

## **CWPP Enhancement Guidance – *Lessons Learned!***

After reviewing many Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs), we have concluded most could provide greater benefits to the participants with a few modifications. We encourage CWPP developers to consider the following recommendations.

### **Formal Agreement**

The Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA) requires a CWPP be “agreed to by the applicable local government, local fire department, and State agency responsible for forest management” (CDF in California). While not required, we suggest a formal agreement, such as the [Wildfire Protection Plan Certification and Agreement Signature Sheet](#) will add clarity that the CWPP is authentic. It will also indicate that the included projects are supported by the community and ready for implementation.

### **Designate a Generous WUI**

HFRA provides communities the opportunity to designate a locally appropriate definition and boundary for the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). The default definition is ½ to 1½ miles from the boundary of an at-risk community, depending on slope, geographic features and condition class or an area that is adjacent to an evacuation route. HFRA includes advantages for communities that designate larger WUIs by providing streamlined NEPA documentation for projects that are greater than 1½ miles from the community but within the community designated WUI. A community designated WUI of 1½ miles loses this advantage. A plan in New Mexico established WUI boundaries 15 miles from the community.

### **Include Federal Projects**

One of the purposes of HFRA is “to reduce wildfire risk to communities, municipal water supplies, and other at-risk Federal land through a collaborative process of planning, prioritizing, and implementing hazardous fuel reduction projects” (emphasis added). Accordingly, HFRA provides for meaningful community participation in federal project planning through the opportunity to recommend projects on federal lands. When Federal agencies implement the community recommendations, the NEPA process is streamlined, reducing planning time and expenses. An easy method to realize this benefit is to consider all federal projects near a community that are in some stage of planning development. Considering planned federal projects also helps meeting the requirement to consult with Federal land management agencies. The community may recommend changes to the scope of the projects or method of treatments. Communities may also recommend additional projects. The greatest benefit will be for those projects that NEPA has not yet begun.

### **Include Revenue Generating Projects**

The CWPP provision is designed to coordinate efforts to reduce fire risk among all landowners. Some CWPPs have included only projects that require grant funding, which limits the opportunity for a coordinated approach to fire risk reduction. It also limits the opportunity for community members to recommend a community fuel reduction strategy and expedited implementation of federal and private projects.

### **Include Projects outside the WUI**

Another purpose of HFRA is “to enhance efforts to protect watersheds and address threats to forest and rangeland health, including catastrophic wildfire, across the landscape.” Just as projects within a WUI, CWPPs provide meaningful community participation in developing recommendations for private and federal projects outside the WUI. Private and Federal land managers also receive similar (but reduced) benefits to implementing the community recommendations as they do with projects within the WUI.

### **Recommend Treatment Types and Methods**

HFRA requires CWPPs to “recommend the types and methods of treatment on Federal and non-Federal land that will protect 1 or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure.” Treatment recommendations are part of the NEPA and CEQA process. Community recommendations are necessary for land managers to realize the streamlined processes. Additionally, the greatest controversy frequently revolves around treatment recommendations. Providing recommendations for the type and method of treatment that the community will support focuses land owner attention on community acceptable land management practices. Treatment recommendations can be project specific, or area-wide.