Leaders Guide for developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan

This Leaders Guide was created for Leaders by Leaders and is designed to work directly with “Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan – Handbook for Wildland-Urban Interface Communities” available at: www.safnet.org/policyandpress/cwpp.cfm

Leaders Guide General Instructions

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Phase 1: Forming and Norming

Step #1 Convene Decision-makers: Form a core team of representatives from local government, local fire, and state agency responsible for forest management

- Staff meeting review of CWPP process; brainstorming methods and who to invite to the planning process
- Fire Chief/Leader to decide the need for a CWPP; consult with neighboring fire chiefs
- Develop conceptual mission and policy direction for CWPP
- List lead planning team: local, state and federal agencies; local community leaders
- Define jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional players and match them to the wildland fire problems
- Identify core group of policy leaders, statutory authorities, those with sign off powers; granting agencies
- Review local, state and federal wildland plans and the City/County General Plan Safety Element
- Face to face meetings with city and county executive and political leaders – check the level of support for the CWPP
- Begin defining the geographical planning area for the CWPP

Step #2 Involve Federal Agencies; Identify and engage local representative of the BLM and DOI; contact other land management agencies as appropriate. Public Releases

- Define property ownership in the CWPP planning area
- Work with state and federal agencies for grant opportunities

- Contact local agencies that have completed a CWPP
- Assign the official CWPP planning team for the first meeting; involve the public early and continuously
- Face to face meeting with state, federal and regional leaders that have a property interest in completing a CWPP – discuss the need to form a planning team and to access available grant funds
- Engage interested Parties: Contact and encourage active involvement in plan development from a broad range of interested organizations and stakeholders

- Personal invitation to property owners and a broad range of stakeholder groups to join the planning process
- Find meeting locations and convenient meeting times
- Develop the agenda for the first meeting
- Convene the first CWPP meeting; introduce planning process; describe benefits of doing a CWPP; expand planning team membership; and encourage support and involvement
- Leadership to assure CWPP process is on the right track and empower other leaders to keep process on track
- Leadership to encourage members of the planning group to stay engaged, encourage the non-participants to engage and speak out, make sure the non-fire representatives are invited
- Understand and be ready to address the “deal stopping” issues; be ready to keep planning team focused on the mission and vision of the planning process
- Define the mission and direction of the planning process to accurately reflect the community concern.

Phase 2: Risk Assessment and Priority Setting

Step #4 Establish a Community Base Map: Work with partners to establish a baseline map of the community that defines the community WUI, inhabited areas at risk, forested areas containing critical human infrastructure, and forest areas at risk for large-scale fire disturbance.

- Start with any base map, define the CWPP planning area – use natural and recognizable boundary breaks
- Convene the second CWPP meeting and focus on defining the fuel hazards, assets at risk and confirm the planning area; make sure that the planning team understands the mission and vision of the CWPP process

Step #5 Develop a Community Risk Assessment: Work with planning partners to develop a community risk assessment that considers fuel hazards; risk of wildfire occurrence; homes, businesses, and essential infrastructure at risk; other community values at risk and local preparedness capability.

- Gather information about hazards, fuel models, risks; threats, use local, state and federal agency information and identify on the base map
- Convene the third CWPP meeting, present and build upon the risk and assessment information, fire chief to “tell it like it is”

Step #6 Establish Community Priorities and Recommendations: Use the base map and community risk assessment to facilitate a collaborative community meeting to identify priority fuel reduction, structural protection, and improved fire response project; clearly indicate relationship to reducing community wildfire risks.

- Develop a process that leads to collaboration and consensus building around the highest priority projects that prevent, mitigate and prepare for risks and hazards; consider wildland fire threat to structures as well as structure to structure fire spread.
- Convene the fourth CWPP meeting; review risk mgmt and reduction plans; prioritize planning project
- Facilitate the meeting; capture feedback, organize and prioritize; fire chief should be present to encourage and monitor feedback making sure the planning process is staying on track.

Phase 3: Plan, Do and Evaluate

Step #7 Develop an Action Plan and Assessment Strategy: Consider developing a detailed implementation strategy to accompany the CWPP; as well as a monitoring plan that will ensure its long-term success.

- Attain buy in and commitment for the “doing”; track and measure progress; engage private property owners
- Convene the fifth CWPP meeting; fire chief to encourage outcomes and community involvement; fill the gaps and keep the process moving forward
- Set up a method for changing, updating, and revision of the plan; change to meet future demands

Step #8 Finalize Community Wildfire Protection Plan: Communicate CWPP results to the community and key partners.

- Public release and a media blitz about who, what, where, why, and how the fire safe projects are being processed; use planning team members to deliver the message
- Planning team to develop the background, funding and staffing plans for the projects
- Leadership team to meet with key stakeholders, property owners, and policy leaders and deliver the plan message; attain signature support from funding agencies
- Convene the sixth CWPP meeting; celebrate the development of the plan; schedule future meeting to follow implementation, update, funding and tracking of plan; set a specific date for the next meeting

Step #9 Track Progress and Update CWPP: A plan stays alive when it’s evaluated and updated to meet the reality of the implementation days.

- Describe accomplishments to date and review the 8 Step CWPP planning process to pick up loose ends and new areas of concern
- Convene the seventh CWPP meeting to celebrate success, upgrade existing plans and to plan for the future
- Plan future meetings to track and update the planned activities

For more specific information, refer to the Leader’s Guide Supplement

CWPP/FG/GENERAL/REV05/10MAY05

Sponsored by:

- National Association of State Foresters
- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- The Wilderness Society

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