating landowners and homeowners about reducing wildland fire risk through fuels treatment projects and Firewise building and landscaping practices.
- Develop a strategy for implementing your CWPP and assessing its effectiveness.
- Share the plan with your community and others.



Communities at risk for wildland fire are encouraged to start work on a CWPP as soon as possible because the process can take several months.

For more information about CWPPs or to obtain assistance developing a CWPP, contact:

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For more information about services provided through the NFS Wildland Fire Protection Program, call (402) 472-2944.



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What Is a CWPP?

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is a written document that identifies the steps a community will take to reduce its risk of damage from wildland fire. The plan addresses the community's wildland fire response capability, as well as the protection of homes and structures within the community.

The plan also should identify and prioritize areas of private, state and federal land where fuels treatment projects are necessary to reduce wildland fire threats to the community and its infrastructure.

Finally, the CWPP should include details about how steps outlined in the plan will be implemented.

CWPPs were developed as part of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA), which was passed by Congress on Nov. 21, 2003, and signed into law by President George Bush on Dec. 3, 2003.

Why Should My Community Develop a CWPP?

A CWPP allows a variety of community groups to come to agreement and create strategies for managing local natural resources and protecting their community's residents and infrastructure.



Effective wildfire protection planning brings together local firefighters, interested community members, and local and state government officials.

Having a CWPP in place provides communities with important benefits:

- They can decide upon the definition of the wildland-urban interface in their area and its boundary.
- They can help decide fuels treatment priorities in their wildland-urban interface.
- Communities can apply for grants for federal cost share on local fuels treatment projects. These grants can reduce the local cost of projects by at least 50 percent.



With a CWPP, a community takes specific steps to protect residents and infrastructure from dangerous wildland fires.

Who Should Develop a CWPP?

Interested local parties should take the lead in developing a CWPP. However, the plan should be developed with support from state and federal agencies.

Collaboration between a variety of local organizations and interest groups is important to developing an effective CWPP. At a minimum, this collaboration should include local government officials, local fire authorities and the state forestry agency.

State and federal land managers can contribute specialized natural resource knowledge and expertise to the planning process. This can be

especially important in the areas of vegetation management, value and risk assessment, using Geographic Information Systems and mapping.

When Should My Community Develop Its CWPP?

ASAP. If your community is at high risk for large-scale or high-intensity wildfires, get started as soon as possible because it takes several months to develop a CWPP. But, when complete, your community will have laid the groundwork for protection from wildfires and will be able to apply for cost-share assistance to complete fuels treatment projects, which can further reduce the risk of wildfire damage.

What Areas Are Included in a CWPP?

The CWPP will emphasize your area's wildland-urban interface. This is the area where people, homes and other structures and community infrastructure are most at risk from wildland fire.

Watersheds and wildlife habitats, popular recreation sites or water and power plants may receive priority for fuels treatment projects.



Fuels treatment projects clear brush, small trees and debris that serve as "ladder fuels" which can quickly turn ground fires into crown fires.